

Case study: the importance of development compliance from an asset managers perspective

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Councils have a responsibility to ensure that development within their region is provided to an acceptable standard. The majority of development work is assessed under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 by local governments. This provides a consistent and rigorous process, which ensures that the planning approvals meet community expectations.

The Sunshine Coast is one of the largest regional economies in Australia. Along with an increasing population is a need for accelerated development to provide infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing community. Sunshine Coast Council is assessing an increasing number of applications and subsequently receiving a greater number of contributed assets from infrastructure agreements. With contributed council assets reaching an all-time high, asset managers are stressing the importance of adequate planning and compliance of developments to minimise the number of complaints post development and receive the best outcome for the community.

This paper outlines a case study by Sunshine Coast Council's stormwater asset managers, and highlights the lessons learnt from investigating community concerns raised over a prior subdivision. These particular concerns had been ongoing since development handover and investigated by various council officers over a number of years. By referencing the original development conditions set by council, it was possible to identify that there had been an issue with the compliance of those conditions, and ultimately the problems were able to be better understood and appropriate resolution actions undertaken.

Lessons learnt from this example include the significance of adequate record keeping, the importance of accurate as-constructed plans and asset hand-over processes, as well as the value in conducting a thorough review of archived development files. The case study also demonstrates that having appropriately trained officers, who have the skills and knowledge to be able to understand historical development conditions, can reduce community complaints and capital expenditure on unnecessary works.