Responses to questions on notice from the Department of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure - SA Government.

Greetings

Further to my evidence given on 29 August 2014 I provide the following additional material , as requested by members of the Committee:

Page numbers refer to the attached Hansard transcript.

Page 27 – Telecommunications Industry. "Any further information on planning approvals for telecommunications infrastructure".

Carriers have the power to install low-impact facilities without seeking state, territory or local government planning approval.

Low impact facilities are specified in the *Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 1997*, and include small radio communications antennae and dishes that are erected on existing towers and buildings. Underground and overhead optical fibre installations are identified as being low-impact facilities. Whilst freestanding mobile phone towers are not classified as low-impact facilities, certain equipment is defined as low impact when it is mounted on existing structures such as buildings, poles or towers.

All low-impact facilities must be installed in accordance with the *Telecommunications Act 1997* and the Telecommunications Code of Practice 1997.

If not a low impact facility, then approval is required under state planning legislation, and the processing and categorisation of such towers are governed by the zone requirements – so Category 2 or 3 usually. Recent Environment, Resources and Development Court determinations on third-party appeals have been on balance in favour of such proposals on the basis that they are critical and expected pieces of communications infrastructure that serve the wider community, and there being no other technical solution than the selected location.

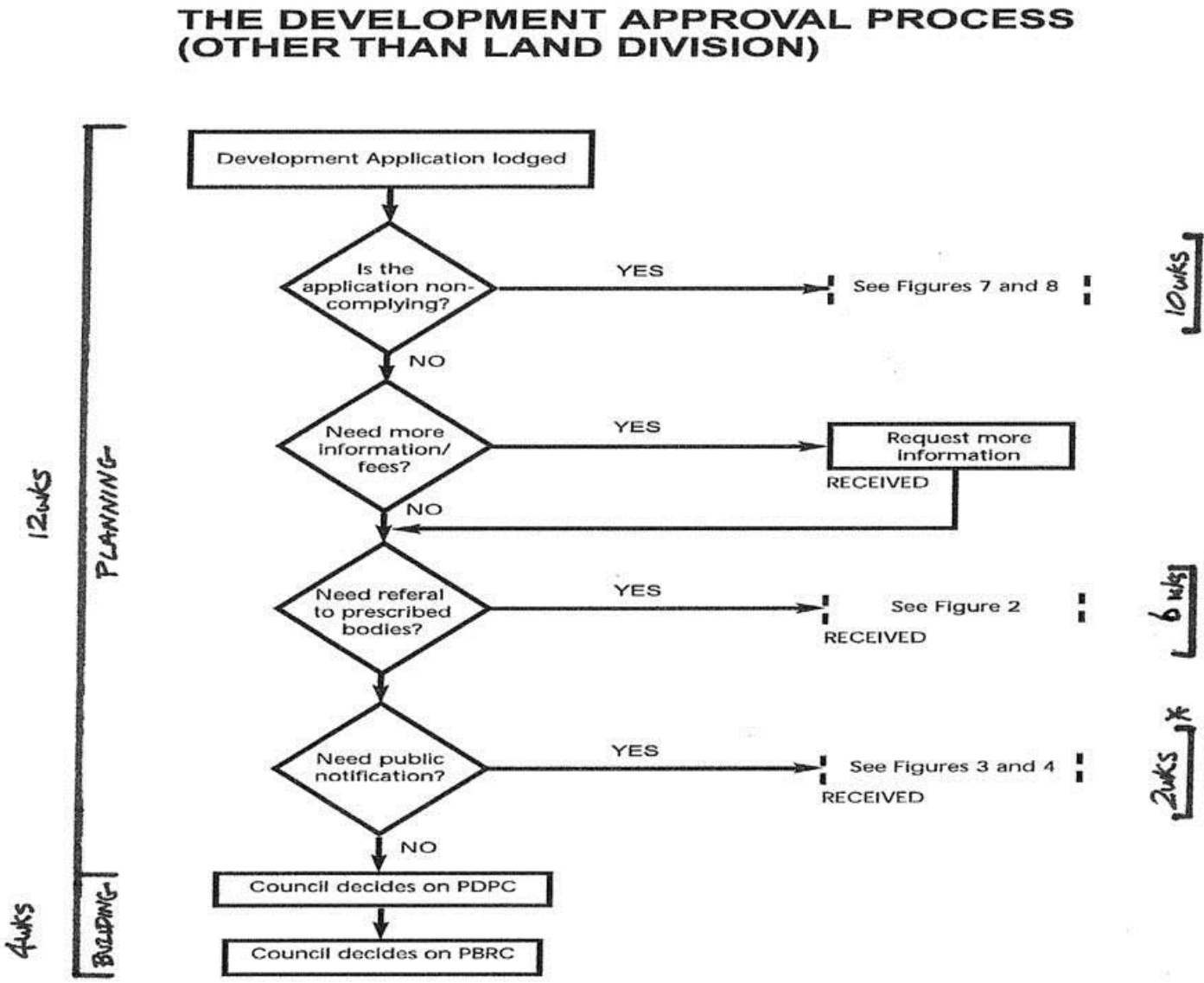
Telecommunications applications are now generally straightforward, with better policies, up-to-date court judgements (which have set the assessment weighting for service and siting requirements) and a more informed community as to the social and economic benefits of improved mobile and data services for home and business use, where the potential health impacts have been further investigated and standards updated.

The most complex development applications tend to be located in highly visible / residential locations, where other factors are also at play – such as perceived loss of property values, interruption to views etc – which in the latter case, when considering issues of character and amenity, are valid assessment criteria in Development Plans. However, we also frequently see, albeit in a concurrence role at the Development Assessment Commission, 30m+ high monopoles as non-complying developments in other locations where no representations have been received.

The standard of telecommunications development applications has improved, and most likely also the preparatory and due diligence work of the respective carriers – such as with co-location and the need to work with local communities and landowners to achieve acceptable outcomes – has also smoothed the assessment process.

Page 29 – Statutory Time Frames. “Does the three month statutory timeframe work?”

Timeline & flowchart for the approvals process:



Assuming a merit process – then generally there would be a 3-month statutory timeframe for planning consent purposes.

This does not include time-off for further information requests, or if the process is non-complying (which is more problematic as appeal rights are removed, statutory processes are lengthened and concurrence from the Development Assessment Commission is required).

If agency referrals are required under Schedule 8 of the Development Regulations, then additional time is provided.

Any requirements for public notification (10 business days) are undertaken concurrently with the nominal 3-month assessment timeframe.

Page 29 – Public Infrastructure Procurement Reform Options. “Which reform options are your preferred ones?”

The procurement reform options that South Australia endorses are well covered in the report:

- More time and resources in the initial concept design specifications
- Take account of enhanced use of existing infrastructure
- Value management of pricing solutions and cheaper build options
- Early contractor involvement, when appropriate
- Building information modelling of concept designs, when appropriate
- Packaging of projects into smaller components, when appropriate
- More government investment in understanding site risks up front, when appropriate.

However, the procurement recommendations do not reflect or recognise the current level of sophistication in South Australia's current procurement practice. The recommendations generally are inapplicable to South Australia, being already embedded into current practice.

Page 30 – Access Regimes. "More information about current access regimes in SA."

The attached document #8942680 comprises slides from a recent workshop on South Australia's access regimes, and provides a good oversight of our rail, electricity and gas regimes for third party access to major infrastructure.

Regards,
Mark Elford
==========

Executive Director, Economic Development
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE
PO Box 1533 Adelaide SA 5001

p: (08) 8204 8185 (internal: 48185)
f: (08) 8204 8835
m: 0418 813 040
e: mark.elford@sa.gov.au
w: www.dtei.sa.gov.au