

Fact Sheet 3: Secondary Dwellings

Noosa Plan 2020 – As amended 26 September 2025

What is a Secondary Dwelling?

A **secondary dwelling**, commonly known as a granny flat, is a self-contained dwelling that is:

- used in conjunction with, but subordinate to, a primary *dwelling house*¹ on the same lot, and
- may be attached to or separate from the *dwelling house*.

Secondary dwellings are intended for permanent occupation. The resident(s) do not need to be related to those living in the primary *dwelling house*.

Only one *secondary dwelling* is permitted per lot (regardless of the size of the lot), and it cannot be subdivided or separately titled to the main dwelling and cannot be developed on a property covered by a Building Unit Plan.

How can a Secondary Dwelling be occupied or used?

Secondary dwellings:

- Must be permanently occupied (not used for *short-term accommodation or home-hosted businesses*²),
- Can be rented separately to the main *dwelling house* (even if tenants are unrelated to the main household residents),
- Must provide one on-site car parking space, in addition to the two spaces required for the primary *dwelling house*, and
- Must comply with zone-specific³ built form requirements (e.g. height, setbacks, site cover).

Do I need Council planning approval?

In most cases, a *secondary dwelling* can be assessed by a private building certifier as part of the standard building approval process, without the need for referral to Council. However, planning approval or Council referral is required in certain situations.

The Table of Assessment in Part 5 of Noosa Plan 2020 outlines the acceptable outcomes for *dwelling houses* (including *secondary dwellings*) in each zone. If a proposed *secondary dwelling*:

- does not comply with any of these requirements (e.g. GFA, height, building setbacks, site cover),
- is located on a site affected by a constraint (e.g. biodiversity, coastal protection),

then a development application must be submitted to Council for assessment.

Built form requirements

A secondary dwelling may have one or two bedrooms and a maximum gross floor area (GFA)⁴ of 65m². Additionally, a secondary dwelling must comply with the built form provisions for a dwelling house included in the relevant Zone Code of Noosa Plan 2020, including building height, setbacks and site cover.

Connection to Services

Secondary dwellings located within the urban boundary (shown on the zone maps⁴) must be connected to the following essential services:

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

¹ Refer to **Fact Sheet 2: Building a Dwelling House**

² Refer to **Fact Sheet 4: Home Hosted Visitor Accommodation** and the **Short-term Accommodation Guide** for requirements for short-term letting.

³ Refer to Council's interactive mapping to confirm zoning and overlays <https://www.mapping.noosa.qld.gov.au/>

⁴ unenclosed balconies/decks and garages are not included in the GFA calculation

Noosa Plan 2020 – Secondary Dwellings

If reticulated water supply is not available, the property must be equipped with rainwater tanks providing a minimum combined capacity of 60,000 litres for both the primary *dwelling house* and the *secondary dwelling*.

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

Bushfire hazard

If your property is located within a Bushfire Hazard Area (shown on the Bushfire Hazard Overlay mapping⁵) and is not connected to a reticulated water supply, you must provide:

- a dedicated water source for firefighting purposes, such as a dam, swimming pool, or water tank, with a minimum capacity of 5000lt⁶
- a 50mm diameter outlet pipe fitted with a standard fire brigade fitting, connected to the water supply⁷.

Flood hazard

If a property is located within a Flood Hazard Area (shown on the Flood Hazard Overlay mapping⁵), the finished floor level of habitable rooms must be:

- At least 300mm above the defined flood event (DFE); or
- If the DFE is not available, at least 500mm above the highest recorded flood level.

You can request a flood search from Council for a fee⁸.

Landslide hazard

Secondary dwellings (including access) should generally not be built on land identified as a Landslide Hazard Area (shown on the Landslide Hazard Overlay mapping⁵).

If there is no feasible alternative, and development must occur within a mapped Landslide Hazard Area, the following applies:

- A site-specific geotechnical assessment is required to demonstrate that the proposed development can be safely designed and constructed to address the landslide risk,
- The assessment must confirm that the development will not compromise the safety of people or property, and

- Any risk mitigation measures recommended in the geotechnical report must be implemented as part of the development.

What about Modular or Prefabricated Homes?

There are various companies in and close to Noosa Shire designing and building small modular or prefabricated homes. These can be brought onto a site as a *secondary dwelling*, however, are still required to meet the relevant provisions of Noosa Plan 2020 as per the above (eg. GFA). Additionally, building and plumbing approvals are required⁹.

Are Infrastructure Charges Payable?

No. As of 1 July 2025, Infrastructure charges do not apply to a *secondary dwelling*.

This Fact Sheet/Guide 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

⁵ Refer to Council's interactive mapping site to confirm hazard overlays

⁶ Must be separate from the household's regular water supply.

⁷ This requirement does not apply if the water source is a dam or swimming pool.

⁸ Refer to www.noosa.qld.gov.au/planning-development/searches/property-searches.

⁹ Refer to **Fact Sheet 7: Tiny Homes**