

Fact Sheet 25: Short-term Accommodation in the Rural 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, and can include a manager's residence, and office or recreation 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 zone

Under Noosa Plan 2020, the Rural zone is primarily intended for agricultural and rural activities, typically in conjunction with permanent residential living on very large, unserviced lots.

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

However, *short-term accommodation* may be considered consistent 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 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 (ie *secondary dwellings* cannot be short-term let).

If the use complies with the above requirements, a Development Permit (ie Council planning approval) is not required.

Ongoing use of a dwelling house for short-term accommodation

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

Different forms of short-term accommodation

Short-term accommodation may be provided on a Rural lot (subject to Council approval) as follows:

Code Assessable	Impact Assessable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ on the same site as the applicant's principal place of residence, and▪ located on a site with an area of at least 4 hectares, and▪ not incorporating conference or function facilities, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ on the same site as the applicant's principal place of residence, and▪ located on a site with an area of at least 4 hectares, and▪ not incorporating conference or function facilities, and

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ with no more than four guestrooms, cabins or permanent tents, and▪ not exceeding 200m² total gross floor area, and▪ accommodating no more than 8 guests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ having a total gross floor area not exceeding 1,000m², and▪ accommodating no more than 24 guests.
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If the proposal meets either of the above lists of requirements, 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 mapped as 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/>