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1 Introduction

Holiday homes are a component of the short stay accommodation sector in some parts of Western Australia and an important aspect of the overall mix of tourism accommodation, particularly in popular tourist destinations within the State. Over the past decade a growing number of holiday homes have been made commercially available, resulting in an increasing trend to purchase or build homes for holiday home use.

The informal development of this section of the tourist accommodation market has meant that holiday homes have so far operated with minimal regulation, resulting in an uncertain legal environment, issues of inequity with other service providers and land use conflict. The issue of impact on neighbouring residential amenity has caused particular concern in the community.

In response to these issues the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure formed the Holiday Homes Working Group in 2005. The role of the working group was to investigate issues surrounding the operation of holiday homes and matters raised by the group have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this bulletin.

2 Background

This bulletin sets out the interim position of the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) in relation to the planning and regulation of holiday homes in Western Australia. The bulletin provides guidance to local governments when dealing with issues associated with holiday homes in the local government planning framework.

The bulletin proposes possible changes to local planning schemes and the preparation of local planning policies, tailored to address the specific issues encountered by local governments.

3 Objectives

The objectives of this planning bulletin are:

- To facilitate a consistent, equitable and efficient planning process for the regulation of holiday homes in Western Australia.
- To support the tourism industry by the promotion of voluntary accreditation of holiday homes.
- To encourage good quality, well managed holiday homes for use by short-term visitors generally in locations that will enhance the tourism experience while minimising potential impacts on adjoining residents.
- To support the role of holiday homes as part of the tourism industry.

4 Proposed guidelines

4.1 Overview

Given that holiday homes are a legitimate part of the tourist accommodation industry and a desirable use in areas of high tourism amenity, it is recommended that holiday homes be formalised as a land use and dealt with via the local planning framework in the following ways:

- Introduction of a Model Scheme Text definitions for holiday homes.
- Introduction of holiday homes as a use class in the zoning table of local planning schemes.
- Identification of preferred areas for holiday homes in local planning strategies based on sound planning principles.
- The preparation of local planning policies to deal with the potential issues associated with holiday homes.

These guidelines may be applied in different ways by different local governments depending on the

local planning scheme and policies already in effect.

4.2 Local planning schemes

4.2.1 Definitions

It is proposed that the following definitions for holiday homes should be used in local planning schemes and adopted in the Model Scheme Text:

Holiday home (standard) means a single house (excluding ancillary accommodation), which may also be used for short stay accommodation for no more than six people (but does not include a bed and breakfast, guesthouse, chalet and short stay accommodation unit).

Holiday home (large) means premises conforming to the definition of holiday home (standard) with the exception that the premises provide short stay accommodation for more than six people but not more than 12 at any one time.

4.2.2 Holiday homes as a use class

It is recommended that holiday homes be introduced as a use class in the zoning table of local planning schemes, and be made a D or an SA use (discretionary or discretionary subject to advertising).

Initial approval should be granted for a limited period of one year, and renewed on a three year to five year period subject to compliance as determined by a local government, to ensure that there is minimal impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. This is designed to provide a degree of certainty to operators, while also enabling the local government flexibility to terminate approvals of non compliant operators.

Existing holiday homes (where it can be demonstrated that there is a history of operation with minimal or no conflicts) should be considered for the identified longer approval subject to the requirements of the relevant local government.

In general, holiday homes should be residential dwellings on freehold lots.

4.3 Local planning policy

As well as including holiday homes as a controlled use in local planning schemes, local governments are encouraged to develop a local planning policy on holiday homes.

The content of a local planning policy may include:

- objectives
- definitions
- planning application and approval considerations
- conditions of approval
- establishment of a holiday homes register
- non compliance
- voluntary accreditation

The Department of Planning has prepared guidelines to assist local governments in the preparation of local planning policies.

4.4 Preferred locations for holiday homes

To reduce conflict between holiday homes and ordinary dwellings, particularly in residential zones, ideally they should be located in preferred areas identified either through the tourism component of the relevant local planning strategy, or in a local planning policy. As a guide, holiday homes are more appropriate in areas of high tourism amenity and close proximity to key tourism attractions such as the beach, town centre or rural areas, but may not be appropriate in suburban locations.

4.5 Holiday homes register

A register of approved holiday homes should be established and maintained by the local government. The register should record basic details of the property including the contact details of the owner and/or manager; property address; and configuration (bedroom number, number of beds, bathrooms, car parking spaces etc). These matters should be considered for inclusion in the approved management plans for the operation of the holiday home.

4.6 Voluntary accreditation

Local governments are encouraged to promote voluntary accreditation of holiday homes from the Tourism Council of Western Australia. Accreditation is a non regulatory, voluntary means of addressing identified customer service and consumer protection issues. The benefits of accreditation include improvements in the quality of accommodation product through the application of standards, capture of accommodation provider details.

4.7 Transitional arrangements

It is recommended that local governments allow owner operators up to 12 months, after a local planning policy has been adopted, to apply for and obtain approval for the operation of existing holiday homes and implement the recommended regulatory measures.

6 Comment

Any comment on this bulletin should quote the title: Holiday Homes Guidelines and reference number: 801/6/1/44 V2 and be directed to:

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469 Wellington Street
Perth WA 6000

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