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## **MYTHICAL CONSULTATION ON THE PLANNING AND DESIGN CODE**

The draft Planning and Design Code was released prematurely on October 1 last year. It was, and still is, incomplete, inaccurate and confusing. It was, and still is, inaccessible in both hard copy and electronic versions. It is still difficult to determine what are policy changes and what are mistakes.

The so-called 'consultation' on the Code comprised lectures, tightly controlled public forums and confusing 'briefings', which were inscrutable to participants and defied explanation by presenters.

The community and stakeholders, including Councils, have spent many thousands of hours trying to decipher the Code and constructing feedback to Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI). Their efforts have been largely ignored. The 'What we Have Heard' Report on Phase 2 (rural Code) is incomplete and sanitised. The bureaucrats may have 'heard' but they haven't 'listened'.

We are told that a revised Phase 2 Code will be made publicly available before its implementation commences on July 1. This seems highly unlikely. It is clear that no lessons have been learnt in correcting errors and omissions as the Code process has moved through the three Phases. This bodes ill for the accuracy and utility of the next version of the massive Phase 3 (metropolitan Code) document and its implementation, supposedly in September.

The report on the Phase 2 consultations reduces 180 individual submissions to barely three and a half pages of summary, omitting the numerous complaints about the poor quality of the materials for consultation and the lack of time to consider and respond to them. While rural councils and their communities

had just two months to respond to the cumbersome, confusing and error-ridden draft Code, the Department took four months to produce this cursory, self-serving and highly selective response. Many of the issues raised by rural Councils and the Local Government Association have been disregarded or ignored. This is emblematic of the failed consultation and engagement process undertaken by DPTI and the State Planning Commission.

This whole unsatisfactory process smacks of a 'planning on the run' approach which has dogged the development of the code and its promulgation right from the beginning.

The 'Consultation' has been an exercise in arrogance, futility and expense.....officially \$135,000, but we suspect much more.

The cost, in the loss of community trust and confidence in the new planning system, is inestimable.

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