

Planning fights go back to the fence

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NEIGHBOURS will be urged to settle development disputes by thrashing out their differences over the back fence under changes to planning laws.

Planning Minister Frank Sartor said residents will be encouraged to talk out issues to avoid long, costly legal fights.

Mr Sartor tabled the "landmark" reforms in Parliament this week claiming they would streamline planning processes for families.

But he said Land and Environment Court appeals would continue for unresolved cases.

The Government had made more than 50 changes to the legislation including a proposal to allow land to be seized for urban renewal.

Urban Taskforce chief executive Aaron Gadiel said plans to expand the categories of development regarded as complying with planning rules would help home-owners to expand or rebuild their houses.

Executive Director of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce Patricia Forsythe said the new laws would bring common sense back to the planning system.