D.4: PURPOSE BUILT RURAL TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Vacations and short breaks which provide a 'country holiday experience' are increasing in demand. This demand comes from both domestic and international holiday makers as well as business and educational concerns. Many regional communities have benefited from this increasing tourism interest.

The economic spin-offs of rural tourism, can be expected to continue to provide much valued diversification to the traditional agricultural income base of those country areas with tourism potential.

New tourist accommodation proposals can have many hurdles to cross before a viable and sustainable business can be set in place.

4.1.1 Application

This Chapter applies to all land to which, 'tourist and visitor accommodation' is a permissible use with consent under the provisions of Cessnock Local Environmental Plan (CLEP).

Applicants are advised that other chapters in the DDCP may be required to be referenced in plan preparation, with the following of particular importance:

- 1. Part C Chapter C.4 Land Use Conflict and Buffer Zones in relation to land use conflict and the application of buffer zones; and,
- 2. Part E Chapter E.3 Vineyards District in relation to issues and requirements applicable to the Vineyard District, including viticulture or permitted uses adjoining viticulture located outside the Vineyards District.

4.1.2 Purpose

To provide detailed guidelines for the establishment and on-going maintenance of purpose built rural tourist accommodation.

The guidelines are aimed at purpose built development for rural tourist accommodation. 'Cabins' as part of a 'tourist and visitor accommodation' development is a commonly used term for the type of development for which these guidelines have been prepared.

This purpose built form of rural tourist accommodation can be distinguished from lower key proposals to accommodate guests in the family home, referred to as 'Bed and Breakfast accommodation'. (Council provides a separate policy in regard to this type of development).

4.1.3 Definitions

In this Chapter and with specific regard to 4.5.13 Density & Scale of Development, the following terms are defined as follows:

- *'tourist accommodation building'* means a building or part of a building containing one or more tourist accommodation units.
- *'tourist accommodation unit'* means premises used for the temporary accommodation of up to 4 tourists in a maximum of 2 bedrooms for up to 42 consecutive days or, in aggregate, 150 days in any 12-month period, but does not include bed and breakfast accommodation.

4.1.4 Aims and Objectives

<u>Aims:</u>

- to assist applicants in understanding the purpose of Council's requirements, the various approvals that may be required and the processes involved;
- to provide information and options to promote best practice in planning, approving and operating rural tourist accommodation establishments.
- to encourage rural tourist accommodation that is compatible in its design with its surroundings and adjoining land uses.

Objectives:

- to provide more detail to the planning provisions contained in CLEP;
- to identify important issues that shall be addressed prior to the carrying out of development in the area; and
- to ensure that development is carried out in a manner that recognises site opportunities/constraints and reduces land use conflict between adjoining/adjacent land uses.

4.2 UNDERSTANDING THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

From the viewpoint of Council there are three major, and interrelated tests for a rural tourist accommodation proposal. These are indicated graphically below.



4.3 WHAT APPROVALS ARE REQUIRED?

A range of government authorities and pieces of legislation can be called up in the regulation of a rural tourist accommodation proposal.

A detailed listing is provided at Schedule 1 at the end of these guidelines. This list may appear daunting to some. But please note that depending on the circumstances, many applications will simply need to go through the approvals process administered by the Council.

4.3.1 Council – The First Stop

Where more than one authority is involved, Council is able to assist in co-ordinating input and approval of other authorities. The body of these guidelines point to the key requirements for approvals or licenses from State authorities.

Council is the best starting point to find out whether there is a need to make contact with other authorities to seek further approvals and advice on how to obtain these can be obtained at Council.

4.4 PREPARING AN APPLICATION

4.4.1 Good Planning & Effective Documentation

Apart from the actual plans of the proposed building works, there are three key documents which can be prepared in the early stages of your application. These can help ensure you're as well positioned as possible to deal with the requirements of Council and other government authorities.

(a) Site analysis document

- Helps you and others understand the site constraints and opportunities on the site and also take into consideration neighbouring land uses.
- An example of a simple site analysis drawing is provided over page. More complex proposals may need to provide written documents.

(b) Statement of Environmental Effects

- Written statement responding to each of the key development issues in accordance with Council's requirements.
- The major portion of these guidelines work through the range of issues which can be involved in a rural tourist accommodation proposal.

(c) Management Plan or Statement

- An outline of operational procedures to minimise the potential problems of interest to regulators, into the future.
- An approach to these matters is suggested in the next section.

It can be expected that applications for new purpose-built rural tourist accommodation will require input from suitably qualified professionals, familiar with the issues covered in these guidelines (Assessment Criteria).

The Council or professional and industry associations can assist with directing you to suitable experts in the field to meet the needs of your proposal.

Sound initial planning and analysis work can lead to a well conceived development in terms of environmental sustainability. It can also prepare you well for any questions which arise during the approvals process.

4.4.2 Site Analysis Plan

The site analysis plan should clearly identify the proposed development site in relation to important existing features both on the subject land and on adjoining parcels of land. The site analysis plan will help demonstrate that the development concept can 'fit in' to the existing setting. A simplified example of a site analysis plan is provided below:



Adapted from Shoalhaven Council (1995)

That the following information shall be included (as relevant) on a site analysis plan:

- north point;
- property boundaries and key dimensions;
- contours and major physical features;
- existing vegetation;
- creeklines or wetlands;
- distances and any sightlines to adjoining dwelling-houses;
- relevant details on any adjoining farm or other rural activities;
- views; and
- location of existing services.

4.5 FITTING INTO THE LOCALITY

4.5.1 Impact on Adjoining & Nearby Properties

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Tourist accommodation on rural properties shall not bring with it any potential to prejudice the operational aspects of working farms or other rural activities on adjoining or nearby properties.

CONTEXT

- There can be conflict between farm activities and tourist accommodation. Aerial spraying for intensive crops, early morning bird sot, dust from cultivation, noise from pump irrigation and the odours from intensive livestock are examples of typical and legitimate farm activities which can all cause disturbance to visitors.
- There is a danger that, over time, tourist accommodation near working farms, or other rural activities, may raise complaints about the effects of legitimate farm activities on the enjoyment of visitors.
- It is particularly important to protect operating farms. Generally, priority should be given to the on-going viability of traditional rural industry over rural tourist accommodation. In certain localities and sites these factors may well suggest tourism activities are fundamentally inappropriate.

GUIDELINES

- Show distance from the property boundary to the tourist accommodation on Site Analysis Plan.
- While dependent on local circumstances, if the setback is greater than about 200 metres then the proposal would be likely to satisfy the requirements for this point (for example, aerial spraying of pesticides is not allowed within 150 metres of dwelling houses).
- If the adjoining farms have potential to disturb or annoy guests, the following actions shall be initiated:
 - put in place tree planting to filter / screen views of the adjoining farm;
 - display appropriate signage within the main reception area that reads as follows:

"This accommodation is located in an agricultural area. Farm activities may cause nuisance or inconvenience from time to time, but such activities are essential to the maintenance of the prosperity and character of our local area."

4.5.2 Site Location

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Ensure that the site chosen for the proposed development is fundamentally suitable for rural tourist accommodation purposes.

CONTEXT

• The capacity to manage potential impacts on the natural and / or cultural environment should be high priority considerations in the site section process.

- At the same time the natural and / or cultural environment is likely to be a key factor in providing appeal as a rural tourism destination.
- Where risks of problems in areas of environmental management are low, likewise, the need for safeguards will be low, reducing development costs and the potential for delays in the approvals process.
- The proposed site, and development concept, will need to have legitimate potential to attract visitors seeking the 'country holiday experience' in its different forms.

GUIDELINES

Give careful consideration to whether a proposed site, and proposed concept, has:

- inherent natural or cultural appeal as a rural tourism destination;
- readily available water supply;
- slopes, soil types and land areas suitable for building works and wastewater disposal (consider potential for subsidence and / or slip);
- potential for problems with bushfires, flooding, land degradation, groundwater recharge, and other natural hazards;
- potential for land contamination (eg. cattle tick dip sites);
- potential to adversely affect sensitive wetlands, drinking water catchments or other water bodies;
- potential to disturb or destroy native flora or fauna;
- potential to destroy Aboriginal relics or sites or other heritage items;
- suitable site accessibility (consider potential road upgrading requirements);
- existing visual screening or potential for planting of vegetation buffers in areas of high scenic value;
- potential to prejudice agricultural activities, or other legitimate rural uses such as extractive industries, logging, etc, on site or on adjoining lands; and
- potential to prejudice the privacy and other amenity considerations which may be enjoyed on neighbouring properties.

4.5.3 Water Supply

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Adequate arrangements for water supply for residents and guests.
- Water supply arrangements to minimise any adverse effects on-site or downstream.
- Water usage schemes to promote water reuse and the minimisation of water wastage.

CONTEXT

- Proposals will generally not have access to town water. Sufficient supply of safe drinking water, which meets user needs, without unreasonable adverse environmental consequences, is a basic requirement.
- Any extraction of water from streams or from groundwater sources requires a licence from Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECC&W). DECC&W regional offices can give general advice on potential water sourcing issues, including vulnerability to contamination. Specialist hydro-geologists can assist in determining groundwater availability to a particular site.

Quality of Drinking Water

- Rainwater tanks are encouraged as a source of drinking water supply. Specific procedures and controls are necessary to ensure appropriate quality. Water drawn from streams or groundwater can be affected by pollutants or minerals, and may need to be tested for key health characteristics before being accepted as suitable for drinking purposes.
- Common sources of pollutants in streams can include: animal carcasses or excrement; leakage or seepage from landfill sites; effluent treatment systems; and/or chemical runoff from farm activities.
- Drinking water standards are a function of the raw water quality and any treatment system which may be proposed.
- A comprehensive guideline on drinking water quality standards has been prepared by NHMRC (1996). The publication notes that the documented health related guidelines as 'very conservative' and based on safety for life long consumption. The publication suggests a practical strategy for monitoring 'small water supplies serving transient consumers'.

Water quantities

- A water management plan will normally be required indicating: demand profile for different water types (drinking, other domestic, garden use, rural activities, fire protection), sources of supply, storage arrangements and drainage facilities. Demand profiles should be based on site specific circumstances, however as a guide, drinking water supply of around 30 kilolitres per annum per suite, and around 80 kilolitres per annum for larger dwellings is suggested as an indicative standard.
- Water conservation devices (dual flush toilets, aerated shower roses and bathroom taps etc.,) can help in reducing demand while improving the efficiency of effluent management.

SPECIAL APPROVALS

Approval from the DECC&W is also required when it is intended to dam a watercourse. Contact DECC&W for details.

GUIDELINES

- Professional assessment and detailed advice from relevant experts is required to address the issues of water management. Contact Council and / or DECC&W for guidance on points of contact for expert advice
- Contact DECC&W for advice on licence requirements if water is to be extracted from a stream or groundwater source.
- Contact DECC&W if proposing to create a dam.
- Submit a 'water management plan' for proposed development including details on:
 - water budget for development concept;
 - sourcing and treatment details;
 - hydrologic design of water control, storage, and supply works;
 - analysis of downstream effects; and
 - arrangements for ongoing maintenance.
- Note: Drinking water supply of around 30 kilolitres per annum per suite, and around 80 kilolitres per annum for larger dwellings suggested as an indicative standard.

4.5.4 Effluent Management

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Effluent management systems to minimise any adverse effects on site or downstream.
- Beneficial reuse of treated effluent.
- Management arrangements to protect against failure of effluent management systems.

CONTEXT

- There is an increasing level of concern from government regulators and the broader community on the potential for inappropriate effluent management systems to contaminate streams and groundwater resources.
- Problems can arise if any treatment system does not have careful regard for, among other things: effluent loading characteristics; local rainfall patterns; local flooding and groundwater conditions; the slope of proposed irrigation areas; the absorption capabilities of soil; and proximity to watercourses.

Approvals

- Local Government Act 1993 requires that all effluent treatment and disposal systems receive approval from Council prior to their installation. A number of matters are taken into consideration as part of this assessment and are outlined in the Environmental and Health Guidelines 'On Site Sewage Management for Single Households'. This document is available from the NSW Department of Local Government.
- If on-site treatment systems are proposed to be located in more sensitive areas it may be necessary to work through the more lengthy process of an 'Environmental Impact Statement'. See Schedule 3 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2000* for details.

Treatment Systems

- It is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 1993* that all systems installed on land have had the accreditation of the Director General of the NSW Health.
- There are increasing concerns about conventional septic tank systems which rely on underground absorption trenches. Concerns relate to the heavy reliance of such systems on suitable soil characteristics. Soil 'clogging' and infiltration characteristics will often simply not be able to provide an environmentally sustainable system. Separation of 'black' (toilet) and 'grey' (sink, laundry, etc.,) water is suggested as a key requirement.
- With appropriate maintenance, an aerated wastewater treatment system (AWTS) can be more suitable. An AWTS provides for 'secondary' level effluent treatment, after which spray irrigation of the treated effluent can occur safely if suitable design and maintenance arrangements are in place.
- Appropriately designed composting toilets may also be considered.
- The best treatment scheme for a particular proposal is a site specific consideration.
- Council is able to provide the correct procedure for making an application to install an effluent treatment system and detailed advice relating to effluent irrigation systems in particular:
 - site selection and assessment;
 - determining water balance arrangements;
 - establishing irrigation land and disposal area requirements;

- calculating wet weather storage capacities; and
- operational and management processes.
- It is important to recognise that sound maintenance is essential for satisfactory performance of on-site effluent management.
- It is also important that regular inspection and servicing of facilities be undertaken.

GUIDELINES

- Professional assessment and detailed advice from relevant experts is required to address the issues of effluent management. Contact Council for guidance on points of contact for expert advice.
- Contact DECC&W (Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water) to determine whether scale of activities will require a pollution control licence.
- Provide details on:
 - local characteristics including: climate; soil and groundwater characteristics; slopes; proximity to dwelling houses; streams; and flood levels;
 - design flow rates, effluent characteristics and treatment details, tank capacities and layout;
 - effluent transport;
 - storage ponds and evapo-transpirational details, irrigation areas, fencing, distances to living areas; and
 - management plan for on-going maintenance and monitoring

AVOID a design scheme which releases effluent:

- within 100 metres of a natural waterbody or environmentally sensitive area;
- on areas with high water tables, or problem soils;
- on land sloping more that 6^0 ;
- within a drinking water catchment;
- floodplain; or
- within 250 metres of a dwelling house not associated with the development.

4.5.5 Land Management & Flooding

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Buildings shall be designed to minimise earthworks and the potential for major erosion and landslip.
- Works shall be setback from watercourse banks to minimise potential for instability. Buildings shall be clear of local flood levels.

CONTEXT

- Land clearing, building activities and the intensive use of farm properties by visitors, especially near watercourse or on steep lands, can all be the source of land degradation.
- These problems, which can turn into serious matters for operators, are preventable with sound initial analysis and design, and on-going maintenance. For larger scale development in particular this may require:
 - tree planting;
 - development of defined gravel walkways; and / or
 - use of low key (suitably designed) retaining walls and steps in steeper erosion prone areas.

Special Approvals

Permits from DECC&W are required for any excavation works within 40 metres of the bank of a stream, for access across a stream or for tree clearing within 20 metres of the bank. DECC&W also provide professional advice on land management strategies to protect against erosion.

Where land has been identified by Council as flood affected, in some cases it may be necessary for the applicant to undertake a flood study to identify appropriate levels for any structures.

GUIDELINES

- **AVOID** a design scheme which requires:
 - significant tree clearing;
 - building works with significant earthworks (eg. cut and fill as opposed to split level or pole frame construction which responds to the terrain);
 - any works on slopes greater than 20%; and / or
 - development within 40 metres, or any tree clearing within 20 metres, of a stream bank.
- If any of the above are necessary, submit details on the need for these works and why a lower impact alternative is not possible (ie. development in cleared area, less steep land, alternative construction methods)
- In such circumstances you should also submit a soil management strategy. DECC&W can provide professional advice
- On steep slopes, where slip problems can occur, check with Council on whether a specialist geotechnical study is required.

4.5.6 Bushfire

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Development siting design, mitigation works, maintenance activities and management response planning, should maximise protection to lives and property from bushfire.

CONTEXT

- Bushfire prone land can endanger both occupants and property.
- These problems are serious matters, which can be addressed by sensible analysis, design, construction and on-going maintenance in the majority of cases.
- *Rural Fires Act 1997*, requires a formal referral with a appropriately prepared report to NSW Rural Fire Services, as an essential part of the assessment.

GUIDELINES

- Any rural tourist accommodation located on bushfire prone land is classified as a 'special fire protection purpose' under Section 100B(6)(d) of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.
- The application is therefore 'Integrated Development' under Section 91 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and a formal referral with accompanying report shall be forwarded to the NSW Rural Fire Service.
- The report shall be prepared having regard to the NSW Rural Fire Service publication 'Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006'.

- The NSW Rural Fire Service are required to provide Council with 'general terms of approval', without which the application cannot be approved.
- For rural tourist accommodation not located on bushfire prone land, the threat of bushfire still needs to be considered and appropriate analysis, design, construction and on-going maintenance shall be undertaken and forwarded to Council with an application.



4.5.7 Flora & Fauna Ecosystems

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Development shall not unreasonably impact on native flora and fauna, and in particular, threatened species.

GUIDELINES

Compliance with Cessnock DCP, Part C: General Guidelines, Chapter 2: Flora and Fauna Survey Guidelines.

4.5.8 Cultural Heritage

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Development shall not unreasonably impact on our cultural heritage.

CONTEXT

- In any development proposal, consideration should be given to the conservation of any items of cultural significance, including Aboriginal and post European settlement heritage.
- The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 and Heritage Act 1977 bring forward requirements regarding the conservation of items of heritage value. This can relate to issues of historic, scientific, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic significance.
- Tourism can benefit from an association with heritage of a local area, with tourists seeking to experience a sense of the history and story of the locality.
- Tourism interest in Australia's indigenous culture is increasing.
- In consultation with representatives of Aboriginal communities, Tourism New South Wales has developed guidelines to assist, where it is intended to incorporate aspects of Australia's indigenous culture into tourist activities or products. The guidelines emphasise the need to develop such matters in line with the values of affected Aboriginal communities.

GUIDELINES

- Initially contact Council for advice on the potential for your site to have cultural significance.
- Depending on local conditions, it may also be necessary to contact the DECC&W, DoP, the local Aboriginal Land Council, or an appropriate specialist to gain advice on potential implications, and the need for specialist analysis.
- It may well be possible to develop tourism accommodation in the vicinity of items of cultural significance following careful design and management arrangements.

4.5.9 Scenic Character (including signs)

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Development proposals and associated signage, to fit in to the rural or natural setting without adversely affecting the local visual character.
- Recognise the legitimate role of identification, advertising and directional signage for rural tourist accommodation.

CONTEXT

- It is important for rural tourist accommodation development to be unobtrusive and sympathetic to the local visual setting. This raises questions as to the siting, landscaping and materials used for the development.
- Signage for rural accommodation development can provide important identification, advertising and directional information, meeting commercial needs, and the needs of unfamiliar visitor traffic. None of these forms of signage need be unreasonably obtrusive.
- In certain circumstances, establishments may be able to gain approval from the RTA for a 'White on Blue' tourist accommodation signposting on RTA roads.
- Council staff can give advice on policies for directional signs for local roads, and are recommended as initial points of contact for proposed signs on RTA roads.
- Advertising, identification and directional signs on the site shall be considered based on the merits of individual cases.

GUIDELINES

- Compliance with Cessnock DCP, *Part D: Specific Development, Chapter 5: Outdoor Signage.*
- If the proposed development can be viewed from adjoining properties and / or roads, screen planting shall be provided to filter views into the site.
- Colours and materials for a proposed development shall suit the character of the site and of dark natural colours and of low reflective quality.
- Development shall be sited such that it is not located on prominent knolls or ridge lines, and is well set back from property boundaries.
- Especially on rural properties where there is a significant distance from the road boundary to the accommodation destination, appropriate reinforcement signage along the internal access road can be provided.
- Design and lighting of proposed developments shall take into consideration any design guideline and codes Council have in relation to outdoor lighting in rural areas.

4.5.10 Access & Parking

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Safe and practical access from the public road system for visitors, service vehicles and emergency vehicles.
- Reasonable and appropriate quality of parking to meet visitor and operational needs.
- Development shall contribute on a reasonable basis to the demand it imposes on public roads.

CONTEXT

- Rural gravel roads provide part of the fabric of the country holiday experience. Similarly, parking standards shall not unreasonably exceed that which might be expected in rural holiday circumstances.
- However, it is generally appropriate that access roads be suitable for two wheel drive vehicles, and parking be to all weather standards.
- If creek crossings can become flooded, then applicants shall demonstrate suitable management response arrangements, included four wheel drive access in the case of the need for site departures, especially in emergency circumstances.
- In steeper lands, road alignments should attempt to follow contour lines, and be located to ensure road gradients are manageable for two wheel drive vehicles. Particular consideration should be given to the visual impact any proposed road may have on the scenic character of the locality.
- Some rural roads and access tracks are not maintained by Council and as such it is the responsibility of 'users' to upgrade and maintain such tracks.

GUIDELINES

- Internal accessways shall be constructed in accordance with Council's standards.
- Lesser standards may be appropriate for low intensity development, or one way accesses.
- Accessway gradients shall not generally exceed 12%. Accessways in excess of this grade may need to incorporate sealing.
- In bushfire prone land additional standards including provision for emergency vehicle access and turnaround areas may be required.
- All weather parking to provide enough area for one space per unit and one space per two employees.
- Where 'day trippers' or coach transport are anticipated additional parking and / or access provisions may be necessary.
- Upgrading of intersection with public road system may be required dependent on sight distances and road geometry at intersection and scale of development.
- Roadworks developer contributions in accordance with the local Section 94 Contributions Plan.

4.5.11 Social & Economic Effect

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Recognise social and economic factors associated with rural tourist accommodation development.

CONTEXT

- While it is important not to fall into the trap of considering tourism the 'universal panacea' for rural communities, tourist accommodation on rural properties can provide social and economic benefits for local communities and land owners.
 - These benefits can include:
 - increased job opportunities;
 - diversification of the income base of farms and rural towns; and / or
 - a broader base for the establishment, maintenance and / or expansion of local services.
- Social and economic benefits are important considerations and shall be taken into account when balancing up an assessment of the appropriateness of a proposed development.
- Proponents are encouraged to make clear the social and economic effects of a proposal at the application stage. Local council economic development or tourism officers can be useful contact point in gaining an appreciation of the strategic implications of tourism development in a local area.

GUIDELINES

Applicants are encouraged to provide details on the likely effects of the proposed development in terms of direct local employment opportunities and demands on local services.

4.5.12 Waste Management

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

The environmentally sustainable management of waste generated by rural tourist accommodation development.

GUIDELINES

Compliance with Part C: General Guidelines, Chapter 5: Waste Management & Minimisation.

4.5.13 Density & Scale of Development

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Ensure the scale of development does not unreasonably affect the surrounding rural character.
- Ensure the scale of development does not unreasonably affect the surrounding natural environment.

CONTEXT

- Particularly in those localities most attractive to tourism activities, concern has been raised that the density and frequency of rural tourist accommodation development is causing a change to the local rural character, which has provided one of the attractions in the first place.
- In some areas it has been necessary to put in place controls on the density of rural tourist accommodation to protect the character of an area.

• More generally, it is emphasised that proposed sites must have the required carrying capacity ensuring the development proposals can 'fit in' without adverse environmental or cultural effects. All of the preceding elements of these guidelines give assistance in this regard.

GUIDELINES

RU2: Rural Landscape Zone

- Council shall not grant consent to development for the purposes of *tourist & visitor* accommodation on land within the RU2 Zone, unless the lot on which the development is to be carried out has an area of not less than 10 hectares and has a dwelling entitlement pursuant to clause 4.2A CLEP.
- Council shall not grant consent to *tourist* & *visitor accommodation* development within the RU2 Zone, which exceeds a density of one *tourist accommodation unit* per hectare of land.
- However, Council may consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the RU2 Zone to a maximum density of 1.5 *tourist accommodation units* per hectare, where a proposal seeks to fully comply with the requirements for the establishment and maintenance of native vegetation corridors for the full length of property boundaries or creeklines, as relevant, or where a proposal seeks to establish and maintain a minimum of 6,000 m² of native vegetation.
- Council shall not grant consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the RU2 Zone which exceeds a floor space ratio of 0.1:1.
- Council shall not grant consent to *tourist* & *visitor accommodation* development within the RU2 Zone which exceeds the maximum number of permissible *tourist accommodation buildings* specified in the following table:

Lot size (hectares)	Maximum permissible number of tourist accommodation buildings at 1 tourist accommodation unit / hectare	Maximum permissible number of tourist accommodation buildings at 1.5 tourist accommodation units / hectare
Up to 10	Not applicable	Not applicable
Exceeding 10 but not exceeding 20	6	8
Exceeding 20 but not exceeding 30	9	12
Exceeding 30 but not exceeding 40	12	16
Exceeding 40	15	20

• Council shall not consent to the erection of *tourist accommodation units*, as staged development pursuant to Section 80(5) of the Act, unless it is satisfied that at least 2 *tourist accommodation units* will be erected in the first stage of the development.

RU4: Rural Small Holdings Zone

- Council shall not grant consent to development for the purposes of *tourist & visitor* accommodation on land within the RU4 Zone, unless the lot on which the development is to be carried out has an area of not less than 10 hectares.
- Council shall not grant consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the RU4 Zone, which exceeds a density of one *tourist accommodation unit* per hectare of land.
- However, Council may consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the RU4 Zone to a maximum density of 1.5 *tourist accommodation units* per hectare, where a proposal seeks to fully comply with the requirements for the establishment and maintenance of native vegetation corridors for the full length of property boundaries or creeklines, as relevant, or where a proposal seeks to establish and maintain a minimum of 6,000m² of native vegetation on land not affected by native vegetation corridor locations, in accordance with the provisions of *Cessnock DCP*, *Part E: Specific Areas, Chapter 3: Vineyards District.*
- Council shall not grant consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the RU4 Zone which exceeds a floor space ratio of 0.1:1.
- Council shall not grant consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the RU4 Zone which exceeds the maximum number of permissible *tourist accommodation buildings* specified in the following table:

Lot size (hectares)	Maximum permissible no. of tourist accommodation buildings at 1 tourist accommodation unit / hectare	Maximum permissible no. of tourist accommodation buildings at 1.5 tourist accommodation units / hectare
Up to 10	Not applicable	Not applicable
Exceeding 10 but not exceeding 20	6	8
Exceeding 20 but not exceeding 30	9	12
Exceeding 30 but not exceeding 40	12	16
Exceeding 40	15	20

• Council shall not consent to the erection of *tourist accommodation units*, as staged development pursuant to Section 80(5) of the Act, unless it is satisfied that at least 2 *tourist accommodation units* will be erected in the first stage of the development.

E2: Environmental Conservation Zone

• Council shall not grant consent to development for the purposes of *tourist & visitor* accommodation on land within the E2 Zone, unless the lot on which the development is to be carried out has an area of not less than 10 hectares and has a dwelling entitlement pursuant to clause 4.2A CLEP.

- Council may grant consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the E2 Zone provided the maximum number of *tourist accommodation units* or *tourist accommodation buildings* on any lot does not exceed 2.
- Council may consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the E2 Zone if it is satisfied that:
 - (i) the development fully complies with the requirements for the maintenance of existing habitat corridors as per *Cessnock DCP, Part E: Specific Areas, Chapter 8: Bow Wow Creek Gorge*; or
 - (ii) a minimum of 900 native trees or shrubs per *tourist accommodation unit* will be established and maintained in accordance with *Cessnock DCP 2009, Part E: Specific Areas, Chapter 8: Bow Wow Creek Gorge.*
- Council shall not grant consent to *tourist & visitor accommodation* development within the E2 Zone which exceeds the maximum number of permissible *tourist accommodation units* or *tourist accommodation buildings* specified in the following table:

Lot size (hectares)	Maximum permissible number of tourist accommodation units with habitat enhancement	Maximum permissible number of tourist accommodation buildings with habitat enhancement
10 and greater, but less than 40	4	4
40 and greater	8	6

• Council shall not consent to the erection of *tourist accommodation units*, as staged development pursuant to Section 80(5) of the Act, unless it is satisfied that at least 2 *tourist accommodation units* will be erected in the first stage of the development.

4.6 WELLBEING OF OCCUPANTS

4.6.1 Building Structures

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Building design, material and construction to be capable of sustaining an acceptable level of safety and serviceability.

CONTEXT

- The most significant factors relevant to satisfactory building works include:
 - the structural integrity of the design, in particular, its capacity to withstand a combination of loads to which the building could reasonably be subjected; and
 - the use of satisfactory construction materials and methods.
- The provisions of the BCA provide fundamental direction on all new building works. Proponents should refer to the BCA, or their building specialist, for details.
- In areas of risk associated with the stability and load bearing capabilities of soil, it may be necessary to engage specialist geotechnical as well as structural engineering advice in the design of building structures.

GUIDELINES

The BCA nominates detailed provisions relating to building structures relevant to rural tourist accommodation.

Loads

The loading requirements are satisfied if the building or structure can resist loads determined in accordance with nominated standards for: dead and live loads and load combinations; wind loads; snow loads; and earthquake loads as applicable to the local circumstances.

Construction

Specific Australian Standards, with any limitations, are recognised in the BCA for the following forms of construction: masonry; concrete; steel; composite steel and concrete; aluminium; timber; footings; piling; glass installations; protection from termites; roofs; particle board structural flooring; earthwall construction; domestic metal framings.

4.6.2 Fire Safety & Buildings

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Adequate protection of occupants and fire fighters.
- Adequate fire containment and protection of buildings.

CONTEXT

The BCA provides detailed provisions relating to fire safety. The BCA provisions differentiate between larger and smaller buildings accommodating tourists. If the total number of occupants of a building exceeds 12 persons, or the floor area exceeds 300m², then the higher 'Class 3' standards apply.

For Class 3 buildings, in particular, it will be necessary to engage building specialists familiar with detailed fire safety construction standards.

Certification of Fire & Other Safety Measures ('Essential Services')

'Essential Services' include: fire and smoke alarms; fire doors; hydrants; portable extinguishers; emergency lighting; and other fire safety equipment; or safety measures; required for a development. The BCA provides details on required 'essential services'. For Class 3 buildings, each of the required 'essential services' needs to be assessed and certified annually by a 'competent person'. This annual certification is to be provided to Council.

Bushfire Prone Areas

Building considerations relevant to bushfire risk are discussed at 4.5.5.

GUIDELINES

The BCA provides detailed requirements relating to fire safety applicable to rural tourist accommodation buildings. Both performance based provisions and acceptable standards of construction are provided, focused on the following matters:

• fire resistance and stability;

- compartmentation;
- separation of buildings from boundaries or other buildings;
- protection of openings;
- provision for escape;
- fire fighting equipment;
- smoke hazard management;
- emergency lighting, exit signs and warning systems;
- heating appliances.

For Class 3 buildings, annual certification of 'essential services' by a 'competent testing person' is required. Evidence shall be provided to Council (see LG Act / Regulations).

4.6.3 Toilets & Showers

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- To provide an adequate number of toilet and shower facilities to cater for the requirements of the occupants.
- All facilities to be of an acceptable standard and designed to facilitate ease of maintenance and cleaning.

CONTEXT

- The provision of adequate numbers of toilets and showers is a basic requirement for the health and wellbeing of occupants. In many instances guest units will be serviced by ensuites, in other cases share facilities will be provided.
- The construction and location of facilities should be convenient to the location of the bedrooms for which the facilities are provided.
- Council encourages the use of water saving devices such as dual flush toilets, restricted flow shower heads etc

4.6.4 Sleeping Rooms

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Provide a safe, healthy, clean and functional area to cater for the sleeping, storage and amenity needs of visitors.

CONTEXT

Sleeping room considerations can become most prominent in the case of shared sleeping rooms such as bunkhouse arrangements.

In these circumstances sleeping rooms should be designed to:

- provide adequate space and facilities for occupants to store clothes and travel gear or alternatively have locker facilities provided in another area;
- allow adequate natural light and ventilation into the room either via natural or mechanical;
- provide bedding and flooring which are easily cleaned and maintained so as not to provide harbourage for vermin of any description;
- allow the occupants to exit the room quickly and easily in emergencies consider location beds to each other, height of beds, no keyed exit doors;

- ensure appropriate sound insulation from noise generating sources (eg. kitchens, bathrooms, laundries); and
- protect the occupants from external entry and theft.

Density

In an appropriate room layout and with good design, it is suggested that double bunk arrangements can meet a density of about 2.5m² per bunk.

A density of this figure is very much dependent on the room configuration and proportions of dimensions within rooms. A slightly larger room may only achieve a density of 3.0m² per bunk.

Cleanliness

Clean bedding is a major consideration for high turnover (eg. backpacker accommodation) and special hygiene management practices may be necessary to protect against problems with lice and other pests in these circumstances.

Councils have powers under the Local Government Act / Orders / Regulation to ensure appropriate standards are maintained.

GUIDELINES

As a general, guide, clear floor space (excluding beds and furniture) should be provided of at least 60% of total floor area.

Sound transmission class (STC) rating of 50 for separating walls and floors between sleeping rooms and toilets, bathrooms, laundries and kitchens. STC rating of 45 for walls and separating floors in all other cases.

In general, it is suggested that each sleeping room be provided with the following:

- a waste container;
- appropriate window coverings;
- a non-key operated latching device on the door;
- a night light or other satisfactory illumination sufficient coat hooks, hanging space and secure storage for each person's possessions;
- a flyscreen to at least one openable window;
- a mirror; and
- all mattresses and pillows provided with washable coverings, with impermeable coverings on mattresses recommended to keep mattresses clean.

For bunk arrangement the following are suggested:

- the distance between the top surface of the mattress on a bunk and the bottom surface of a bunk or ceiling above is to be not less than about 850mm;
- not less than about 900mm between bunks in plan;
- safety rails fitted to the upper bunks;
- a suitable ladder is to be provided for access to the upper bunks.

4.6.5 Kitchens and Food Handling

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Ensure that food storage and meal preparation areas and processes are conducive to the preparation and consumption of food which is safe for guests.

CONTEXT

- In general, health regulators perceive a higher risk to consumers when food is prepared on the premises of, and by, a third party, compared to food prepared in one's own home. This is reflected in regulatory practices and it is important to ensure those involved in food preparation have the appropriate skills, and that appropriate food storage and hygiene infrastructure and programs are in place.
- Public health can be compromised in the food preparation process by such factors as:
 - incorrect storage of food, including storage at incorrect temperatures, or for too long;
 - meal preparation and / or consumption in unclean areas or with unhygienic utensils;
 - food handling without regular washing during meal preparation; and
 - unhealthy contamination of food through carriers such as cockroaches, rats, mice, flies, dust, dirt and even domestic pets.
- Proponents need to provide food handling areas, facilities and practices which comply with the NSW *Food Act 2003* and *Food Regulation 2004*. They also need to demonstrate a capacity to manage the hazards which come with the food handling components in the establishment. This capacity would include:
 - appropriately trained staff;
 - appropriate cleaning and other hazard management arrangements; and
 - an effective monitoring system.
- The National Code for the Construction and Fitout of Food Premises (Australian Institute of Environmental Health 1995) provides useful and detailed guidelines on construction, equipment and washing facilities for food premises.

GUIDELINES

- Those preparing meals must have demonstrated skills and competencies in food hygiene matters for new operations this will generally require the completion of an agreed course of study in food hygiene.
- Benches used for food preparation should be finished in a material that is smooth and durable, impervious to moisture and easily cleaned. Stainless steel is preferred. Walls above should be tiled to a minimum height of 450mm.
- Adequate provision for hygienic cleaning of utensils and foods double bowl sinks preferred.
- Handy wall-mounted liquid soap dispenser and hand towels to encourage hand washing and drying by food handlers.
- Refrigerators with a capacity to maintain food at required temperatures, and thermometers in easily apparent positions to facilitate systemic check of temperatures.
- Clear, documented and displayed management arrangements outlining practices on:
 - daily, weekly and monthly cleaning and hygiene standards;
 - check systems for food storage; and
 - program for approved pest control treatment.
 - Garbage should not be kept in or around the kitchen.

Refer to the National Code for the Construction and Fitout of Food Premises (Australian Institute of Environmental Health 1995) for detailed guidance on the above matters.

MAY BE APPROPRIATE

Food safety management plan, based on Hazard Risk Analysis, (see 4.7 below).

4.6.6 Access for People with Disabilities

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Make suitable provision for access and circulation by people with disabilities.

GUIDELINES

Compliance with Cessnock DCP, Part C: General Guidelines, Chapter 6: Access & Mobility.

4.7 GOOD ON-GOING MANAGEMENT

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE

Ensure management, staff and operational processes and resources are equipped to sustain sound environmental management practices for the operating life of the development.

CONTEXT

- Success in ensuring continuing environmental sustainability, happy guests and good neighbourly relations requires continuing commitment on the part of the operation's management and staff.
- Gaining operational approval from Council and / or the relevant authority is really only the start. Many of the matters considered in these guidelines, requires a commitment to detailed maintenance and management procedures.
- It is noted that industry accreditation programs have already acknowledged that a commitment to good management is a key to successful tourist accommodation businesses. This is further discussed below.
- A few of the workings of a rural tourism accommodation development which, without good management and maintenance can have serious implications for the natural environment the well being of visitors, staff or property itself, are outlined in the table.
- An Emergency Action Plan shall be included in the Management Plan submitted to Council with the application. It is important that guests (who may not be familiar with the locality) are aware of emergency action plans in the event of a bushfire, flood or other natural disasters. The plan should address the following:
 - a map clearly identifying access routes and alternate routes in the event of an emergency;
 - contact numbers for local bushfire control, local police and ambulance, plumber and electrician, W.I.R.E.S, etc.

Example of potential problems which can arise without sound management.

Item	Some Risk Examples
Water supply	\Rightarrow Contamination of supply point and consequent risk to guests and staff.

Effluent Management	⇒ Failure or primary or secondary treatment could result in downstream pollution.
Land management	\Rightarrow Erosion problems may result from horse riding or other guest activities near creek line.
Bushfires	\Rightarrow Heightened risks due to non attention to designated fuel management zones.
Ecosystems	\Rightarrow Damage to habitat through high visitation levels.
Waste management Fire safety within buildings	 ⇒ Litter and pollution of surrounds and downstream. ⇒ Alarms or fire protection devices not working due to inadequate servicing.
Kitchens and food handling	\Rightarrow Risk to guests from inappropriate food storage or unhygienic handling.

- Inspections from State and local authorities are one component of encouraging satisfactory on-going maintenance procedures. However, a key to sustainable, successful business (and avoidance of statutory orders and fines, or even business closure) is a systemic commitment to good on-going management. Documented plans of management can demonstrate this commitment. These plans can nominate daily, weekly and monthly actions focused on key risk areas, nominating the resources which will be put to work for these purposes.
- Well run operations will have management plans in place as a matter of course. Where there is a 'public interest' consequence if a procedure fails. Council may also require details on management procedures, and on occasions submission of regular reports as a means of monitoring operational practices. The simple graphic below indicates the generic system used for management planning like this.



INDUSTY ACCREDITATION PROGRAMS

• Increasingly, industry associations are initiating accreditation programs aimed at improving and maintaining accommodation and other service standards for tourism

businesses. Industry sees this work as important for ongoing sustainability of tourism in the highly competitive global market place.

• One such program is the 'Tourism Accreditation Program' run by the Australian Tourism Operators Associations. Accreditation with this program requires demonstration of a commitment to on-going management practices, training and staff development in areas including: food safety and handling, and environmental risks (ATOA, 1996). The Tourism Council of Australia is also developing a national quality standard. Local authorities would welcome evidence of accreditation in relevant programs as a demonstration of an understanding of the need for on-going commitment.

DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT PLANS – EXAMPLES OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

 It is emphasised that any management plan requirements for a particular development are site specific considerations. However to assist potential operators in gaining an appreciation, a series of matters which may come under consideration for environmental and public health aspects of a rural tourist accommodation development are outlined below. Where appropriate, references are cited where further details may be obtained.

Water Supply

- Water conservation measures (dual flush toilets, restrictions of water pressure eg. 150kPa, devices to Australian Water Conservation Rating AA or better).
- Regular microbiological monitoring, and monitoring of any other key health related characteristic identified as a local concern.
- Maintenance of plant and equipment.
- Inspection of raw water sources for potential contamination (eg. dead bird, animal carcases, drainage inflows).
- Maintenance of any barrier systems in place.
- Compliance with any Water Management Plan. (see NHMRC, 1996)

Effluent Treatment Systems Matters

Matters for consideration can be extensive, and include:

Septic Systems

- Water conservation measures.
- Use of readily biodegradable washing powders and detergents (bleach avoidance).
- Arrangements for desludging of septic tanks.
- Any arrangements for rotation of trenches (to prevent clogging).
- Regular removal of greases and oils from grey water preclarification pit.
- Arrangements for application of gympsum or replacement of ineffective trenches.

Aerated Wastewater Treatment Systems

- Water conservation measures.
- Use of readily biodegradable washing powders and detergents.
- Details on daily, weekly and monthly monitoring and servicing arrangements, including expect servicing for:
 - ⇒ all mechanical, electrical and other equipment (eg. chlorinator, disinfectant replenishment, pumps, fans, alarm system, slime growth on filter media, sludge

- return system operation, sludge accumulation in primary treatment tank);
- \Rightarrow sample testing from irrigation chamber and final aeration chamber;
- \Rightarrow irrigation system and area (eg check for runoff escape, irrigation failure, application of gypsum, rotation of irrigation areas).

Erosion Management

- Compliance with any submitted soil management plan, especially where construction requires significant levels of cut/fill.
- Maintenance of tracks especially in steep lands with erodible soils.

Bushfire Protection

- Details on fuel management programs, especially in any designated fire protection zone.
- Programs of activity to reduce litter around buildings and sealing of areas for protection against ember build-up.
- Safety of location of flammable materials.
- Maintenance schedule for fire protection equipment and any 'active' fire protection elements (eg. any bushfire sprayer system).

Natural or Cultural Heritage

• Compliance with any conservation plans or management strategies agreed at the approval stage.

Waste Management

• Compliance with any plans of management or waste minimisation strategies agreed at the approval stage.

Fire Protection Systems (other than Bushfire)

- Guest information sheets explain actions in the case of fire alarm and personal communication of arrangements at reception.
- Regular monitoring and maintenance programs for smoke detector alarms and other 'active' fire protection elements.
- Annual essential services certificates' from competent person, in accordance with LG Act requirements.

Kitchens and Food Handling

- Hazard identification and schedule of actions to avert for:
 - \Rightarrow food procurement (quality control);
 - \Rightarrow food storage (time, temperature, cross contamination control);
 - \Rightarrow preparation (protection from contamination and cross contamination;
 - \Rightarrow cooking (time temperature control);
 - \Rightarrow post cooking and reheating (time, temperature and contamination control).
- Cleaning plan including: daily, weekly and monthly cleaning schedule.
- Appropriate competencies and qualifications of relevant staff (Tourism Training New South Wales can provide details on course and resources available to rural and regional operators).

SCHEDULE 1 - APPROVALS WHICH MAY RELATE TO RURAL TOURIST ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT

ltem	Legislation	Responsible Authority	Comment
Development Application	Environmental Planning & Assessment (EP & A) Act 1979	Council	EP&A Act requires council to consider a range of criteria prior to determining an application. May be referred to other authorities for comments or concurrence in some circumstances (eg 'prime agricultural land' or 'integrated development')
Construction Certificate (Building Approval)	EP & A Act 1979	Council	Approval under Section 81A (5) EP&A Act. Demolition may be exempt development, see CLEP 2009, Clause 2.6A.
Change of Use of Existing Building to Use Inconsistent with Current Classification	EP & A Act 1997	Council	For example change from Class 1a to Class 1b, or Class 1 to Class 3 under provisions of the BCA.
Subdivision Application	EP & A Act 1979	Council	Main focus in any subdivision work (release of linen contingent on adequate completion of road, drainage works, infrastructure contributions etc).
Approval for any Waste Treatment Device	Local Government Regulation 2005	Council, Director General of Department of Health EPA	Guidelines issued by Department of Health
Bores and Ground Water Extraction	Water Management Act, 2000	DNR	
Stormwater Pollution Control Works	Pollution Control Act, 1970 and Clean_Waters 1970	Environment Protection Authority	Section 17K approval issued for significantpollution control structures usually after DA.
Excavation / fill within 40m of watercourses	Water Management Act, 2000	DNR	Part 3A permit
'Dam' over 7 megalitres in capacity"	Water Management Act, 2000	DNR	Can apply to larger dams constructed on properties.

Approvals Which May Relate to Rural Tourist Accommodation (continued)

ltem	Legislation	Responsible Authority	Comment
Removal of vegetation within 20m of prescribed streams	Native Vegetation Act 2003	Department of Environment & Climate Change (DECC)	Section permit required. Concerned with stability of river channels.
Clearing of Vegetation	Native Vegetation Act 2003	Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Department of Energy & Water (DEW), Central Management Authority (CMA) – Hunter – Central Rivers & DECC	Reference should be made to CLEP 2009, Clause 5.9.
Development Affecting Koala habitat	SEPP 44: Koala Habitat Protection and National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974	NPWS	
Activities within National Parks	National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974	NPWS	Licences from NPWS may be required for touring or other commercial activities within National Parks
Operate a Caravan Park or Camping ground	Local Government Act, 1993 and relevant Regulation	Council	May be camping areas associated with other accommodation
Driver's License and Accredited Operator for 4WD Tour Vehicles	Passenger Transport Act 1990	Department of Transport	
Liquor On-License (Restaurant)	Liquor Act, 2007	Licensing Court of NSW	
License to Sell Tobacco	Business Franchise Licenses (Repeal) Act 1997	NSW Treasury	Not required for vending machines where machine owner licensed
Gazettal of Local Environment Plan (LEP)	EP & A Act, 1979	Minister for Planning Department of Planning Council	Some applications may not be permissible in zone. LEP can be prepared to make development permissible. LEP can also provide standards for development.
Development Control Plan (DCPs)	EP & A Act, 1979	Council	Provides higher level of detail in controlling development, perhaps related to a concept plan prepared by applicant.