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DPTI

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17 October 2018

Department of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure
Planning Reform Team
GPO Box 1815
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Via email DPTI.PlanningEngagement@sa.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Accredited Professionals Scheme – Draft Regulations

In reference to the DPTI Accredited Professional Scheme Draft Paper, the Mid Murray Council provides the following comments for consideration in particular to the implications this proposal may have on regional Councils.

- a) Consideration to amend the Regulations to include consultation with the relevant bodies before amendments are made to the Competency Requirements (Planning and Building) and that a list of the Competency Requirements form part of the Regulations. Any changes made may have implications on the Accredited Professionals Scheme and effective operation of the relevant authority.
- b) Clarification on whether DPTI plan on delegating its powers to another body or will DPTI administer its own accreditation scheme. Currently, there is much confusion with accrediting bodies on what training is accepted as part of the CPD scheme and these vary between the bodies. Where an accreditation scheme is to be administered by DPTI or a body there needs to be a clear and defined process particularly surrounding CPD training to prevent other bodies dictating what is deemed as compliant training within the scheme.
- c) Classes of Accreditation – Planning
 - (i) The Assessment Manager must be able to delegate to planning staff (accredited or otherwise) otherwise this could result in unnecessary workload increase and delay in processing particularly in regional Councils.
 - (ii) Consideration to how this affects regional Councils with limited staff, for instance Mid Murray Council's current two planning staff would only currently qualify for Level 4 allowing them to sign off Deemed to Satisfy (equivalent to complying) when they are clearly capable of dealing with more complex issues.

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- (iii) Mechanism to allow 'on merit' assessment for higher level accreditation if you do not meet the strict criteria.

d) Classes of Accreditation – Building

- (i) The draft proposal states that existing Building Surveyors currently qualified as a Level 1, 2 or 3 may be eligible for accreditation, however, those existing in the profession should automatically be deemed to meet the requirements and their accreditation should be carried over in the same manner as a Private Certifier. No justification has been provided as to why a Building Surveyor may not be eligible particularly if already accredited with an organisation recognised under the Development Act. Also no explanation on why a Private Certifier qualifications carry over but other Building Surveyors do not.
- (ii) Level 3 - Assistant Building Surveyors in South Australia are currently permitted to assess Development Applications (in relation to Building Rules Consent) of all classes provided the proposed buildings are no more than 500m² in size and two storeys in height. Many regional Councils employ such qualified Building Surveyors as this meets the Council's development needs. The current system has been in place for decades and has worked well for Councils and current Level 3 – Assistant Building Surveyors. No rationale has been provided within the draft proposal as to why this change is deemed necessary. This change will certainly have a detrimental effect on regional Councils further reducing the ability to employ suitably qualified Building Surveyors. Level 3 Assistant Building Surveyors should remain as currently existing within the Development Regulations 87.
- (iii) Level 4 – Building Inspectors in South Australia is a new Level for inspecting Class 1 and 10 buildings only. This appears to be taking the industry of building surveying backwards and does not prompt the profession. Introducing this level will not assist regional Councils in addressing staff shortages in the area of building surveying given a Building Surveyor is required to be multi-skilled to address various issues. This does not address the issue of ensuring there is enough adequately trained professional Building Surveyors in the industry.
- (iv) The qualifications for a Level 4 Building Inspector do not appear to correlate with existing RTO courses. Therefore clarification is sought on how it is proposed for this level to achieve the relevant qualification and be successfully employed.
- (v) Inspections – should remain the function of Councils being that they are impartial. It has been identified in other States that the engaging of Private Certifiers to undertake inspections has had a negative impact building work standards. Adequate fees to cover costs are required (similar to Wastewater applications).

e) Applying for Accreditation

- (i) Building Surveyors - existing accredited Building Surveyors should have their qualifications and current accreditation automatically carried over (transitioned) into the new legislation without need for the individual's industry body applying for accreditation on their behalf. Individuals should be able to apply not the industry body.
- (ii) Fees - Fees have already been paid to the relevant body for accreditation and additional fees of \$600-\$800 per Officer for application evaluation and register is not affordable to Councils. Regional Councils are required to pay for accreditation fees in order to attract staff, Panel members etc.
- (iii) The annual review fee, upgrading of accreditation to higher level, CPD fees have not been specified and needs to be clarified.
- (iv) Consultation in regards to development of processes in regards to –
 - i. Upgrading of accreditation. The reason for this is to ensure that the professional has clear guidelines and processes when submitting documentation for an upgrade.
 - ii. Accreditation decision making (i.e. approve, refuse, suspension etc.).

f) Code of Conduct

- (i) Councils already ensure that all their staff abide by a Code of Conduct. It would be beneficial to align all Code of Conducts so that only one is required to be complied in lieu of numerous documents (i.e. Council, DPTI, accreditation body etc.).

I thank you for your consideration of Council's comments and commend DPTI staff for the amount of work that has gone into this process so far. Please do not hesitate to contact me via either telephone on [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED] to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully,



Jake McVicar
Director – Development & Environmental Services

cc. Stephen Smith – Director, Policy
Local Government Association
[REDACTED]