



Employment Zones Reform

Communications strategy

Background

The reform of employment zones aims to support long-term economic recovery through job creation and encourage increased productivity in NSW.

A key outcome of the reform will be ensuring employment zones provide clear strategic intent, include clarity around their application and increase flexibility around land uses.

What are the reforms doing?

The existing Business (B) and Industrial (IN) zones are being replaced with five new employment zones and three supporting zones under Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006 (SI LEP Order). Each Local Environmental Plan prepared under the SI LEP Order will need to be updated to rezone existing B and IN zones to an Employment or supporting zone by December 2022 when the B and IN zones are repealed from the SI LEP Order.

An important stage of this process is the public exhibition of the translation of the existing zones into the new zones. It is proposed that the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) will centralise this public exhibition however support will be required from councils to ensure notice of this exhibition reaches the stakeholders and community members that would like to know about the changes.

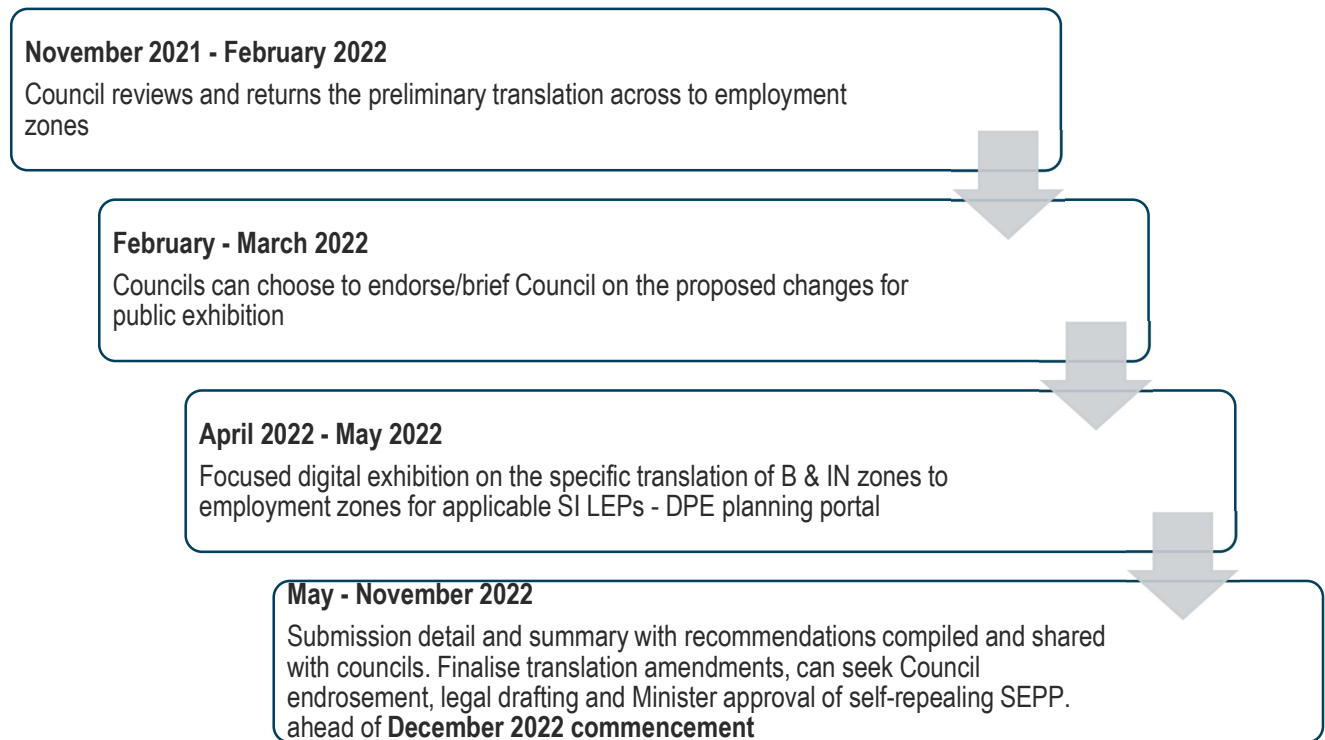
This communications strategy intends to provide an outline of the council versus the Department's responsibilities to ensure the public exhibition process is effective.

Councils' strategic planning staff have reviewed a preliminary translation and amended or confirmed the proposed employment zone to replace areas currently with a B or IN zoning along with the land use table for each zone.

This communications strategy and plan will assist to co-ordinate any Council communication you choose to undertake with stakeholders, local businesses, landowners, and the broader community in tandem with social media and stakeholder management being undertaken by the Department.

Timeline for the next implementation phase

The following timeline shows how the exhibition phase fits with the overall program.



A targeted exhibition submissions approach

The employment and supporting zones and associated land uses were publicly exhibited in June 2021. The policy has been finalised and the new zones are now in place within the SI LEP Order.

The April public exhibition is to seek feedback on how the existing B and IN zones will be translated into the new employment zones within individual Local Environmental Plans. Where submissions are made specific to the changes proposed for specific properties, it is essential that submissions identify the lot/land the subject of the submission. Further, the feedback needs to be focused on any change that is proposed as part of the translation. Existing zones and land use tables will be shared for context but feedback will be directed to the extent of any change. Feedback on mandated land uses or existing land use permissibility for specific particular zones is not subject to public exhibition.

A targeted submissions approach has been designed to minimise any misinterpretation of the feedback and which zone it applies to as part of a stakeholder's submission.

This will enable targeted consideration of feedback by the Department and Council on stakeholder reaction to the proposal after it is collated and synthesised by DPE. Raw submission data will also be shared with Council.

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To assist with the exhibition, DPE will have available the following communications collateral:

- DPE 'how to' video for councils to explain the submissions process and assist with any enquiries
- FAQs on the submissions process that can be shared
- Social media content and posts that can be shared
- Text that can be placed on council websites/included in landowner letters/information brochures/rates notices

It would also be recommended that Council provide a link from your website to the exhibition webpage on the planning portal

Councils can undertake additional communications on the translation and are encouraged to get in touch with the team to see how we can support you from a collateral preparation perspective.

At the conclusion of the exhibition, Council will be provided with a spreadsheet that captures the specific feedback lodged through the portal as well as a summary of feedback that provides focus ahead of policy finalisation.

For more information about the exhibition, please contact employment.zones@planning.nsw.gov.au.