

NOOSA PLANNING SCHEME POLICY 23— TELECOMMUNICATION TOWERS

Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to —

- a) Encourage telecommunication towers to only be located in areas that will not cause impact on existing character;
- b) Provide site selection criteria to assist applicants;
- c) Ensure that telecommunication towers meet the aims of The Noosa Plan; and
- d) Provide guidance to the community, Council and its staff in the assessment of development applications for telecommunication towers.

1. Low impact facilities

- a) The *Telecommunications (Low Impact Facilities) Determination 1997* defines low impact facilities that remain under the control of the Commonwealth Government. Facilities that are not specified in the Determination cannot be considered low impact facilities and may be regulated by the Noosa Plan. A copy of the Determination is available from the Australian Government Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. (Check their website at: <http://www.dcita.gov.au/>).
- b) In some cases additional equipment added to existing facilities may be determined to be a minor change. Where there is an existing approval in place, such minor changes may only require a change to the development approval. An application process is involved, however there is no public notification period, refer to Section 3.5.24¹ and 3.5.33² of the *Integrated Planning Act*.
- c) The Telecommunication industry is encouraged to comply with *Low Impact Mobile Facilities: Guidelines for Better Visual Outcomes 2001* published by the Mobile Carriers Forum.

2. Site location for telecommunication towers that are not low impact

- 2.1 Proposals for towers over premises that are in the Community Services, Industry or Business Centre Zones and comply with the Infrastructure Uses Code are generally consistent with The Noosa Plan.
- 2.2 Applications on sites containing *environmentally sensitive areas*, such as native habitat, steep slopes or ridgelines are unlikely to be supported, if those areas are likely to be adversely impacted upon by the proposed development.

3. Matters for consideration

- 3.1 In addition to matters identified in The Noosa Plan, Council may when assessing proposals for telecommunication towers have regard to other considerations.
- 3.2 Council is unlikely to support proposals that would result in the following—

¹ S.3.5.24 – Request to change development approval (other than a change of condition).

² S.3.5.33 – Request to change or cancel conditions.

- a) Loss of vegetation on *steep slopes* or *ridgelines*; or
- b) Visual scaring or the degradation of views or vistas from the *major road network*; or
- c) Loss of distinct character associated with the various towns, villages or rural areas of the Shire; or
- d) Alteration to key landform and landscape characters such that they become dominated by the facility; or
- e) Impact on views to and from waterways, beaches and *riparian zones*.

3.3 There is still much debate regarding the potential health risks associated with electromagnetic radiation. Carriers need to provide evidence that necessary measures have been taken to ensure public health and safety will not be adversely affected. In the absence of such evidence, Council is likely to adopt the precautionary principle and may refuse the application.

3.4 Wherever practical towers should —

- a) Maintain the integrity of landmarks and places of significance;
- b) Avoid interrupting significant views;
- c) Be architecturally integrated with the building/structure they are mounted on;
- d) Be positioned to minimise clutter of multiple facilities;
- e) Be colour matched to their background, using no reflective paint;
- f) Be at least partially screened by vegetation; and
- g) Be positioned and designed to be less visible by pedestrians.

4. Co-location

Carriers are obliged to consider co-locating on existing towers or public utility structures in the area. However it is acknowledged that co-location will not always result in the best visual outcome. To assist with the identification of potential co-location sites as new towers are installed on a regular basis the most up to date inventory of facilities is provided by the Australian Communications Authority via their website at www.acma.gov.au

POLICY HISTORY

*PSP23 adopted by Council 3 November 2005 and took effect 3 February 2006.
It is based on a superseded planning scheme policy dating back to 2000.*