

Developing the Town Planner's Assistant

Are your Development Assessment Planners 'crying out' for assistance? Would you like to train staff quickly to assist these planners? Do you have motivated staff keen to expand their skills base, make their jobs more challenging?

This training aims to equip participants to be able to provide support to town planners working in the development assessment process within local government or private practice. The course will focus on enhancing participant's skills and knowledge base to be able to undertake or understand the assessment of minor Development Applications against numerical standards in DCP's and LEP's, to complete or understand initial assessments for larger Development Applications, to answer specific planning enquiries and generally assist development assessment planners.

This course is also open staff working in private practices, who may be seeking a greater understanding of the planning system.

DURATION: 3 days, face to face plus: 2 days of self directed learning/reading (prior to and post course)

COST: On Application

FACILITATOR: *Rolf Fenner*

Rolf has over twenty years professional experience in urban and regional planning and public policy development. He is currently the Senior Policy Adviser with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) based in Canberra. In his capacity as the Senior Policy Adviser, Rolf represents ALGA on the national Planning Officials Group (POG), Development Assessment Forum and a wide range of other policy areas impacting on local government.

Rolf 's planning experience includes working for the NSW Department of Planning, as well as local governments in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. He has also worked as a planning consultant and lectured in planning at Newcastle University for several years in a part time capacity. Rolf holds a Master Degree in Public Policy, Graduate Diploma in Management, Post Grad Diploma in Policy and Law and a Honours degree from UNE's Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning. He completed his Certificate IV Assessment and Workplace Training in 2003.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE COURSE?

The course will benefit those who work and/or assist in the development assessment area but have not completed a Town Planning course, those who already have training in an allied discipline, or those who may be interested in pursuing town planning as a profession.

This training course is aimed at planning staff who have a leaning to town planning as a profession or are working in that sphere of council or private business.

The training course *will not* make town planners out of the participants but it will provide them with a sound platform on which to base future decisions in respect to the profession and it will enable them to play an assisting role for a range of minor development applications. As their experience in this area **improves** then it would not be unreasonable to expect participants to assess some of these types of development.

Local Government Training Institute

4 Sandringham Ave Thornton NSW 2322

PO Box 137, Thornton NSW 2322

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Key topics include:

- An overview of the planning system – from the EP&A Act to a DCP
- understanding zoning provisions, interpretation of uses & permissibility
- development assessment overview
- Assessing a development application: major & minor development, site inspection, compliance with requirements, referrals and the role of government agencies
- Site analysis, development considerations and requirements
- Decision making process – public consultation, determination and politics, post determination and the role of the Land & Environment Court
- Site inspection of a proposed development site & a completed development site

Background

The National Inquiry into Planning Education and Employment – *'Planners for Tomorrow'* chaired by Sue Holliday - recognized the labour market deficiencies, lack of training for planners and the stress associated with the workplace.

The Inquiry was particularly interested in addressing these issues if the profession and planning in general is to remain viable. A number of recommendations were made to improve the supply of planners, to improve the working environment and the planning system and to increase professionalism.

This training seeks to pick up on the initiatives to improve the supply of planners by *'recognising the role of planning assistants'*.

Overview

The training course provides participants with an understanding of the development assessment process and the role local government plays in this process. It is intended to prepare the participant with enough background so that they will be confident when explaining the main steps in the process to others.

As the development application process relies on strategic planning for its policy framework the participants will be made aware of the interrelationship between these two different but important planning roles.

The training course will focus on:

- communicating an understanding of the development process
- how to apply for consent to undertake development
- what level of information is needed to support applications

The program will focus on those types of development that are:

- of a routine scale
- the likelihood of environmental impact is remote
- likely to be approved

Using a Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan as a guide to assess a development application, the course will familiarise participants with their construction and applicability to the process.

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Accredited Outcomes

Participants have the option of applying for statement of attainment for the following nationally accredited units:

- LGAPLEM402B: Assess minor applications for use or development and
- LGAPLEM403A: Attend request for building and planning information and advice
In partial completion of a Certificate IV in Local Government (Planning)

To obtain this accreditation, participants need to complete the assessment tasks. The Local Government Training Institute estimates this to take two days.

This includes time for reading course materials, researching organisational policies and procedures within their own workplace and completing assessment tasks.

What is required to be done by participants to get the accreditation?

- Read all instructions and tasks that are sent to you
- Read Units 1-3 prior to course (these are sent to participants on a CD)
- Complete assessment Task 1 prior to course (a simple written task covering “Understanding Legislation and Policies”)
- Attend three days of face-to-face teaching;
- Commence Assessment Task 2 Part A during course
- Complete Assessment Task 2 post course of assessing a minor DA (supervisor to sign);
- Submit Assessment Task 1 and Assessment Task 2 (signed by supervisor) within one month of completion of course and to be assessed for accreditation

What if participants don't want the accreditation?

They can simply attend the course and benefit from the information given.

Comments From Participants About This Course

“I now have a better working knowledge of planning, planning terminology”

“I have more understanding of planning, how to review a DA in the sense of approving the DA”

“I picked up concepts, scope, tips, processes, big picture, terminology, where to find information, who to ask”

“I have a better understanding of the whole process of development applications and all the issues the planner needs to be aware of”

“I got lots of information and gained some clarification on things that I have been dealing with. It will help me at work greatly as I have a better understanding of the information that I am passing on”

“I am more confident with the assessing of DA's and the application of the appropriate legislation”

“I enjoyed this course, very informative and everyone could participate. I liked the fact that lots of other councils participated which gave you an insight on how different councils are and ideas that may help us have a better way of going things”

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