

Strategic policy

Approval of Limited Facilities Camping – Interim Policy

Corporate Plan reference:	<p>A smart economy</p> <p><i>A prosperous, high-value economy of choice for business, investment and employment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong economic leadership, collaboration and identity - A regional hub for innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity
Endorsed by Council on:	18 September 2014 OM14/134
Director responsible for policy:	Group Executive Economic and Community Development

Introduction

Limited facilities camping options are important tourism infrastructure for the drive tourism market, which accounts for 70 percent of the overnight leisure market in Queensland and is rapidly expanding.

In April 2014, the Queensland Government released the *Queensland Camping Options Toolkit* to assist local governments to increase the provision of camping facilities and attract more drive tourists to their regions. This toolkit details a range of options for council to explore that could contribute toward the doubling of overnight tourism in Queensland by 2020. However, implementation of the recommendations in the *Queensland Camping Options Toolkit* is a longer-term undertaking for the Sunshine Coast Council, as the current regulatory framework prohibits camping without express approval, which is typically only granted if a high level of facilities are provided on the site.

To enable the region and local businesses to generate economic benefit from this expanding drive tourism market while a comprehensive drive tourism policy is developed by Council, this interim policy provides a clear framework for Council to approve limited facilities camping without the need to satisfy the requirements that are ordinarily applied to accommodation parks.

Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform the decision making and approvals process and to provide guidance on the application of conditions when assessing limited facilities camping under *Sunshine Coast Regional Council Local Law No. 1*

This policy does not alter or override any other statutory or policy provisions that apply to the use of land or the activity of operation of accommodation parks.

Policy outcome

The outcomes of this policy will allow for:

- increased opportunity for the provision of lower cost tourism infrastructure in the Sunshine Coast Council local government area;
- an enhanced tourism experience for drive tourists visiting the region;
- an improved match between the application of regulations and the risks to the community and environment associated with limited facilities camping; and
- consistency and transparency in the application of the non-mandatory provisions within the Sunshine Coast Regional Council *Subordinate Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011* Section 6 of Schedule 10.

Policy scope

This policy applies to the operation of accommodation parks as defined by and subject to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council *Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011*.

Policy statement

All limited facilities camping proposals will be subject to the requirements of Section 9(1) of *Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011*, for example:

- Necessary planning approvals must be in place; and the provisions of the *Land Act 1994* must be complied with where applicable.

Conditions that will ordinarily be imposed under local law covering the operation of an accommodation park will also be consistently and transparently applied to all operators of limited facilities camping grounds (commercial, public and community), based upon the risk to the community and environment.

Operation of an accommodation park will be subject to all provisions within *Subordinate Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011* Section 6 of Schedule 10 unless a comprehensive risk assessment demonstrates it is unnecessary to do so, or:

- i. only limited facilities are provided where the land is to be used for camping; and
- ii. the users of the land for this purpose will be 'self-contained campers'; and
- iii. there is a reliable mechanism in place to limit the use of the land for short-term self-contained camping.

When deciding an application for approval for a limited facilities camping activity that meets the three conditions stipulated above (i, ii and iii), an authorised person (or Council) may approve the application under *Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011* s 9(1) for limited facilities camping to be undertaken on the land and elect to not apply the conditions that will ordinarily be imposed in Section 6 of Schedule 10 of *Subordinate Local Law No. 1*.

Guiding principles

- Council exercises its statutory ability in a consistent and fair manner
- Regulatory provisions that exceed the assessed level of risk represent an inefficient and ineffective use of land resources
- The rules governing the provision of products and services that have a commercial value reflect competition neutrality principles, where required

- Limited facilities camping offers and serves a different tourism market to resorts, hotels, motels, holiday rentals and caravan parks
- For the wider economic benefit of the tourism industry, Council facilitates the provision of products and services that meet the needs of emerging and expanding tourism markets
- Health, wellbeing and environmental values and standards are not compromised
- The preservation of community land is balanced against the granting of commercial use of community land, where it can be demonstrated that there is enhanced use of the land and there is benefit to the community.

Roles and responsibilities

Licence application process

The applicant will need to apply for an accommodation park licence under *Sunshine Coast Regional Council Local Law No. 1 (Administration)*. The form needs to be submitted along with supporting information and the application fees to council's Customer Service Centre. The application will be processed by an Environmental Health Officer within the Healthy Places Unit. Processing time is between 2 to 4 weeks depending on the quality and completeness of the application. The licence when issued will be valid for a maximum 12 month period.

Licence compliance and enforcement process

Environmental Health Officers undertake an annual inspection of the activity to determine compliance. This includes the audit of records required to be kept by the licensee on the vehicle details, length of stay and persons who stayed at the park and those dates. Compliance checks shall also include whether the licensee has added additional services or facilities outside of those permitted under the limited facilities camping sites category. The checks will also ensure that the licensee has not added additional sites to the accommodation park as this will breach their licence.

It is likely that spot unannounced audits will also be required to ensure the time period limitations of stay are upheld by the licensee. Failure to meet this licence conditions may result in compliance and enforcement action, prosecution, issuing of fines or cancellation of the accommodation park licence. Officers will also respond to complaints lodged by the community in relation to the operation of the accommodation park.

Application of the Policy

This policy will be applied in the following instances:

- Where the applicant has been able to demonstrate a recurring history of the site being utilised for camping (i.e. demonstrate pre-existing use rights);
- Where the applicant has satisfied all the requirements of the *Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014* and if required, a Development Application has been approved.

Measurement of success

The success measures for this policy will be:

- an increase in the provision of lower cost tourism infrastructure in the region;
- an increase in overnight stays by drive tourists visiting the region;
- an absence of measurable environmental impacts resulting from limited facilities camping at sites approved under this policy (e.g. correct wastewater disposal)
- an absence of substantiated community safety complaints associated with limited facilities camping at sites approved under this policy; and

- all applications for limited facilities camping satisfy the requirements of this policy and conditions that will ordinarily be imposed within the Sunshine Coast Regional Council *Subordinate Local Law No.1 (Administration) 2011* Section 6 of Schedule 10 based upon the risk to the community and environment.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

Camping means:

- to pitch, place or erect a tent, caravan or another structure that may be used for camping for the purpose of staying overnight by using the tent, caravan or structure; or
- to place other equipment that may be used for camping, or a vehicle or vessel, in position for the purpose of staying overnight by using the equipment, vehicle or vessel; or
- to keep a tent, caravan, another structure or other equipment that may be used for camping in position overnight, whether or not the tent, caravan, structure or equipment is unattended.

Council controlled land means land owned, held in trust or otherwise controlled by the Sunshine Coast Council.

Limited facilities means the provision of:-

1. rubbish bins; and
2. water access; and
3. toilets and or dump point

to the standard required. *The provision of showers, or laundry facilities, or kiosk facilities or similar exceeds the classification of limited facilities.*

Reliable mechanism will include a consistent and accepted method for verifying that a camper is self-contained camper. It will also include a management plan for recording the details of campers prior to or upon arrival and ensuring that a camper does not exceed a short-term period, as defined within this policy.

Self-contained camper/s means a person or persons who are camping within a structure or vehicle that holds fresh water, will collect and store all greywater and/or blackwater; and has on board cooking and sleeping facilities.

Short-term means a period not exceeding 3 nights within any consecutive 7 day period.

Related policies and legislation

Land Act 1994 (Qld)

Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)

Queensland Government Caravan Park policy (PUX/901/102). SLM/2007/3127 Version 3.3

Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 (Qld)

Queensland Government Secondary Use of Trust Land PUX/901/209 Version 5

Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme

Sunshine Coast Regional Council Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011

Sunshine Coast Regional Council Subordinate Local Law No.1 (Administration) 2011

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Create new		Council	18/09/14
1.1	Updates names under new Organisational Structure	Y	Corporate Governance	13/02/18

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