

Association of Australian Certifiers

Submission on Discussion Paper – Transitioning from Paper to Digital Survey Plans

Introduction

The Association of Australian Certifiers (AAC) is generally supportive of the initiative to transition from paper to digital survey plans and believes the initiative will provide significant efficiency gains for the development industry as a whole and in particular the practitioners who prepare, certify and register survey plans, with flow on benefits to consumers.

The AAC’s members are only impacted by a small portion of the overall survey plan preparation and registration process and as such our comments are relatively brief and confined to those areas.

Discussion Paper Comments

Specific Areas of the Discussion Paper	AAC Comments
<i>Future-State Scenario (Sheet 2): Breakdown of Consent Gathering Processes</i>	The diagram on Page 10 shows an area for a “Certifying Authority without NSW Planning Portal Endorsement Capability”. Given that Cl. 157(1)(c) of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000</i> requires the application for all subdivision certificates to be lodged on the NSW Planning Portal, it is difficult to imagine a situation where a certifying authority could approve a subdivision certificate without Planning Portal capability, so it is questionable whether this section is required? The status of strata certificate applications is probably still unclear in terms of Portal applications, but it is likely only a matter of time before strata certificate applications are mandatory through the Portal.
<i>Section 4.4.4 – Signature Sheets and Electronic Signing Options</i>	This section details various options that consenting parties will be able to utilise to sign signature sheets. One of these is using a wet-ink signature and scanning this for upload to the surveyor or alternate lodging party. If wet-ink signatures will still be accepted, this seems like a missed opportunity to make the entire process a digital one. It was understood that the impetus behind the entire digital survey plan process was to align with the NSW Government’s digital strategy and it would seem a backward step and departure from this direction to permit wet-ink signatures on documents. As mentioned in the Discussion Paper, wet-ink signatures will also give rise to issues regarding retention responsibilities and periods for original documents.

Responses to Discussion Paper Questions

The following responses are provided to the Discussion Paper Questions which are relevant to the Association's members.

Question	AAC Response
<p>6. <i>In your experience, what impact will the requirement for administration sheets and section 88B instrument templates to be generated from the NSW LRS Connect workspace have on current practices?</i></p>	<p>The AAC's members have already started using LRS Connect generated admin sheets and they are much easier to complete and process than a paper based or pdf version of the form, so very little impact is expected.</p>
<p>11. <i>Consenting parties include registered proprietors, mortgagees, owners corporations/community associations, certifying authorities (including councils and registered certifiers), other authorities (eg government agencies or utility services providers) and other parties with an interest on title (like lessees). How do you think each type of consenting party should access plan documents (offline or online or directly via the plan workspace) in order to provide their consent?</i></p>	<p>Our preference would be for our members to access documents online within the Planning Portal, as that is where they are processing determinations for certificate applications.</p>
<p>12. <i>Four options have been identified in Part 4.4.4 as ways that various consenting parties may be able to provide their consent. Which of these options do you consider to be best suited for each type of consenting party and why? Are there any other options which may be appropriate?</i></p>	<p>Our preference would be either that consents are digitally signed, or endorsement is provided either within LRS Connect or the NSW Planning Portal.</p>
<p>13. <i>Do you have concerns about verification of identity in the consent gathering process? How could lodging parties ensure that consenting parties have been appropriately verified in an online environment?</i></p>	<p>We have no concerns regarding identity verification. Any process would be an improvement on the current system where our members have no identity protection.</p>

If you require further information, please contact AAC CEO, Jill Brookfield on 0431 082 259 or jbrookfield@aacertifiers.com.au.