

## Changes to Council's Duty Planner and Building Surveying Services

Wagga Wagga City Council advises residents, development applicants and potential applicants that it is changing the availability of its Duty Planner and Building Surveying Service to allow staff to focus on prioritising and assessing applications that have already been lodged with Council.

From today, Monday 21 October 2024, Council Planners and Building Surveyors will only be available between **8.30am until 1pm** each weekday for phone enquiries or drop-ins at the Customer Service desk at the Civic Centre.

This change comes from a review that aims to improve timeframes and provide sustainable planning and development services in the most efficient manner.

Council's Project Director Regulatory Planning and Reform Rebecca Fox says the new hours were determined after analysis of the queries currently being received and the evaluation of the trial reduction in planning duty services earlier this year.

"Temporarily reducing the service to four days a week over a six-week period in June and July allowed our officers to focus on Development Applications that were already with Council for feedback or determination," Ms Fox said.

"Customers were supportive of this trial and our officers were able to reduce the backlog of Development Applications significantly."

Council assesses applications in line with the Minister for Planning's Environmental Planning and Assessment (Statement of Expectations) Order effective 1 July 2024.

"We're continually working on improving how we deliver our services to the community and developers.

"We like to work with the community to make sure the service is as efficient and seamless as possible and, ultimately, we are aiming to reduce timeframes for assessment and decisions made by Council."

The Duty Planner service enables residents, builders and developers to ask questions about development applications they've submitted or are considering submitting, from relatively simple matters such as fence heights to complex developments and planning requirements.

Council is committed to providing this service to the community, and to working with all applicants to improve the quality of information received in applications and reduce timeframes for assessments.

“We are still encouraging applicants and potential applicants to contact the service if they have a planning and development related query, but please do it before 1pm each weekday,” Ms Fox said.

“We are focussed on the large number of applications currently in the planning system and are seeking to collaborate with applicants to improve timeframes as the data indicates that we can assess good quality information more quickly.

“Taking queries only between 8.30am and 1pm each weekday will also allow duty officers to finalise and respond to more complex queries each afternoon.”

You can visit [www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/planning](http://www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/planning) to learn more about building and development in Wagga Wagga.

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### Media Opportunity

**What:** Hear about changes to Council’s Duty Planner and Building Surveying Service, which come into effect on Monday 21 October.

The change has been introduced following a review that aims to improve timeframes and provide sustainable planning and development services in the most efficient manner.

**Who:** Council’s Project Director Regulatory Planning and Reform Rebecca Fox.

**When:** Monday 21 October 2024 at **11.30am**.

**Where:** Wagga Wagga Civic Centre Forecourt.

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Contact 6926 9190 or [media@wagga.nsw.gov.au](mailto:media@wagga.nsw.gov.au)

### About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of \$240 million.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre, and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina, and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds, and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as ‘the City of Good Sports’.

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