



Byron Shire Council Development Factsheet

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING CONSULTANTS TO PREPARE YOUR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

Planning law is complex and specialised. Whilst Council officers can advise you on some aspects of your proposal, they cannot prepare the application for you, or give you detailed technical or legal advice. Should you decide not to prepare the application yourself, you can engage an experienced consultant or consultants to assist you. Council staff **cannot** recommend consultants, however the following are some suggested guidelines for choosing a consultant.

1. Consultants can be found through the Yellow Pages. For example:
 - Planners under “Town and Regional Planning”
 - Engineers under “Engineers Consulting”
 - Environmental scientists under “Environmental &/ or Pollution Consultants”
 - Registered surveyors under “Surveyors – Land”.
2. You are advised to contact at least 3 consultants to determine the professional most suited for the purpose.
3. Consultants should be willing to undertake a site inspection to enable the scope of the job to be determined so that a reasonably accurate cost can be quoted. Consultants must ensure that they understand exactly what they are being asked to do and should confirm any discussions in writing so that both parties understand the tasks to be undertaken.
4. The person engaging the consultant should confirm that the consultant is professionally qualified in the relevant field of expertise. Consultants should be eligible for membership of their respective professional association (eg. IE Aust for Engineers, RAPI or PIA for Planners).
5. The consultant should always be willing to provide a quotation or an estimate of expected costs for the work.
6. It is a good idea to check that the consultant has had some experience in submitting DAs to Byron Shire Council, although this should not preclude the use of those who have not.
7. The consultant should be able to give a good estimate of the time line to complete the project. If this is not the case it may be that the consultant is very busy, and the job may take more time than usual.
8. Ask the consultant for referees and examples of similar work they have undertaken.
9. A consultant should never guarantee that a DA will be approved. This is beyond the control of the consultant, and while they may do a good job in preparing the DA submission, there is never any guarantee that it will be approved by Council.
10. A consultant in any one of the specialist fields mentioned can act as a project manager for the other professions involved in the DA submission, but should not practice a profession for which he or she is not qualified. Thus it is common for a planner to put together a DA submission and rely on the input of other professionals such as engineers, ecologists or other environmental professionals, or vice versa.
11. If sub-consultants are used, the client should ensure that they are appropriately qualified prior to accepting an offer from the project consultant.

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