

What is a Development Assessment Panel?

Council has to make decisions on most forms of development in its area as the designated relevant planning authority (as defined by the Development Act). Development Assessment Panels are established to ensure that quality development assessment decisions are made in an efficient and consistent manner.

Council has established a Development Assessment Panel and empowered the Panel to consider and make decisions on development applications on behalf of Council. The vast majority of development applications in our area are, nevertheless decided upon by Council staff under delegated authority.

Why did we establish a Development Assessment Panel?

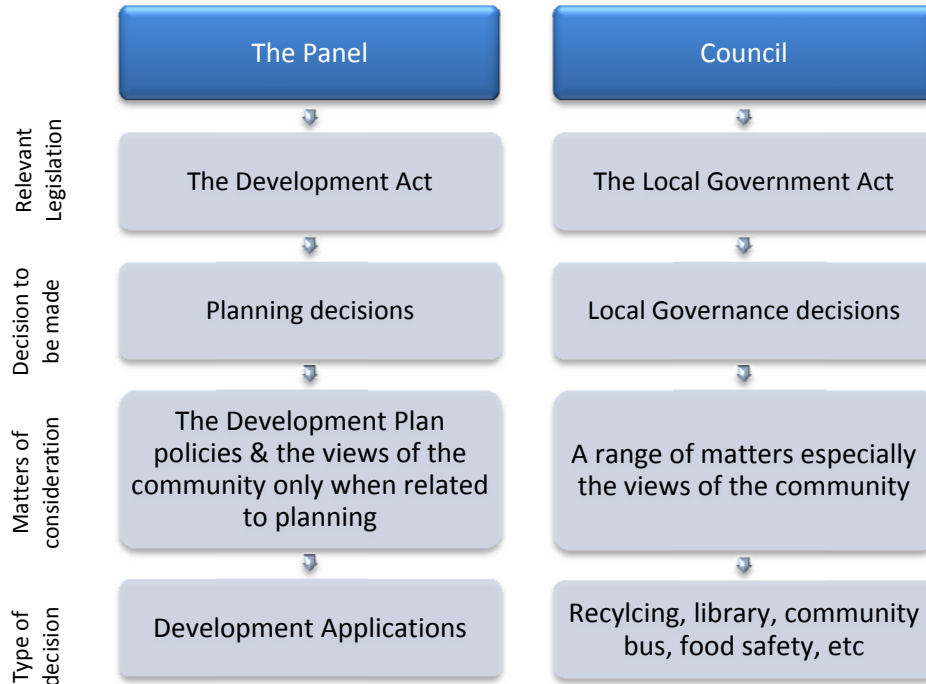
To comply with changes to the Development Act in 2001, all Councils must establish a Development Assessment Panel.

Development applications are lodged with the Council, not with the Development Assessment Panel.

Why is the Panel's role different from the role of Council?

Council has a governing role to perform on behalf of the local community under the Local Government Act. A Development Assessment Panel's role is not one of governance, but to act as a planning authority and to assess development applications. It operated under the Development Act.

Even though the Panel was established by Council, its powers are limited. Unlike the Council, which can decide on issues, such as constructing a new road, having regard to a range of matters, the panel can only consider the policies in the Development Plan when deciding upon development applications (see below).



How does the Panel make planning decisions?

When the Panel makes a decision on an application, it must assess it against the Development Plan.

In doing so, it weighs up the pros and cons by referring to the relevant provisions of the Development Plan and considering any relevant written and verbal representations. The decision will involve a judgment based on the extent to which the development satisfies the Development Plan “objectives” and “principles of development control”.

It is important that the members of the Panel receive the same information on each application and do not inform opinions or give undertakings in relating to their views on a development proposal that may come before the Panel. For this reason, it is inappropriate for members on the Panel to take into account information outside the formalized process.

Who is on the Panel?

Council’s Development Assessment Panel consists of three Elected Members and four individual members.

Can I make a representation to the Panel on a Development Application?

Interested parties are notified of development applications (as per the Development Act and Councils policies) and are provided an opportunity to lodge submissions.

In some instances, the Panel will then hear the verbal comments of interested parties before it makes a decision. In this case, all parties will be advised of the meeting time and the availability of meeting papers. However, the panel can only consider issues that relate to policies in the Development plan that guide development.

When and where does the panel meet?

The Panel decides on development applications on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. The meetings commence at 10.30 am and are held in the District Council of Robe Council Chambers, Smillie Street Robe.

Can I view the Panel agenda and minutes?

Yes, either at the Council office or on the Council website www.council.robe.sa.gov.au. However, information is generally not made available if it:

- Confers a commercial advantage
- Is commercially confidential
- Has been requested to be treated as confidential
- Affects personal security
- Includes legal opinions
- Would cause the panel to breach a law

Minutes of meetings are available within five business days of the meeting.

Can I view a Panel Meeting?

Generally, the Panel does make its decisions in public. In some circumstances however, as provided for by the Development Act, the meeting or part of it may be held in private. If the decision is made privately, minutes that accurately report the outcome will be prepared and made publicly available.

Want to know more?

The above information is advisory and a guide only to give you a general understanding of the key points associated with the approval system. It is recommended that you seek professional advice or contact the District Council of Robe regarding any specific inquiries or for further assistance concerning the use and development of land. Being properly prepared can save you time and money in the long run.