

# LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

## DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT BRANCH

# NEWSLETTER



## BRANCH UPDATE

October 2008

Welcome to the first edition of our Branch newsletter! Following the Queensland local government reform in March 2008, Logan became the sixth largest Council in Australia, with a population of 275,000 and an area of 930sqkm. The new Logan is a high growth area, with the population expected to increase by 200,000 people over the next 20 years.

Logan City Council faces the important challenge of equipping itself to effectively manage this growth. This is not an easy task, given the continuing skills shortages across the required professional and technical areas. The Development Assessment Branch apologises for the delays that have been experienced across all application types since the amalgamation. Council inherited hundreds of active development applications from the transferring areas of the former Beaudesert and Gold Coast Councils without adequate resourcing to address this workload. Council also faced challenges accessing application data and history. Work on data integration is progressing and will be completed towards the end of the year.

Our customers can be assured of our continuing efforts to recruit staff to manage your applications, and to implement best practice systems and processes to improve our turnaround times. We appreciate your support as we progress these initiatives, and ask you to work with us as we implement service delivery improvements. One such improvement regarding the lodgement of electronic copies of development applications and supporting documents is detailed later in this newsletter.

## IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Council's Development Assessment Branch is partnering with the Customer Service Unit to further provide efficient and on-the-spot service to our community.

From Tuesday 14 October 2008, all calls to the DA Branch are being processed by Customer Service officers in the first instance. This migration of calls to the Customer Service Call Centre will allow for a more timely and efficient response by technical officers to customer queries. Customers will be provided with a reference number relating to their request. The request will be forwarded to the appropriate area within the DA Branch where a specialist officer will research the information to be provided and respond to the customer. Customers with follow up enquiries regarding the request should quote the reference number provided by the Customer Service Call Centre. As an additional improvement



to Council's customer service, from 15 December, Assistant Planners will be located at the Development Enquiries counter in Council's foyer. This service will cover the lodgement of development applications and enquiries regarding all the Branch services including building, plumbing, planning and subdivisions.

The decision to provide a front-line service has been taken to ensure Council continues to provide quality service,

increases the level of service, and allows customers to meet face-to-face with Council officers to discuss details of their applications.

The work being undertaken by the project team from Development Assessment and Customer Service will broaden the 'public face' of the DA Branch and allow Council to continue to meet the needs of the community as growth patterns increase across the City.

## AS-CONSTRUCTED PLANS

The provision of As-Constructed Plans for development works which are to become assets of Council, including those for Logan Water and for other services such as electrical supply, are an important part of the development approval process and the future management of these community assets.

Council is aware of concerns that delays in the As-Constructed Plan review process can delay the occupancy or sale of development. Council is attempting to address the backlog of As-Constructed Plans through the recruitment of additional technical/engineering staff and, in the interim, by extending current staff work hours.

Developers and their consultants can play their part in improving turnaround times for As-Constructed Plan approval by ensuring that plans are to the required standard prior to lodgement. In-house checking by those preparing the As-Constructed Plan, as part of their quality assurance process, will facilitate faster turnaround times by Council.

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### We've made it easier for you to contact us

Council provides online access to the Logan City Planning Scheme and components of development applications.

#### Planning Scheme On-line

The on-line access provides an easier way to search the planning scheme. Additional features provide specific information such as which development codes and overlay maps apply to a proposed development, and what the use type and level of assessment is for a proposed development on a property.

#### Development Application Tracking

Development Application Tracking (DAT) – is also available online. This service provides access to information on the status of development applications, from lodgement of the application with Council through to decision. Enquiries about an individual property can also be conducted.

This online service provides all Council's customers with easier access to information about their development applications.

A fact sheet is available on Council's website at [www.logan.qld.gov.au](http://www.logan.qld.gov.au).

For more information about Planning and Development Online contact the Development Assessment Branch on 3412 5269.

## LODGING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS WITH DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

In a move to provide a more efficient and timely service to our customers, Logan City Council is reviewing its development application lodgement process. The current process under the Integrated Planning Act requires applicants to lodge the application form, owner's consent and the appropriate fee. This lodgement deems an application to be 'properly made' under IPA.

Applicants are now able to submit their land development applications (Material Change of Use and Reconfiguring of Lots) with only one printed copy,

provided a full electronic copy of all documents is also submitted.

Under this process, Council would like applicants to submit a hard copy application as outlined above and include a CD with documents of the 'common material'. This 'common material' consists of the mandatory requirements under IPA and supporting documentation such as plans and reports.

It is important that all documents are saved to the CD as separate PDF documents rather than one large file. This

will allow Council to register the application, forward appropriate documents to relevant internal referral agencies and have material available through PD Online as required.

The implementation of this new lodgement system enables sets of electronic documents to be entered into Council's document management system in an efficient and timely manner thus ensuring improved service to our customers.

For details contact the Development Assessment Branch on (07) 3412 5269.

## MEET THE NEW PROGRAM LEADERS

The Development Assessment Branch has five Program Leaders across the areas of Planning, Engineering, Building and Plumbing, and Business and Performance. Here are the two newest team members.



**Gary Bowtell** (above) joined Logan City Council on 18 August as Program Leader of the Development Engineering section. Gary has worked in local government in Queensland since 1985. A number of engineering and planning roles at Burdekin Shire Council were followed by a role as Manager of Works and Services at Kilcoy Shire Council. During his time at

Kilcoy, Gary was Acting CEO for a brief period. Gary transferred to Somerset Regional Council in a development engineering position as part of the amalgamation process.

Gary is married with three adult children and commutes each day from a small acreage holding at Delaneys Creek 15 mins north west of Caboolture where the family have lived for three years.

**Bruce Macnee** (right) came to Logan City Council as Program Leader Planning South West at the end of July this year, overseeing development in the former Gold Coast and Beaudesert areas. Bruce worked at Hervey Bay City Council for seven years where his most recent position was Executive Manager Planning Services. During this time, Hervey Bay experienced significant growth as a popular sea-change destination.



Bruce moved with his family from New Zealand in 2001, having worked for Auckland City Council as a planning officer for five years following a successful career as a building contractor.

The Macnee family have moved to Brisbane with one son attending Griffith University and the other at secondary school at Toowong.

