

## Proposal to consult neighbours rejected

Forcing builders and homeowners to consult neighbours before lodging plans was "like encouraging drivers to decide through discussion on which side of the road to drive on", a developer lobby group claims.

The Urban Taskforce has also warned NSW Planning Minister Rob Stokes' idea to give councils and their independent assessment panels responsibility for more development applications risks slowing processing times.

On Thursday, Mr Stokes revealed he was revisiting the state government's failed bid in 2013 to overhaul the state's planning act. Among a number of pro-

posals is the idea that developers and homeowners could be required to consult affected neighbours before lodging a DA with a council.

Mr Stokes said this would help remove the "hostility" generated by the current system whereby neighbours are notified only after a DA is lodged by removing the element of surprise.

But Chris Johnson, chief exec of the Urban Taskforce, said the minister "seems to be telling communities that they can set the rules in discussion with an applicant". Mr Johnson said planning "needs clear rules".

Sean Nicholls



Chris Johnson