

Tiny Houses

Updated March 2024



DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

WHAT IS A TINY HOUSE?

Tiny houses are small, compact dwellings that are often fully self-contained. Tiny houses can:

- be designed to be relocatable (e.g. on a trailer or wheels) or stationary;
- range in size but are generally significantly smaller than a standard dwelling; and
- be designed and built using green principles and provide an affordable housing option, while minimising land consumption and impact.

DO I NEED COUNCIL APPROVAL FOR MY TINY HOUSE?

Unless your tiny house is on wheels and in an approved Caravan Park, Council approval is required.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation about tiny houses, and some people buying these buildings have been told that no approvals are required from

councils. This is not correct; any building requires building approval and plumbing approval before being installed on land.

The approvals required depends on how the tiny house is constructed/ used and the property characteristics (i.e. zoning, overlays).

Council approvals that may be required include:

- Development approval for a Material change of use (a planning approval);
- Development approval for Building work (a building approval);
- Permit for Plumbing and drainage work (a plumbing approval);
- A local law approval for a Temporary Home.

It is strongly recommended advice be obtained from Council regarding the approvals required for your tiny house, so your specific circumstances (i.e. intended use, zoning, overlays) can be taken into consideration.



HOW CAN I FIND OUT THE APPLICABLE PLANNING SCHEME, ZONE AND OVERLAYS FOR MY PROPERTY?

Council's [ePlan](#) can be used to determine the applicable Planning Scheme, zone and any overlays for your property.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A PLANNING APPLICATION?

Council's [Application Requirements and Processing Fact Sheet](#) details all information required to be lodged with the Planning application.

BUILDING APPROVAL

The building approval process for a tiny house is the same as for any Class 1a Dwelling. This means the tiny house must be built to a Class 1a dwelling standard, i.e. be built by a QBCC licensed builder, be on engineered footings or stumps, and come with the necessary certificates required to obtain a Form 21 – Final Certificate.

Footings, structural steel, and reinforced concrete portions of building work all need to be certified by a Registered Professional Engineer Queensland (RPEQ). Also, any works outside the scope of AS1684 (Timber Framing Code) will need to be certified by an RPEQ.

Many of the commercially sold tiny houses have been imported into Australia and may not meet Australian standards. Before buying one of these buildings, you should ask for written certification that building, plumbing and electrical works have been carried out in accordance with Australian requirements.

Certificates and documents required include, but are not limited to:

- Approved structural plans and specifications;
- Engineers Form 15 for the structure and the footing/pier design;
- Glazing for shower screens, mirrors, windows and doors;
- Wet area sealing;
- Smoke alarms;
- Energy efficiency report;
- Roof truss;
- Termite protection;
- Soil test.

It is recommended advice be obtained from a Building Certifier to ensure your proposed tiny house complies with the requirements of the building assessment provisions. This advice can be provided by a Private Building Certifier or Council's Building Certifier can be contacted on 1300 005 872.

This fact sheet is designed to be a guide to the Planning Scheme and tiny houses. Additional information can be obtained from the relevant Planning Scheme. If you require further specific information, please contact Council's Customer Service on 1300 005 872.

Please note this fact sheet may be updated by Council at any time with the most recent version available on Council's website. If you have a printed copy, please see Council's website to ensure you have the latest version. ■

Need further
information?

PLUMBING APPROVAL

It is recommended advice be obtained from Council's Plumbing Team to ensure your tiny house and associated on-site effluent disposal system (where required) complies with the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018*.

Council's Plumbing Team can be contacted on 1300 005 872.

TEMPORARILY LIVING IN A TINY HOUSE OR CARAVAN

If you propose to reside in a caravan (or shed) temporarily while you construct a dwelling on the same land, you will require a Temporary Home permit under Council's *Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011* and *Subordinate Local Law No. 1.3 (Establishment or Occupation of a Temporary Home) 2011*. You must have obtained building and plumbing approvals for the dwelling, and you must also have appropriate facilities available (potable water, toilet, shower, etc.).

Council's Local Laws Team can be contacted for further information on these requirements on 1300 005 872.

COUNCIL APPROVALS

The below table is a guide to what approvals are required for a tiny house.

Intended use of tiny house	Is approval required?
A Tiny House: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on wheels and registered as a caravan or trailer; parked lawfully; only used for accommodation while travelling away from home; not connected to services (i.e. water, sewerage); and not rented out. 	No. A tiny house on wheels is a caravan. No approval is required to store a caravan on your land. A caravan can be used for accommodation only if parked within an approved Caravan Park.
A Tiny House: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on wheels or not on wheels; and used as a temporary home while an approved house is being constructed on the same land. 	Yes, a permit is required under Council's Local Laws for a Temporary Home. The permit will allow use of the temporary home for a limit period (say six months). A building approval for the Dwelling house to be constructed must first be obtained. A Building Approval from a building certifier may also be required for the tiny house.
A Tiny House: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not on wheels; used to provide permanent accommodation; and will be the only dwelling on the lot. 	Yes, Building and Plumbing Approvals are required. Planning Approval may also be required depending on the zoning and overlays relevant to the land.
All other uses of a tiny house, this may include (but is not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tiny house used as permanent accommodation; tiny house used as an addition to an existing dwelling; tiny house used as an additional dwelling; tiny house rented out for either short-term or long-term accommodation; or tiny house used for guest accommodation or storage. 	Yes, Building and Plumbing Approvals are required. Planning Approval may also be required depending on the zoning and overlays relevant to the land.