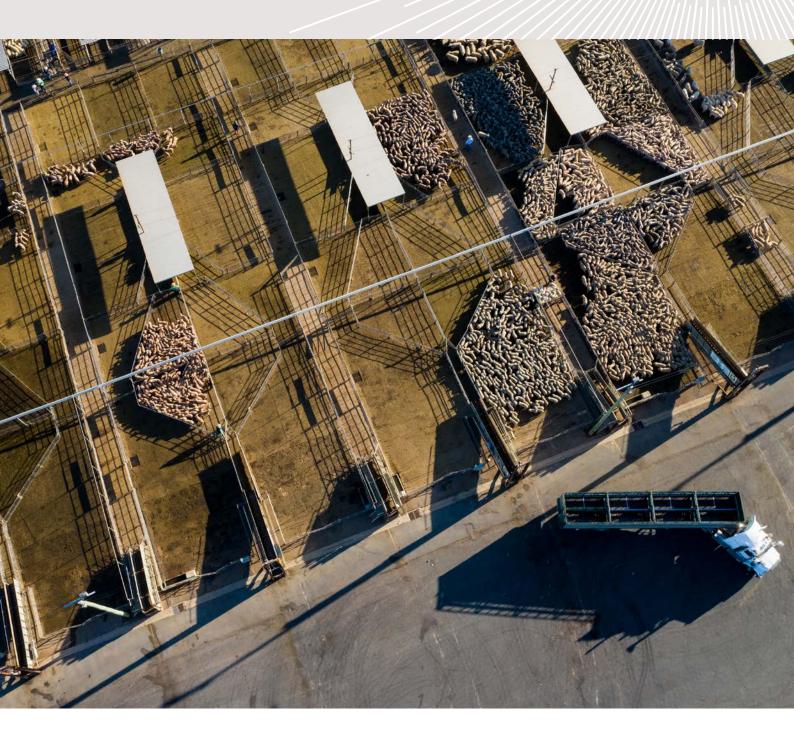
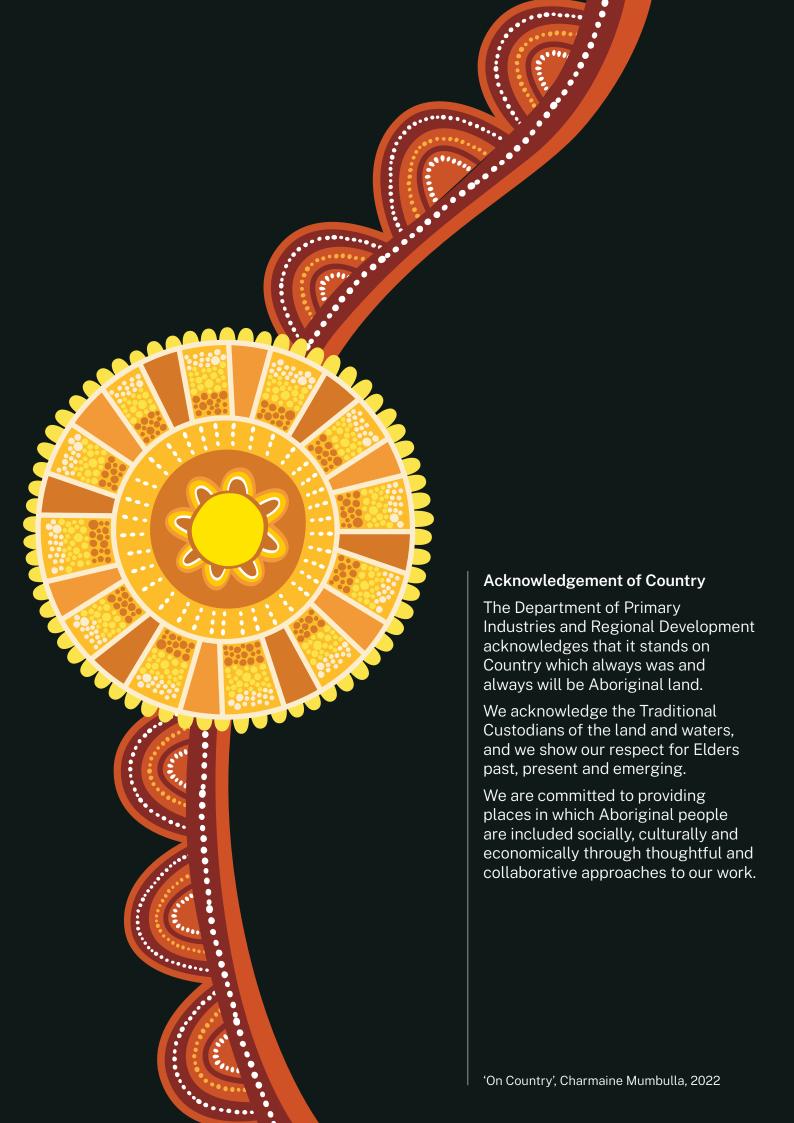
Special Activation Precincts



Activation Precinct Certificate comprehensive guide February 2024





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Glossary

| Term/Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--|---|
| RGDC | Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation |
| ACHR | Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report |
| APC | Activation Precinct Certificate |
| AMP | Asset Management Plan |
| BAR | Biodiversity Assessment Report |
| BCA | Building Code of Australia |
| Consent Authority | Authority having the function to determine an application. The EP&A Act sets out provisions for the relevant consent authority. |
| Complying Development | Routine development that an EPI provides can be approved by meeting specified predetermined development standards. |
| CDC | Certificate issued by accredited certifier for complying development. |
| Construction Certificate (CC) | Certificate to the effect that work completed in accordance with specified plans and specifications will comply with the requirements of the Act and Regulations. |
| Development Application (DA) | Application for consent under Part 4 of the EP&A Act to carry out development. |
| DPHI | Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure |
| Exempt Development | Classified in an EPI as development that may be carried out without the need for development consent because it will have minimal environmental impact, so long as any requirements of the EPI are satisfied. |
| EE | Essential Energy |
| EMP | Environmental Management Plan |
| Environmental Management System (EMS) | Document which outlines environmental standards and controls within each precinct for compliance and monitoring. |
| NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) | Agency responsible for issuing Environmental Protection Licences and monitoring compliance of potentially hazardous and hazardous development. |
| Environmental Planning Instrument (EPI) | LEP or SEPP made under Part 3 of the EP&A Act. They contain the controls that apply in relation to the development of an area/site. |
| EPL | Environmental Protection Licence |
| EP&A Act | Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 |
| EP&A Regs | Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 |
| FPL | Flood Planning Level |
| HIS | Heritage Impact Statement |
| NPWS | National Parks and Wildlife Services |
| PBP | Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019 |
| Principle Certifying Authority (PCA) | Responsible for issuing complying development certificates, construction certificates and carrying out critical stage inspection of the construction process. Can be local Council or private certifier. |

| Term/Abbreviation | Meaning |
|---|---|
| PHA | Preliminary Hazard Analysis |
| PMF | Probable Maximum Flood |
| POEO | Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 |
| RAP | Remediation Action Plan |
| S68 | Approval issued under section 68 of the Local Government Act 1993. |
| | These approvals relate to stormwater, sewerage, and water works and are issued by the local Council where the Council is the water and sewer authority. |
| S138 | Approval issued under section 168 of the NSW Roads Act 1993. |
| | These approvals relate to activities undertaken within the local council's road reserve (or other roads authority) be approved by the roads authority prior to the activities being undertaken. |
| S7.11 & s7.12 | Development Contributions |
| | Contribution to be paid from developer to RGDC and Council to fund the provision of infrastructure services within the precinct. |
| Special Activation Precinct | A dedicated area in a regional location identified by the NSW Government to become a thriving business hub. |
| State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP) | EPI made under the EP&A Act by the Governor to make provision with respect to any matter that, in the opinion of the Minister, is of State or regional environmental planning significance. |
| SEPP Precincts-Regional | State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021 |
| Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund (SHLF) | NSW Government fund helping to deliver critical infrastructure and priority initiatives identified in the 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW, NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018–2038 and other long-term government plans. |
| Statement of Consistency (SoC) | Statement prepared by an application to demonstrate the proposed development is consistent with the relevant master plan and delivery plan. |
| | |

Introduction

Special Activation Precincts

Special Activation Precincts (precincts) are designated areas in regional NSW that have been identified by the NSW Government as places where businesses in many sectors can thrive. These precincts will create jobs, attract businesses and investors, and facilitate economic development in regional NSW to ensure regions are well placed to grow and meet future economic needs.

Purpose of this guide

This guide aims to assist potential developers by providing an overview of the planning pathways for undertaking development within a Special Activation Precinct where there is a current master plan and delivery plan.



Construction of railway overpass bridge in Parkes

Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation

The Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation (RGDC) provides a business concierge function that facilitates a 'one-stop-shop' for businesses and investors undertaking development within a precinct. The business concierge will partner with businesses to simplify planning applications and approvals, and open doors to opportunities with other businesses

RGDC was established to deliver on the NSW Government's bold commitment to drive economic growth and prosperity in regional NSW through Special Activation Precincts.

RGDC facilitates the delivery and development of the precincts through streamlined and coordinated planning processes, government-funded enabling infrastructure, and a business concierge support service.

RGDC works with the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, who fund and plan these precincts respectively as part of the 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW.

Business concierge services

RGDC provides a business concierge function that facilitates a 'one-stop-shop' for businesses and investors undertaking development within a precinct. The business concierge partners with businesses to simplify planning applications and approvals, and open doors to opportunities with other businesses within a precinct.

Planning services

RGDC has an in-house planning services function which enables streamlined planning to provide certainty and confidence to business. This guide details the precinct specific planning approval pathways.

If you are a business interested in establishing in one of our Special Activation Precincts, please contact us.

T 1300 REGION (734466)

E activationprecincts@regional.nsw.gov.au

Roles and responsibilities

The following provides an overview of the key agencies and their role in the Activation Precinct Certificate process.

Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation

The Planning Services team is responsible for:

- providing pre-application and pre-lodgement advice
- · preparing development specific checklists
- issuing Activation Precinct certificates (in most cases)

Business Concierge provide the following services:

- coordinating pre-application evaluations and pre-lodgement
- coordination of other government agencies

Council

The relevant council is responsible for issuing:

- section 68 approvals (required where an activity is carried out on council land, assets or required connection into local council infrastructure)
- section 138 approvals (required where an activity is carried out within council road reserve)
- · complying development certificate.

Principal Certifying Authority

A Principal Certifying Authority can be responsible for:

- · issuing complying development certificates
- · issuing construction certificates
- carrying out critical stage inspection of the construction process.

A list of accredited certifiers can be found on the NSW Department of Fair Trading online portal.

A Principal Certifying Authority can also be responsible for undertaking certain compliance functions as detailed in the relevant delivery plan.

Environmental Protection Authority

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is responsible for:

- Providing pre-lodgement advice on development which may require an environmental protection licence
- issuing Environment Protection Licences.

The EPA is also responsible for undertaking operational compliance functions related to matters under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* for scheduled activities.

Planning Secretary

The Planning Secretary through the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) is responsible for:

- identifying whether development for potentially hazardous industry or potentially offensive development is low, medium, or high risk
- acting as the consent authority for development involving a potentially hazardous industry or potentially offensive industry that requires development consent.

Business Concierge

RGDC provides a business concierge function that facilitates a 'one-stop-shop' for businesses and investors to work with you and support you through planning, environmental, infrastructure and commercial, and partnership pathways within a precinct.

A key function of the business concierge is to guide investors through approval processes in the most efficient manner.

To streamline the process, investors have the option of progressing parallel planning applications, environmental approvals and licences, and other approvals, licences and permits required for a proposed development. It will be at the investors' discretion when they choose to initiate the other approval and/or licence requirements.

The business concierge will engage with other government agencies, regulatory bodies, and the council to discuss any additional approval requirements early in the process. Where possible, the business concierge will work with government agencies to streamline approval processes and avoid duplication of requirements. The business concierge has established agreements in place with other government agencies to assist with the efficient delivery of development within precincts. The business concierge offers a range of additional services, as shown in Figure 1.

The <u>business concierge</u> should be the first point of contact when commencing development within a precinct. Significant efficiencies can be gained by engaging early in the process.



Activation Precinct Certificate process

Guiding investors through approval process

Coordinating government agencies and regulatory bodies



Pre-application evaluation

Providing comparative data on potential locations

Helping to identify business-to-business solutions opportunities

Identifying specific sites for your operation



Assessment criteria in relevant delivery plan

Implementing the Environmental Management System

Assisting with embedding circular economy principles



General business support

Guiding business set-up

Advice on accessing grants and other financial incentives

Helping to identify and develop new commercial opportunities

Informing on relocation and visa requirements

Planning Framework Overview

1



Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

2



Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations 2021

3



Environmental Planning Instruments:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts-Regional) 2021
 - Zone
 - Objectives
 - Land uses
- State Environment Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008

4



Special Activation Precinct Master Plan

- Visions and aspirations
- Principles
- Precinct-wide performance measures



Special Activation Precinct Delivery Plan

- Built form and landscape design guidelines
- · Precinct-wide mapping
- Landscape strategy
- Precinct and site-based assessment criteria and solutions

Activation Precinct Certificates

A key component of the precincts is streamlined planning which is facilitated by the issuance of Activation Precinct certificates.

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021, an Activation Precinct certificate is required for the following:

- To accompany an application for a complying development certificate on land within a Special Activation Precinct.
- Before development consent is issued for a development application on land within a Special Activation Precinct.

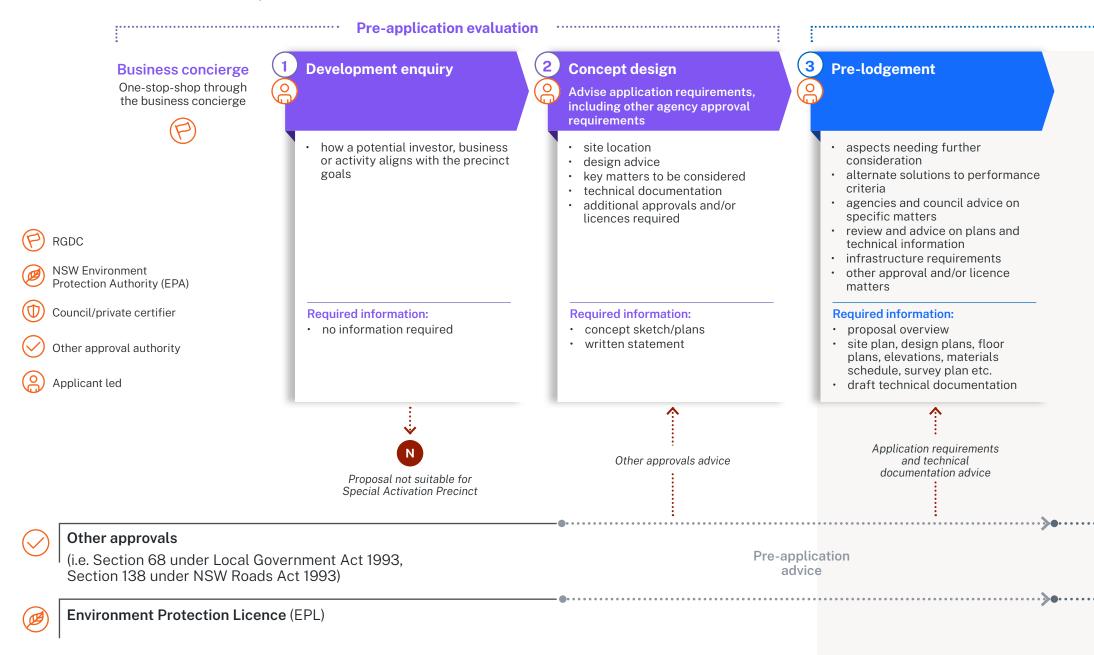
In accordance with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts-Regional) 2021 (Precincts-Regional SEPP), RGDC aims to simplify planning and environmental approvals for development within a precinct. For example, many industrial and employment uses that would usually require a development application under the traditional planning framework are intended to be undertaken as complying development within a precinct. The complying development pathway does not require public notification and will not require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE).

Streamlining the planning process in this way allows for an assessment pathway that significantly reduces the time and cost of setting up a business within the precinct, whilst also ensuring proposed development is consistent with the applicable master plan and delivery plan.



Aerial of citrus orchard in Moree

Activation Precinct Certificate process



- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Application for

development approval

Application evaluation and determination

Application

Lodge application

- · complete checklist
- application form
- · accept application or request information
- give written notice of application to utility providers (i.e. land near electricity transmission and distribution networks, pipeline areas, and level crossings and rail corridors) for comment within 14 days

Optional parallel

assessment pathways

Required information:

- application form
- technical documentation

Evaluation and determination

30 day evaluation period commences once application is accepted

- ensure consistency with master plan and delivery plan
- on basis of submitted plans and technical documentation
- consider any submissions received from any utility providers

Activation Precinct Certificate

- 3 year currency period
- stamped and dated technical documentation attached
- · may include requirements for consistency
- · Corporation gives copy of APC to other agencies and council



Approval granted either unconditionally or subject to conditions







Lodge with council/ private certifier Follow process under EP&A Act*



Development Application

Lodge with DPHI**. Follow process under EP&A Act





Construction Certificate

Lodge with council /private certifier. Follow process under EP&A Act





Environment Protection Licence

Lodge with EPA (can be lodged prior to development consent). EPL may only be granted after CDC or consent is issued.



Information request Evaluation period pauses

Refine for consistency Evaluation period stops and starts again

Applicant liaises with corporation on modifications after APC issued

Lodgement and assessment



Pre-application evaluation

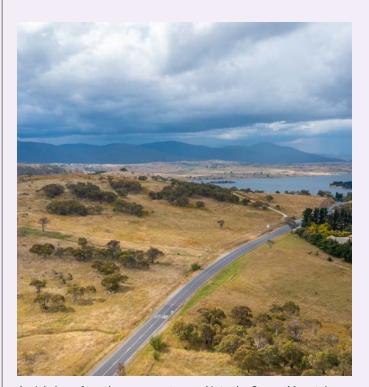
At the very start of the development process, potential investors are encouraged to undertake a pre-application evaluation with the business concierge to ensure any proposed development aligns with the precinct goals.

At this point, the business concierge can also assist investors with any general enquiries, provide comparative data on potential locations, identify business to business solutions and opportunities, and help to identify specific sites for your operation.

The pre-application evaluation stage is not a mandatory step in the Activation Precinct certificate process, however it is highly encouraged to ensure alignment with the precinct goals and promotes decision-ready applications to support a streamlined planning pathway. It also provides an opportunity to identify and resolve issues up-front, prior to making a formal Activation Precinct certificate application, which will help expedite the assessment of your application once lodged. The preapplication evaluation process is detailed below.

Pre-application evaluations can be requested via the website.

The business concierge can provide advice at all stages of the application process. The more detailed information supplied, the more detailed feedback provided.



Aerial view of southern connector road into the Snowy Mountains precinct

Step 1 - Development enquiry

Prior to any work commencing on an application for an Activation Precinct certificate for a proposed development, a potential investor is encouraged to engage with the business concierge through a 'development enquiry' meeting which is a high-level discussion on the suitability of the proposed development within the precinct. RGDC can provide guidance to potential investors on how the proposed development does or does not align with the precinct principles, as well as advice on the design and development outcomes expected before the development is conceptualised. Precinct principles can be found in section 2.1 of the relevant master plan.

Potential investors are not required to provide any information as part of the development enquiry meeting and should come away with a sense as to whether their proposed development would, in principle, be suitable within the precinct.

Step 2 - Concept design

Following the development enquiry meeting, and once concept plans and a proposal overview is prepared, potential investors are encouraged to engage with RGDC (through the business concierge) through a 'concept design' meeting.

This meeting allows RGDC to provide more detailed advice in relation to future application requirements, design advice, key matters to be considered, technical documentation to be provided as well as any additional approvals and/or licences that may be required. RGDC will undertake a concept design evaluation and provide advice on:

- a preferred site if one is not already identified
- any key matters that will need consideration, including design
- advice on alternate solutions to the assessment criteria, where relevant
- technical documentation requirements
- any additional approvals, licences and permits.

RGDC (through the business concierge) will also coordinate and engage with council and other government agencies and approval authorities as early as possible to ensure that the proposed development is not only designed and planned for consistently with the master plan and delivery plan, but also to ensure that the proposed development will satisfy other approval requirements.

The concept design step may involve multiple meetings and/or advices.

For development requiring an Environmental Protection Licence the business concierge will coordinate engagement with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and the will issue technical assessment requirement for your specific proposal at this stage.

What is an Environmental Protection Licence?

A licence is a regulatory approval tool that authorises specific activities. Every licence has conditions which outline the legal obligations on the licence-holder, such as discharge limits, monitoring and reporting.

Who needs a licence?

You will need a licence if:

- you undertake one or more activities listed in Schedule 1 of the POEO Act
- you undertake 'scheduled development work', being work required to enable a scheduled activity to be undertaken at a premises (e.g. the construction of a chemical storage plant that will require a licence to operate).

Application evaluation and determination

Step 3 - Pre-lodgement

A pre-lodgement meeting with RGDC is the first formal and mandatory step in the Activation Precinct Certificate process and is necessary to promote decision ready applications to support a streamlined planning pathway for development.

A pre-lodgement allows applicants to discuss their proposal with RGDC in more detail, providing a preevaluation of the proposed development to identify where changes may be required to ensure consistency with the master plan and delivery plan. It gives all parties including RGDC, other government agencies, regulatory bodies and council the opportunity to:

- identify design, planning or operational aspects of proposals which may need further consideration or amendment
- discuss any alternate solutions to meet the performance criteria
- review draft technical documentation that will be required for the formal lodgement of an application in accordance with the Development Specific Checklist
- work through any specific issues (i.e. biodiversity, flooding, stormwater constraints etc.)
- work through issues and application requirements for relevant licences and approvals.

All applications for an Activation Precinct Certificate should adequately address the master plan and delivery plan requirements. Proposals are required to include relevant information to demonstrate consistency with the master plan and delivery plan. During pre-lodgement discussions RGDC will advise what documentation is required to support particular types of development.

More than one pre-lodgement may be required, and pre-lodgements may be in the form of meetings and/or written advice.

Supporting documentation

A Development Specific Checklist will be provided by RGDC to applicants following a pre-lodgement meeting. Note where Step 1 and/or Step 2 are undertaken, an applicant may receive a Development Specific Checklist during these steps. The Development Specific Checklist will identify the Activation Precinct Certificate application requirements for each development proposal.

If a change is made to the proposed development following pre-lodgement discussions and/or prior to lodging an Activation Precinct Certificate application, an amended Development Specific Checklist may be required where additional documentation is needed. RGDC should be consulted in this instance to confirm whether any additional information is required. The Development Specific Checklist will be used by RGDC upon lodgement.

Step 4 - Application

If you have not already done so, please contact Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation's planning team on <u>planning@rgdc.nsw.gov.au</u> before you lodge your application. The team will help to ensure your application is ready for lodgement and provide advice to support a streamlined planning approval.

An application for an Activation Precinct Certificate must be lodged online through the NSW Planning <u>Portal</u> (the portal). Applicants must register for a NSW Planning Portal account to start the process. For further information on how to lodge an application through the portal use the Submit Activation Precinct Certificate Application guide.

As part of making an application for an Activation Precinct certificate, applicants will need to provide a statement of consistency which includes information on how the development proposal is consistent with the Regional-Precincts SEPP and respective delivery plan. To assist with this, RGDC will provide the application with a bespoke statement of consistency to address the matters relevant to the proposal.

It is noted that the delivery plans seek to deliver the principles, aims and performance criteria set out in the relevant master plan, and in accordance with section 3.7(4) of the Precincts-Regional SEPP delivery plans are required to be consistent with the relevant master plan. As such, the evaluation of any proposed development against the delivery plan is considered sufficient to also ensure consistency with the relevant master plan.

Applicants are encouraged to provide a response to the relevant requirements detailed in the Precincts-Regional SEPP and assessment criteria detailed in the delivery plan.

Once an application has been lodged by the applicant, RGDC will undertake a completeness check of the application against the development specific checklist and either accept the application or request further documentation required for lodgement.

Step 5 - Evaluation and determination

An application for an Activation Precinct Certificate has a 30 day evaluation period which commences once an application is taken to be made in the form approved by RGDC and satisfies the requirements under section 3.10(2) of the Precincts-Regional SEPP.

Neither the day on which the application for an Activation Precinct Certificate is lodged nor the following day are to be taken into consideration in calculating the number of days in the evaluation period.

If required, RGDC will give written notice of the application to external referrals (i.e. for land near electricity transmission and distribution networks, pipeline areas, and level crossings and rail corridors) within two days of receiving an application, and must consider any submissions received from external referrals within 14 days of giving the written notice.

The evaluation of Activation Precinct Certificate applications will be undertaken against a standardised assessment framework to ensure a standard approach is being undertaken for the evaluation of development proposals. RGDC will evaluate an Activation Precinct certificate application against the:

- Precincts-Regional SEPP,
- relevant master plan, and
- relevant delivery plan.

RGDC will evaluate a development proposal's outcomes against the acceptable solutions or alternative solutions in Chapter 6 of the delivery plan to ensure the precinct vision and aspirations are achieved.

RGDC can only issue an Activation Precinct Certificate where the RGDC that the development is consistent with the master plan and delivery plan that applies to the land concerned. An Activation Precinct Certificate may be issued subject to requirements.

RGDC maintains a register of <u>Activation Precinct</u> Certificate determinations on its website. The register is updated monthly and includes details of the application, determination date and evaluation timeframe.

Modifying an Activation **Precinct Certificate**

Should the proposed development change in design or intended use, a new Activation Precinct certificate is required. An evaluation will be carried out on the components that have changed from the initial Activation Precinct Certificate and a new Activation Precinct Certificate will be required prior to the issue of a Complying Development Certificate. If a Complying Development Certificate has already been issued, then the principle certifying authority is required to issue a new Complying Development Certificate that is consistent with the current Activation Precinct certificate for the proposed development.



Aerial view of Master Pet facility. Image supplied by Pet Care Kitchen, Parkes NSW.

Development Pathways

Development within a precinct can be classified as either:

- exempt development.
- complying development
- development requiring a development application.

An Activation Precinct Certificate is only required for complying development and development requiring a development application.

The following sections assist potential investors in determining whether an Activation Precinct Certificate is required and whether their proposed development is considered exempt development, complying development, or requires development consent.

Exempt Development

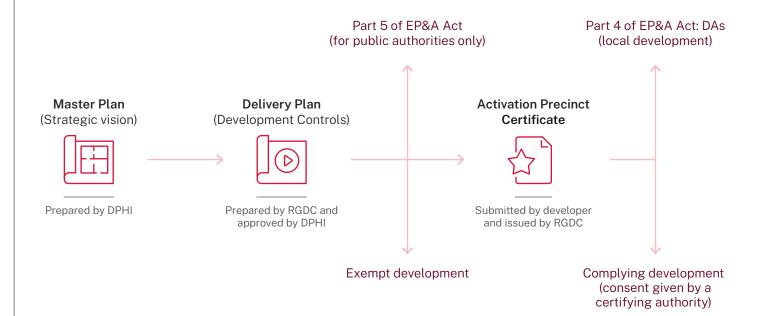
Certain types of small scale or minor works can be considered exempt development e.g. building alterations (internal), driveways and hard stand spaces, and garbage bin storage enclosures.

Exempt development does not require planning or building approval provided the development achieves compliance with the relevant development standards as set out in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 (Codes SEPP) as well as any deemed-to-satisfy building provisions of the National Construction Code.

Schedule 1C of the Precincts-Regional SEPP also identifies development that is considered exempt development when carried out in accordance with specific development standards.

Whilst an Activation Precinct Certificate is not required for exempt development undertaken within a precinct, other local approvals may still be required.

Precinct planning pathway



Complying Development

The complying development pathway is a streamlined approval process used for development that meets certain pre-determined development standards as specified in the Precincts-Regional SEPP.

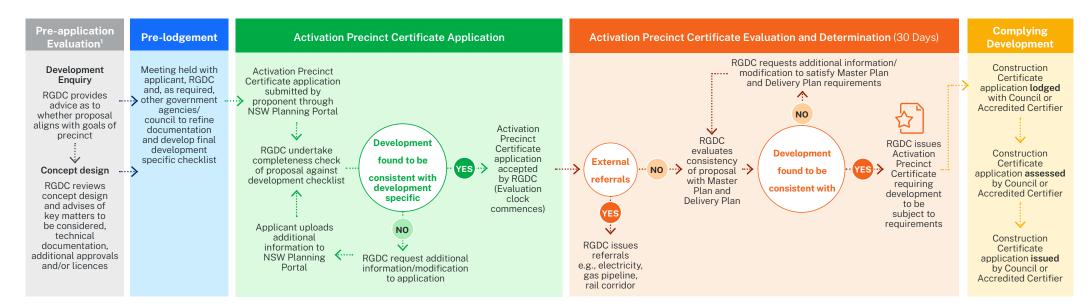
In most instances a Complying Development Certificate will be required for development within a precinct and can be issued by either the local council or a registered certifier (the certifying authority), after the issue of an Activation Precinct Certificate.

Engaging with a registered certifier at the pre-lodgement stage will assist in a streamlined approval pathway. Throughout the assessment process RGDC can liaise with the certifying authority to further streamline the process.

Conditions of consent may be imposed by the certifying authority. A standard set of complying development conditions are prescribed in the Precincts-Regional SEPP.

A Complying Development Certificate is a combined planning and construction approval, and therefore the design and documentation must demonstrate compliance with any relevant building standards.

A standard approval pathway for complying development within a precinct is provided below.



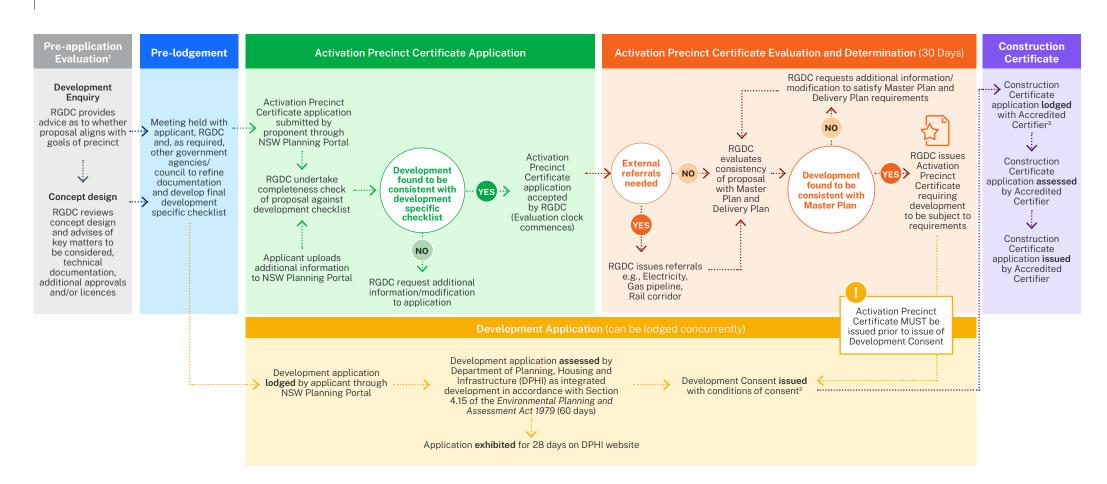
¹The 'Pre-application Evaluation' step is non-mandatory for applicants. All other steps are mandatory for Complying Development.

Development Application

Where a proposed development does not meet the requirements for qualifying as exempt development or complying development, a development application will be required. Where a development application is required, development consent must be obtained from the consent authority under Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

The process for obtaining an Activation Precinct Certificate can be undertaken in parallel to an application for development consent. However, an Activation Precinct Certificate is required before development consent can be issued for development on land within a precinct.

A standard approval pathway for a development application within a precinct is provided below.



¹The 'Pre-application Evaluation' step is non-mandatory for applicants. All other steps are mandatory for Development Consent.

² Activation Precinct Certificate must be issued prior to issue of Development Consent.

³ Can occur anytime after lodgement of development application.

⁴ Can only occur after issue of Development Consent and required prior to commencement of construction works.

Other useful resources

NSW EPA Special Activation Precincts Information Package

RGDC Guide to Complying Development in Special Activation Precincts



Cattle farmers in Moree

Special Activation Precincts



