

Tasmanian Planning Scheme

Residential Zones – Fact sheet

Purpose

This fact sheet gives an overview of the zones in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme for residential uses.

What is a zone?

A zone groups land that has one main use or purpose in common.

What do the residential zones do?

Residential zones identify land that is most suitable for housing. Tasmania also has several other land use zones where people can live, with differing types of conditions. Table 1 summarises these.

Table 1: Zones where people can live

Zone Group	Zone	Notes
Residential	General Residential, Inner Residential, Low Density Residential, Rural Living	These zones are the primary residential zones. Each has a different preferred density.
	Future Urban	Protects land for future urban development. Residential development can occur but should not happen in a way that limits its future zoning and development.
Mixed use	Village, Urban Mixed Use	Provides for a mix of uses. Residential is a primary use, along with compatible business or commercial uses.
Business and commercial	Local Business, General Business, Central Business	Residential is not the primary purpose but is allowed where it does not compromise the main uses: business, commerce and other commercial activity.

Rural and agriculture	Rural, Agriculture	New residential uses are discretionary but can be approved where required for an agricultural use or if they do not affect the productive agricultural and rural uses of the land.
Environmental	Landscape Conservation, Environmental Management	New residential uses in the Landscape Conservation Zone are generally discretionary but can be approved if they do not negatively impact on the environmental or landscape values. Residential use in this Environmental Management Zone is generally limited to reserve management staff.
Tourism	Major Tourism	Residential uses should support the primary use of tourism, e.g. staff accommodation in remote sites.
Community use	Community Purpose	Residential uses are permitted for social and supported housing and accommodation associated with community facilities on-site.

Where do residential zones apply?

These zones apply across many different areas of Tasmania, but the most significant zones for residential use are the General Residential, Inner Residential and Low Density Residential zones. All the detail about each zone is contained in the planning scheme maps and the zone text. The maps tell you where the zone is applied, and the text tells you what can occur in those zones.

The bulk of Tasmania's population lives in the General Residential Zone. This is coloured bright red on the planning scheme maps. This zone is intended for housing, on land identified as suitable, with full services such as:

- water
- sewerage
- sealed roads
- electricity
- communications.

This is the zone most people would associate with the traditional suburb.

The Inner Residential Zone permits higher population densities. Residents gain from being closer to services, employment, shops and restaurants. In the Low Density Residential

Zone, there may be fewer services and greater risks from hazards such as bushfire. Zones that mix uses require careful management, because of the nearness of different uses which may not always be an ideal match with homes. For example, the Urban Mixed Use Zone also allows for hotels, restaurants, shops and businesses.

The characteristic that sets the main residential zones apart from each other is density. Density is a significant issue in planning. It is often defined as the number of houses in a particular area and is an important aspect of how cities and regions function.

Our cities and towns can operate better when people live in well-designed housing in denser urban areas. Appropriate densities can:

- give people greater access to services and employment
- encourage greater use of public transport, walking and cycling
- provide for a better variety of houses to suit the needs of the community
- provide savings from better use of existing houses
- minimise sprawl into important agricultural areas and surrounding natural areas.

Table 2: The three main residential zones

Zone	Minimum lot size in m ² *	Minimum site area per dwelling (multiple dwellings) in m ² *	Suited to
General Residential Zone	450	325	Land with full infrastructure, i.e. power, water, sewerage, telecommunications.
Inner Residential Zone	200	200	As above. Also for promoting more walkable cities and higher densities with less private space.
Low Density Residential Zone	1500	1500 (if connected to reticulated sewerage, water and stormwater), otherwise 2500	Land that cannot be connected to some or all infrastructure, or which may have ecological features that need protecting.

** Note that smaller minimum lot sizes and minimum site areas per dwelling may be approved at the discretion of the local council if they meet specific requirements in the planning scheme.*

The text in the planning scheme sets out other information about housing that is important to know. This includes matters like:

- how far away from each property boundary your house needs to be (setbacks)
- requirements for garages and carports
- requirements for outside storage, especially for bins
- requirements to minimise impacts on sunlight to neighbouring properties (overshadowing)
- requirements for windows, balconies and decks to minimise impacts on the privacy of neighbouring properties
- how many parking spaces are required
- how subdivisions are designed, including things like road layout and service connections.

Standards for multiple houses on the same lot (multiple dwellings) are also included in the zone text.

Changes to residential zones

All zones in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme are defined in the State Planning Provisions. The State Planning Provisions are reviewed every five years to make sure they remain appropriate and relevant. The first review commenced in 2022 with a priority to improve the requirements for residential use and development.

More information on the review of the State Planning Provisions is available on the Planning in Tasmania website.

Land supply

An important part of land use planning is ensuring we have a suitable supply of land for houses and other uses to meet the needs of the community. The regional land use strategies and the zones in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme identify where land supply is for housing.

The regional land use strategies are subject to regular review to consider changes to urban growth boundaries and land supply requirements. These changes are based on demand and supply studies and inform zone changes in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

More information on reviewing the regional land use strategies is available on the Planning in Tasmania website.

Can anything else happen in residential zones?

There are a range of uses that can coexist with housing. In the three main urban residential zones, there can be uses like:

- home-based businesses
- visitor accommodation
- local shops
- medical facilities
- community centres
- schools
- cafés and restaurants.

Having a variety of uses in the residential zones can provide important services to the community as long as they don't cause significant impacts to residents. For example, a local shop has limits on its size, opening hours and delivery times. Larger shops and longer opening hours are allowed in the business zones.

In most of the other zones where people can live, the main use of the zone takes precedence. Some zones also encourage an equal mix of residential and non-residential uses. These other zones include:

- Village, Urban Mixed Use, Local Business, General Business, Central Business
- Community Purpose
- Future Urban
- Rural, Agriculture
- Landscape Conservation, Environmental Management
- Major Tourism.

The Village Zone recognises that many small towns and villages in rural Tasmania do not have a clear separation between where residential and business uses occur. This has become part of their history and character, and the Village Zone is meant to keep this pattern.

In larger towns and cities, the Urban Mixed Use Zone is meant to provide a mix of residential, retail and community services and commercial activities. The three business zones provide the greatest mix of uses and facilities in our towns and cities. The Central Business Zone is applied to our busiest areas, such as the main CBD areas of Hobart and Launceston. This zone has the greatest mix of uses and facilities, but is also the noisiest place to live. Residential uses are encouraged in all the business zones, particularly housing located above or behind the street front. This means the street front remains available for shops and other businesses.

The Community Purpose Zone provides for a range of community health, educational, cultural and social facilities. Residential use and development in this zone relates to these

types of facilities, such as residential care facilities, respite centres, retirement villages and other forms of assisted housing, along with accommodation for staff or students.

The Future Urban Zone protects land for future urban use and development prior to rezoning. In the meantime, residential use and development is limited to a single dwelling on existing smaller lots. Any subdivision is carefully considered to ensure future urban use and development is not hindered.

Finally in the Major Tourism Zone, residential use is discretionary and must be complementary to or support the tourism use.

Rural areas

In rural areas, a limited range of houses can be built in the Rural Living, Rural, Agriculture, and Landscape Conservation and Environmental Management zones. The Environmental Management Zone will have the least number of people living in it because it is mostly applied to national parks and other public lands. Any housing will be strictly limited to those people maintaining the park or visitor facilities if they have been approved.

The Rural Living Zone permits residential use and development in a very low density rural setting. Use and development can have lot sizes ranged from one hectare to ten hectares. Small scale agricultural uses (e.g. hobby farms) often occur in the Rural Living Zone. These areas often adjoin farming areas in the Rural and Agriculture zones where more intensive agricultural and rural uses are undertaken.

The Landscape Conservation Zone generally applies to private land with high scenic value or significant stands of native vegetation. A single dwelling is permitted with some conditions, along with a number of tourism-based uses like visitor accommodation, tourist operations and cafés. Development in this zone must minimise impacts on the landscape values.

In the Agriculture Zone, residential use is permitted under certain circumstances, to allow farmers to live on-site or for farmworkers' accommodation. Houses should be sited away from where agricultural activity takes place, where possible. The Rural Zone is for other rural uses and is treated similarly to the Agriculture Zone.

Table 3: Summary of approval pathways for housing in residential zones

Zone	No permit needed	Permitted – permit granted if house meets certain rules	Discretionary – permit may/may not be granted, depends on zone rules
General Residential Zone	Y, single dwelling	Y, other forms of housing	
Inner Residential Zone	Y, single dwelling.	Y, other forms of housing	
Low Density Residential Zone	Y, single dwelling	Y, home-based business	Y, other forms of housing
Village	Y, single dwelling	Y, other forms of housing	
Urban Mixed Use	Y, home-based business	Y, at rear or above ground floor	Y
Local Business		Y, at rear or above ground floor	Y
General Business		Y, at rear or above ground floor	Y
Central Business		Y, above ground floor	Y
Rural		Y, alterations/extensions to existing dwelling	Y, single dwelling only
Agriculture		Y, alterations/extensions to existing dwelling	Y, other forms of housing that support agriculture

Landscape Conservation		Y, single dwelling in approved building area	Y, single dwelling only
Environmental Management		Y, for reserve management staff accommodation	
Community Purpose		Y, for residential care, respite, retirement village, assisted housing, student accommodation	
Future Urban		Y, single dwelling	

Do I need a planning permit?

In five zones (the General Residential, Inner Residential, Low Density Residential, Rural Living and Village zones) a planning permit is not needed to build a single house, as long as the house is designed to meet the requirements on:

- height
- set back from neighbours
- off street parking
- size of the land covered
- other issues.

People will still need building approval.

If the proposed house exceeds any of these requirements it can still be approved if it can be shown that the impacts are acceptable.

A planning permit is required for residential use and development in the other zones.

What can I build?

You are generally free to design the house of your choice within the limits set by the planning requirements.

Most local government areas have a list of properties in the Local Historic Heritage Code or local heritage precincts mapped in an overlay. Some may also have local area objectives, specific area plans or site-specific qualifications that apply to particular sites or areas. If your property is affected by either of these, there may be additional requirements or some restrictions on what you can build.

If your property has a hazard-related overlay such as bushfire or flooding, there will be additional conditions, which are intended to keep you and your family safe. Issues related to hazards may be considered through the planning or building approval processes. For example, the type of construction can increase the risk of ember attack in a bush fire. These issues will be assessed at the building approval stage.

For more information

If you want more information about a specific block and what you can build, contact your council.

If you have general questions about the residential zones, contact:

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