

State Design Review Panel

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the State Design Review Panel of the Western Australian Planning Commission.

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) is established under the *Planning and Development Act 2005* to provide independent advice to the Government on integrated land use planning and development, and to facilitate the preparation, implementation and delivery of state planning policies, strategies and plans through its functions and statutory decisions. Schedule 2 of the Act provides for the WAPC to establish committees to support it in delivering its functions.

Adoption Date: 1 October 2025

Effective Date: 18 November 2025

1. PURPOSE

The State Design Review Panel (SDRP) was established by the WAPC to provide objective, professional advice regarding the design quality of State significant development proposals and projects and those proposals specifically identified by a State planning instrument or a local planning scheme as requiring referral to the SDRP. This advice enables informed decision making and supports the delivery of good design outcomes that provide social, environmental and economic benefits to all Western Australians.

2. OBJECTIVES, SCOPE & FUNCTIONS

The key objective of the SDRP is to support implementation of State Planning Policy 7.0: Design of the Built Environment (SPP 7.0) and enhance the quality of the built environment through:

- provision of advice to proponents (including government agencies) on built environment design quality matters and opportunities to align significant development proposals with SPP 7.0, to inform design development pre-lodgement; and
- provision of advice to the WAPC and other decision makers on the design quality of lodged significant development proposals and projects, in accordance with SPP 7.0, to support design assessment and statutory decision making.

SDRP advice is typically sought by government agencies or statutory decision-makers on State significant development applications and public works proposals. SDRP advice may also be sought in relation to other development proposals where these are considered to have State significance, and other matters as required by the WAPC.

Provision of design review advice (other than at the request of the WAPC) is subject to the approval of the WAPC Chairperson on the advice of the Government Architect/Chair of the SDRP, based on the criteria outlined below.

3. DURATION

The SDRP is a standing committee of the WAPC and is established indefinitely.

4. AUTHORITY, ACCOUNTABILITY & DECISION-MAKING

The SDRP has been established as an advisory committee under Schedule 2 of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

The Committee is established as an expert and multidisciplinary advisory pool of members from which project design review panels (sub-committees) are formed. The Committee and its project panels are authorised to provide objective design advice to proponents and decision makers based on SPP 7.0 and to make recommendations on design through the Chair to the WAPC but does not have delegation to make decisions or to represent the WAPC. Planning decisions will be made by the responsible authority under the *Planning and Development Act 2005* and/or other legislation.

The Committee must operate in accordance with the *Western Australian Planning Commission Regulations 2024* and the Commission's Governance Manual which contains its Policies, Procedures and Code of Conduct (including its Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality requirements).

5. MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

The SDRP comprises of:

- The Government Architect;
- The Principal Associate (Design Review) to the Government Architect;
- A pool of highly experienced, multi-disciplinary built environment professionals from industry, government and academia with demonstrated expertise in effective design review from which individual design review project panels will be constituted. Member expertise may relate to one or more of the following disciplines:
 - Architecture
 - Landscape Architecture
 - Urban design
 - Aboriginal engagement and designing with country
 - Planning
 - Heritage
 - Sustainability (including environmental design, systems ecology, urban water expertise)
 - Transport planning
 - Civil, structural and services engineering
 - Public art

The Government Architect is the Chair of the SDRP.

The Principal Associate (Design Review) to the Government Architect is the Deputy Chair of the SDRP.

Up to four other members of the pool with architectural expertise and extensive experience in design review may be appointed as Alternate Deputy Chair/s of the SDRP to act in the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair. The appointment of Alternate Deputy Chair/s is undertaken concurrently with appointment to the SDRP pool.

Appointment to the SDRP pool is through a public advertising process and will be for a term of up to four years, with half the pool renewing every two years. The WAPC may extend the term of any pool member for a maximum of an additional 12 months without undertaking a public advertising process. Selection criteria is outlined in Attachment 1.

A member may resign from the SDRP pool by submitting a letter of resignation to the WAPC Chair. Should a member resign, or a vacancy arises for other reasons, the WAPC may appoint a person using nominees from the most recent publicly advertised process to serve the remainder of the term.

Members shall have a clear understanding of their authority, responsibility and accountability and have the appropriate skills necessary to fulfil their role on the SDRP.

6. MEETING, OPERATION & SUPPORT

Referrals

Referral to SDRP for design review can be initiated by the Premier (on advice from the Minister for Planning), WAPC, commissioning government agency or statutory approval authority.

Other than referrals required by a statutory planning instrument, all referrals require the approval of the WAPC Chairperson who may seek the advice of the Government Architect (SDRP Chair) prior to approving the request.

In determining whether or not a referral will be accepted, consideration will be given to the following:

- The project is considered by either the Premier (on the advice of the Minister for Planning) or the WAPC to raise issues of State importance, or has been otherwise identified as being of importance to the State by a Cabinet or other Government decision.
- The application is made under Part 11B of the *Planning and Development Act 2005* and is proposed to be determined inconsistently with applicable planning instrument under section 171R(1)(a) or (b).
- The social, economic and environmental importance of the application to the State
- The financial value of the project, generally expected to be above \$100 million
- Whether the project is subject to evaluation for Design Excellence and this requirement is identified in a statutory document or by another decision of the Government
- Whether the project is required to be reviewed by the SDRP by a State planning instrument or a local planning scheme.
- Whether the same or very similar proposal has undergone another design review process (either local government or other agency) and the advice or report is or can be made available to the decision-maker.
- The capacity of the SDRP to review the application within a reasonable timeframe
- Whether there are reasonable prospects for an improved design outcome.

Where a proposal has already undergone a design review process the SDRP is unlikely to provide further advice as the opinion of a properly constituted local design review panel constitutes expert opinion in its own right.

Project design review panel constitution

Individual project design review panels of three (3) to seven (7) pool members will be assembled and approved by the SDRP Chair with member selection based on the complexity of the project under review and its key design issues, taking into account member expertise, availability, declared conflicts of interest and any other relevant consideration.

Design review sessions will be chaired by the Chair of the SDRP. Where the Chair is unavailable for any reason, the Deputy Chair will undertake all necessary functions of the Chair. Should neither the Chair nor Deputy Chair be available, the Chair may, with the approval of the Chairperson of the WAPC, appoint an Alternate Deputy SDRP Chair to undertake the necessary duties for a project panel. The duties and responsibilities of an Alternate Deputy Chair cease at the conclusion of the project panel for which they were appointed.

Design Review sessions and reporting

SDRP design review sessions will be:

- Held as required.
- Held at a venue nominated by the SDRP Chair - generally within the offices of the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage. In person attendance is preferred however the option to attend virtually *may* be available at the discretion of the project design review panel Chair.
- Conducted generally in accordance with the WAPC's State Design Review Panel manual
- Supported by staff members of the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage who will:
 - Provide at least 5 business days' notice of meetings.
 - Circulate agendas and papers at least 5 business days prior to a meeting.
 - Circulate minutes endorsed by the Chair of the project design review panel within 10 days of a meeting and refer a copy to the WAPC.
 - Undertake record keeping in accordance with the requirements of the WAPC and the Department's policies and procedures.

A design review report is issued to the referral body and proponent within 10 days after review (or as required to facilitate statutory processing times), unless otherwise agreed by the SDRP Chair or, if this is not appropriate or possible, the Deputy Chair. A design review report may be denoted as either:

- 'interim' – indicating that subsequent design review sessions to address matters raised during the review session are anticipated to be scheduled, or
- 'final' – indicating there are no further review sessions and this is the SDRP's advice to the statutory decision-maker.

Design review reports capture the panel feedback provided and can include dissenting views. These reports represent confidential advice to the proponent and referral body. An interim report is not intended for wider publication and must be read within the context in which the review and feedback were undertaken and the stage of the project design process. The final design review report may be published by the decision maker as part of a public consultation and/or other development assessment process. Design review reports are approved for issue by the Chair of the project design review panel with all final design review reports requiring the approval of the SDRP Chair. Should the SDRP Chair have a conflict of interest or is otherwise unable to approve the report, the Deputy Chair will undertake this and any other necessary functions to finalise and release the report.

When appointed to a project design review panel, every effort should be made by members to attend all meetings. Where a member is unable to attend or participate in a meeting, a substitute alternative SDRP member will be selected by the SDRP Chair.

Member Remuneration

SDRP members will receive sitting fees based on a rate determined by the Minister for Planning on advice from the Public Sector Commission. Fees will be paid for either a half or full day. If a member is engaged to chair a design review session, the member will be paid at the rate set for the SDRP Chair.

Members who hold positions paid from public monies (including full-time State and Local Government employees) will not be remunerated, in accordance with Premier's Circular 2025/15 (or any revision). Part-time public sector employees may be eligible for remuneration if the work is undertaken in their own time and any potential conflicts of interest are appropriately managed, subject to approval by the relevant Minister.

Panel members should advise the WAPC (via Commission Support) immediately if their employment circumstances change, including to/from a public sector role.

Travel allowances for Members will be considered in line with the Guidelines for Official Travel by Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Government Officers and applicable policy. Members should not make any travel arrangements without first consulting with the Commission Support.

7. ENDORSEMENT & REVIEW

These Terms of Reference were established by resolution of the WAPC on 3 April 2019 and updated as outlined below. They will be subject to review every 5 years or earlier if so resolved by the WAPC.

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<i>June 2022</i>			<i>2.0</i>	<i>June 2022</i>
<i>May 2024</i>	<i>P Rodic</i>	<i>Align to standard, introduce deputies</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>01/05/2024</i>
<i>August 2024</i>	<i>A D'Costa</i>	<i>Introduce Principal Associate as ex-officio Deputy Chairs</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>14/08/2024</i>
<i>October 2025</i>	<i>M Payne</i>	<i>Amendments to operational and process requirements, Inclusion of Attachment 1.</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>01/10/2025</i>

ATTACHMENT 1

SDRP MEMBER SELECTION CRITERIA
Demonstrated qualifications, expertise and experience in urban design, architecture, landscape architecture or related built environment disciplines relevant to the design of significant and complex built environment projects, and as per the SDRP member category nominated. This includes professional association memberships where appropriate.
Extensive demonstrated experience in design review (as outlined in the SDRP Design Review Manuals, or a similar process) of significant and complex development proposals.
Demonstrated ability to analyse, evaluate and offer objective and constructive qualitative feedback pertaining to built environment design quality.
Demonstrated application of the ten principles of good design of State Planning Policy 7.0 - Design of the Built Environment. Include examples of how these principles have informed your work.
Demonstrated excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to communicate clearly with design, development and planning professionals regarding complex design matters.
An understanding of the Western Australian planning system.
Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of governance and probity requirements in a State government setting including conflicts of interest and confidentiality, along with awareness of responsibilities under relevant public sector governance frameworks.
Diversity in representation (refer State Government Boards and Committees: Classification and Appointment Guidelines or successor documents).