

Fact Sheet 24: Short-term Accommodation in the Rural Residential Zone

Noosa Plan 2020 – As amended 26 September 2025

What is short-term accommodation?

Short-term accommodation is the use of a dwelling to provide accommodation for tourists or travellers for stays of less than three consecutive months. This may include a manager's residence, as well as offices or recreational facilities for the exclusive use of guests. Examples of *short-term accommodation* include:

- the use of an entire dwelling (whether that's a house, duplex, unit or apartment);
- motels;
- backpacker or hostel accommodation; and
- farm-stays, cabins and permanent tents.

Short-term accommodation in the Rural Residential zone

Under Noosa Plan 2020, the Rural Residential zone is intended primarily for permanent residential living. The dominant form of development in this zone is *dwelling houses* occupied by long-term residents on large, generally located on un-serviced lots.

The regular or frequent use of a *dwelling house* for *short-term accommodation* is generally not supported in this zone.

However, *short-term accommodation* may be considered a consistent use where it involves the infrequent use of a permanent resident's principal place of residence for short-term stays.

Additionally, *short-term accommodation* options (such as cabins) may be permitted in the Rural Residential zone, where they are ancillary to a permanent residential use on the site (i.e. the applicant must reside permanently on the property).

Short-term accommodation in a principal place of residence

Occasional *short-term accommodation* use of an entire dwelling house - where the permanent resident

temporarily vacates their home (e.g. for holidays or work travel) - may be considered accepted development (subject to requirements) where the following conditions must be met:

- the dwelling is the applicant's principal place of residence
- the property is let to short-term guests on no more than four occasions per calendar year
- the total number of nights let does not exceed 60 nights per calendar year
- only one self-contained dwelling is let at any one time (i.e. *secondary dwellings* cannot be short-term let).

To qualify as accepted development, the proposal must also comply with all applicable provisions of the Rural Residential Zone Code. If these requirements are not met, a development application must be submitted to Council for assessment and approval.

Ongoing use of a dwelling house for short-term accommodation

Using an entire dwelling house for *short-term accommodation* that does not meet the accepted development requirements is an **inconsistent use** in Rural residential zone.

Different forms of short-term accommodation

Other forms of *short-term accommodation* may be considered on a Rural Residential lot, subject to Council approval, where the following conditions are met:

- The accommodation is provided in addition to the applicant's principal place of residence on the site.
- The property has a minimum lot size of 4 hectares.
- The total gross floor area of the short-term accommodation does not exceed 250m² (combined).

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- A maximum of 12 guests are accommodated at any one time.
- The use does not include a conference or function facility.

If all of the above requirements are satisfied, a development application must be submitted to Council seeking a Development Permit for a Material Change of Use - Short-term Accommodation. The proposal will be assessed against all relevant provisions of Noosa Plan 2020.

What if my property is within a hazard area?

Noosa Plan 2020 includes Overlay maps that identify areas subject to natural hazards such as flooding, landslides, and bushfires¹.

Existing Dwelling Houses (Principal Place of Residence)

If you are operating *short-term accommodation* from your principal place of residence, and the use meets the previously outlined accepted development requirements, then assessment against the hazard Overlay provisions is not required.

However, even if formal assessment is not required, it is strongly recommended that property owners provide guests with relevant hazard information, such as:

- Flood evacuation plans
- Bushfire safety procedures
- Emergency contact details

This helps ensure guest safety and preparedness in the event of a natural hazard.

Additional Short-Term Accommodation (e.g. Cabins)

If *short-term accommodation* is proposed in addition to the main *dwelling house* (such as cabins), and the site is affected by a hazard Overlay, the proposal must address

the relevant Overlay Code requirements as part of the Material Change of Use application.

What other approvals are required for short-term accommodation?

Properties operating *short-term accommodation* require an additional approval under the **Short Stay Letting or Home Hosted Accommodation Local Law**. For further information on the approval requirements under the local law go <https://www.noosa.qld.gov.au/short-stay-letting-home-hosted-accommodation-local-law>.

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: www.noosa.qld.gov.au/noosa-plan-2020

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

☎ (07) 5329 6500

✉ planning@noosa.qld.gov.au

¹ Refer to Council's interactive mapping to confirm overlays
<https://www.mapping.noosa.qld.gov.au/>