

Council

PROPOSED COUNCIL POLICY – CAMPING AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PERMITS

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Meeting Date: 26 August 2025

Number of Pages: 16

CAMPING & TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PERMITS

Purpose

To provide clear guidelines for the granting of permits to camp and/or temporarily reside on private property under the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997* (the Regulations) where this is at the discretion of the Shire of Plantagenet.

Scope

This policy applies to all properties located within the Shire of Plantagenet.

Definitions

Definitions for terms used in this Policy are consistent with the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995 and Regulations 1997*, the *Shire of Plantagenet Local Planning Scheme No. 5* and the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

Tiny House on Wheels (THOW) – means a structure that is designed for human habitation on a wheeled base, no greater than 50m² in floor area, constructed of domestic grade materials with the character of a dwelling, and with the capacity to be licensed as a vehicle under the *Road Traffic (Vehicles) Regulations 2014*. This definition of a THOW is not taken to include:

- An original or retrofitted caravan, bus, truck body, wagon, or other vehicle; and,
- A tent, camper trailer, yurt, or other temporary structure associated with camping; and,
- A park home, sea container or other transportable structure whether designed or adapted for residential use.

Camp – for the purposes of this Policy, the term ‘camp’ as defined in the *Caravan Park and Camping Ground Act 1995*, includes the use of a Tiny Home on Wheels or any other structure utilised in association with a camping permit granted by the Shire.

Policy

Requests for short-term camping on private property for longer than 5 nights (Clause 11(1)(aa) of the Regulations)

1. The Chief Executive Officer or delegate may issue a permit to camp on private property for longer than 5 nights subject to the following conditions:
 - 1.1. A maximum length of stay of 10 days may be permitted on any lot without an approved habitable dwelling. This includes the first 5 days of stay permitted under Clause 11(1)(a) of the Regulations.

- 1.2. A maximum length of stay of 28 days may be permitted on any lot with an approved habitable dwelling.
- 1.3. A maximum of 1 caravan and 1 tent may be permitted for any lot under 1 hectare in size.
- 1.4. A maximum of 2 caravans and 2 tents may be permitted for any lot over 1 hectare in size.
- 1.5. Camping is not permitted on any land that is within the Commercial, Service Commercial, General Industry or Strategic Industry zones.

Requests to long term camp (temporary accommodation) on private property for up to 24 months

(Clause 11A of the Regulations)

2. The Chief Executive Officer or delegate may issue a permit for long-term camping on private property subject to the following conditions:

- 2.1. Camping may include the use of a caravan, recreational vehicle (RV) or bus (only) subject to:

- An approved and active building permit for the construction of a residential dwelling on the property;
- Evidence of agreement with the registered builder or owner-builder regarding insurance liability while the property is (or contains) a building site;
- A maximum length of stay of 12 months;
- A maximum of 1 caravan, RV or bus may be permitted for any lot under 1 hectare in size.
- A maximum of 2 caravans, RVs or buses may be permitted for any lot over 1 hectare in size.

Note: The Shire may grant approval for more than 1 caravan for a period of up to 3 months. If an application for more than 1 caravan is for greater than 3 months the Shire will forward the application to the Minister for determination (as required by the Regulations).

- 2.2. Camping may include the use of a tiny home on wheels (THOW) subject to:

- A maximum length of stay of 24 months.
- A maximum of 1 THOW on any property.
- The location of the THOW being in a position on the property that appropriately minimises bushfire risks and enables evacuation, to the satisfaction of the Shire.
- The location of the THOW being accessible via a two-wheel drive, all-weather driveway or access track.

- The THOW being a vehicle (caravan) licensed under the *Road Traffic (Vehicles) Regulations 2014*.
- The THOW being of domestic grade materials and appearance.
- Sufficient demonstration, to the satisfaction of the Shire, that the THOW is both structurally safe and all utility services have been installed (or verified) by an appropriately licensed person.
- Sufficient demonstration, to the satisfaction of the Shire, that the design, materials and construction of a THOW complies with the standards of the National Construction Code (NCC) and applicable Australian Standards as much as is practicable.
- The payment of an annual permit fee will be required, acknowledging that the person/s temporarily residing on the property will be able to utilise community services and infrastructure that are provided and maintained by the Shire, but will not otherwise pay equivalent rates to support the provision of these services and infrastructure.

2.3. The use of other vehicles not specified above or a tent, yurt, camper trailer or other temporary structure associated with camping is not permitted as part of any permit granted for long term camping under this section.

General requirements for all camping permits

3.1. A legal right to camp on the property must be demonstrated.

3.2. A camping permit may be granted on any land where a residential dwelling could potentially be established (subject to approval) under *Local Planning Scheme No. 5*.

3.3. A camping permit:

- Must be used by the applicant named on the permit;
- Is not permitted to be sub-let; and
- May not be used for any commercial purpose or gain, including short-term rental accommodation.

3.4. The location of any camp is required to be:

- Consistent with the setback or building envelope requirements according to the zoning of the land;
- A minimum of 1m from any boundary between private properties;
- A minimum of 6m from any boundary to a public reserve;
- Where multiple caravans have been permitted, maintaining a minimum of 3m between caravans;
- Where a residence or other building exists on the site, not between that residence or other building and the street (unless otherwise approved); and

- Sufficiently separated from areas of remnant vegetation and forestry so as to avoid environmental degradation and/or avoidable bushfire risk, to the satisfaction of the Shire. No clearing is authorised through the granting of a permit to camp.

3.5. The Shire reserves the right to apply conditions to the granting of a permit to ensure the:

- Appropriate provision of services and management of wastes;
- Protection of the natural environment;
- Protection of the amenity of neighbouring landowners; and
- The safety of all occupants from natural hazards.

The Shire may apply other conditions that are deemed necessary on a case by case basis.

3.6. Sufficient arrangements for the provision of a potable water supply, wastewater disposal system and waste collection service are to be put in place while the property is occupied to the satisfaction of the Shire.

3.7. Camping is not considered to be an ongoing change in land use and vehicles and structures that are utilised are considered a tolerable loss; however, the protection of life and minimisation of risk to others is considered critical. The following minimum requirements for protection from bushfire will be applied to all camps:

- Camping is not permitted between November and April (inclusive) on any property that is without public road access in two different directions, to two different suitable destinations and with an all-weather surface.
- Camping is not permitted on any day where the Fire Danger Rating is declared as 'Extreme' or 'Catastrophic'. On any such day a camp is not to be occupied; however, occupants of a camp may shelter within an approved residential dwelling on the property.
- A camp must be evacuated immediately in the event that the WA State Government issues any bushfire warning (advice, watch and act or emergency) that relates to the property where that camp is located.
- It is the sole responsibility of the permit holder to ensure that all occupants of a camp are aware of and compliant with the applicable fire danger ratings, bushfire warnings, total fire bans and other local fire management restrictions.
- Campfires are permitted/ prohibited in accordance with the Shire's annual Fire Management Notice.

3.8. The Shire may, at its discretion, revoke a permit if the conditions of that permit are not adhered to. In the event that a permit is revoked the permit holder and other occupants of the camp must leave the site within a period of time specified by the Shire.

- 3.9. No camp shall be permitted to utilise an unapproved building of any kind. Any supporting structures (eg. water tanks, decks, patios, outbuildings) must be constructed in accordance with relevant Shire approvals.

(Note: Some structures may be exempt from approval where the property contains an existing residential dwelling)

Document Control						
Document Responsibilities						
Owner	Chief Executive Officer	Business Unit	Development and Regulatory Services			
Reviewer	Executive Manager	Approval	Council			
Document Compliance						
Legislation		Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997				
Other						
Document Management						
Review:			Next Due:		Ref:	
Version #	Effective Date		Sections Modified (if applicable)			
1						

Schedule of Public Submissions
Draft Council Policy - Camping & Temporary Accommodation Permits

	Name/Address	Submission	Comment
1.	L. Wolsoncroft Kendenup I140144	I feel the SOP should fully implement the State government legislation to allow small homes and Caravans on private land to help ease housing pressure.	<p>The Regulations do not provide clear direction on how a local government is to implement a permit process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining the type of structures that are appropriate for longer-term occupation (or not), including defining what a THOW is (and is not) Defining how the requirement of the Regulations for demonstrating 'health and safety' is to be implemented <p>This provides local governments with a high degree of discretion but also leaves local governments almost entirely responsible for addressing risk mitigation.</p> <p>The proposed policy seeks to balance what could conceivably be allowed under the Regulations with consideration of the health and safety of the occupant, the amenity of neighbours, and avoiding expending a significant amount of ratepayer funds on compliance processes.</p>
		I don't think there should be any interference with colours, people choice.	The policy includes an expectation that a Tiny Home on Wheels (THOW) is of 'domestic grade materials and appearance'. This does not limit colour choice but does act as a safeguard to ensure that a THOW fits within its surroundings and the amenity of neighbours is preserved.
2.	F. Stein Kendenup I140315	<p>First, I want to express my sincere gratitude and congratulations to the Shire. The initiative to open up opportunities for camping and temporary accommodation, particularly to allow living in Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOWs), will make an enormous, positive difference to the lives of many people affected by the current housing emergency.</p> <p>I have carefully reviewed the informative and well-written council report and draft policy. Please find my comments below:</p>	Support noted.

	<p>1. Short-term camping for more than 5 nights:</p> <p>Some drafted provisions require the existence of an approved dwelling as a criterion for eligibility. I propose that instead, the existence of toilets and a sewage system (unless the caravan is self-contained) should be sufficient. People should be allowed to camp for more than 5 nights on vacant land with a permit, provided there is no environmental risk due to lack of sewage solutions.</p>	<p>Comment noted, not supported.</p> <p>The policy supports camping without services for up to 10 days, extending what is permitted by the Regulations.</p> <p>The policy supports camping for longer where full services (as provided by a house) are accessible, as this provides for toilets and showers, drinking water, effluent disposal, waste collection, electricity and telecommunications, bushfire shelter and other general amenities. Longer term camping without adequate servicing results in increased risks to personal safety and environmental health. Regular servicing is also required for vehicles marketed as 'self-contained'.</p>
	<p>2.1 Long-term camping (excluding THOWs, building permit in place):</p> <p>Please consider increasing the maximum allowed stay to 24 months instead of 12. State legislation permits up to 24 months, and many builds, especially owner-builds, take longer than 12 months. Extending this period would reduce stress for builders and lessen the administrative burden on Shire staff.</p>	<p>Comment noted, partially supported.</p> <p>The proposed policy does not support long term living in vehicles, which is a significant compromise on living standards particularly in relation to health and safety.</p> <p>However, officers agree that some building projects can take longer than 12 months to complete and propose a minor adjustment to the policy which will allow for a renewal of a permit where a genuine applicant is clearly progressing the construction of a new dwelling.</p>
	<p>2.2 THOW Eligibility – Critical Provision That Needs Attention:</p> <p>Before addressing technical points, I want to emphasise that in the current housing crisis, standard caravans should not be treated less favourably than THOWs. Provision 2.1 rightly allows home builders to live in standard caravans. However, someone who is homeless and cannot access or afford standard accommodation has an equally, if not more, compelling case for being allowed to live in a standard caravan. The State legislation no longer stands in the way of this, and the Shire could lead the way in enabling such solutions.</p> <p>Focusing now on the THOW-specific provision: The draft states:</p> <p><i>"Camping may include the use of a tiny home on wheels (THOW) subject to: (...)"</i></p>	<p>Comment noted, partially supported.</p> <p>Under State legislation a caravan and a THOW are the same (both are considered a caravan).</p> <p>The Shire's proposed policy recognises that there are specific design differences between a caravan and a THOW and these have a substantial difference on their liveability.</p> <p>Caravans are constructed of light weight materials and are designed for constant travel.</p> <p>THOWs are not designed to be light weight and are moved on rare occasions only, being built using more conventional housing construction methods but on a wheeled trailer base.</p>

	<p><i>"The THOW being a vehicle (caravan) licensed under the Road Traffic (Vehicles) Regulations 2014." (...)</i></p> <p><i>"Sufficient demonstration, to the satisfaction of the Shire, that the design, materials and construction of a THOW complies with the standards of the National Construction Code (NCC) and applicable Australian Standards as much as is practicable. (...)"</i></p> <p>Problem: To be licenced as a vehicle, a THOW must comply with Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1 (VSB1). However, VSB1 often conflicts with provisions of the NCC, making simultaneous full compliance impractical if not impossible.</p> <p>For clarity and feasibility reasons, VSB1 should be set as the required construction standard for THOWs.</p> <p>The phrase "complies with the standards of the NCC ... as much as is practicable" is too vague and unhelpful for prospective THOW owners making major purchase decisions. These are often six-figure investments. Even if 100% certainty cannot be given, clearer guidance is needed to help applicants understand what will and will not be accepted.</p> <p>Also, I would welcome a framework that gives Shire officers the discretion to apply common sense and professional judgment in assessing THOW suitability, rather than adhering rigidly to the NCC.</p> <p>Suggested revised wording:</p> <p><i>"The THOW must be a vehicle (caravan) licensed under the Road Traffic (Vehicles) Regulations 2014 and built to the construction standards of the Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1 (VSB1), in the absence of a classification for Tiny Houses in the National Construction Code (NCC). THOWs are also expected to be constructed using domestic-grade materials that meet the intent of relevant NCC provisions where practicable. The materials should demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Shire, durability, fire safety, energy efficiency, and thermal comfort appropriate for residential use. Full NCC compliance is not required unless the THOW is intended to be permanently fixed to the land as an approved dwelling and no longer licensed as a vehicle."</i></p>	<p>THOWs are typically much larger, better insulated and built relative to the majority of requirements of the National Construction Code.</p> <p>The National Construction Code prescribes standards for residential dwellings that take into account long term research into appropriate living conditions, structural integrity, electrical and gas safety and various other aspects of construction that contribute to developing safe and healthy homes.</p> <p>THOWs typically do not meet certain aspects of the Code (eg. ceiling heights for loft bedrooms) but usually meet the majority of other standards.</p> <p>The policy references the Code as a means of distinction between a THOW built for longer term occupation (with some variances from the Code) compared to a typical caravan which is built for short term occupation.</p> <p>As noted in this submission, this approach aims to enable Shire officers to apply common sense and professional judgement in determining whether a THOW is constructed appropriately, without rigid adherence to the Code.</p> <p>Officers suggest that the policy achieves the objectives of this submission without requiring modification.</p>
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	<p>3.3 Permit Restrictions:</p> <p><i>"A camping permit:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Must be used by the applicant named on the permit;</i> <i>• Is not permitted to be sub-let; and</i> <i>• May not be used for any commercial purpose or gain, including short-term rental accommodation."</i> <p>Clarification request: I understand this to mean that a landowner can lease land to someone who then applies for a permit to camp on it in their own THOW. If this is not permitted, I urge an amendment to allow it. This is a critical pathway for people who cannot afford land but own a THOW, to find a legal and safe housing solution. I agree that the person living in the THOW should be the applicant and should not sublet or run a commercial operation.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Yes, the policy allows for someone to lease land from another person and then seek a permit for camping or temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Permission from the landowner is required to be demonstrated upon application.</p> <p>The policy does not support a landowner leasing a campsite in a similar manner to a caravan park, or a permit holder not occupying the site and sub-leasing it to someone else.</p> <p>Commercial operations for campgrounds and caravan parks are required to seek planning approval and licensing as appropriate.</p>
	<p>3.4 Camp Location:</p> <p><i>"Where a residence or other building exists on the site, not between that residence or other building and the street."</i></p> <p>This provision feels overly restrictive, particularly for short-term stays (e.g. family visiting over holidays). I see the merit of this restriction for long-term use, but there will be cases where enforcing it provides little public benefit and only adds unnecessary obstacles. For example, it must still be possible to put a THOW on a property that only has a shed at the end of the block, but nothing else. Shire officers should be able to allow such exemptions.</p> <p>Suggested revision:</p> <p><i>"Where a residence or other building exists on the site, not between that residence or other building and the street (unless explicitly permitted by the Shire)."</i></p>	<p>Comment noted, supported.</p> <p>This policy requirement is not intended to be rigidly applied, and officers support additional wording to help clarify this.</p> <p>The intention is to reduce the potential for an unsightly campsite to be visible from the street or to impact on neighbours, and this will depend on case by case assessment.</p>

		<p>3.7 Bushfire Restrictions:</p> <p>The following requirements appear overly strict for long-term THOW residents:</p> <p><i>"Camping is not permitted on any day where the Fire Danger Rating is declared as 'Extreme' or 'Catastrophic'. On any such day a camp is not to be occupied; however, occupants of a camp may shelter within an approved residential dwelling on the property. (...) A camp must be evacuated immediately in the event that the WA State Government issues any bushfire warning (advice, watch and act or emergency) that relates to the property where that camp is located."</i></p> <p>If someone lives full-time in a well-prepared THOW, connected to power and water, they are often safer than occupants of older fixed dwellings. Treating THOW residents differently on fire risk grounds is unfair and burdensome. Long-term (24 months) THOW residents should be subject to the same rules as permanent residents of fixed dwellings in bushfire-prone areas.</p>	<p>Comments noted, not supported.</p> <p>Since 2015 the town planning framework in WA has included strict requirements for new development so as to minimise the risk to life and property from bushfire. This resulted from national inquests and reviews following a series of catastrophic bushfire events in the decade before.</p> <p>The planning framework does not apply to the granting of camping/ temporary accommodation permits; however, the risks are almost exactly the same. A 2-year THOW occupant is exposed to the same bushfire risks as the resident of a new house in the same location.</p> <p>The proposed policy does not include many of the requirements that apply to the development of a new house, primarily to reduce the costs involved in obtaining approval and constructing a THOW. This also gives a THOW more flexibility in where it can be located within a property.</p> <p>The policy prioritises early evacuation as the most critical factor in ensuring that the risk to life is minimised. Shire officers strongly recommend that these requirements are adopted and enacted as an absolute minimum standard.</p> <p>If an applicant wanted to propose an alternative the Shire would only consider this where that applicant had undertaken appropriate bushfire risk assessments and complied with construction standards the same as what is now standard practice for a new house.</p> <p>When considering any decision the Shire has a responsibility to consider the level of risk involved and avoid circumstances that place life in an excessive amount of danger. This includes camping/ temporary accommodation occupants as well as the increasing the burden and risking the lives of emergency services personnel and volunteers.</p>
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	<p>Closing Comment:</p> <p>Despite my many comments and requests, I want to reiterate my strong support for the Shire's move to enable more diverse housing options. This policy has the potential to positively transform lives, particularly for those most affected by housing shortage and unaffordability. I hope my suggestions assist in refining the policy for maximum community benefit.</p>	<p>Support noted, with thanks.</p>
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DID YOU KNOW?

Camping on your block?
If you want to put a shed, water tank, deck or other structure on your property you may need planning and building approvals.

Check out the information on our website or contact our friendly team for details.



MORE INFORMATION:



www.plantagenet.wa.gov.au

Find policies, application forms, and other planning & building information. You can also make an online enquiry.

CONTACT US:



(08) 9892 1111



info@sop.wa.gov.au



PO Box 48
MOUNT BARKER WA 6324

This information is provided as a general guide only - please contact us before starting your project.



Shire of
Plantagenet

Mount Barker • Kendenup • Narrikup
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V1.1 19 August 2025



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CAMPING ON PRIVATE LAND

Environmental
Health Guidelines



Can I camp on my own land without a permit?



Yes, you can camp on your own land **without** a permit for up to:

- Maximum of 5 nights in any 28 day period
- Maximum of 1 caravan

Please apply to the Shire for a permit if you want to camp for a longer time or with multiple caravans.

You are responsible for:

- Complying with seasonal fire restrictions (see our website)
- Disposing of grey and black wastewater at a dump point or in an approved septic system
- Collecting and disposing of rubbish in a bin or at the tip
- Respecting your neighbours and keeping noise levels to a minimum

Can I get a permit to camp for longer?

Yes, you can apply for a permit from the Shire to camp on land you own (or with the landowner's permission).

The Shire's Policy for Camping & Temporary Accommodation Permits supports:

- Maximum stay of 28 days if the property has an existing house
- Maximum stay of 10 days if the property does not have a house
- Maximum of 1 caravan and 1 tent on properties under 1 hectare
- Maximum of 2 caravans and 2 tents on properties over 1 hectare

Camping is not supported on land within the Commercial, Service Commercial, General Industry or Strategic Industry zones.

Camping permits can be used by the person who applies and their friends and family, but are not permitted to be rented, sub-let or used for any commercial purpose. Please contact our team if you are hoping to start a camping business.

What are the conditions of a camping permit?

All camping permits will be subject to conditions.

For details of typical conditions please refer to the Shire's Policy for Camping & Temporary Accommodation Permits (available on our website).

Conditions may be general or specific to the property, including:

- Campsites being set back from property boundaries as per the standards for the zone
- Campsites located behind a house on the property (where one exists)
- Campsites being vacated during fire danger weather (see Policy)
- Appropriate arrangements for managing rubbish and effluent disposal must be in place



DID YOU KNOW?

A 'tiny home' on footings is treated the same as any other residential building (ie. Single House or Ancillary Dwelling) and must meet the standards of the National Construction Code.

A 'tiny home on wheels' that is registered as a vehicle is treated the same as a caravan under WA State legislation.



MORE INFORMATION:



www.plantagenet.wa.gov.au

Find policies, application forms, and other planning & building information. You can also make an online enquiry.

CONTACT US:



(08) 9892 1111



info@sop.wa.gov.au



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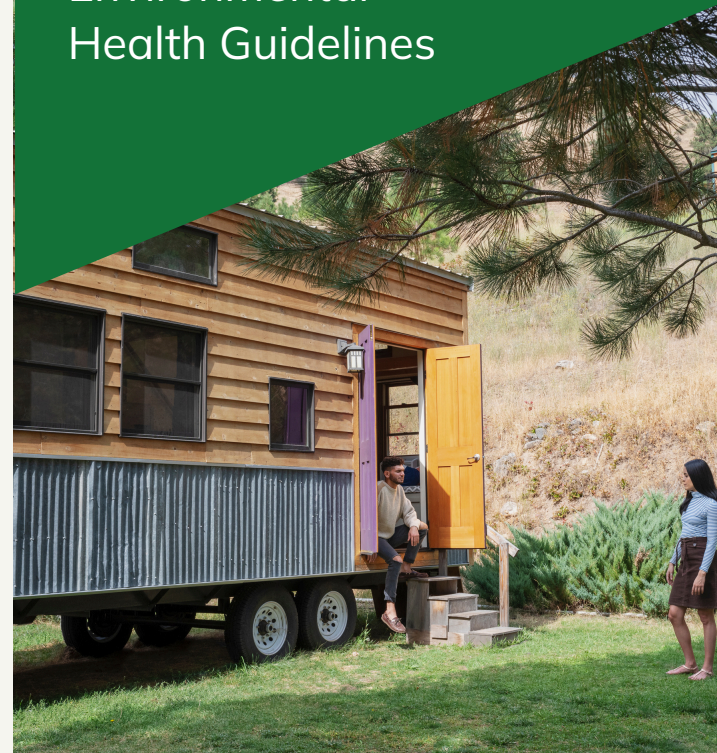


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TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION (INCL. TINY HOMES ON WHEELS)

Environmental
Health Guidelines



Can I live on site while I am building my home?



You can apply to the Shire for a camping permit to use temporary accommodation building your house.

To apply you will need:

- Planning and building approvals in place for your house
- Agreement from your builder or an owner-builder permit, with details of how building site safety and liability will be addressed

A permit can be granted subject to:

- Maximum 12 months
- Maximum 1 caravan, RV or bus (lots under 1 hectare in size)
- Maximum 2 caravans, RVs or buses (lots over 1 hectare)**

**State Government approval needed if 3+ months

A shed cannot be used as a habitable building, even for a temporary period.

Can I live on my property in a tiny home on wheels?

You can apply to the Shire for a camping permit to use a tiny home on wheels (THOW) as temporary accommodation for up to 24 months.

THOW requirements include:

- THOW is a registered vehicle at the time you apply
- Purpose built THOW (not a bus, caravan, RV or camper trailer)
- Domestic grade materials and appearance (ie. looks like a house)
- Construction-level details that show structural safety and building standard (see Policy)
- Compliance certificates for electrical, gas and plumbing work
- Located to minimise bushfire risk and with 2WD vehicle access
- Located within the standard lot boundary setbacks for the zone
- Approval is obtained for a wastewater management system

For full details please refer to the Shire's [Camping & Temporary Accommodation Permits Policy](#) (available on our website).

What are the permit conditions?

Conditions apply to all permits for camping or temp. accommodation. For details of typical conditions please refer to the Shire's [Camping & Temporary Accommodation Permits Policy](#) (available on our website).

Conditions may be general or specific to the property, including:

- Camping permits cannot be rented, sub-let or used for any commercial purpose.
- Camping is not supported on land within the Commercial, Service Commercial, General Industry or Strategic Industry zones.
- Campsites being vacated during fire danger weather (see Policy)
- Appropriate arrangements for managing rubbish and effluent disposal must be in place

