

PlanSA ePlanning System Improvements Action Plan

A response to feedback received via the 2022 Customer Survey



Introduction

PlanSA's inaugural annual survey was conducted by market research company Action Market Research (AMR) in June-July 2022 to provide feedback on South Australia's ePlanning system. Feedback was obtained from over 1500 users of the system including council staff, planning and building professionals and community members who had interacted with the electronic planning system in the past 12-months. We would like to thank all survey participants for their time and effort in providing us constructive feedback on PlanSA and its ePlanning system.

The survey explored the overall level of customer satisfaction in PlanSA, as a business unit within Planning and Land Use Services (PLUS) and the four elements that make up the ePlanning platform:

- the PlanSA website,
- the Development Application Processing (DAP) system,
- the Online Planning and Design Code, and
- the South Australian Property and Planning Atlas (SAPPA).

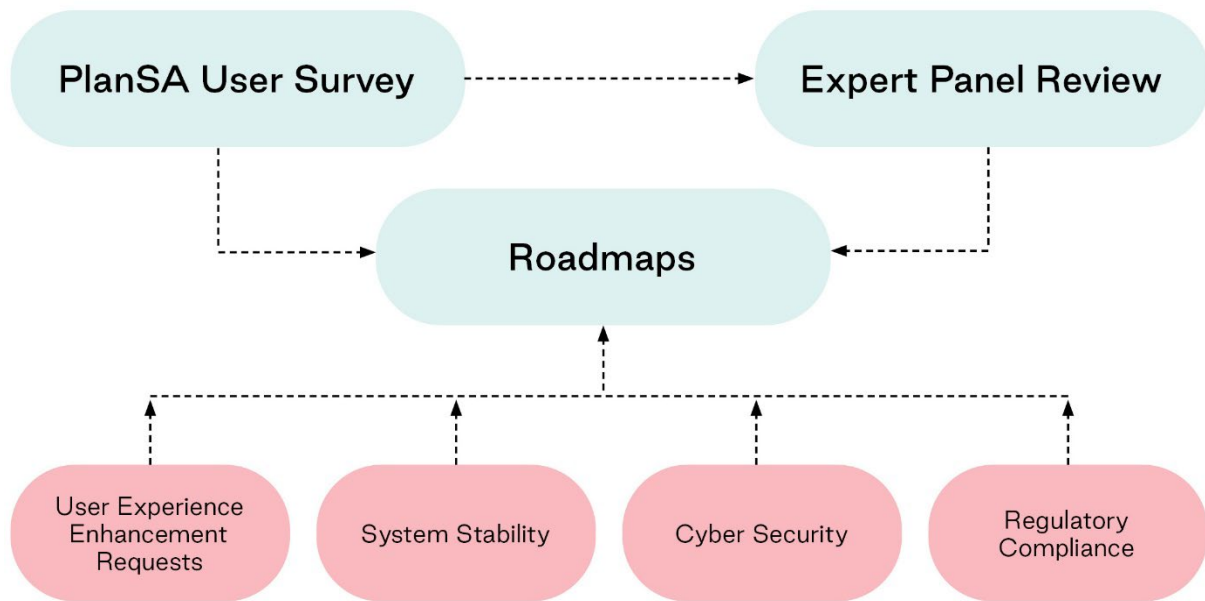
In addition, the survey provided insights into customer satisfaction levels with PlanSA's support services and comparison with the previous planning system, managed individually by South Australian councils.

PlanSA has undertaken a detailed review of the feedback and is implementing a series of system improvements to address the key issues raised, and to further improve the PlanSA customer experience and useability of its systems. A key outcome of this review is the preparation of an Action Plan (this document) that identifies future opportunities and timeframes for delivery.

This Action Plan takes into account feedback from the survey as well as regular feedback from system-users raised through the Service Desk, user forums, and reference groups.

Additionally, the Expert Panel has been convened as part of the Planning System Implementation Review and the Panel has provided preliminary feedback on priority improvements to the system, but will also make recommendations to the Minister on future improvement to the state's planning system.

All of this information will be used to inform the quarterly PlanSA roadmaps that report on [completed](#), [in-progress](#), and [planned](#) enhancement projects. These projects are categorised by system stability, cyber security, regulatory compliance, and user experience improvements and are updated quarterly on the PlanSA portal.



The feedback provided in the PlanSA User Survey has been categorised into groups: community, decision makers, applicants (including volume applications) and referral agencies as outlined below:

User Survey Respondent Groups

Type	Description
Community Members	Users who interact with the PlanSA system in a variety of different ways including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - representors making submissions on development applications - visits to the PlanSA website for information - general interest in development that is occurring within their area, and any relevant planning policies.
Decision Makers (Councils, accredited professionals)	Users who are recognised as Relevant Authorities by the <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i> (the Act) and are responsible for doing assessments and making decisions within the system.
Applicants (including volume applicants)	Users who lodge applications on the portal and manage applications within the DAP.
Referral Agencies	Users who are Government referral agencies that provide direction or advice on applications. The referral agencies are determined through an assessment of the application against Schedule 9 of the Act.

This Action Plan contains PlanSA’s response to the feedback, including preliminary feedback from the Expert Panel, along with the proposed actions and intended timelines to address priorities.

Action Plan

Short Term Priorities (6 Months Implementation)

Improvements to the Section 7 data extract		
Action 1.1	Amend the existing data extract through formatting improvements along with additional information relating to building indemnity insurance and development approval authorisation dates.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data extract is difficult to read and check
PlanSA Response	A review of the data extract will be undertaken against the feedback that has been received by councils and other stakeholders using this extract, including conveyancers. There are opportunities for improvements to the formatting, ordering of conditions and information, and its content based on the framework outlined within the <i>Land and Business (Sales and Conveyancing) Act</i> .	
Group conditions by element type		
Action 1.2	Provide the ability to store conditions and notes grouped by a key so that typically applied conditions and notes can be applied without re-typing or re-selecting from a master condition and notes list.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conditions should be able to be grouped by category i.e., Traffic, stormwater, illumination.
PlanSA Response	This suggested enhancement supports assessment efficiency for decision-makers within the system. The functionality can be extended to general advisory notes and reserved matters. Other enhancements requested by stakeholders through the PlanSA Service Desk such as the ability to order, rename, and preview conditions and notes, will also be included in this project.	

Development Application Processing (DAP) dashboard improvements

Action 1.3

Enhanced dashboard to improve accessibility of relevant information linked to assigned development applications including tasking, assessment clocks, fee, and referral management.

Survey Respondent

Feedback

Council

- Interface is not user-friendly and difficult to navigate
- Dashboards to be consistent across all screens and provide more information

Accredited Professionals

- Finding allocated applications and statuses is difficult
- Should only see applications that are allocated to the user

Referral Agencies

- Applications can currently be filed under numerous tabs - for example 'For your Action' and 'Waiting' at the same time

PlanSA Response

Enhancement requests relating to dashboards account for more than 10 percent of the total number of open enhancement requests received by the Service Desk. As the number of applications within the system increase, the dashboards are becoming increasingly complex to manage within the existing layout and ordering of information. PlanSA will develop a new dashboard design and provide greater flexibility for users to create their own filters to better manage their workloads.

Subscription service improvements

Action 1.4	Create additional subscription options so that community members and system users can subscribe to be notified when certain types of applications are lodged, or where there is a public notification in progress.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Community Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be notified about significant developments in my area
PlanSA Response	The PlanSA website already includes some subscription options, including the ability to subscribe to applications within a council area, and to status changes of Code Amendments. This functionality can be updated to increase the subscription options available to PlanSA users. In future, it will include the ability to be notified of certain forms of development and applications currently on public notice, to allow the community to have their say more easily.	

Map on website showing development applications

Action 1.5	Create a web page on the PlanSA website showing development applications on an interactive map, along with links to the public register development application record.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Community Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be able to locate development applications on a map
PlanSA Response	A Code Amendment Map has previously been introduced to allow users to view Code Amendments by geographical and council area. This existing functionality will be expanded to also display applications on public consultation across the State, including performance assessed, restricted, crown and major developments.	

Creation of a builders database

Action 1.6	Create a centralised database for builder information (or access to Consumer Business Services data) that is integrated into the PlanSA system to remove the requirement for builder data to be re-entered for each application and building notification.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduce the need for multiple data entry points by creating a builders database
PlanSA Response	A project is being considered to centralise builder contact information, so it is entered once, and made available within the DAP, allowing users to search and select a builder rather than enter the contact details each time. As further analysis is required to determine if there can be integration between volume builder IT systems and the DAP, this is out of scope for action 1.6 but will be considered separately.	

Planning and Design Code as a checklist document

Action 1.7	Improve on the existing code policy snapshot by creating a checklist document for planning consents that lists the code rules which can then be used to improve consistency and efficiency.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There should be a checklist in the DAP to be used for assessment
PlanSA Response	Solution options are being considered to convert the code policy snapshot into a checklist document and be made available to decision-makers during the verification and assessment process. This will provide consistency for assessors and relevant authorities.	

Simplified submission process

Action 1.9	Improve and simplify the layout of the application submission form.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve process and encourage better quality of information from applicants
	Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline costs involved at beginning of application• Needs a process map at the top to click forward and back
PlanSA Response	The current development application form in the DAP will be improved to make it easier for applicants to understand and use. The submission process will be assisted by providing a more user-friendly overview of the development application process and the fees that may be applicable through the life of an application.	

Medium Term Priorities (6-12 Month Implementation)

PlanSA website review and re-design		
Action 2.1	The layout of the PlanSA website needs to be redesigned to improve search functionality, access to information, and provide resources tailored to the different user groups.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Community Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to search and navigate • Not mobile friendly • Public notification submission process is tedious
	Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminology is not user-friendly and needs more guides on code and guidelines • Should be easier to navigate • The PlanSA website kept taking me around in circles and it took me 2 hours to find useful information.
PlanSA Response	The website was developed prior to the state-wide ePlanning system and served as the portal for news, information and learning material during the transition to the new planning system. Now that the system has been in operation for more than a year, the current layout of the website will be reviewed to better provide information for the various user groups.	

Archiving inactive development applications

Action 2.2	Enable the ability to lapse development applications where the applicant has not provided mandatory documentation or paid fees within a certain timeframe.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should be a way to lapse or archive inactive development applications
PlanSA Response	There are several applications that have currently been submitted into the system, yet are unable to be formally lodged as the applicant has not provided sufficient information to allow for the completion of the verification process. It is understood this causes frustration for relevant authorities as the applications appear on dashboards and they have no ability to be refused or cancelled. Creating functionality to allow Relevant Authorities the ability to lapse applications, will reduce the impacts in this scenario.	

Direct debit payment options

Action 2.3	Enable Direct Debit as a payment option for larger payment amounts, which are currently limited to paying via credit card.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Accredited Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No direct debit options
PlanSA Response	PlanSA understand that the building and development industry require an alternative option for the payment of fees aside from credit card. A project is being progressed to provide direct debit options for certain users including volume applicants, surveyors and private certifiers.	

Recording emails straight into the DAP system

Action 2.4	Enable relevant authorities to record emails directly into the DAP system and ensure that any suspicious file types are identified and quarantined.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails should be able to be recorded straight into the DAP
PlanSA Response	Currently applicants and relevant authorities, including councils and accredited professionals can only upload emails as a pdf document. From a system stability and cyber security perspective this measure was implemented to ensure that emails containing viruses were not uploaded into the state-wide system. Further investigations are required to determine how emails can be quarantined if viruses are detected prior to implementing this enhancement to allow email file types.	

New online submission Form

Action 2.5	Provide a submission process that is better tailored to the types of users accessing the system and reduce the number of log-in accounts required.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log-in system should be easier • Very time-consuming way of lodging applications, checking on them, notifying mandatory stages of the constructions • The amount of time it takes to find what you want
PlanSA Response	There are many user accounts that have been set-up to access the DAP by applicants that may only ever lodge one application. The number of single-application user accounts will continue to increase over time. The existing submission process will be reviewed to provide a more tailored experience for the different users.	

Improve relevant authority data management

Action 1.8	Enable specific users to rectify errors within the system.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System doesn't have the ability to correct mistakes• Allow relevant authorities to make corrections/adjustments• Information is not easily edited• Councils should be able to remove accidentally linked documents and edit data fields
PlanSA Response	An opportunity exists to investigate increasing the ability for relevant authority users to 'self-service' changes to development applications in the DAP. This seeks to reduce (or potentially remove) the need for PlanSA to manually update the system with some commonly requested changes. Currently these requests are reviewed and approved by a delegate within PLUS. Further investigation is required to determine if relevant authorities could have a designated person within each organisation, who is responsible for making changes and providing a clear audit history about the changes that have been implemented.	

Other Priorities (PDI Act or Regulation change required)

Greater efficiencies in application assessment within the DAP	
Action 3.1	Improvements to development application processing workflow to reduce admin and data entry.
Survey Respondent	Feedback
Accredited Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too linear and lengthy development assessment workflow
Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear nature of the system – inability to do multiple processes at once (planning and building concurrently) • Applicant to pay fees upfront to verify and assess together • Time consuming and at least 15% more admin time required
Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting applications and having to wait 30-days to be asked for information
Referral Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in the referral process, not receiving notice of the referral when the PlanSA portal lists it on the public register • Have a system that saves time
PlanSA Response	<p>Subject to recommendations in the Expert Panel Report.</p> <p>The DAP platform was developed to provide state-wide access to an application processing system for all applicants and decision makers. However, in some cases the requirements of the Act dictate that certain tasks and processes need to be undertaken, which has resulted in the issues above. There is opportunity, with the support of the Expert Panel and the State Government to review the original legislative framework to support greater efficiency in the application assessment.</p>

Building notifications submitted directly into the DAP

Action 3.1	Investigate opportunities to support builders submitting notifications through the DAP, through the integration of software and development of a mobile application.	
	Survey Respondent	Feedback
	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Builders should directly submit building notification instead of email/phone to councils
	Accredited Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streamline building notifications for builders to make it easier for them to submit them• Better integration with volume builders IT systems (e.g., submissions, building notifications)
PlanSA Response	Currently the Act contemplates that building notifications can be submitted either through the DAP or directly to the council by email or phone. The option to notify directly to council, results in additional administrative work as councils then need to manually enter this information from the builders, into the DAP to be able to appropriately manage building inspections. A change to the legal requirements, supported through a process to more easily allow builders to submit notifications, will be explored.	