Purpose

The purpose of Bega Valley Shire Council’s Development Advisory Panel (DAP) is to:

- Provide pre-lodgement advice to persons, groups or companies intending to carry out rezoning and /or development within the Bega Valley Local Government Area.
- Provide advice to other Council departments in relation to infrastructure and community projects, where Council is the proponent and/or asset manager.
- Provide advice to senior management in relation to policy issues relating to development and planning matters.
- Review weekly development application lodgements.
- Identify referral and consultation requirements for all development applications submitted to Council.
- Monitor processing and referral timeframes for all development applications.

Aims and Objectives of the Development Advisory Panel

- To assist applicants submit complete, high quality applications (both rezoning/planning proposals and development applications) through the provision of constructive pre-lodgement advice.
- To promote the orderly control of development.
- To form an effective communication link between the various Units of Council.
- To identify matters of concern regarding Council policy for reference to senior management and Council.
- To recognise and identify development demands on Council’s resources.
- To monitor the effect of individual developments on Council’s overall policies.
- To meet on a regular basis to ensure a minimum delay with regard to application processing, allocation and referrals.
- To monitor outstanding referrals on development applications with the aim of ensuring efficient and quality assessments of proposals.

Composition of the Development Advisory Panel

The DAP comprises the following core Council staff:

- Planning Coordinator (chair)
- Building Coordinator
- Development Engineering Coordinator
- Environmental Services Coordinator
The DAP is supported by Planning and Environment Group Administration Specialist staff and is regularly attended by Council’s cadets (from Planning, Environment and Infrastructure) for staff training and development purposes.

In the event of the absence of any of the above staff, a nominee is to be appointed to attend the relevant meeting.

Responsibilities of the Development Advisory Panel

The DAP shall have the following responsibilities:

- To provide accurate advice to prospective applicants in relation to rezoning and/or development matters to ensure well considered and complete applications are lodged with Council.
- To provide a timely and efficient advisory service to prospective applicants and development professionals by ensuring written pre-lodgement advice is forwarded to applicants within seven days of the pre-lodgement meeting.
- To provide a coordinated, collaborative approach to the consideration and assessment of development applications, Council infrastructure projects, re-zonings/planning proposals and policy development.
- To ensure consistent application of plans and policies, referral and concurrence requirements and upholding Council’s various memorandums of understanding.
- To actively highlight and initiate potential improvements to the development assessment process through identification of best practice initiatives and processes.
- To ensure efficient use of Council resources by meeting only when pre-lodgement meetings are requested by customers and/or there are significant development applications or matters for discussion highlighted on the weekly DA listings.

Provision of written advice to applicants/customers

To ensure consistent and balanced advice is given to prospective applicants regarding development proposals, the Chair of the DAP shall moderate discussions to ensure that the advice issued is holistic and consistent with the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (as amended).

There may be times when additional research or advice is issued to applicants which may not have been discussed at the pre-lodgement meeting. The written advice to the customer will suitably differentiate between matters discussed at the meeting and additional advice issued as a result of further investigation or consideration of the proposal.

Applicants should note that once a formal written response is issued to the customer by the Development Advisory Panel, the letter becomes a public document and the matter is no longer confidential.

Fee for service

The fee for the provision of advice at a pre-lodgement meeting or in considering preliminary plans shall be as per Council’s adopted Fees and Charges.

An invoice will be issued by Council soon after the meeting.

The DAP may also charge additional fees where an onsite inspection is required or if further research or assessment is needed in relation to the proposal. Fees for this additional work shall be levied at the rate for ‘Development Enquiry Fee – Non-Standard’, in accordance with Council’s adopted Fees and Charges.
The General Manager may consider requests from community and charitable groups to waive the fee.

Applicants are advised that any advice provided by the DAP should not be construed as granting approval, in principle or otherwise, to any proposed activity or development. The determination of any proposal can only be made once a development application or rezoning application has been lodged with the Council and this application comprehensively assessed against all relevant legislation and Council policies.