



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

# DA PROCESS REVIEW

January 2016



# BACKGROUND



- Willoughby City Council undertook a 'Better Services Review' in 2014. This review led to a 'Fit for the Future Improvement Program' as of July 2015. One key improvement initiative identified as part of 'Fit for the Future Improvement Program' was the DA Process Improvement.
- New expectations from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for:
  - increased digitisation of DA tracking information for display on the NSW Planning Portal and
  - preparation for electronic DA lodgement and determination

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Review and document DA process
2. Increase digitisation
3. Reduce process and determination time
4. Maintain (or improve) satisfaction levels of DA applicants
5. Improve consistency of assessment

# KEY FACTS – Jan to Jun 2016



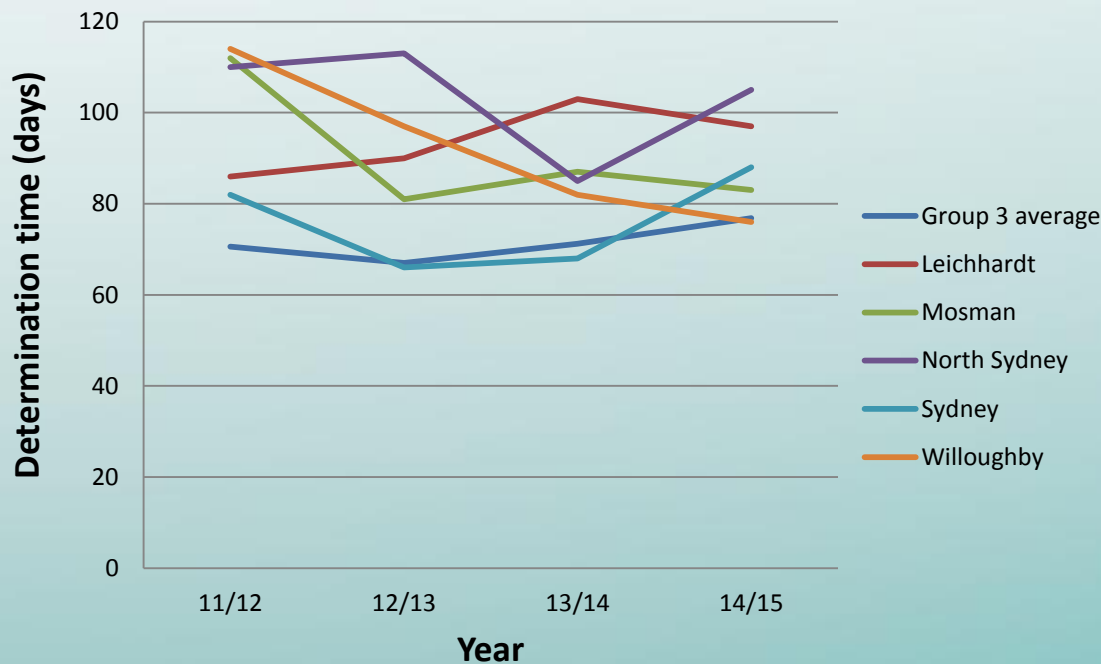
Overall applicant satisfaction post determination	73 % (up from 68 % 14/15)
Number DAs determined (excluding trees)	253
DAs – residential alterations & additions	167 (66%)
Number S96s determined	115
S96s – residential alterations & additions	89 (77%)
Average determination time – All DAs / S96	85 days
– residential alts & adds (DAs + S96)	79 days
- DA residential alts & adds	93 days
- S96 residential alts & adds	51 days

# Comparison with other councils

as published by Department of Planning



### Determination Time - Residential Alterations and Additions



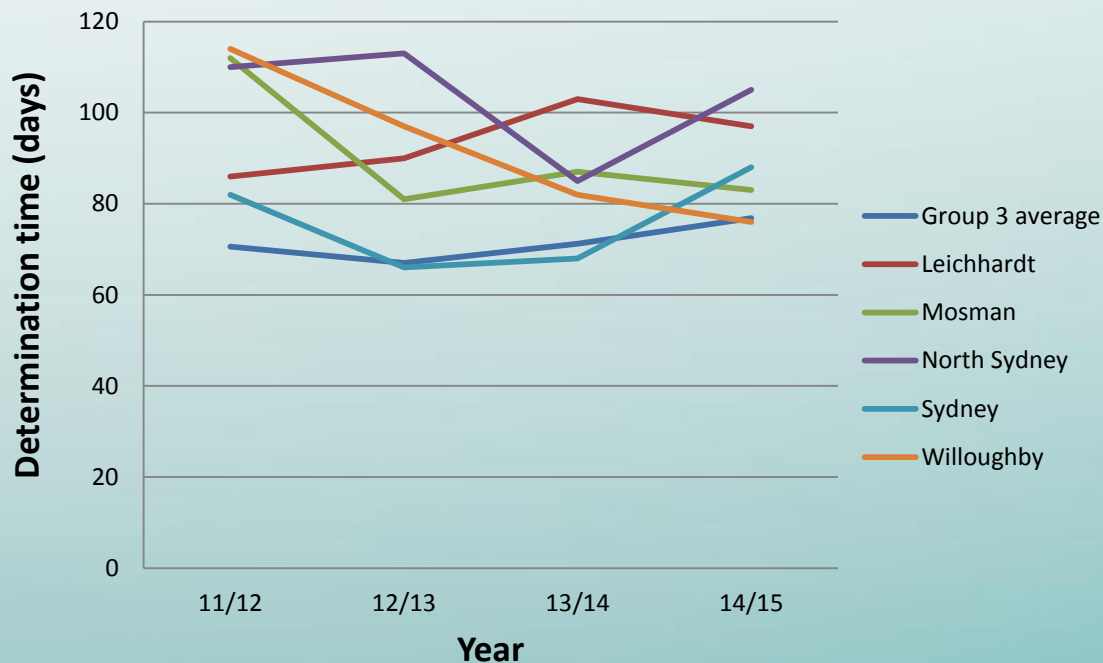
	14/15
<b>Group 3 average</b>	77
<b>Leichhardt</b>	97
<b>Mosman</b>	83
<b>North Sydney</b>	105
<b>Sydney</b>	88
<b>Willoughby</b>	76

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## Determination Time - Residential Alterations and Additions



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	15/16	June-Dec '16
Alts & Adds (DAs)	86	< 70

# Residential Alterations and Additions

## Average determination times by decision type

### Jan – June 2016



- **Approved by Council**
  - Number Determined: 3 Applications
  - Average Processing Time: 206 Days
- **Approved by Ward**
  - Number Determined: 12 Applications
  - Average Processing Time: 162 Days
- **Approved by Staff under Delegation**
  - Number Determined: 137 Applications
  - Average Processing Time: 85 Days

# VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

via ongoing online survey of all applicants of determined Development Applications  
(461 surveys completed of 2184 (21 %) surveys emailed since August 2013)



*Request to “keep the applicant more informed throughout the process”*

*“Council’s DCP is ambiguous”*

*“Long delay between lodgement and communication of issues”*

*“Ward Council process was disappointing”*

*“Willing to negotiate”*

*“Good response time to queries”*

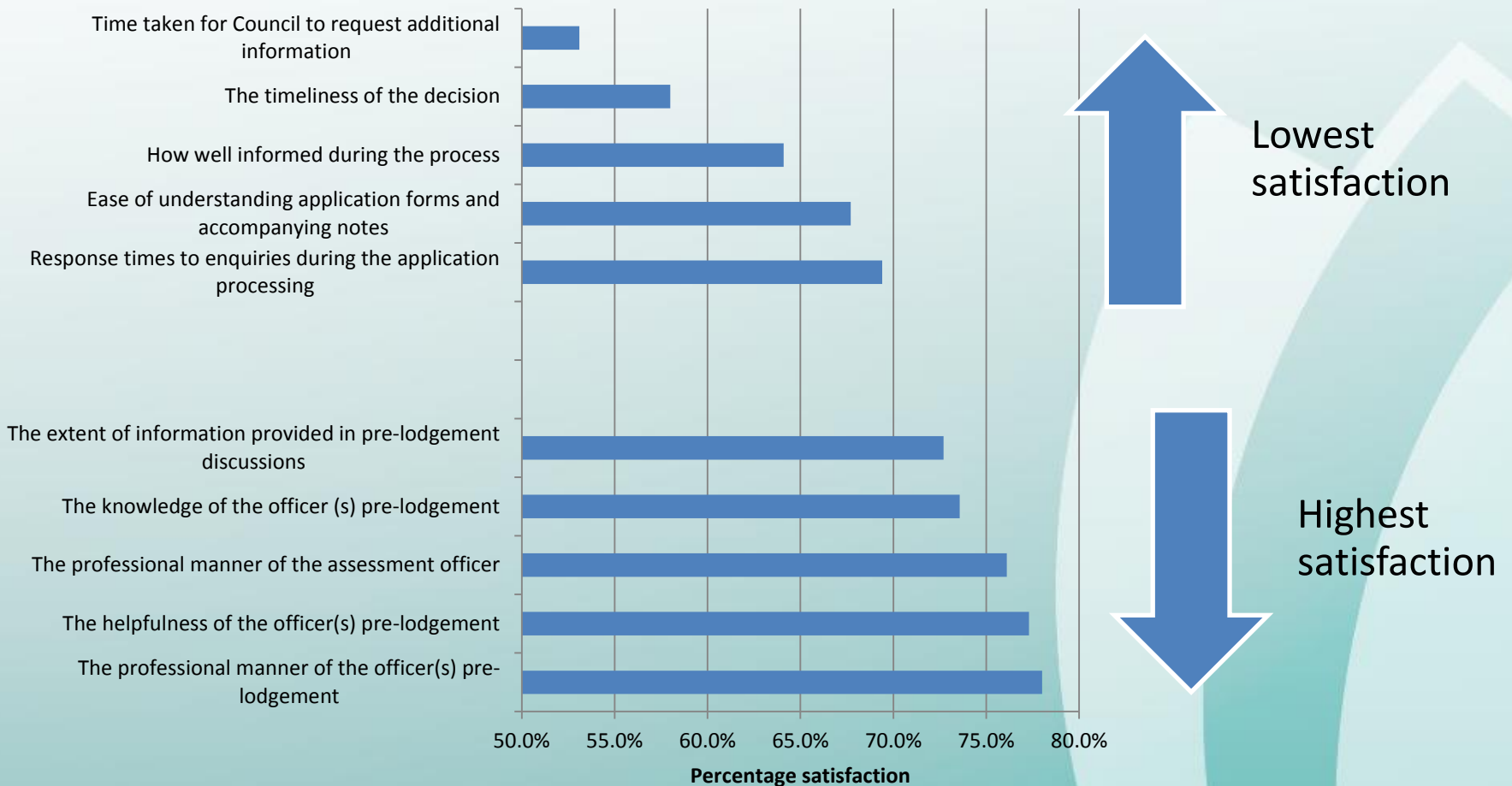
*“Determination time is too long”*

*“Explained what we needed to do to have a trouble free DA at the pre lodgement meeting”*



# Customer Survey

(average during survey – all areas rated above 50%)





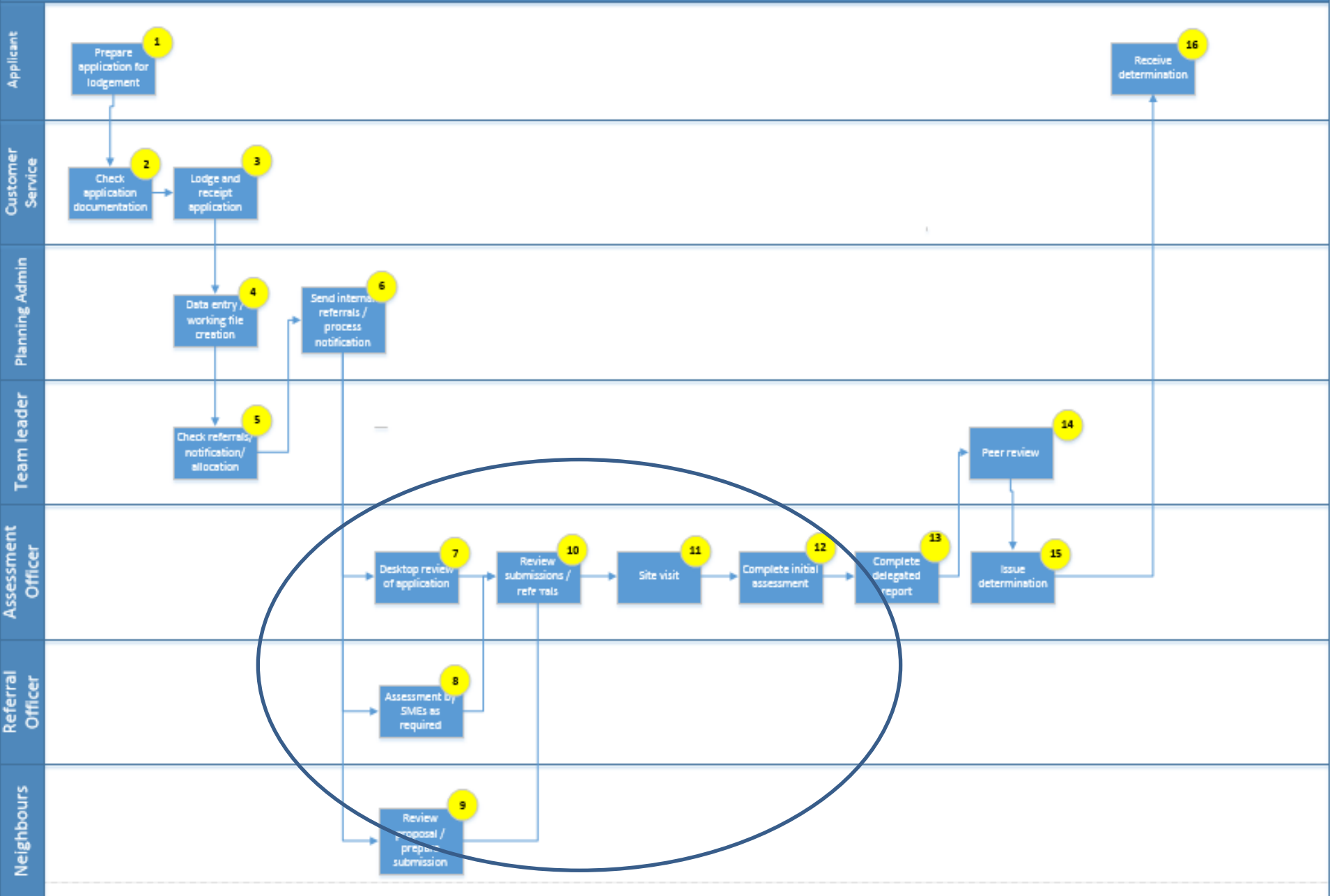
# What we did?



- Mapped process
- Analysed customer feedback
- Analysed data
  - Time per process stage
  - Reasons for additional information requests
  - Development engineers time spent per task type


# Standard Residential DA Process – without additional information requested

Phase



# SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS



No.	Issue Description	Recommendation (s)
1.	<p><b>Lengthy times for additional information requests to be sent to applicant.</b> Average number of days before requests are sent out is 49. 3 of top 5 reasons for additional information are engineering related.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardized assessment process with automatic prompting of key stages – <i>not commenced (To be completed end June)</i></li> <li>Review of ‘Engineering referral’ team processes with consideration of duty officer – <i>in progress (To be completed end March)</i></li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Significant amount of Development Engineers time is spent handling general enquiries.</b></p> <p>Development Engineers spend 25% of their time on general enquiries not related to current DAs they are dealing with.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved website design and information </li> <li>KnowledgeBase articles should be prepared (or revised) - <i>in progress (To be completed end June)</i></li> <li>Customer Service team should be retrained on engineering queries they can handle and which team to direct others to – <i>not commenced (To be completed end June)</i></li> </ul>

# SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS (ctd)






No.	Issue Description	Recommendation(s)
3.	<b>Inconsistent assessment processes</b> resulting in some inconsistent determinations and time taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardise assessment tables </li> <li>Standardise report templates - <i>in progress (To be completed end June)</i></li> <li>Standardise peer review process </li> <li>Implement reporting of stages – <i>(To be completed end June)</i></li> </ul>
4.	<b>Lodgement of incomplete applications</b> which resulted in longer than necessary assessment times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing resident workshops on DA process </li> <li>Additional information (predominantly engineering) provided at pre-lodgement meetings - <i>To be completed end March)</i></li> <li>Additional checklists available (S96 and subdivision) </li> </ul>
5	<b>Lengthy times for applicants to return additional information.</b> (average 48 days between request and receipt of additional information).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prompt to assessing officer on due date for additional information (To be completed end June)</li> <li>Sending “firm” reminder to applicants </li> <li>“Plain English” Eng. Req.s (To be completed end March)</li> </ul>

# Customer Journey Improvements





based on feedback from applicants over past 3 years



Stage	2014	Current
<b>Pre lodgement</b>	Limited information online	Improved online general information on development process. Searchable LEP and DCP  <i>Online investigate option for specific developments - In progress (To be completed end 2017)</i>
	Pre-lodgement meetings booked by phone	<i>Able to book and pay online for meeting (set-up complete in Zipporah) – in progress (To be completed end June)</i>
<b>Lodgement</b>	6 hardcopies of all documents required	Electronic copy + 3 hardcopies required 
	No guidelines provided on what to expect during assessment	Letter advising applicant “what to expect” during assessment and how to check progress via online tracker 


# Customer Journey



Stage	2014	Current
<b>Lodgement</b>	No guidelines provided on what to expect during assessment (ctd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshops being run for prospective DA applicants</li> </ul> 
<b>Notification</b>	Only property owners notified	Occupiers as well as owners notified 
<b>Assessment</b>	Minimal communication from assessment officer	Improved online application tracking  <i>Prompt advice of additional information requirements – in progress (To be completed end June)</i>
<b>Determination</b>	Determination documents provided via mail	All determination documents provided electronically 

# ESTIMATED BENEFITS



Type	Estimation	Status
Improved efficiency - electronic stamping	22 hrs pw	
Improved efficiency - electronic signatures	768 applications x 0.25 hr = 192 hours pa	Initially trialling with tree removal applications
Community satisfaction increased – improved information online 24/7 (also reduces phone calls)	<i>Not measured yet</i>	To measure with overall Council customer satisfaction survey
Applicant satisfaction - reduced determination time	<i>Slight increase</i>	Ongoing
Improved ability to meet ePlanning requirements from Dept Planning via online tracking and electronic signatures and stamping	Reduced time required to prepare for DOP changes in 2017	DOP Requirements have not been clearly advised to date

# Future stage reviews



- DCP controls for engineering matters with aim to simplify and reduce controls for residential low density areas (2017 – 2018)