



Dependent Relative “Granny Flat” Accommodation Fact Sheet

Can my parents live on our property in a separate house?

What is dependent accommodation, also known as a “granny flat”?

DEPENDENT ACCOMMODATION

A dependant accommodation unit is a freestanding building or part of an existing building (usually a dwelling) that is generally used for accommodation by a dependent relative such as a teenager or grandparent/s. The unit is required to be dependent on the main dwelling for services to be considered as such. Specifically, it must be connected to the same services (e.g. electricity, phone line, sewer and water connection or waste control system) as the primary dwelling on the site.

Dependent accommodation units come in different forms. Some are simply a freestanding building containing a bedroom and ensuite and others are a small self-contained residence (a dwelling) that also comprises a small kitchen. Others are simply just an extra bedroom and ensuite in a separate part of a dwelling and are considered no different to a standard dwelling addition proposal.

SELF CONTAINED RESIDENCE OR HABITABLE OUTBUILDING

The way dependent accommodation is treated and assessed is based on a number of factors, including whether the unit is a self-contained residence (a small dwelling) and the zoning of the land.

A self-contained residence or dwelling is when a building or part of building can be resided in independent of any other building. A unit that contains a bedroom or multi-use living space, a bathroom and kitchen (irrespective of size) is considered to be a self-contained residence. Many apartments do not feature a separate laundry and separate car parking spaces, however this does not exclude these buildings from being considered self-contained residences.

Based on the above, it is a much simpler process to achieve consent for a dependent accommodation unit that is not a self-contained residence (a small dwelling). Dependent accommodation units that are not self-contained residences can be treated as habitable outbuildings if freestanding and simply a dwelling addition if the extension is suitably connected to the dwelling. Similar to an application for a shed, other planning considerations such as siting of the building, proximity to natural features, stormwater management, colours and materials and waste control still need to be considered in the planning assessment.

If you want the dependent accommodation unit to be a self-contained residence there are a few more factors to consider.

ZONING AND ASSESSMENT

The council’s Development Plan has a general desire to allow dependent accommodation units in appropriate locations within the Council area. However, some zones within the Council area do not envisage more than one dwelling on a site (allotment) and therefore a dependent accommodation unit that is a self-contained residence may not be the best option.

A self-contained residence (second dwelling) is non-complying in the Township, Hills Face and the Watershed (Primary Production) Zones. This means this type of development is generally not supported or envisaged, but there is still the right to apply for such. However, a self-contained residence in the form of dependent accommodation unit is treated as ‘on-merit’ within the Mixed Residential Zone, Residential Zone and Country Living Zone.

Whilst there is good chance that Council would consider a dependent accommodation proposal that is a self-contained residence in a township zone, more careful consideration would need to be given to proposals in the Watershed (Primary Production) Zone and Hills Face Zone. In the Watershed (Primary Production) Zone, other factors such as bushfire risk and water quality impacts need to be carefully considered before Council will agree to assess a non-complying proposal. In water sensitive areas the generation of additional wastewater from another habitable building may not be appropriate. It is also generally not desired to increase population within high bushfire risk areas and therefore accommodation for the aged or people with a disability needs to be carefully considered. If a full assessment is undertaken, a referral to the Country Fire Service would need to be made in mapped high risk areas.

If applying for a dependent accommodation unit please note the following guidelines:

- A unit will only be considered when the site is a minimum of 1000sqm in a sewerred area or 1200sqm in a non-sewerred area
- The maximum floor area of the dependent accommodation unit should be restricted to 72sqm in all areas (townships and rural)
- The building should have an open floor plan with the only separate room being a bathroom. If proposing a self-contained residence, the laundry is required to be integrated into the bathroom or the kitchen. If a separate room such as a bedroom is genuinely required for practical reasons, there should be a maximum of one
- Unless under the main roof of a dwelling, the unit should not be internally accessible from another part of the overall building such as existing shed that is proposed to be partly dependent accommodation and partly storage (i.e. accessible externally only)
- The unit must be connected to the same services (e.g. electricity, phone line, sewer and water connection or waste control system) as the existing dwelling. Where the site has an on-site waste control system the dependent accommodation unit must utilise and be dependent on the whole existing or upgraded waste control system which services the main dwelling on the site (i.e. sharing the same effluent disposal area is not sufficient)
- The unit should share the same crossover and driveway as the main dwelling, but can have a separate car parking space
- Adequate car parking and private open space (minimum of 20 square metres) should be provided for the unit

In summary, if the unit has more than one bedroom or exceeds the size limitation detailed above, the building may be treated as a second dwelling, not a dependent accommodation unit. In this case, the proposal would not be in line with or supported by the general desire of the Council Development Plan to allow dependant accommodation units in appropriate locations.

PLEASE NOTE

The information provided in this Fact Sheet is only intended to be a summary. All applications are considered on their individual merits and therefore situations may vary.

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Further information

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