

Model Local Government Framework

Temporary Use of Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOWs) as Accommodation

Purpose

To provide a clear, low-risk framework for the use of Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOWs) as temporary accommodation, aligned with State Government settings, while maintaining public health, safety, and amenity standards.

1. Definition

A Tiny House on Wheels (THOW) is considered a **caravan** where it:

- Is built on a registerable trailer or chassis
- Has a valid VIN or equivalent identification
- Is designed to be towable and remains capable of being moved
- Is built complete, off-site (no installation, fold-out, erection)
- Is not permanently affixed to land (no footings, slabs, or structural anchoring)

Where these criteria are met, the THOW is **not classified as a permanent building**.

2. Permitted Use (Temporary Accommodation)

THOWs may be approved for **temporary accommodation on private land** for up to:

- **24 months (per State settings)**

Use cases may include:

- Housing for family members
- Worker accommodation
- Transitional or hardship housing
- Short-to-medium term residential use

3. Approval Pathway (Streamlined)

A **simple permit or registration process** is recommended in place of full Development Application (DA).

Application requirements:

- Site plan (basic layout showing location on property)
- Evidence of mobility (registration, VIN, photos)
- Proposed wastewater and water management approach
- Owner consent

Target processing timeframe: 5–15 business days

4. Minimum Site Conditions

To ensure safety and amenity:

- Maximum **1 THOW per lot** (unless otherwise approved)
- Minimum setbacks (e.g. 1.5–3m from boundaries, council discretion)
- Safe access for emergency services
- Located on land with an existing primary dwelling (preferred but not mandatory depending on zoning)

5. Wastewater & Services (Fit-for-Purpose)

Recognising the temporary nature of THOWs, **low-impact solutions should be accepted** where safe:

Acceptable options may include:

- Self-contained systems (cassette or composting toilets)
- Grey water diversion systems compliant with health guidelines
- Pump-out or removal services
- Connection to existing dwelling services (where available)

Full permanent sewer infrastructure should not be required unless:

- The installation becomes permanent
- There is demonstrable environmental or health risk

6. Utilities

- Power: grid connection, solar, or generator
- Water: mains, tank, or delivered supply

No requirement for permanent utility infrastructure where temporary solutions are safe and functional.

7. Duration & Compliance

- Approvals issued for **24 months** (preferably renewable)
- Conditions clearly stated at approval
- Council retains right to inspect if complaints arise
- Non-compliance may result in revocation of approval

8. Amenity & Neighbour Considerations

To maintain community standards:

- THOW must be maintained in good condition
- No unreasonable noise, waste, or visual impact
- Optional neighbour notification (at council discretion, not mandatory)

9. Exit Strategy

At the end of approval period:

- THOW must be removed, or
- Approval renewed (subject to review), or
- Transitioned through standard planning pathways if becoming permanent

10. Benefits to Local Government

This framework:

- Aligns with State housing objectives
- Reduces pressure on housing supply
- Minimises illegal/unregulated installations
- Provides a clear, enforceable pathway
- Limits administrative burden compared to full DA processes

11. Pilot Recommendation

Councils may adopt this framework as a:

- **24-month pilot program**, with periodic review
- Data collected on uptake, compliance, and community impact

Key Principle:

Temporary, movable dwellings should be regulated as temporary uses—not as permanent buildings—unless their form or use clearly changes.

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