**Project Proposal Template**

**Project Title:** *Exempt Development A/MLI tool for sheds and patios*

**Project Owner Details (contact details won’t be shared unless consent provided):**

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**Executive Summary:** Every year, councils receive thousands of enquiries from homeowners, builders, and property purchasers asking what they can and cannot do on a specific parcel of land. Common questions include:

* *Can I subdivide my property?*
* *Can I build a shed or patio—and how big can it be?*
* *What approvals do I need for a retaining wall?*

These are reasonable questions—but the answers are not always simple. They require referencing multiple planning instruments, including the [Albury Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2010-0433), the [State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt & Complying Development Codes) 2008,](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2008-0572) and the [Albury Development Control Plan (DCP) 2010](https://www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/property/plan/planning-controls/dcp). Users must also interpret zoning, minimum lot sizes, and the appropriate development pathway: Exempt, Complying Development, or full Development Application (DA).

The challenge is to build a prototype AI or rule-based tool to assist with these common planning queries, for only small-scale residential structures - sheds and patios. The aim is to improve timing of responses, reduce friction for potential builders and property purchasers, and demonstrate how AI can modernise public-facing planning advice.

**Background:**

In New South Wales, determining what can be built on a property requires navigating complex planning regulations. For simple structures like sheds and patios, residents often struggle to understand whether their proposal qualifies for Exempt Development (no approval required) or needs formal development approval.

The [State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 (SEPP)](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2008-0572) provides standardised rules for exempt development across NSW, but interpreting these legal documents can be challenging for property owners. A digital assessment tool could simplify this process by automating the rule-checking process and providing clear guidance.

**Objectives: (key functional requirements)**

Design and develop a web-based prototype that can:

1. Assess shed and patio proposals against [SEPP](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2008-0572) Exempt Development criteria
2. Provide clear recommendations on whether a proposal qualifies as Exempt Development or requires a Development Application
3. Explain the reasoning behind each recommendation with reference to specific planning clauses
4. Deliver a user-friendly interface that guides and prompts residents through the assessment process

**Scope (A list of prioritised, must-haves, nice-to-haves and optional outcomes)**

**Planning Framework:**

* [State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt Development) 2008 only](https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2008-0572) - Must have
* Focus on Part 2 (Exempt Development) criteria for:
  + Sheds and similar structures
  + Patios, pergolas, and carports

**Geographic Focus:**

* Albury LGA context (for realistic property examples) - Must have
* 10-15 sample properties with different characteristics (urban, rural, different lot sizes) – could have

**Technical Features:**

* Web-based assessment form - Must have
* Rules-based decision engine (not AI/ML) - Must have
* Clear recommendation output with explanations – could have
* Reference links to relevant SEPP clauses – should have
* Basic validation and error handling – should have

**User Journey:**

1. User selects property type/location from sample options – must have
2. User inputs proposed structure details (dimensions, location) - Must have
3. System applies SEPP exempt development rules – Must have
4. System returns recommendation with explanation – Should have

**Out of Scope**

* Multiple planning instruments (LEP, DCP)
* Live GIS data integration
* Complex environmental overlays
* Complying Development pathways (focus on Exempt only)
* Multiple council areas
* Subdivision or complex development types

**Data / Materials Availability:**

*The data is available and is online. To be built in our environment is preferred.*

**Intellectual Property:**

*AlburyCity to own IP – but aim for it to be available to allow further development by another group of students in the future.*