

# ‘Tiny Houses’

‘Tiny Houses’ is an informal term that is often used to describe a smaller home that may be considered more financially sustainable, or a lifestyle preference compared to the more traditional sized houses.

This Regulatory Note provides guidance on the building and plumbing regulatory requirements for the use of these buildings and road registrable vehicles for accommodation purposes.

These ‘Tiny Houses’ currently fall into one of the following categories:

- **Habitable buildings** (not road registerable) – A class of building recognised under the National Construction Code that is built for the purpose of living in. This definition covers site-built and prefabricated buildings.

The Regulatory Note – [Prefabricated buildings – Plumbing approval process](#) provides more information on plumbing approvals for unregistrable relocatable buildings.

- **Road registerable vehicles** are structures that are capable of being registered for use on a public roadway and relocated by towing behind a vehicle. These are commonly known as a caravan or camping trailer.

**Note:** A structure is no longer deemed road registrable where it is connected to the ground by any form of construction or plumbing work.

## Building Requirements

### Habitable buildings (not road registerable)

- Use of land for residential purposes requires council planning approval.
  - Reference: *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* and local council planning scheme.
- All building and plumbing work in Tasmania must meet the requirements of the *Building Act 2016* and provisions of the National Construction Code (NCC) relevant to the Class of building being constructed.
- A Building Surveyor must be engaged by the owner of the premises to perform or exercise the functions of the Building Surveyor as described in the *Building Act 2016*.
- An occupancy permit is required before the building is occupied.

## Road registrable vehicle

- Any proposed occupation of a road registerable vehicle on land zoned for residential purposes requires council planning approval.
  - Reference: *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* and local council planning scheme, or local by-laws for the use and occupation of caravans.
- Planning approval for the use of a road registerable vehicle does not imply an equivalent form of building classification or approval.
- A road registrable vehicle is not classified as a Class of Building under the NCC and may not be directly connected to plumbing services. See plumbing requirements below.

## Plumbing Requirements

The provision of drinking water and the appropriate disposal of wastewater are matters of public health and therefore all fixed connections must be in accordance with the *Building Act 2016* and the NCC.

All plumbing work including these connections can only be performed by a licensed plumber.

### Habitable building

- All plumbing must be in accordance with the *Building Act 2016* and the NCC. Examples of plumbing work include but are not limited to:
  - Cold and heated water supply
  - Storage of water for drinking (e.g., roof catchment collection)
  - Connection of roof and surface stormwater system to an approved point of discharge
  - Connection of wastewater to a TasWater approved point of discharge or to an accredited Onsite Wastewater Management System (septic tank, etc)

## Road registrable vehicle

- Fixed plumbing as described above, must not be connected to a road registerable vehicle, but these services may be provided by one of the methods below.

### Plumbing services options

A road registerable vehicle may, subject to local authority approval, be placed adjacent to certain facilities and other permanent structures that are connected to plumbing services in accordance with the *Act* and the NCC. These facilities include:

- A Class 10 structure (e.g., a shed) with approved plumbing facilities.
- A WaterMark certified bathroom/amenities pod – a pre-approved prefabricated structure fitted with WaterMark licensed sanitary fixtures and water supply

- An approved dump point (as per AS/NZS 3500.2) that can be one of the following forms:
  - A dump point that is designed to connect directly to the TasWater sewer connection point (Category 3 Plumbing work); or,
  - A dump point connected to a blind storage tank requiring regular pump-out by an accredited contractor (Category 4 Plumbing work).

Dump points provide the necessary disconnection from the mobile structure while allowing safe disposal of cassette toilet waste, sink and shower greywater. Dump points may be prefabricated or built on site. Fixtures within a mobile structure cannot connect directly to an approved dump point but must discharge over it.

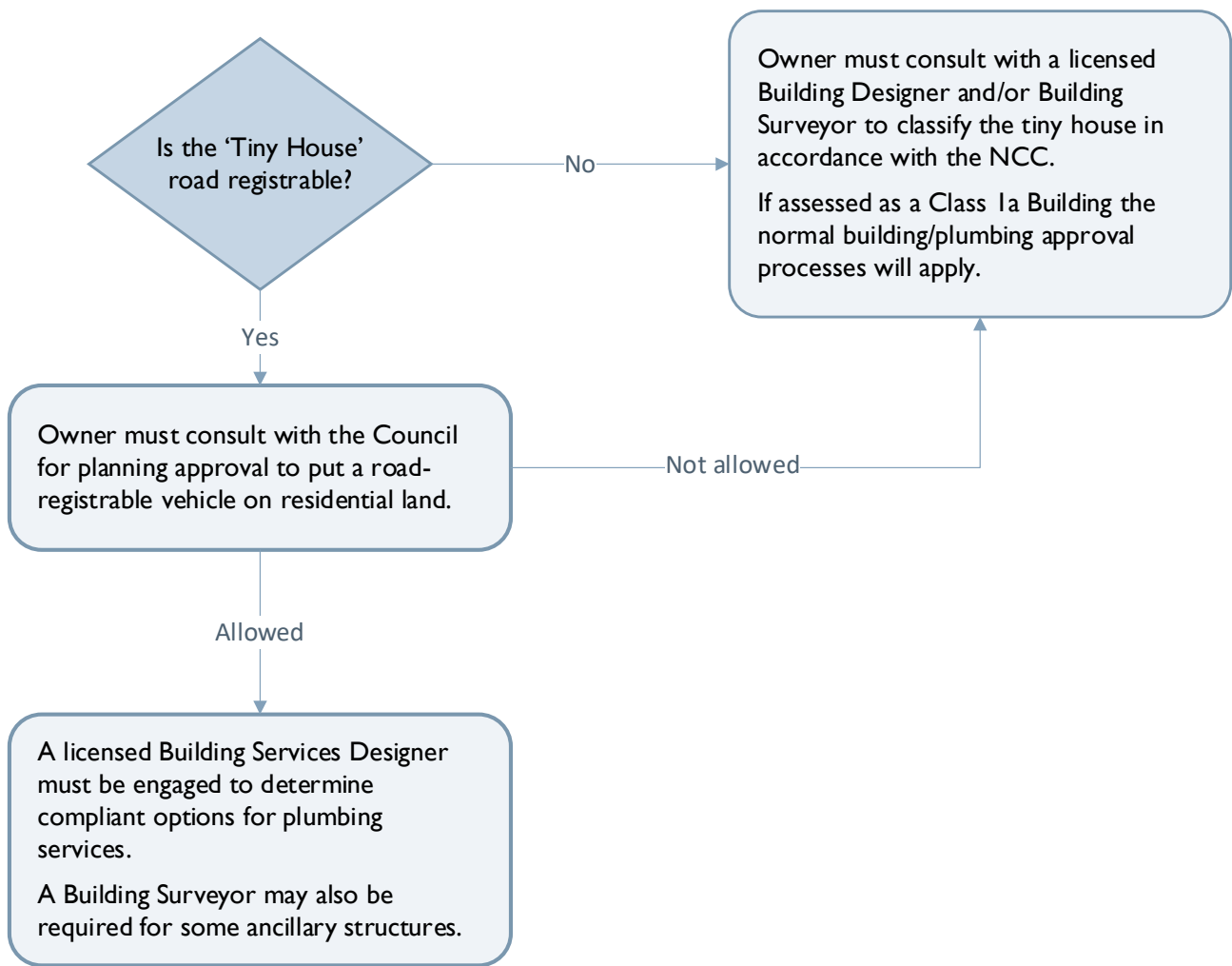
The plumbing services options described above all require full council approval prior to use.

## **Status of Onsite Wastewater Management Systems**

In Tasmania, Onsite Wastewater Management Systems (OWMS) are formally accredited in accordance with the *Building Act 2016* for use in association with all classes of buildings described in the NCC.

An OWMS is not permitted for installation independent of, or in isolation from a Class of Building recognised under the NCC.

Waterless Composting Toilets (WCT) are not permitted to be installed in a caravan or trailer-based structure. OWMS are controlled by State regulation, as they require an absorption system to remove excess liquid. The installation of these systems must only be undertaken by a licensed plumber.



Version	Application Date	Sections amended
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