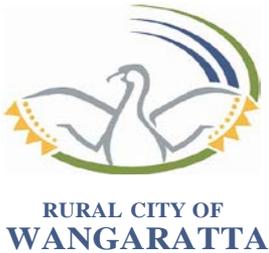


## No.2 – Important Information for Permit Applicants



The purpose of this advice sheet is to assist permit applicants and landowners lodging applications in understanding the planning permit process.

The most common concerns of applicants relate to time delays and the level of information requested, so it is important to understand the process and application requirements from the outset.

### **Seek a pre-application meeting**

The most important first step is to take advantage of a pre-application meeting (see Planning Advice Sheet Nos. 3 & 4 - Pre-application Meetings). Engaging in discussions with Council's planning officers prior to the lodgement of a planning application may avoid any misunderstandings or requests for further information when the planning application is lodged.

### **Consult your neighbours and act on their concerns**

Council actively encourages permit applicants to discuss their plans with neighbours as early in the process as possible, prior to the lodgement of a planning application with Council. This can reduce the risks of issues or disputes arising later in the planning application process.

### **Carefully choose the contact person for the application**

The planning application form requires permit applicants to nominate a contact person who will be the person Council will communicate with during the course of the application process. If this contact person is not the landowner or the permit applicant, this can often lead to frustration, as those other persons are not directly informed about the progress of the application. It is the responsibility of the contact person to ensure that these other persons are kept fully informed of the status of the application.

### **Present a comprehensive application**

Planning scheme controls can be complex, which inevitably requires Council to request information from permit applicants. These controls may relate to (amongst other things):

- protection of native vegetation, and areas of environmental significance
- bushfire management
- septic systems
- car parking and traffic implications
- conservation and heritage
- the requirements of statutory authorities, such as VicRoads and North East Water

It is often the case that Council must request from the permit applicant further information (ie. after the application is lodged) to assist in the proper consideration and assessment of the application. This is often a cause of delay in the consideration of applications. Whilst sometimes unavoidable (because new issues arise in the course of assessing a formal application), the likelihood of a request for further information can be reduced by having a pre-application discussion with Council officers.

### **Consult referral authorities directly**

Statutory referral authorities such as CFA, EPA, NEW, NECMA, GMW, DEPI, VicRoads, may need to be consulted prior to further progression of the application. These bodies have authority over their relevant aspect of the application, and their determinations and information requirements must be met. Council must generally await their response before progressing the application. To determine whether there are likely to be any issues, applicants may wish to discuss their application directly with these bodies.

### **Consult your neighbours before applying, and enter discussions prepared to compromise**

Planning applications often need to be advertised and neighbours advised in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. It is mandatory that an advertising period for an application be a minimum of fourteen (14) days.

There may be potential objectors to the permit application, in which case early consultation with neighbours may prove beneficial and may add to a better understanding of key issues and concerns. It may also lead to compromises or agreements acceptable to all parties, and even in some cases a withdrawal of objections. If objections remain, a further delay is often incurred. It is often beneficial if discussions have occurred before the application, and potential points of objection have been resolved.

If Council's decision concerning the permit application is appealed by any party (be it the permit applicant or objectors) to the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), a further delay of several months will be incurred (see Planning Advice Sheet No.6 - Applications for Review at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal).

### **Overview**

There are two common significant causes of delay within the permit applicant's ability of control, which are:

- When Council requests information to enable a full and proper assessment of the application, the applicant who does not provide ALL information could encounter delays.
- If the permit applicant decides to alter the application plans or documentation part way through the process, this may cause several of the aforementioned requirements to be revisited. For these reasons, Council recommends that permit applicants communicate to potentially affected neighbours and Council officers prior to the lodgement of an application.

Many of the problems outlined may be lessened or avoided during the process if the contact person nominated on the application form keeps in touch with the Council planning officer allocated the application. The nominated planning officer is available to assist you in processing and progressing your application.

**This advice sheet is to be used as a general guide only. Council has made all reasonable effort to ensure the information provided in this series is true and accurate. However, it is recommended that readers seek professional advice before acting or making decisions on the basis of this information. For any questions or clarification, please contact Council's Planning Unit on 5722 0888.**

## **CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

The following information (as a minimum) must accompany any planning permit application (unless other information requirements provided in the checklists within the suite of Planning Advice Sheets produced by Council's Planning Unit are relevant to your particular proposal):

- Appropriate application fee (schedule of fees available on Council's website or at Council offices);
- Completed application form (form available on Council's website or at Council offices);
- Full and recent copy of property title (within the last 3 months), along with any related plan of subdivision, restrictions, covenants or agreements (available from the Land Registry (Titles Office) or at [www.land.vic.gov.au](http://www.land.vic.gov.au)); (see Advice Sheet 5: Obtaining a Copy of Title);
- A detailed description of all components of the proposal (ie. buildings and works, change of land use, vegetation removal or any other reason for why a permit is required). For all proposals involving non-residential uses, an outline of the operation of the proposal, the existing and proposed hours of operation, number of staff and customers (if any), provision of car parking spaces (number and location) must be included;
- Three (3) copies of a fully dimensioned Site Plan drawn to a scale of 1:100, showing (as a minimum): At least one copy to be provided in A3.

### Existing Conditions

- the location of all existing buildings, structures and vegetation.
- internal building layout for existing buildings and structures.
- the location and layout of driveways and car parking areas and car parking structures.
- contours / site levels.
- the location of existing buildings on adjacent properties (including nominated setbacks from the common boundaries to the subject site)
- the location of existing buildings (including nominated setbacks from boundaries and other key site features).
- the location of effluent disposal system (for non-sewered properties).
- any existing earthworks and retaining walls.
- location of existing individual trees within 10 metres of all proposed buildings, structures and excavations.
- north point for orientation purposes clearly indicated on the plans.

Proposed development and/or works

- the location of all proposed buildings and structures (including nominated setbacks from boundaries and other key site features)
  - the internal building layout and finished floor levels for the proposed buildings and structures.
  - the location and layout of any new driveways, car parking areas and car parking structures.
  - any proposed earthworks.
  - all trees to be removed and those to be retained – should the application include an arborist assessment, tree numbers corresponding with the arborist report must also be shown.
  - details of any proposed lighting.
- Three (3) copies of scaled and fully dimensioned Elevation Plans drawn to a scale of 1:100, showing (as a minimum):
- wall heights and overall building heights for each elevation.
  - external colours, finishes and materials.
  - natural ground levels and finished floor levels.
  - details of any cut, fill, and proposed retaining walls;
- One (1) set of photo reduced A3 plans of all plans outlined above if the original plans are larger than A3 size;
- A written submission detailing how the proposal responds to the provisions of the relevant zone, overlays, particular provisions and State and local planning policies (as appropriate);
- A CD containing a copy of all plans and associated reports in a PDF format.

**The above checklist ensures that all documents are submitted to Council to initiate the assessment of the planning application. Additional information may be required depending on the precise nature of the proposal and any site-specific considerations. If applications are lodged without sufficient information for Council assessment, Council will formally request more information in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.**

**Please check other planning advice sheets for relevance to your proposal. If applicable, the information requirements provided in that advice sheet and checklist should also be provided when lodging your application.**