

GENERAL

- **What is the difference between a building and planning permit?**

If you are building or changing the way you use your land you may need a planning permit and/or a building permit.

Planning permits relate to the use of land in accordance with the planning scheme. A planning permit allows land to be subdivided, developed or used for a particular purpose, such as the use and construction of a house and any associated works; tree removal or to operate a business or other commercial activity. Planning permits are issued by Council, VCAT or the Minister for Planning.

Building permits relate to structures and are required to ensure a construction complies with the Building Regulations 2006. A building permit may be required for a structure, fence or retaining wall. Building permits are issued by Council or a private registered building surveyor.

When a planning permit is required, it will need to be approved prior to a building permit being issued. A building permit must be consistent with requirements of the planning permit.

We provide assistance and advice about construction and land use in the Southern Grampians Shire. Prior to commencing any works talk to a planner to see if a planning permit is required, and contact a building surveyor to discuss obtaining a building permit.

- **Can I build on my block or a block I would like to buy?**

To find out if you are able to build on a block of land you need to know the zoning, schedules and overlays that apply to it under our planning scheme.

Before you make a decision on a property it is important that you talk to a planner about whether planning permit is required to use or develop the land the way you want to and what issues you may face if you need a permit.

- **How long will the planning permit process take?**

Many of the applications we receive are straightforward and take 1-4 months to process. More complex applications may take 5-12 months or occasionally longer.

Factors influencing the duration of the decision making process include:

- Requirements for further information from the applicant
- Referral of an application to internal and/or external authorities
- Notification to neighbouring properties
- Objections

Some applications may be decided by Council at a formal meeting, particularly proposals for major projects and those with a significant environmental or community impact.

- **Can I extend a permit?**

Every planning permit has a condition stating the timeframe for when the approved use, development or subdivision must be started and completed within for the permit to remain valid.

If you require more time to start or complete your project you can request an extension of time for the permit to remain valid.

Such a request must be made in writing, must state the reasons for the extension, must be accompanied by the relevant fee and must be submitted to Council before the permit expires or within 6 months afterwards.

- **Can I amend a planning permit?**

A planning permit may be amended by Council by making changes to conditions, plans, drawings or other documentation approved under a permit.

Minor changes that are considered unlikely to cause detriment to other properties or affect the interest of an external authority may be approved by what is commonly referred to as “secondary consent”.

More major changes may be approved through the submission of an Application to Amend a Planning Permit.

Contact a Planner to determine which is the best way to proceed with your amendment and what processes (ie. re-referral, advertising) may be involved in its assessment.

Applications to amend a permit are assessed against numerous planning criteria and may or may not be approved by Council.

SUBDIVIDE

- **Can I subdivide my property?**

A planning permit is required to subdivide any property; however there are big differences between subdividing in urban areas where there is good access to services and facilities and rural areas where the further subdivision of land may be more challenging, or not possible.

Minimum lot sizes for subdivision are prescribed by the relevant zones, schedules and overlays that apply to the property under our planning scheme. Any application for subdivision must comply with the relevant subdivision requirements to enable an assessment to be undertaken.

It is important you talk to a planner to find out if you are able to subdivide your land and if you can what restrictions may apply.

TREES & VEGETATION

- **Can I remove Trees and Vegetation?**

A planning permit is often required if you wish to remove or prune trees or other vegetation.

Our planning scheme controls the removal and lopping of trees and native vegetation (e.g. shrubs, tree ferns, native grasses) so it is important you talk to a planner before you remove any vegetation.

Your application will have the best chance of being approved if:

- You demonstrate there is no other option but to remove the trees/vegetation
- The overall impact of the vegetation removal on the surrounding landscape and ecology of the area is minimal
- It is clear that tree/vegetation removal has been minimised, with good quality vegetation and significant, healthy trees being successfully retained
- You and are willing to work with us on developing a revegetation plan to provide replacement planting that achieves a long term environmental gain. This can be done through our biodiversity offsets program
- It has been prepared by a professional consultant after talking to one of our planners and the application includes detailed information from an arborist or ecologist

SET UP OR RUN A BUSINESS

- **Do I need a planning permit to set up a Home Business?**

Some businesses can be run from home without a planning permit, but are subject to strict criteria.

To see if your business complies please talk to a planner.

The [Business Victoria website](#) has more detailed information on setting up a business from home.

FENCES

- **Do I need a planning permit to put up a fence?**

In some cases a planning permit is required to put up a fence. At other times the fence itself may not require a permit however the removal of trees or other native vegetation may. Other permissions such as a building permit may also be required.

It is important that you talk to a planner before you start work to check what approvals you need.

SUBMISSIONS

- **How do I make submissions relating to a planning permit?**

Submissions relating to active planning permit applications can be made by filling in the objections form and sending via email to council@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au in person to one of our council offices or via post to

Attn: Planning Department
111 Brown Street
Locked Bag 685
Hamilton VIC 3300

Please ensure that any submission made to Council is dated and signed.