

Tasmanian Planning Scheme

Rural Zones – Fact Sheet

Purpose

This fact sheet gives an overview of the zones in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme for rural uses in urban areas.

What is a zone?

A zone groups land that has one main use or purpose in common.

Terms

The Tasmanian Planning Scheme (see Table 6.2) groups agricultural uses under the term 'Resource Development'. The definition is:

the use of land for propagating, cultivating or harvesting plants or for keeping and breeding of livestock or fishstock.

Resource Processing is defined as:

use of land for treating, processing or packing plant or animal resources. Examples include an abattoir, animal saleyard, cheese factory, fish processing, milk processing, winery, brewery, cidery, distillery, and sawmilling.

What do the rural zones do?

The Agriculture Zone and the Rural Zone are the two main zones used in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme for rural businesses.

The Agriculture Zone applies to the State's main agricultural land, sometimes called Tasmania's 'agricultural estate'. All agriculture depends on suitable soil. While soil fertility can be renewed, the loss of good soil through conversion to other land uses is often permanent. The Agriculture Zone is intended to protect quality soil.

The Rural Zone covers much of the remaining rural land, except for land zoned for environmental management. The Rural Zone applies to land which has limited opportunities for agriculture or to areas with other rurally based industries like mining, processing facilities and forestry. It is designed to be more flexible. It caters for a wider array of permitted and discretionary uses needed in Tasmania's rural areas.

The rural zones ensure the best agricultural land remains available for agricultural production. Tasmania places a high value on its agricultural land with agriculture being a major employer and among the largest contributors to Tasmania's economy.

Agricultural land is determined through mapping. In preparation for introducing the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, the Tasmanian Government undertook a major review of agricultural and rural land. This introduced new rural zones to better reflect Tasmania's characteristics. Detailed mapping of potential agricultural land was undertaken, which has helped councils apply the Rural and Agriculture Zones in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Where do the rural zones apply?

The rural zones are the most commonly used zones in the Tasmania along with the zones for environmental, such as national parks and reserves.

The Rural Zone is mapped in light brown, while the Agriculture Zone is a darker brown.

Can anything else happen in the rural zones?

Because of the need to prevent the loss of agricultural land, the number of permitted uses in the Agricultural Zone is fewer than in the Rural Zone. This protects the future viability of agriculture. Uses that can support agricultural business are allowed as discretionary uses. This lets farmers diversify and add value to their agricultural businesses through farm stays and other visitor experiences. Tourism, which promotes Tasmania's high quality produce, is in support of the broader goals of the Agriculture Zone.

Alterations and extensions to existing dwellings are permitted in both zones, but new dwellings are discretionary and require a planning application. Housing in rural zones is generally limited to what is needed to support agricultural uses, such as farmhouses and on-site workers' accommodation. This means land remains available for agricultural uses and minimises potential conflicts with competing land uses.

The Rural Zone is the preferred zone for extractive industries, resource processing and some types of manufacturing that need a rural location to operate. Extractive industries in particular are bound by the location of the source material. Other business that are better suited to the Rural Zone are those that process or store produce or provide services to the rural community, like a vet.

Subdivision

Subdivision in the Agricultural Zone is generally limited, to reduce the breakup of agricultural land and its conversion to other uses. There is more flexibility to subdivide land in the Rural Zone. Subdividing lots to 40 hectares in size is allowed, along with smaller lots necessary for rural uses.

Subdivision for housing is not allowed in rural zones. This is limited to the residential zones, including the Rural Living Zone.

Do I need a planning permit?

Most agricultural uses (Resource Development) do not require a planning permit in the rural zones. Most other uses require a planning permit in the rural zones. Additionally, many things are either exempt from the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, or do not require a permit if the requirements in the planning scheme are met.

The table below summarises the use classes that are Permitted or Discretionary in the Rural and Agricultural Zone. The asterisk (*) means that there is a qualification or a limit.

Table 1: Summary of land use classes in rural zones

	Rural Zone	Agricultural Zone
No permit required	Natural and Cultural Values Management Passive Recreation Resource Development Utilities*	Natural and Cultural Values Management Passive Recreation Resource Development* Utilities*
Permitted	Business and Professional Services* Domestic Animal Breeding, Boarding or Training Educational and Occasional Care* Emergency Services Extractive Industry Food Services* General Retail and Hire* Manufacturing and Processing* Pleasure Boat Facility* Research and Development* Residential* Resource Processing	Food Services* General Retail and Hire* Pleasure Boat Facility* Residential*

	Storage* Utilities* Visitor Accommodation	
Discretionary	Bulky Goods Sales* Business and Professional Services* Community Meeting and Entertainment Crematoriums and Cemeteries Custodial Facility Educational and Occasional Care* Food Services* General Retail and Hire* Manufacturing and Processing* Motor Racing Facility Pleasure Boat Facility* Recycling and Waste Disposal Research and Development* Residential* Service Industry* Sports and Recreation Storage* Tourist Operation Transport Depot and Distribution Visitor Accommodation	Bulky Goods Sales* Domestic Animal Breeding, Boarding or Training Educational and Occasional Care Emergency Services Extractive Industry Food Services* General Retail and Hire* Manufacturing and Processing* Research and Development Residential* Resource Development* Resource Processing Storage* Tourist Operation Transport Depot and Distribution* Utilities* Visitor Accommodation
Prohibited	All other uses	All other uses

What can I build?

Development must be for a use that is allowable in the zone. Approval depends on the use standards being met.

There are exemptions for farm and domestic sheds of a certain size in the rural zones. The use table and the use and development standards in each zone outline the requirements, such as building height and setbacks.

For more information

If you have queries about the specifics of your land and what you can build, please contact your local council.

If you want general information about these zones and their application, you can contact the State Planning Office.

State Planning Office

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