



TINY HOUSES ON WHEELS PILOT



TINY HOUSES ON WHEELS (THOWs) PILOT

A Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot presents exciting possibilities as we seek to address pressing issues around affordable housing and key worker accommodation.

The pilot will run until December 2026. Successful applicants will be granted a Temporary Residence permit under our Community Amenity Local Law 2021, subject to terms and conditions.

What is a tiny house on wheels?

For the purposes of this pilot, a tiny house on wheels is defined as a provisional form of accommodation designed to be used as a dwelling, and registered or required to be registered under the *Road Safety Act 1986* (Vic).

While a caravan, wagon or van is classified as a recreational registrable vehicle, for the purposes of this pilot they are not classed as a tiny house on wheels.

Where can tiny houses on wheels be parked in the Surf Coast Shire?

The pilot will consider applications in zones which allow for accommodation, including residential and some rural zones.

The tiny house on wheels must not be located in a Flooding Overlay or Bushfire Management Overlay, unless within a township boundary.

Why has Council introduced the pilot?

The pilot will help us to better understand complex issues surrounding use of tiny houses on wheels before reaching a formal local law position. It will enable us to test the conditions under which THOWs are allowed and regulated.

In May 2021 Council declared a key worker accommodation crisis in recognition of how a lack of affordable accommodation was impacting the economy and sustainability of local communities. We want people to have access to more affordable and sustainable residential accommodation options. Tiny houses on wheels ticks both of these boxes.

For a comprehensive list of FAQs, visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/THOWs.



“This pilot is a big step forward in finding or creating a legal pathway to allow tiny houses. It may also encourage other local government areas to follow the same pathway.

“There are numerous benefits that tiny houses offer. Affordability is key, with low bills and low capital cost. Sustainability is also key, enabling people to reduce their environmental footprint and the energy they use. They also don’t leave a scar on the land. Once they’re gone, the grass comes back and the trees keep growing, there’s no lasting impact.”

Wayne Reid – Victoria Planning Lead, Australian Tiny House Association (tinyhouse.org.au)

Checklist

- Permission from land owner to park on suitable land.
- Compliance certificates for tiny house and site connections (electrical, plumbing and energy rating if applicable)
- Essential safety measures (smoke alarm and residual current device)
- Electricity/gas connection, potable water source, wastewater management, and stormwater management
- Certificate of Title
- Proposed / indicative site plan

Application process

1. Apply for the pilot by completing the online application form via surfcoast.vic.gov.au/THOWs or collect a hard copy application form, available from Council office (1 Merrijig Drive, Torquay) or by calling **5261 0600**.
2. Applications are assessed for suitability, additional information may be requested.
3. If successful, an invitation to be part of the pilot will be provided with details of next steps.
4. Further approvals may need to be secured before a permit is issued (i.e. onsite wastewater management system).
5. On submission of these approvals, a Local Law will be issued, subject to terms and conditions.
6. At least 14 days before any action is taken to place the Tiny House on Wheels on the land, Council must be notified.
7. Council will notify neighbours and provide information on the pilot and how feedback will be obtained.

Timelines

- Applications will be acknowledged within **three days**.
- Outcome of assessment will be provided within **28 days** of receipt (including a request for information or advice on suitability for pilot).
- Local Law permit will be issued within **14 days** of receipt of any further approvals/information required.
- **Fourteen days** prior to commencing any site preparations or works associated with installing the Tiny House on the land, Council must be notified to enable notice to neighbours.

The pilot will run until 13 December 2026. All permits issued will be valid until this date.

Did you know? According to Victoria University research, tiny houses are up to five times cheaper to build than traditional homes and should be seen as an alternative housing option.

Contact us

We will consult directly with participants and neighbouring properties throughout the pilot.

For full details on the Tiny Houses on Wheels Pilot, visit surfcoast.vic.gov.au/THOWs. The webpage has contact details if you’re seeking further information. You can also email (tinyhouse@surfcoast.vic.gov.au) or call us **5261 0600**.

