



NEWS RELEASE
The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP
Member for Heffron
Minister for Planning
Minister for Redfern Waterloo

Saturday 24 October 2008

RED TAPE CUT FOR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS

The Rees Government has delivered on its promise to overhaul planning laws and cut red tape in the delivery of essential school infrastructure across NSW.

NSW Minister for Planning, Kristina Keneally, today said that an amendment to the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure)* has been gazetted, ensuring a simpler, faster process for approval of important school facilities such as gyms and halls.

“When the Premier launched this initiative last month he highlighted that it can **take up to 200 days to get planning approval for a school gym or hall,**” Ms Keneally said.

“The official gazettal of the amendment means these approval times will be **cut back to as little as 10 days** for appropriate types of school development.

“Under the new code, school facilities can be automatically ticked off if they meet specified criteria which make sure the new school building would have a minimal impact on any surrounding houses.

“I instructed the Department of Planning to consult about the complying development provisions, including with the Local Government and Shires Association, Department of Education and Training, Association of Independent Schools, and Catholic Education Commission.”

Following that consultation, a code was developed which resembles a ‘check-list’ through which school developments can be automatically approved. The code includes rules about:

- Noise minimisation measures;
- Building height and material standards;
- Vegetation management;
- Setbacks from neighbouring properties;
- Provisions for solar access of neighbouring properties; and
- Compliance with the Building Code of Australia.

Ms Keneally said that around NSW, there are some 20 school gyms and halls currently being built or in the final stages of planning.

“If a school has a design plan for a hall or gym which doesn’t impact significantly on surrounding communities, that plan should not be held up by unnecessary red tape,” Ms Keneally said.

“These reforms are common-sense. They will speed up the process of applications and bring significant benefit to the state’s 750,000 public school students.

“The changes will also benefit non-government schools by allowing basic infrastructure such as single storey classrooms and libraries to be built in accordance with the complying code.”

Ms Keneally said today’s reforms add to steps taken in January this year to simplify and speed up the installation of security fences, awnings and rainwater tanks in schools.

Media Contact: Phil McCall 9228 5811 / 0438 619 987

Page 1 of 1