



***Draft Threatened Species Conservation
(Biodiversity Banking) Regulation 2007***

Submission of the Urban Development
Institute of Australia NSW to the
NSW Department of Environment
and Climate Change

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Biodiversity Banking (BioBanking) has been established under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act) by the NSW Government with the objective of addressing purported losses to biodiversity and threatened species in New South Wales. BioBanking is a voluntary mechanism and an alternative process to that of the implementation of Part 4 and Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (Threatened Species Assessment of Significance). The success of BioBanking relies on the adequate demand and supply of BioBank sites and development sites, and a balanced approach between biodiversity conservation and the creation of new communities.

UDIA NSW is supportive of the principles of the BioBanking, but has always emphasised that the scheme must be voluntary, transparent and provide a clear process to achieve the BioBanking objectives. UDIA NSW has been working with the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC), and has appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Reference Group to provide input into the development of the Assessment Methodology and draft Regulations.

UDIA NSW understands that the BioBanking is in its formative stages, and as such, certain unknowns are being progressively resolved as the scheme develops and the appreciation of its various implications improves. UDIA NSW, in broad consultation with its members, has generated a submission it believes will assist the DECC in providing a workable scheme for the community. There are a number of concerns UDIA NSW has with the draft documentation that have been articulated pursuant to this objective and should be interpreted as providing robust feedback in the interests of achieving optimum outcomes, including a balanced realisation of environmental, social and economic objectives.

2. PRINCIPAL ISSUES

Recognition of the State and Regional Objectives

BioBanking provides a mechanism which seeks to maximise the utility of areas of biodiversity value within a context of social and economic pressures. It seeks to offset the impacts of urban development with the conservation and improvement of biodiversity values in alternative locations. As currently proposed, BioBanking does not have a strategic objective, yet sits within the context of Regional Strategies and other planning instruments.

UDIA NSW contends that the implementation of BioBanking should not compromise the capacity of the broader community to achieve the objectives of the NSW State Plan, Metropolitan Strategy and the various Regional Strategies. In this regard, it is important to recognise the broader context within which the BioBanking scheme sits, and the nature of decision making that has preceded BioBanking, particularly in relation to designation and conservation of biodiversity areas, through both regional and local planning instruments.

Pursuant to ensuring that BioBanking fits within an a broader context, UDIA NSW recommends that a business plan be prepared and published to provide a strategic framework for the achievement of BioBanking objectives. The Business Plan will identify areas of biodiversity that are a priority for conservation and will subsequently inform a register of sites that would be suitable for use in the scheme. The identification of potential credit sites is critical to ensuring that an adequate supply of biodiversity credits is sufficient to support an effective market to meet demand.

RECOMMENDATION 1

UDIA NSW recommends that a Business Plan be developed in order to provide a strategic context for BioBanking by identifying priority conservation areas and thereby informing the availability of credit sites to ensure the supply needed to establish and maintain a market for the scheme.

Land to which BioBanking Applies

The draft Regulations identify the various classifications of land that can be used for the creation of BioBank credit sites. The exclusion of lands which are already the beneficiaries of conservation funding, or biodiversity certification is supported in principle by UDIA NSW. However UDIA NSW contends that the exclusion of land which has been zoned for conservation or open space uses is at odds with the objective of maximising the utility of biodiversity values in the community.

DECC would no doubt be acutely conscious of the fact that simply zoning land for environmental protection does not ensure land of high biodiversity value will be conserved, or indeed, maintained to a desirable extent. It is therefore important that the opportunities presented by a scheme that mandates regular maintenance of conservation sites be extended to those areas which have the capacity to benefit and generate genuine biodiversity outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 2

UDIA NSW recommends that land zoned for environmental protection or open space uses be provided the opportunity for participation in the BioBanking scheme. This will provide greater opportunity for maximising biodiversity values in a community.

BioBanking Regulations

The BioBanking Regulations fail to prescribe timeframes for assessing the applications for BioBank sites or sites proposing credits and obtaining approval from DECC. One of the major problems plaguing the existing offsets scheme is the lack of certainty and efficiency in decision making. The lack of accountability in guaranteeing assessment timeframes for the industry is a major source of uncertainty for development stakeholders and in many cases provides a justifiable rationale for not using the system.

In order to generate confidence in the scheme, UDIA NSW recommends that the BioBanking Regulations prescribe mandatory assessment timeframes for the assessment of BioBank applications to provide certainty for participants. This will also demonstrate a level of accountability that has been absent from previous assessment frameworks.

UDIA NSW is concerned that the draft Regulations do not detail a process of when to apply for BioBank participation, as it seems to concentrate on BioBank sites, and not sites where credits are being applied for. The draft Regulations should detail a clear and accessible process if participation is to be encouraged. This is particularly important as BioBanking relies on a viable supply and demand market for its implementation.

The potential exists for confusion and/or conflict with the existing Commonwealth legislation, the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. UDIA NSW recommends that the draft Regulations be amended to provide clear guidance as to the relationship between the pieces of legislation and any inconsistencies and conflicts that may arise as a result of participating in BioBanking. Any guidance would also clearly articulate the need for additional approvals if such was the case.

RECOMMENDATION 3

UDIA NSW proposes that the BioBanking Regulations prescribe mandatory assessment timeframes for the assessment of BioBank applications to provide certainty and accountability for industry stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The relationship between the Threatened Species Conservation (Biodiversity Banking) Act 2007 and the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 be clarified and codified in the draft Legislation.

Assessment Methodology

The successful implementation of the Regulations will rely on the effective utilisation of the draft BioBanking Assessment Methodology (draft Assessment Methodology). In providing confidence to UDIA NSW members in promoting BioBanking, a variety of specific issues and concerns have been found with the draft Assessment Methodology provided by the DECC for implementation of Part 7A of the TSC Act. In particular, the following concerns with the draft Assessment Methodology in its current form have been identified, including:

- the absence of several critical and crucial elements of the draft Assessment Methodology, including:
 - the BioBanking Operation Manual;

- the BioBanking Credit Calculator; and
- the Threatened Species Profile Database;
- there is no discussion of or justification for the apparent underlying offset ratio between the biodiversity values lost as a result of development (be they biodiversity credits or areas of habitat) and the biodiversity values on a BioBank site required to offset those losses;
- there is no benefit or incentives provided in the Assessment Methodology (by way of biodiversity offsets) for the provision of security of conservation tenure for BioBank sites; and
- there is considerable concern that the underlying principles of the BioBanking approach will be surreptitiously incorporated into all impact assessment pursuant to the EP&A Act, with consequent substantial increases in development costs.

Lack of Necessary Documentation

As noted above, neither the BioBanking Operational Manual nor the BioBanking Credit Calculator are available for members of UDIA NSW for consideration when attempting to evaluate the draft Assessment Methodology. Given the significance of those elements of the draft Assessment Methodology, in its approach and its implementation, it is simply not possible to properly assess or provide a thorough critique of the draft Assessment Methodology in their absence.

The DECC has also failed to release the Threatened Species Profile Database for comment as part of the public review of the draft Assessment Methodology. It is imperative that all of the elements upon which the Draft Assessment Methodology is based are available for public comment, given that:

- the *Threatened Species Profile Database* determines *inter alia* which threatened species can be dealt with by habitat and/or ecosystem protection or conservation and which species will require the calculation of *threatened species credits* and require detailed field surveys in some instances; and
- will determine in many instances areas of land subjected to 'red flag' classification.

It appears that there will be instances, as yet undeterminable because the *Threatened Species Profile Database* has not been made available, in which biodiversity credits for a whole ecosystem will be required to offset development on a particular site, and that for some threatened species ,additional 'species credits' will be required to offset development on the same area of land. If that is the case, the consequence would be substantial in terms of the credit cost to the extent that it may be prohibitive to the development proceeding.

The *Database* is particularly important given the approach appears to be enshrined in the Assessment Methodology currently on exhibition. In this regard it is also noted that the *Threatened Species Profile Database* will contain the specific field survey

requirements for threatened biota, and is therefore of particular relevance in determining likely cost of undertaking the necessary investigations on development sites.

RECOMMENDATION 5

UDIA NSW recommends that further additional information, including the BioBanking Operational Manual, the BioBanking Credit Calculator and the Threatened Species Profile Database be released for industry examination prior to the commencement of the scheme.

Vegetation Condition

Vegetation condition is classified in the *Draft BioBanking Assessment Methodology* into only two classes, 'low' and 'moderate to good'. Those classifications are of particular significance in the *Draft Methodology* as they determine, in part, the areas of vegetation which would either be satisfactory as BioBank sites or which would be identified as 'red flag' areas. UDIA NSW has previously commented on the definitions/classification of the vegetation condition as a concern, particularly as these elements are embedded within the *BioBanking Calculator*.

It should also be noted that there are no benchmarks for vegetation types in the Sydney metropolitan area. This would appear to exclude the Sydney metropolitan area from the BioBanking approach, in the event that any developer deemed it worthwhile to adopt the BioBanking scheme in this area.

RECOMMENDATION 6

UDIA NSW recommends that the vegetation benchmarks and types be exhibited or made available in order that the benchmark ranges are known and therefore provides certainty to the development industry of the condition, benchmarks and hence condition of vegetation.

Definition of Low Condition

The definition for 'low condition' vegetation in the draft Regulations is limited to areas that are extremely degraded. BioBanking defines 'low condition' as those areas with very sparse trees and with a high abundance of exotic species – both must occur to be considered as 'low condition'. Because what is defined as low condition is so restricted, many degraded areas are classified under the current BioBanking system as *moderate-good condition*, despite the fact that the long-term viability of some included vegetation is questionable. UDIA NSW has previously raised this issue with DECC, however it is considered that additional testing and reworking needs to be undertaken.

Whilst the definition of vegetation as 'low' or 'moderate-good' condition does not affect the number of credits required, being classified as 'moderate-good' condition

means an area may be a 'red-flag'. These 'red-flag' areas will be problematic when wishing to achieve the State's strategy objectives.

RECOMMENDATION 7

UDIA NSW recommends the revision of the definition and classification of low condition vegetation.

Biodiversity Catchment Boundaries

Under the TSC Act, the identification of endangered ecological communities (EECs) and endangered populations is determined by Bioregions or Local Government Areas (LGAs). The Draft Assessment Methodology defines the vegetation communities by CMA regions and subregions, and is therefore introducing a third and currently unrelated geographical level of classification to EECs and endangered populations. Without being given the opportunity for industry stakeholders to operate the BioBanking Calculator, the effects of the proposed classification are unknown. It should be considered that such classification may place greater emphasis on some communities or populations than is warranted within a particular CMA region.

Notwithstanding the inconsistencies which arise as a result of the use of CMA catchments rather than the existing recognised bioregions, UDIA NSW suggests that the CMAs do provide an appropriate basis for determining the distribution and significance of biodiversity values and threatened biota. Care must be taken however, to avoid pursuing inappropriate levels of conservation within one CMA where the same threatened biota are more than adequately conserved in an adjoining CMA.

RECOMMENDATION 8

UDIA NSW recommends that the DECC standardise its spatial level of classification to ensure consistency and transparency.

Red Flag Areas

'Red Flag' areas are such that they have been identified to exhibit high ecological values that cannot offset, and the use of the 'improve or maintain' management may not be applied. UDIA NSW contends that the presence of such areas must be a redundant concept in future planning considerations and controls. The process of identifying areas of high biodiversity value is undertaken a number of times during the planning process, through the Regional Strategy, Comprehensive LEP reviews and the rezoning process. To give certainty to community stakeholders, the concept of identifying and 'red flagging' areas that are claimed to have been overlooked in previous investigations is not appropriate.

In regard to areas of high biodiversity value not protected under existing planning instruments, the definition of such areas under the BioBanking legislation is very broad and includes all vegetation types listed under legislation as critically

endangered, endangered, or vulnerable, and all vegetation that is identified as being more than 70% cleared and is not in low condition. In addition, there is no indication that there would be any review of the *Threatened Species Profile Database* prior to its adoption, and as is patently the case with the list of threatened species in NSW on the TSC Act, a range of inappropriate threatened species might be identified as indicators of 'red flag areas' without any proper review or critical consideration.

As identified above the definition of 'low condition' vegetation is very restrictive, and it is therefore likely that considerable areas will have 'red-flags'. Such classification and the likely corresponding proliferation of 'red flag' areas will inevitably lead to conflicts with development pressures. UDIA NSW contends that a degree of flexibility must be provided and welcomes the inclusion of 'Red Flag Variation' provisions to this end. However, the provisions do not provide sufficient detail on how the variation process may be undertaken and pathways for achieving the various criteria. UDIA NSW recommends that this process be clearly articulated.

RECOMMENDATION 9

UDIA NSW recommends that the use of 'red flag' provisions to conserve areas of high biodiversity value be made redundant due to the uncertainty they generate for industry stakeholders and their incompatibility with the strategic, triple bottom line planning process.

RECOMMENDATION 10

UDIA NSW recommends that the classification of areas that are to be deemed 'Red Flag' Areas be rationalised to avoid the proliferation of sites that do not possess genuine biodiversity value.

RECOMMENDATION 11

UDIA NSW recommends that the BioBanking Regulations clearly articulate the 'Red Flag Variation' process.

Costs of the BioBanking Approach

The Draft Regulatory Impact Statement provided by the DECC in respect of the surveys and investigations required for BioBanking purposes suggests that the BioBanking scheme would result in survey and assessment costs of "around \$30,000" as compared to \$80,000 for *'threatened species survey and assessment on sites with moderately complex threatened species issues'* using the current assessment process. However this may vary as the likely costs on "sites with moderately complex threatened species issues" where a specific survey is required, particularly given that a proponent may need to demonstrate that such a species is or is not present on the subject site, it is extremely unlikely that such sites would be able to achieve resolution under the BioBanking scheme for a sum of just \$30,000. In particular for a smaller BioBank or development site where offset are required the

BioBanking approach either for financial reasons or because the requirements for a similarity of habitat types cannot be met and therefore not implemented.

RECOMMENDATION 12

UDIA NSW recommend a two stage approach to site assessment, which will include an initial desk top assessment to obtain an appreciation of whether the site is likely to succeed as either a BioBank or development site, followed by a second stage of on-site surveys and assessment

Impact Amelioration Measures

It is noted that the Draft Assessment Methodology does not take into account the different types of development activities and the different impacts which would or may be imposed by a variety of such activities. For example, a rural-residential development may readily provide habitat and resources for threatened species, such as the Koala, and may impose considerable lesser impacts than would a small-lot residential development.

There does not appear to be any mechanism within the assessment process for determining the real impacts of development when ameliorated by relevant or appropriate measures. As a consequence, there may be a disincentive for developers to implement environmental impact amelioration and environmental management measures within development activities. UDIA NSW contends that a greater degree of sophistication and rigour is required to assess the diversity of development activities and their corresponding impacts on the environment.

RECOMMENDATION 13

UDIA NSW recommends that the Assessment Methodology be amended to provide a greater appreciation of the diversity of development activities and their corresponding impacts on the environment. This would include the consideration of land use zoning in the methodology.

Offset Ratios

The Draft Assessment Methodology does not identify the ratio which is embedded within the process or which is applied between the area of land to be cleared for development purposes and the area of land to be used as a biodiversity offset. For the *Assessment Methodology* to be transparent it is considered that the implied or applied offset ratio between clearing of land for development purposes and BioBank offsets be stated clearly and unequivocally. While that ratio will doubtless vary depending on the condition of vegetation to be cleared and the availability of vegetation in various conditions for BioBanking purposes, some overt recognition of the ratio should be provided.

UDIA NSW contends that the calculation offset ratio must give consideration to the planning process that may have already generated significant biodiversity offsets –

such as the case with the application of the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*. Continuous and incremental incursions into the integrity of the urban footprint as identified by the Regional Strategies and local planning instruments will result in significant aversion to the scheme.

RECOMMENDATION 14

UDIA NSW recommends that the offset ratios be disclosed to industry stakeholders where possible and the calculation of ratios give consideration to offsets and concessions already generated for an area during the prior planning process.

Implementation

The BioBanking scheme is currently identified as voluntary, and may be utilised or not by a developer as an alternative to the current assessment framework. It is noted however, that the peer review of the Draft Assessment Methodology recommends that “*the scheme should be compulsory*”.

UDIA NSW strongly reiterates its position that BioBanking must be a voluntary scheme. Support from the development industry and consultation with the DECC throughout the process has been predicated on that basis and has shaped all input that UDIA NSW has provided.

The BioBanking scheme is based on the concept of a market based trading scheme. Once participation in the scheme is made compulsory, the market characteristics are completely removed. This would include artificial fluctuations in the price of credits, and would likely result in the cost of credits prohibitive for market participation from most developers.

UDIA NSW members have also expressed considerable concern that the *maintain or improve* requirement and/or the offset ratios embedded in the BioBanking scheme will ultimately be imposed on all development activities by incorporation of these expectations into the EP&A Act. UDIA NSW contends that a robust and public debate, such as that which has taken place for the development of the BioBanking scheme, is an essential precursor to any amendments to the policy framework and should be adopted as a standard procedure for future reference.

RECOMMENDATION 15

Further consultation be undertaken with the development industry to discuss the implications of imposing the same or similar methodology on any development site where potential offset requirements may be required.

Accreditation BioBanking Professionals

The exhibition material did not include any information in regards to the accreditation of persons wanting to prepare BioBanking Statements. UDIA NSW recommends that the accreditation process be made available for public comment prior to the scheme

commencing. This will ensure that there are no delays in assessing sites once the scheme commences. Input from the industry as well as training is critical in order to ensure proper implementation of the Scheme and there is agreement on both sides that industry consultation and input into the process to date has been valuable and constructive.

RECOMMENDATION 16

UDIA NSW recommends that the process and criteria for accreditation for BioBanking professionals be exhibited for industry comment prior to the initiation of the BioBanking scheme.

BioBank Site Assessment

The current methodology states that site inspections and assessments for all sites to be used as BioBanks are to be undertaken by CMA and/or DECC staff. It is likely that there will be occasions where consultants identify areas suitable for BioBanking on lands owned by developers. The current system would require that the DECC/CMA staff would then physically assess the site, which could be a duplication of survey effort.

The availability of BioBank sites will be crucial to ensuring that there are sufficient credits within the marketplace so that BioBanking credits are available for purchase by developers, and that prices are competitive. As DECC/CMA staff will perform all site assessments, DECC will need to ensure that there is adequate assessment staff so that credits can be brought into the marketplace in a reasonable timeframe.

Costs Associated with Management Actions

Little guidance has been provided by DECC in the exhibited documentation on the cost of the management actions that will be required at BioBank sites. Should management costs be significantly more expensive, this will have effects on final credit prices, and will therefore affect the viability of the BioBanking scheme. Investors and developers who wish to create BioBank sites will require further information and credit price guidelines to provide guidance and certainty so to ensure adequate supply and demand.

RECOMMENDATION 17

UDIA NSW recommends that further guidance on management action costs, and likely BioBanking credit prices, be provided to industry stakeholders.

Scheme Management

UDIA NSW has participated in providing and suggesting inputs for the formal BioBank register. UDIA NSW again emphasises that the tracking of BioBanking credits and appropriate processes for the retirement of credits that are used by a

developer will be a key component of the scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to simplify the current complicated approval systems.

DECC should therefore ensure that administrative processes are simple and easy, so that developers can readily understand and be involved in the system. The BioBank register should also link in with the Title office, so it is possible to obtain a copy of the BioBanking Agreement when registered on title.

Management Plans in Perpetuity

The proposed BioBanking Scheme prescribes the creation of management plans to facilitate the maintenance and improvement of biodiversity values on a site in perpetuity. It is proposed that the cost of the management actions will be resourced by income from a trust account established when the BioBanking agreement is created. UDIA NSW members have expressed concerns in regard to the proposed longevity of the management plans, and the inherent complexities and risks associated with prescribing a suite of actions and commensurate costs in perpetuity.

UDIA NSW contends that the capacity of regulators to predict management costs in perpetuity exposes participants to a degree of risk that may discourage participation. The ability of potential participants to evaluate and minimise their exposure to risk will largely determine their willingness to enter a BioBanking agreement. The inherent difficulties of assessing risk over an undefined period has the potential to present a significant obstacle to the success of the scheme.

UDIA NSW suggests that BioBanking agreements be made for a prescribed period, where a more accurate assessment of variables can be undertaken to provide a greater appreciation of the likely level of risk. A review of management plans after the prescribed period has lapsed could provide for a more appropriate type or level of management actions required for a site.

RECOMMENDATION 28

UDIA NSW recommends that BioBanking Agreements be made for a prescribed period to allow for a more accurate assessment of variables and exposure to risk. Management plans could be revisited and amended once the prescribed period has lapsed to more effectively achieve the conservation objectives.

3. CONCLUSION

UDIA NSW has provided in-principle support for the BioBanking scheme since inception because it has the potential to offer certainty to both threatened species conservation and urban development. UDIA NSW has appreciated being given the opportunity to participate in developing the scheme and hope that the consultation model used for BioBanking be adopted for any future policy initiatives.

UDIA NSW believes that BioBanking has the potential to generate significant benefits for the community and in reviewing the exhibition material, has identified a number of concerns it believes present barriers to successful implementation. UDIA NSW offers the following recommendations that address these concerns and assist in ensuring the long term viability of BioBanking:

1. UDIA NSW recommends that a Business Plan be developed in order to provide a strategic context for BioBanking by identifying priority conservation areas and thereby informing the availability of credit sites to ensure the supply needed to establish and maintain a market for the scheme.
2. UDIA NSW recommends that land zoned for environmental protection or open space uses be provided the opportunity for participation in the BioBanking scheme. This will provide greater opportunity for maximising biodiversity values in a community.
3. UDIA NSW recommends that the BioBanking Regulations prescribe mandatory assessment timeframes for the assessment of BioBank applications to provide certainty and accountability for industry stakeholders.
4. UDIA NSW recommends that the relationship between the Threatened Species Conservation (Biodiversity Banking) Act 2007 and the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 be clarified and codified in the draft Legislation.
5. UDIA NSW recommends that further additional information, including the BioBanking Operational Manual, the BioBanking Credit Calculator and the Threatened Species Profile Database be released for industry examination prior to the commencement of the scheme.
6. UDIA NSW recommends that the vegetation benchmarks and types be exhibited or made available in order that the benchmark ranges are known and therefore provides certainty to the development industry of the condition, benchmarks and hence condition of vegetation.
7. UDIA NSW recommends the revision of the definition and classification of low condition vegetation.
8. UDIA NSW recommends that the DECC standardise its spatial level of classification to ensure consistency and transparency.

9. UDIA NSW recommends that the use of 'red flag' provisions to conserve areas of high biodiversity value be made redundant due to the uncertainty they generate for industry stakeholders and their incompatibility with the strategic, triple bottom line planning process.
10. UDIA NSW recommends that the classification of areas that are to be deemed 'Red Flag' Areas be rationalised to avoid the proliferation of sites that do not possess genuine biodiversity value.
11. UDIA NSW recommends that the BioBanking Regulations clearly articulate the 'Red Flag Variation' process.
12. UDIA NSW recommend a two stage approach to site assessment, which will include an initial desk top assessment to obtain an appreciation of whether the site is likely to succeed as either a BioBank or development site, followed by a second stage of on-site surveys and assessment
13. UDIA NSW recommends that the Assessment Methodology be amended to provide a greater appreciation of the diversity of development activities and their corresponding impacts on the environment. This would include the consideration of land use zoning in the methodology.
14. UDIA NSW recommends that the offset ratios be disclosed to industry stakeholders where possible and the calculation of ratios give consideration to offsets and concessions already generated for an area during the prior planning process.
15. UDIA NSW recommends that further consultation be undertaken with the development industry to discuss the implications of imposing the same or similar methodology on any development site where potential offset requirements may be required.
16. UDIA NSW recommends that the process and criteria for accreditation for BioBanking professionals be exhibited for industry comment prior to the initiation of the BioBanking scheme.
17. UDIA NSW recommends that further guidance on management action costs, and likely BioBanking credit prices, be provided to industry stakeholders.
18. UDIA NSW recommends that BioBanking Agreements be made for a prescribed period to allow for a more accurate assessment of variables and exposure to risk. Management plans could be revisited and amended once the prescribed period has lapsed to more effectively achieve the conservation objectives.

4. ABOUT THE UDIA

Who We Are

UDIA is the voice of development. We represent the industry which develops new communities and proudly advocate for its interests. We pursue access to land for development, encourage the creation of a positive regulatory environment, and seek to moderate the burden of taxes and charges on our customers. We believe in affordable, sustainable, and liveable communities.

Urban development contributes \$15 billion worth of activity to the State economy each year. UDIA NSW represents the leading industry participants with over 520 corporate members.

UDIA was established in New South Wales in 1963 and operates as a non-profit institute for the benefit of its member's throughout Australia, with divisions in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

UDIA NSW is a progressive organisation driven by its members. Our President, Council, Chapters and Committees, Executive Director and staff ensure that we give members and sponsors maximum value for their investment.

UDIA NSW's goals are to:

- Promote high standards for the urban development industry;
- Promote respect for the inherited and natural environment while creating quality, dynamic built environments;
- Ensure the skills which make up the membership of the Institute will be applied to principles of good planning, efficient land utilisation and sustainability of resources for future generations;
- Institute a continuing education and research program to support and assist the industry and for the benefit of others associated with urban development; and
- Promote greater understanding in the community on the role and achievements of the urban development industry.

What We Do

UDIA NSW engages in a range of activities which include:

- **Advocacy** - Lobbying government so that urban development can be undertaken positively and creatively for the widest benefit;
- **Learning** - Keeping members and associates up to date on critical industry issues and best practice through seminars, conferences and communications. Our regular UDIA journal;
- **Innovation** - Encouraging innovation and excellence through the annual *UDIA NSW Awards for Excellence* and giving exposure to the best in contemporary development throughout the year; and
- **Better Business** – Providing opportunities for business networking and learning.