

FACT SHEET: Tiny Houses

What is a "tiny house" (or container home)?

A tiny house is a small, compact dwelling that ranges in size but is generally much smaller than a typical dwelling. It can be stationary or mobile and is usually self-contained. They can be fixed with footings and connected to sewerage and water infrastructure, or on wheels and able to be registered (like a RV or caravan).

Do I need Council approval for my tiny house or container home?

Any fixed tiny house or container home requires building and plumbing approvals before being installed on a property. In some instances, they may also require a planning approval. If the tiny house is on wheels, it may be used for temporary accommodation only and is regulated by Council's local laws. Unless your tiny house is on wheels and in a caravan park, you will require Council approval.

The approvals which may be needed include:

- Development Approval for Building Work (a building approval)
- Compliance Permit for Plumbing and Drainage Work (a plumbing approval)
- Development Approval for a Material Change of Use for a Dwelling House (a planning approval)
- A Local Law Approval for a Temporary Home.

How can I find out the relevant Planning Scheme zone and overlays for my property?

You can view and download a property report for a selected property on Council's [website](#). The property report will show you what zone the property is located in and any overlays (such as flooding) that are on the property.

To find out what the zoning and overlays mean, please see the [Western Downs Planning Scheme 2017](#). You can also view the relevant [Zone Card](#) for the property which provides information on the planning intent of each zone and the types of development supported and not supported in each zone. The zone cards may be useful to you in understanding if your development will be supported in the zone of the property you have selected. To view current and past Development Applications that have been lodged within our region, you can use Council's [Development.i](#).

Can I live temporarily in a Tiny House or Caravan?

If you propose to reside in a tiny house, caravan, or shed temporarily whilst you construct a Dwelling House on the property, you will require a Temporary Home Approval 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 (and planning if required) for the Dwelling House, and you must also have appropriate facilities available (potable water, toilet, shower, etc.). Please see the [Temporary Homes Fact Sheet](#) or Contact Council's Local Laws Team further information on these requirements.

Do I need a Plumbing Approval?

You will require a Plumbing Approval for your tiny house. 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* and the *National Construction Code*, Volume 3. For more information on Plumbing, please see Council's [Plumbing](#) webpage.

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Do I need a Building Approval?

You will require a Building Approval for a tiny house, the same as what is required for any Class 1a Dwelling. The tiny house must be built to a Class 1a dwelling standard with the necessary certificates required to obtain a Form 21 - Final Certificate from a Building Certifier. This includes compliance with the National Construction Code (NCC), legislation, Australian Standards and Codes. It must be built by a QBCC licensed builder on an engineered slab, footings or stumps, and have RPEQ engineer certification. Other requirements for your proposed tiny home will be advised by your Building Designer and/or Building Certifier.

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 for a Class 1a Dwelling are outlined in this fact sheet or can be advised by your chosen Building Designer and/or Building Certifier.

Approvals Overview

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

Intended use of tiny house	Is approval required?
<p>A tiny house:</p> <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) • Not rented out 	<p>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 Tourist (Caravan) Park.</p>
<p>A tiny house:</p> <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. 	<p>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 limited period. A building approval for the Dwelling House to be constructed must first be obtained.</p>
<p>A tiny house:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not on wheels • Used to provide permanent accommodation,; and • Will be the only dwelling on the lot 	<p>Yes, Building and Plumbing Approvals are required. A Planning Approval may also be required depending on the zoning and overlays relevant to the property.</p>
<p>All other uses of a tiny house not mentioned above, this may include (but is not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Yes, Building and Plumbing Approvals are required. A Planning Approval may also be required depending on the zoning and overlays relevant to the land.</p>