

Rural workers' accommodation

North Burnett Regional Council
Planning Scheme



WHAT IS "RURAL WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION"?

Planning schemes in Queensland must only use the terms defined in the legislation, the *Planning Regulation 2017*. This information sheet focuses on two of those defined uses, 'Rural workers accommodation' and 'Workforce accommodation'.

The Queensland *Planning Regulation 2017* defines Rural workers' accommodation as:

rural workers' accommodation means the use of premises for accommodation, whether or not self-contained, for employees of a rural use, if the premises, and the premises where the rural use is carried out, are owned by the same person.

REGULATED DEFINITION

The rural workers' therefore do not need to be accommodated on the farm. It is necessary, however, for the accommodation premises and the rural use premises to be owned by the same person.

This Information Sheet explains the rules around accommodating rural workers within the North Burnett.

LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

Rural Workers' accommodation & Workforce accommodation
Rural workers accommodation initiative
Development categories





RURAL WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION AND WORKFORCE ACCOMMODATION

SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT

It is important to determine which use is being proposed as that bears on the application type. Accommodating a rural workforce in a worker's camp could be either a 'Rural workers' accommodation' or 'Workforce accommodation' depending on the ownership. All 'Workforce accommodation' projects are presently impact assessable in the North Burnett, whereas 'Rural workers' accommodation can be accepted development or code assessable. (Page 4 contains a brief explanation of the categories of assessment.)

workforce accommodation—

- (a) means the use of premises for—
 - (i) accommodation that is provided for persons who perform work as part of—
 - (A) a resource extraction project; or
 - (B) a project identified in a planning scheme as a major industry or infrastructure project; or
 - (C) a rural use; or
 - (ii) creation and entertainment facilities for persons residing at the premises and their visitors, if the use is ancillary to the use in subparagraph (i); but
- (b) does not including rural workers' accommodation.

REGULATED DEFINITION

The planning scheme enables Rural workers' accommodation without planning approval if there are no more than six rural workers per 100 hectares (i.e. 1 per 16.7 hectares) and more than 100 metres from a boundary, road or watercourse.

EXAMPLES

'Workforce accommodation' can accommodate workers in a rural use when the accommodation is owned by a different entity to the rural use.

Example: Sarah has established *Workforce accommodation* on her land. She provides accommodation for persons that perform work as part of the rural industry. On the contrary, Rural workers' accommodation requires that the accommodation and rural use be owned by the same entity.

Example: John runs a blueberry farm. He has established *Rural workers' accommodation* on his farm to accommodate his blueberry pickers.



QUEENSLAND RURAL WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION INITIATIVE

AMENDMENTS TO THE *PLANNING REGULATION 2017*

The Queensland Government amended the *Planning Regulation 2017* on 16 December 2022. The amendments exempt Rural workers' accommodation from needing planning approval in specific circumstances. In response to the housing shortage (particularly accommodation for rural workers), the Government developed the "Queensland Rural workers' Accommodation Initiative" to assist economic recovery and support small to medium-sized businesses. The changes are an interim solution and have a 'sunset clause'. Unless the Planning Minister revokes or extends the provisions, the change will be in effect for three years (until 9 December 2025).

THE INITIATIVE

The initiative has two main parts—

Part A – Repurposing existing underutilised facilities as an interim solution for rural workers' accommodation, where nominated by the Planning Minister and used for accommodating employees for the Initiative.

When nominated by the Planning Minister, the proposal is accepted development and does not need planning approval.

Part B – Small-scale Rural workers' accommodation no longer requires a planning approval from the Council, provided it meets the following criteria:

- in the Rural zone
- premises is 25 hectares or more
- not in a flood hazard or bushfire hazard
- total capacity of not more than 20 employees of a rural use (total on the accommodation premises, the rural use and adjoining premises owned by the same person)
- not involving a new vehicular access.

This information sheet explains the planning scheme's regulation of accommodating workers. Other approvals and requirements may also apply, for example plumbing and drainage, or building works approval to ensure compliance with appropriate building standards including the relevant fire and safety standards.

DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

EXEMPT DEVELOPMENT

As above, small-scale Rural workers' accommodation is exempted through the *Planning Regulation 2017*.





IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Workforce accommodation requires an impact assessable development application in all zones in the North Burnett. Rural workers' accommodation is impact assessable in zones other than the Rural zone.

An impact assessable application needs to be publicly notified and allows submitter appeal rights.

ACCEPTED DEVELOPMENT

If complying with the acceptable outcomes in the Rural zone code, Rural workers' accommodation is accepted and does not need a Council approval under the planning scheme.

CODE ASSESSMENT

Rural workers' accommodation is code assessable in the Rural zone if it does not comply with one of the requirements in the Rural zone code. There is no public notification or submitter appeal rights.

FACILITATING GOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We have a long and proud history of development, prosperity and resilience. With readiness we also face challenges including distance, drought, flood and connectivity. Always receptive to new technology and new ideas, as the digital revolution continues to disrupt and expand economies around the world, North Burnett is gearing up to make the most of emerging opportunities. The Council is committed to drive ongoing economic growth and innovation in the North Burnett.

North Burnett Regional Council aims to be an innovation leader – a destination for business, investment and skills.

Contact Us

Call us for more information about the planning scheme and making an application.



North Burnett Regional Council
PO Box 390 Gayndah QLD 4625



(1300 696 272) (1300 MY NBRC)



admin@northburnett.qld.gov.au



Visit us at: www.northburnett.qld.gov.au