

MEDIA RELEASE 24 April 2008

## Healthy Cities Illawarra Rejects Planning Reforms

Healthy Cities Illawarra has joined with over one hundred other community and environment groups to reject the NSW Government's next round of planning reforms, embodied in the discussion paper 'Improving the NSW Planning System'.

Planning Minister Frank Sartor's proposal will result in major changes to the way that developments in the State are assessed. The reforms to NSW planning include ninety recommendations, which reduce the role of Local Governments and replace them with planning panels for many development applications.

Jill Merrin, Community Environmental Health Officer, said, "The changes continue the shift away from public involvement and transparency in decision-making. There is evidence that people's health suffers where opportunities for involvement in decisions that affect them are reduced.

"In addition, the requirements for environmental assessment will become diluted and there will be more exemptions for developers, leading to greater impacts on the health of natural systems."

Peak environment and community groups, including the Total Environment Centre and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, with advice from the Environment Defenders Office, have coordinated the response from groups across NSW.

The combined submission advises Premier Morris Iemma that the proposed changes will further alienate the community from the planning process.

"Instead, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act needs to ensure genuine community consultation and environmental assessment", said Ms Merrin.

"The principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, as written into the Act, need to be the over-arching requirements of all developments in the State."

*Healthy Cities Illawarra works to improve and promote the health, physical environment and quality of life of the people of the Illawarra. It is a non-profit, community based organisation and is part of a global movement founded by the World Health Organisation.*

**MEDIA: For further information contact : Jill Merrin, Community Environmental Health Officer, Healthy Cities Illawarra. 4226 5000. [jillm@healthyillawarra.org.au](mailto:jillm@healthyillawarra.org.au)**

---

### *Better Health For All*

63 Auburn Street Wollongong NSW 2500 Ph: (02) 4226 5000 Fax: (02) 4226 5339  
Email: [manager@healthycitiesill.org.au](mailto:manager@healthycitiesill.org.au) Internet: <http://www.healthycitiesill.org.au> ABN 83 964 176 052

*Funded by the NSW Health Department and South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Area Health Service*