

Planning Process



Prelodgement

Preparing your application and gathering the required documents.

Before you can make changes to a building or occupy a premises you need to check what approvals you might need first.

If your development proposal is not classified as exempt or complying development, you will need to lodge a development application (DA) to get development consent.

A pre-lodgement meeting can bring to light issues that may need to be addressed prior to submission.



Lodgement

The lodgement of your DA is the formal start of the DA process.

All development and associated applications are required to be lodged through the NSW Planning Portal. This is a mandatory requirement imposed by the NSW Government.

We'll review your application and let you know via your ePlanning account if any further details or information are required. It's important to understand that all required information must be provided so that we're able to undertake assessment.



Assessment

Once lodged, the application will be allocated to one of our officers for assessment.

Further comprehensive checks - including that your site is suitable, your project meets all regulations and how the surrounding natural and built environment might be affected - are made in this stage.

If, in the course of assessing an application, it becomes apparent that further information is required, a Request for Information (RFI) will be issued through the planning portal.

Task list

- ☐ Check approvals
- ☐ Gather documents
 - ☐ Application form
 - ☐ Scaled plans
 - ☐ SEE
 - ☐ BASIX
- ☐ Engage a consultant
- ☐ Book prelodgement meeting

Task list

- ☐ Create ePlanning account on portal
- ☐ Lodge application via NSW Planning Portal
- ☐ Apply for a construction certificate
- ☐ Pay relevant application fees

Task list

- ☐ Respond to RFI
- ☐ Login to portal for updates



Determination

Upon completing the assessment of the application, a determination will be issued via the NSW Planning Portal.

You'll be issued with a formal "Notice of Determination" advising whether your development application has been approved (Development Consent) or refused (Development Refusal).

Your Development Consent will generally be subject and include conditions intended to protect the environment, community and neighbours.

Task list

- ☐ Read conditions of consent



Before you build

Ensure you tick all the boxes so work can start on your project.

Before you start building you will need to:

- Get a Construction Certificate;
- Appoint a Principal Certifying Authority (PCA) to monitor construction - this can be us or an accredited certifier;
- Give us and the PCA two days' notice before you start work; and
- Complete any works listed in the "Prior to commencing work" part of your consent.

Task list

- ☐ Apply for a construction certificate
- ☐ Appoint a PCA
- ☐ Notification before starting works
- ☐ Check consent conditions



Before you move in

Once works are complete, you'll need to obtain an Occupation Certificate.

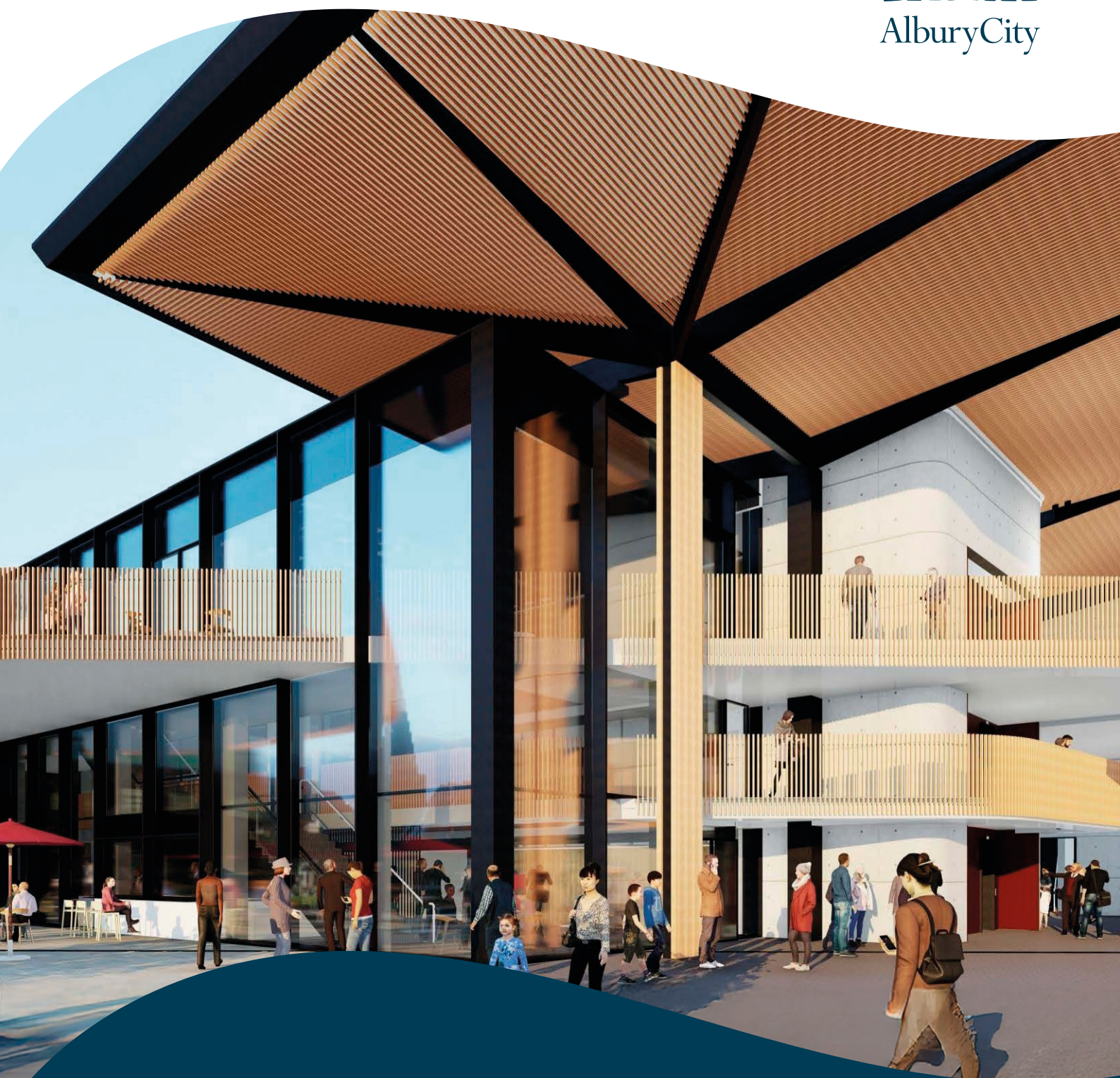
Once all inspections have taken place as outlined in your Construction Certificate, confirming the works have been completed as per the plans, you'll need to obtain an Occupation Certificate.

All required documentation outlined in Attachment 1 of the Construction Certificate must be uploaded with your application.

A final inspection will be arranged.

Task list

- ☐ Apply for a occupation certificate



Development Application (DA) Process

Understanding key steps in planning approvals

Introduction to the DA Process

Overview of DA Process

The DA process is a formal Council assessment ensuring developments meet safety and planning standards.

Key Stages Explained

Stages include determining DA need, research, documentation, lodgement, assessment, approval, and completion.

Balancing Interests

The process balances landowner goals with the public interest, respecting environment and local character.

Practical Examples

Applications are often for new homes, large renovations, commercial projects, and changes in building use.



STAGE 1: Determining Whether You Need a DA

Exempt Development Criteria

Minor works like small sheds or minor renovations follow strict standards and need no formal approval if compliant.

Complying Development Pathway

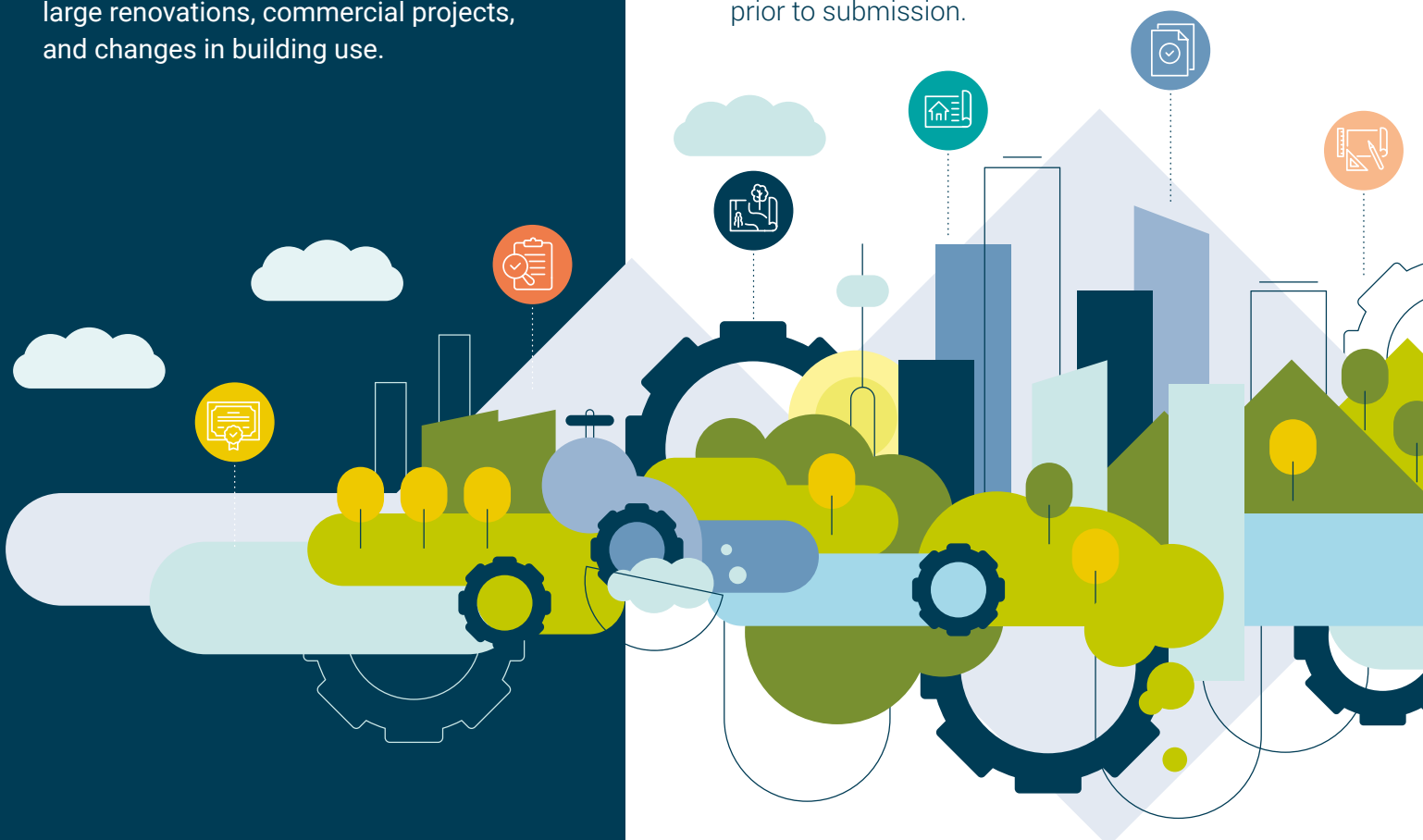
Fast-track approval for low-impact developments meeting State Environmental Planning Policy criteria applies through Private Certifiers or Council.

Full Development Application Requirement

Complex or constrained sites like multi-storey buildings or heritage areas require a full Development Application (DA) and merit assessment.

Importance of Early Determination

Selecting the correct application pathway early avoids delays, rejections, and saves time in the approval process. A pre-lodgement meeting can bring to light issues that may need to be addressed prior to submission.





STAGE 2: **Researching Planning** **Controls (LEP, DCP, Constraints)**

Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

The LEP defines zoning, permissible land uses, building heights, floor ratios, heritage and environmental protections for the property.

Development Control Plan (DCP)

The DCP provides detailed design guidelines including landscaping, setbacks, parking, privacy, and stormwater management and to maintain local character.

Site Constraints Impact

Site constraints like bushfire risks, flood zones, biodiversity, and heritage listings affect development feasibility and may require specialist assessments.

Planning Research Tools

Platforms like the NSW Planning Portal and Council maps assist in accessing controls and statutory policies for accurate development applications.



STAGE 3: **Preparing Documentation** **for Lodgement**

Core Documentation Components

Architectural drawings and a Statement of Environmental Effects form the essential part of DA packages.

Additional Specialized Reports

Bushfire, traffic, acoustic, and heritage reports address site-specific conditions in DA assessments.

Advanced Visualization and Strategies

Shadow diagrams, vehicle swept pathways and waste-management plans support complex development proposals

Use Consultants

It is strongly recommended you use Town Planning Consultants, Architects, Land Surveyors, etc. to assist you with your application.



STAGE 4: **Lodging the DA via the** **NSW Planning Portal**

Online Application Process

Applicants create accounts, fill forms, upload documents, and pay fees via the NSW Planning Portal for DA submissions.

Completeness and Compliance Checks

Council reviews submitted documents to ensure completeness and compliance before proceeding to assessment.

Communication and Notifications

The portal provides real-time notifications on information requests, referrals, public exhibitions, and outcomes.

Transparency and Tracking

Applicants can transparently track application progress and status updates throughout the assessment process.





STAGE 5: Council Assessment Process

Detailed Proposal Review

Council planners evaluate development proposals against zoning, environmental, and statutory requirements.

Internal and External Referrals

Specialists in engineering, traffic, heritage, and environmental fields review the application as needed.

Public Notification and Feedback

Neighbours and stakeholders provide feedback which is considered during the merit assessment.

Assessment Outcome and Conditions

Council determines acceptability and may impose conditions to mitigate impacts before approval.



STAGE 7: Post-Approval Requirements

Construction Certificate Requirement

A Construction Certificate ensures construction plans comply with the Building Code and engineering standards.

Role of Principal Certifier

A Principal Certifier (Council or Private) oversees inspections to confirm compliance with the approved plans and legislation.

Pre-Construction Compliance

Applicants must satisfy DA conditions such as structural certifications and erosion control before starting work.

Mandatory Construction Inspections

Inspections at footing, slab, framing, waterproofing, and final fit-out stages ensure building safety and quality.



STAGE 6: Determination Outcomes

Approval with Conditions

The most common outcome, requiring compliance with certain condition before construction, during works, and prior to occupation.

Refusal Determination

Issued only when proposals fail planning objectives or generate unacceptable impacts, with options for review or appeal.

Deferred Commencement Approval

Allows development only after specific conditions like reports or easements are met.



STAGE 8: Completion and Occupation Certificate

Purpose of Occupation Certificate

The Occupation Certificate confirms a building is safe and suitable for use after all inspections and compliance checks are completed.

Certification Process

The Principal Certifier verifies compliance with approved plans and essential services like fire safety and drainage before issuing the Occupation Certificate.

Legal Importance of Occupation Certificate

Without an Occupation Certificate, a building cannot be legally occupied, leased, or sold in its completed form.

Final Step in Development

The Occupation Certificate ensures construction meets regulatory standards and provides legal closure to the entire development process.