



# WHAT WE HAVE HEARD REPORT

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S NEW PLANNING SYSTEM



### Introduction

As part of South Australia's new planning system, a new 'performance indicators scheme' is being developed to better monitor, analyse and report on the kind of development activities taking place across the state. Specifically, the scheme aims to capture data related to the number and nature of development applications being processed in South Australia and record the decisions and assessment timeframes associated with these.

This information collected by the new performance indicators scheme will be used to identify trends and the cumulative impact of development activities on social, economic and environmental outcomes. Importantly, the scheme will also be used to evaluate the performance of assessment authorities.

This report summarises feedback received on the technical discussion paper, 'South Australia's new planning system: performance indicators' which underwent public consultation in August 2018. The paper sought feedback on how the new scheme could work, the types of data that the scheme should capture, as well as elements of the current 'System Indicators Program' that should continue. The paper also recommended ways data could be captured and presented via South Australia's new ePlanning platform.

In addition to the technical discussion paper, the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure hosted two industry workshops and two Open House sessions seeking input into the scheme. Twenty-five written submissions were received throughout the consultation period from government agencies, councils and industry professionals.





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### Overview of feedback

Respondents universally supported the implementation of a new performance indicators scheme to collect, monitor and evaluate planning system data and believed the existing System Indicators Program was under-performing in a number of ways.

### Challenges of the current system

Respondents highlighted a number of issues with the existing System Indicators Program, namely:

- not all councils provide data and this creates gaps in reporting
- the process of reporting is time-consuming, inconsistent and at high risk of producing inaccurate results
- current performance indicators are not always meaningful or helpful in improving planning outcomes
- there is limited awareness about how performance data is used
- there is limited awareness of the Minister's Annual Report to Parliament on the Development Act 1993
- performance data reported in the Minister's Annual Report has an overt metropolitan focus and does not address progress towards state planning targets.

### Opportunities for the new system

#### Capturing meaningful data

Respondents identified the need for the new performance indicators scheme to collect data that was meaningful and that directly benefited planning outcomes. They argued for a scheme that would help achieve local and state planning targets, such as those outlined in the State Planning Policies and the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (2017 Update).

To this end, respondents suggested that the following types of data might be collected:

- number of development applications refused and reason/s for these refusals
- number of deemed consents and the reason/s for these
- timeframes for development assessments, court appeals and construction start dates

- costs incurred during the assessment process
- degree of complexity for each development application
- number and nature of Code amendments (and who has initiated these)
- number and nature of 'blockers' in the development approval process
- different pathways used to process development applications
- number and nature of housing types being assessed
- number and nature of complaints about new developments
- number and location of in-fill locations
- level of energy efficiency and water sensitivity of new developments
- number of applications involving heritage sites or the adaptive re-use of buildings
- number and location of land divisions and lot creation that impact on infrastructure planning
- environmental impacts of development over time, such as green canopy loss (or gain)
- customer satisfaction levels with the planning system.

Importantly, respondents highlighted the need to capture qualitative development outcomes and trends, and not only quantitative data relating to application types, in order to determine where and how the planning system needed improvement.







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### Sharing data in new ways

Respondents further noted that the new performance indicator scheme represented an opportunity to extract and present planning data in new and powerful ways, such as through graphs, charts, maps, 3D models and fully customisable data sets generated 'on demand'.

It was also suggested during consultation that there may be potential in the future to integrate the data collected via the new performance indicator scheme with data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and share this information with third parties (such as universities and state agencies).

### Measuring the performance of assessment authorities

Some respondents highlighted the need for the new performance indicator scheme to not only evaluate the performance of councils and private sector planners, but also the State Planning Commission itself.

Additionally, many respondents suggested that penalties be applied to authorities who demonstrated systemic poor performance. To support strong performance, it was further proposed that relevant authorities should receive/generate regular performance indicators reports to identify issues in advance, and that the Minister's Annual Report should address areas for system improvement, based on statistical evidence.

### Next steps

A draft set of performance indicators for the new planning system is now being developed in response to the feedback summarised in this report. The next steps in the process are shown in the diagram below.

Innovative ways of measuring planning trends and qualitative planning outcomes will continue to be investigated, as will ways of maintaining transparency and consistency of data input and retrieval.

The final shape and function of the new performance indicators scheme will be submitted to the State Planning Commission and the Minister for Planning for approval in 2019, with the new scheme officially commencing in mid-2020. Data generated from the scheme will first be reported in the Minister's Annual Report for the financial year 2020-2021.

More information about South Australia's new planning system is available at

[www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au](http://www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au)

[www.saplanningcommission.sa.gov.au](http://www.saplanningcommission.sa.gov.au)

