

Fact Sheet 7: Tiny homes

Noosa Plan 2020 – As amended 26 September 2025

What is a tiny home?

A *tiny home* (or *tiny house*) refers to a small, compact, self-contained dwelling. These homes may be either permanently fixed to a site or designed to be movable, such as those built on trailers or wheels.

While sizes can vary, *tiny homes* typically have a floor area of no more than 45m². They differ widely in construction quality and interior fit-out, with some incorporating sustainable design features and off-grid living capabilities.

When is a tiny home a dwelling?

A *tiny home* is classified as a *dwelling* if it:

- is fixed to the land;
- is capable of being used as a self-contained residence, and
- includes facilities such as a food preparation area, a bath or shower, a toilet, a wash basin and clothes washing facilities.

A tiny home as a dwelling house

If a *tiny home* is the only dwelling on an otherwise vacant lot, it must comply with all relevant requirements for a *dwelling house* under Noosa Plan 2020. This includes meeting any zone-specific provisions, such as setback distances, site coverage, and building height¹. If the requirements are not met, a development approval will be required.

A tiny home as a secondary dwelling

When a *tiny home* is proposed in addition to an existing *dwelling house* on the same lot, it is considered a *secondary dwelling* under Noosa Plan 2020. In this case, the *tiny home* must comply with all relevant requirements for a *secondary dwelling*² under Noosa Plan 2020. If the requirements are not met, a development approval will be required.

A tiny home as caretaker's accommodation or a dwelling unit

When a *tiny home* is proposed on a commercial or industrial lot, it may be considered *caretaker's accommodation* or a *dwelling unit*³. In this case, the *tiny home* will require a development approval under Noosa Plan 2020.

Connection to Services

When a *tiny home* is proposed as a permanent dwelling (including the below Temporary Home use), and where located within an urban area, the *tiny home* must be connected to the following essential services:

- reticulated water supply and sewerage
- stormwater drainage, and
- telecommunications infrastructure (where available).

If reticulated water supply is not available, the property must be fitted with rainwater tanks providing a capacity of:

- 45,000 litres – where the *tiny home* is the only dwelling on the property.
- 60,000 litres (combined total) – where the *tiny home* is the *secondary dwelling* alongside a primary residence.

If reticulated sewerage is not available, the *tiny home* must be connected to an on-site effluent treatment and disposal system that complies with relevant health and environmental standards.

Additional tiny home approval requirements

A permanent *tiny home* requires a building approval, obtained through a private certifier, and a plumbing approval, obtained through Council.

¹ Refer to **Fact Sheet 2: Building a dwelling house**

² Refer to **Fact Sheet 3: Secondary dwellings**

³ Refer to **Fact Sheet 10: Caretaker's accommodation and Dwelling unit**

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A tiny home as a temporary home while building a new dwelling house

Under Council's [Subordinate Local Law No 1 \(Administration\) 2015](#), you may apply to live in a temporary home - such as a caravan, van or a *Tiny Home on Wheels* (THOW) on private land while constructing a permanent residence on the property. Contact Council's Environmental Health team for further information on temporary home applications.

When is a tiny home a caravan?

A *Tiny Home on Wheels* (THOW) may be classified as a caravan or recreational vehicle (RV) rather than a dwelling, depending on its design, registration, and intended use.

- If a THOW is built on a trailer or wheels and registered as a caravan or trailer, it is legally considered a caravan under Queensland law.
- As a caravan, the THOW must be lawfully parked and cannot be connected to reticulated water or sewerage systems.
- A THOW is not considered a *dwelling* under the *Local Government Act* and therefore cannot be used as a permanent residence.

Under these conditions, a THOW:

- May only be used for temporary accommodation while travelling, not for long-term or permanent living in one location.
- Cannot be rented out as short-term visitor accommodation or leased as a permanent residence.

Additionally, a THOW registered as a caravan is not required to comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA). However, the BCA remains a valuable benchmark for ensuring a safe and comfortable temporary living environment, particularly in areas such as fire safety, structural integrity and accessibility.

Can multiple tiny homes be accommodated on a rural block?

Permanent residential accommodation

Multiple *tiny homes* for permanent residential use on a lot is considered a *multiple dwelling* under Noosa Plan 2020, which is an **inconsistent** use and is not supported in the Rural or Rural Residential Zones.

Visitor accommodation – Short-term accommodation

Rural⁴ and Rural Residential⁵ zoned properties of at least 4 hectares may utilise multiple permanently fixed *tiny homes* (in the form of *cabins*) for *short-term accommodation*, subject to specific requirements and Council approval. Any *short-term accommodation* in these zones must be located on the same site as the applicant's principal place of residence.

Visitor accommodation - Tourist park

Rural zoned properties of at least 10 hectares may host up to five fully self-contained RVs / caravans / THOWs (where the guests are accommodated in their own vehicle) for short-term stays of no more than four nights, provided they are located on the same site as the applicant's principal place of residence.

Do I need Council planning approval?

Table 1 provides guidance on when development approval will be necessary for a *tiny home*.

Are Infrastructure Charges Payable?

Infrastructure charges do not apply to *dwelling houses* and *secondary dwellings* (as of 1 July 2025).

Infrastructure charges do apply to *caretaker's accommodation*, *dwelling unit*, *multiple dwelling*, *short-term accommodation* and *tourist park* uses.

This Fact Sheet is intended to assist with interpreting Noosa Plan 2020 and **should not be solely relied on to inform decisions**.

Prior to making decisions or undertaking any development, it is strongly recommended that applicants:

- Review all the requirements of Noosa Plan 2020, and/or
- Seek advice from a qualified planning professional.

Noosa Plan 2020 is available online at: <https://noosaplan.noosa.qld.gov.au/eplan>

For further information or assistance, contact Council's Development Assessment team:

☎ (07) 5329 6500

✉ planning@noosa.qld.gov.au

⁴ Refer to Fact Sheet 25: Short-term accommodation in the Rural zone

⁵ Refer to Fact Sheet 24: Short-term accommodation in the Rural Residential zone

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Intended use and circumstances of <i>Tiny home</i>	Approvals required
<p>A single tiny home that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fixed to the land; ▪ being used to provide permanent onsite accommodation; ▪ the only dwelling on the lot, or is a <i>secondary dwelling</i>; and ▪ located in any of the following zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low, Medium or High Density Residential; or ○ Rural or Rural Residential. 	<p>This will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ building approval; and ▪ plumbing approval. <p>A planning approval may also be required if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the use does not meet the requirements for accepted development within the zone; or ▪ a <i>dwelling house</i>¹/<i>secondary dwelling</i>² is assessable development in the relevant zone; or ▪ the site is affected by overlays which require planning assessment.
<p>A single tiny home that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fixed to the land; ▪ being used to provide permanent onsite accommodation; ▪ the only dwelling on the lot; and ▪ located on a commercial or industrial lot. 	<p>This will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ building approval; ▪ plumbing approval; ▪ planning approval for either <i>caretaker's accommodation</i> or a <i>dwelling unit</i>³.
<p>A single tiny home that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ on wheels; ▪ registered as a caravan or trailer; and ▪ used to provide a temporary home only while an approved house is being constructed on the same property. 	<p>This will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a permit under Council's Subordinate Local Law No.1; ▪ building approval; and ▪ plumbing approval.
<p>A single tiny home on wheels that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ registered as a caravan or trailer; ▪ parked lawfully on private property; ▪ only used for accommodation while travelling away from home; ▪ not connected to services (i.e. water, sewer); and ▪ not rented out. 	<p>No approvals required - this is a caravan or recreational vehicle and must be lawfully registered as such.</p>
<p>Multiple tiny homes on wheels that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ registered as caravans or trailers; ▪ parked lawfully on private property; ▪ only used for accommodation by persons travelling away from home; ▪ not connected to services (i.e. water, sewer); and ▪ not rented out. 	<p>A Rural zoned lot exceeding 10 hectares that includes a principal place of residence may accommodate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Up to 5 fully self-contained THOW's may be parked on-site at any one time, where the THOWs are brought to the site by their individual owners for overnight stays. This use may not require planning approval under the Noosa Plan 2020; however, confirmation should be sought from Noosa Council to ensure compliance. ▪ More than 5 and up to 25 fully self-contained THOWs on-site at any one time is classified as a <i>tourist park</i> and will require planning approval.
<p>Multiple tiny homes that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fixed to the land; and ▪ being used to provide short-term visitor accommodation. 	<p>Rural and Rural Residential zoned lots exceeding 4 hectares⁶ and where meeting specific requirements will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ building approval; ▪ plumbing approval; ▪ planning approval for <i>short-term accommodation</i>.

⁶ This form of short-term accommodation is inconsistent on lots less than 4 hectares in size

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