

NSW SDRP: Guidelines for Project teams

Good design is NSW Government policy.

The NSW State Design Review Panel (SDRP) is one of a range of processes established by GANSW to support good design outcomes.

This document sets out requirements for project teams presenting to the SDRP. It should be read in conjunction with the NSW State Design Review Panel Introduction and Terms of Reference documents.

1. The NSW SDRP Program

The NSW SDRP is an independent design quality evaluation process, in which a panel of design and built environment experts provide constructive feedback on the design of significant projects. Projects are referred to the panel by Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) assessment teams, or project teams may apply directly to GANSW to participate.

Early engagement with the SDRP is strongly recommended and has been proven to deliver better design outcomes and support more timely assessments.

2. Role of the Design Advisor

Once your project is referred to the panel for review, a GANSW Design Advisor will be assigned to you. Your Design Advisor will provide liaison support for your project throughout the design review process and will be responsible for establishing a program for scheduled reviews with the panel.

3. Participants in Design Review

The project team should nominate up to six people to attend the review sessions, including:

- Design Lead – Project Architect or Lead Designer (to present the project at each session)
- Client or client's representative
- Other team members who can make a useful contribution – may include landscape architect, planning consultant, heritage architect, ESD consultant, engineers, etc.

Review sessions are attended by up to four panel members and the Chair. The Chair is the Government Architect or their representative. The composition of the panel is at the discretion of GANSW with selection of members determined in response to the project type and scale. The panel will also include an independent member nominated by the relevant local government and attending as their representative.

GANSW is committed to providing consistency and progressive certainty for proponents. To ensure this, the GANSW Design Advisor is assigned to each project for the life of the design review process, and each session for any given project will be run by the same Chair and maintain the same panelists wherever possible.

All panel members are bound by the Terms of Reference including confidentiality and dealing with conflicts of interest. The GANSW conflicts of interest policy follows DPIE guidelines and is assessed for all projects prior to reviews taking place.

Your Design Advisor along with the DPIE Assessments Officer will attend all design review sessions.

Other attendees at review sessions are considered to be observers. They may include other agency representatives, eg Transport, Heritage (if relevant) and local government. All observers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the review session and must be approved by the Design Advisor.

4. Site Visits

As projects are located all over the state, site visits are not typically organised as part of the SDRP program. A detailed briefing on the site will be provided to the panel by the Design Advisor at the first session for any new project, and panel members are encouraged to visit sites in their own time if feasible. For larger and more complex projects, GANSW in consultation with the proponent and Assessment Officers may facilitate a site visit for Panel members prior to the first review session.

5. Structure of the review session

The design review session is an opportunity for your design team to present your proposal to the Panel. Each design review session will last approximately 1.5 hours. For complex and larger projects, such as precincts and infrastructure, this may be extended as agreed with your Design Advisor.

Design review sessions will take place via video conferencing when it is not appropriate or possible to meet in person. This will be facilitated by GANSW.

As a guide each typical session will comprise:

Pre-briefing – 10 minutes (in camera)

Before the project team arrives, the Design Advisor, DPIE Assessment Officer and LGA planning representative will brief the panel on the strategic and statutory

planning context of the project, the site (in lieu of a site visit), and any other key considerations.

Welcome

When the project team arrives, the Chair will introduce proceedings and acknowledge Country.

Project Introduction – 5 minutes

The proponent or their representative will introduce the project to provide an overview of the brief, the vision, aims and objectives. The introduction should also include an outline of the procurement strategy for selecting the design team and summarise any previous advice from internal or other design review panels.

Presentation – 20 minutes

The Design Lead presents the scheme including how they have responded to the key objectives of the project as well as the site and its context, and any feedback provided at previous review sessions. This presentation should also include input from other key consultants where appropriate.

Panel Questions – 15 minutes

The panel members ask questions for clarification by the project team.

Panel Review and summary – 25 minutes

Following questions, the panel will review the project, with comments and discussion moderated through the Chair. All projects will be reviewed in a holistic manner against the Objectives for Good Design as defined by Better Placed, and any other design guidelines relevant to the project or local government area.

After inviting clarifications from the project team, the Chair will conclude the review by summarising key points of advice and provide guidance on any differences of opinion voiced to ensure the project team is left with a clear understanding of the advice.

The project team then leave the session.

De-briefing – 10 minutes (in camera)

The Chair and Panel will confer with the Design Advisor and Assessment and local government observers if required, to ensure all comments and feedback are captured. The advice arising from the review will then be summarised in an advice letter from GANSW which will be distributed to the proponent, the project team, DPIE Assessment Officers, local council observers and Panel members within seven working days of the design review session.

New matters should not arise during this closed session, however should this occur they will be noted as such in the advice letter.

6. Subsequent Review sessions

Subsequent review sessions provide the opportunity for continued feedback to improve the design quality of the project. A minimum of three review sessions is typically recommended. Large and complex projects may require more. The Design Advisor will work with you to determine how many sessions are likely to be required.

Project teams should consider the first review session as an opportunity to establish the key opportunities, objectives, constraints and major issues. Follow up review sessions will focus on design development and changes undertaken to respond to earlier advice. It will be clear from the previous review which elements of the proposal are supported and the concerns that need to be addressed.

7. Documents to be prepared for Design Review Session

Project Information Form

Upon referral, the project information form will be filled in by the proponent and design team. Details to be included in the form include project and planning information, the functional brief and project background along with details of the project team including participants in design review sessions. A short design statement is also required.

Design package

A design package should be issued to the Design Advisor five working days prior to the review session. This information is included in agenda papers to provide the panel with the overall context and objectives of the project and an indicative summary of what will be presented to the Panel.

The Design Advisor will inform you of the requirements for the design materials package.

This should be submitted as a PDF

Panel Presentation – Initial review

This presentation should be assembled to clearly articulate the story of the project from analysis to concept development.

All drawings should be clearly legible when viewed on an LCD screen or projection.

The presentation should be saved as a single PDF file in a manageable size up to 300dpi standard resolution. There is no minimum or maximum number of pages/slides but please bear in mind the time constraint for presentations. If a physical model is available, it is strongly recommended to make this available as part of the presentation. Simple massing models through to detailed design models are very useful in describing schemes, supporting informed discussion and review. Where review sessions take place online, photographs of models are recommended.

Limited video content can be accommodated, though this should not be relied upon for the presentation. Files should be supplied in a standard video format.

Panel Presentation – Subsequent reviews

Subsequent presentations to the Panel should be assembled to demonstrate design development based on previous advice.

Key changes should be clearly identified and summarised including comparison views and plans (where relevant). As per the initial presentation, if a physical model is available, this should be included in the presentation.

The presentation should follow the format outlined above in addition to any drawings or further analysis requested by the panel. Your Design Advisor will be available to provide advice on what should be included in your presentation.

Further information

For more information see the GANSW website ga.nsw.gov.au

Government Architect NSW

GANSW provides design leadership in architecture, urban design and landscape architecture. In this role, GANSW works across government, the private sector and the community to establish policy and practice guides for achieving good design. GANSW provides strategic advice across design, planning and development to support good policy, programs, projects and places.

Contact GANSW

GANSW makes every effort to keep its advice up to date. From time to time we will release new versions of these advisory notes. For further advice, or if you think there is information missing, please contact GANSW.

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