

ROGER FREEMAN WINS UDIA(SA) PUBLIC SECTOR AWARD 2009

Roger Freeman, Principal Planner in the Department of Local Government and Planning, has been awarded the UDIA(SA) Public Sector Service Award for 2009.

The UDIA Government / Local Government Service Award - for outstanding service from someone in either State or Local Government - was first introduced in 2000 to recognise contributions to the urban development industry by individuals working within the public sector.

To be considered, potential recipients must have given at least ten years exemplary service to the development industry; have a strong record of working co-operatively with industry to improve systems and processes; ensure timely approvals; and explore innovations and new ideas which raise standards or reduce costs in the industry.

They must also have demonstrated their ability to understand and positively address issues without compromising their own organisation.

Any planning system is only as good as the people who administer it – and Roger Freeman, is one of the best.

Since 1996 he has been responsible for the assessment functions of the State Development Assessment Commission and has acted as its delegate in making a large number of decisions.

This is a critical role for the development industry – one that requires sound judgement, strong customer skills, a commitment to good development outcomes and a large dose of pragmatism.

The industry is very fortunate that Roger brings all these things – and more – to the often sensitive and complex matters that he is responsible for.

He is accessible, positive, solutions-oriented and unfailingly good-natured. He looks first at the merits of a proposal, how to make it better and how to make it happen, rather than viewing everything primarily through the risk-averse “black letter law” framework of the Development Act.

While his knowledge of the statutory system is second to none, and his ethics and integrity are beyond reproach, his focus is on the intention of the Act and the attainment of good planning outcomes, rather than being driven by statutory compliance.

If he does not know the answer, he will find it for you. If he says he will do something, he will. He is even-handed and personable with everyone he deals with.

Of course, there are times when Roger has to deliver bad news to applicants – the answer cannot always be “yes”!

But for Roger bad news is a last resort and is usually delivered after all the other options have been exhausted. Most importantly, Roger deals with everyone in an open, straight and transparent way.

Roger is a diligent and conscientious servant of the public in the broadest and most strategic sense. The development sector – and indeed the communities of the State – would be much the poorer without him.