

Tiny Houses Down Under

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President

Australian Tiny House Association (ATHA)



AUSTRALIAN
TINY HOUSE
ASSOCIATION

Who is ATHA?

Formed in 2018 by 5 people who shared a passion for Tiny Houses.

The Australian Tiny House Association (ATHA): is a membership association of tiny house builders, dwellers, DIYs, and tiny house enthusiasts.

Our mission is to find a national approach that overcome the regulatory hurdles preventing Australian's from living in their Tiny Houses. We do this through consultation within the tiny house sector and across all levels of Government - Sound familiar????

Australian Tiny Houses are not new?

The original tiny kit homes that helped solve Melbourne's gold rush housing crisis

ABC Radio Melbourne / By Nicole Mills
Posted Thu 3 May 2018 at 6:45am



These tiny homes would have initially housed middle-class families. (Supplied National Trust)



The history of the original kit homes

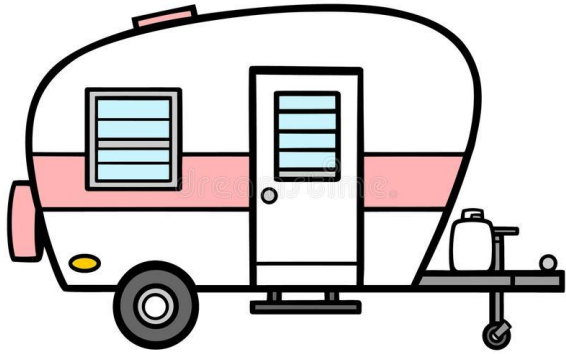
In the 1850s Melbourne's population was booming. Prospectors were flocking in from around the globe en route to the goldfields.

The gold rush created a chronic housing shortage and also an exodus of skilled tradesmen from the city.

Enter kit homes — kind of like flat-pack furniture only for entire houses.

These prefabricated homes were built overseas then dismantled, every component labelled, loaded into packing crates, shipped and reassembled in all corners of the British Empire.

THOWs are straddling a *crevasse*, not quite a house and not a caravan



Tiny Houses can offer an alternative housing solution to many: support families, help vulnerable and displaced people, provide housing choice and leave a smaller environmental footprint.

Tiny Houses can provide shelter, security, warmth, comfort and pride.

Tiny House Definition

The Australian Tiny House Association (ATHA) defines that a tiny house is a moveable dwelling suitable for permanent residential use, with self contained amenities and services and the option to be grid connected.

A tiny house can be:

- A Moveable Tiny House is a transportable structure with the ability to be moved.
- A Tiny House on Wheels (THOW) is constructed on a trailer designed to road legal dimensions, which can be moved.

- TinyHouse2Go



Where do Tiny Houses sit in Australian Regulations?

Local Law/Planning / Building/ Road Transport

Local Laws - oversee regulations at the local council/shire level and vary across Australia, which largely limits any person to permanently *"live in a caravan."*

- New South Wales allows only a relative to live in the caravan on private land where there is no payment.
- Western Australia you can only 'stay in a caravan for 3 days out of 28 days when on private land.
- Shire and Councils in other States:
 - Allow permanent living in a caravan if no nuisance and no payment.
 - Restrict living to no more than 30, 60 or 90 days in a caravan.

ATHAs Response to Local Laws

ATHA prepared a position paper for launch in early 2021 which says:

Living permanently in a Tiny House on Wheels on private property can serve as an innovative housing solution that meets the needs of the local community.

Living in Tiny Houses on Wheels (THOW)

(1) A person must obtain a permit to occupy land and live in a THOW on their own land, or with the landowners consent, for a period greater than 6 consecutive months.

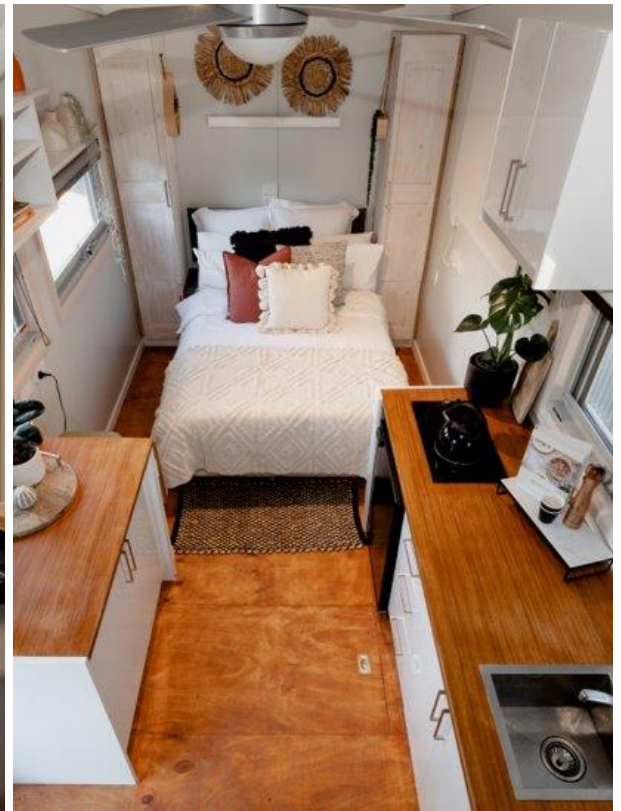
(2) The requirement to obtain a permit does not apply to:

- a person who lives in a THOW in a caravan park or tiny house village that is registered with the Council: or
- a use specifically authorised in the Planning Scheme or where a permit has been granted under the Planning Scheme.

(3) In determining whether to grant a permit to occupy land and live in a THOW Council must take into account the arrangements proposed to ensure:

- That adequate amenity is provided for the occupants
- That disposal of all waste is to the satisfaction of the Council
- That occupancy will not create undue nuisance to neighbours
- That occupancy and use will not create a lasting adverse impact on the land.

(4) A permit can be issued for a period of 5 years, with the opportunity of a renewal at the satisfaction of the Council.



- Tiny House Solutions

Planning Regulations

- Planning regulations in Australia are generally developed at a State level that prescribes land use, subdivision and permanent structures.
- Local Councils in some States can adjust the planning scheme to reflect their needs.
- Due to the nature of THOW and THOS being moveable structures, they did not fit neatly into planning controls.

ATHAs Response to Planning

In 2020 ATHA – Planning Working Group, developed a Planning Policy Template to introduce methods for including tiny houses into local planning schemes.

A copy of the Planning Policy Template was sent to all State Planning Ministers and Local Government Associations seeking support.

During COVID the advocacy of this Planning reform took a back seat and will continue again later in 2021.

• Courtesy: Ben Wrigley and Cotter Reid Architects



Building Regulations

- Housing regulations in Australia are covered by ONE National Construction Code (NCC), which allows some minor State variations.
- The NCC covers fixed structures and hence does not cover THOW or THOS, without them being secured to the ground.

ATHAs Response to Building

In 2020/21 the ATHA – Building Reference Group, developed a Tiny House Construction Guide for THOW and THOS.

ATHA is soon releasing the Guide for Trial by Tiny House builders and DIY to gauge feedback
Explore regulatory pathways for advocacy.

Transport Regulations

Road Legal Registered Trailer

Max load up to 4.5T, 2.5m wide, up to 12.5m long, 4.3m high

THOWs and THOS can be built beyond these dimensions but the trailer needs to be engineer designed and get a road transport permit.



Courtesy Lynda McKillican

Motivation

- Environment – reduction in energy use (when on grid), less resources
- \$ saving- rent/ mortgage/ bills
- \$ making- bnb, weekend escapes
- Simplicity and freedom
- Less is more: de-clutter, downsize, minimise
- Conscience
- Flexibility, mobility
- Homelessness
- Homes to fit occupants per data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics:
 - 58 % of dwellings have 1 or 2 residents (ABS- 2011)
 - 23% of houses have 1 or 2 bedrooms (ABS 2016)
 - Average household size approx 2.5 people

Who Would Choose a Tiny House?

- **Passionate** about a smaller environmental footprint
- **Wanting** more disposable income to enable different choices
- **Younger** and wanting to get into the housing market
- **Older** and don't want a high mortgage
- **Aged** and wanting to be near family but independent
- **Over 50** with less choices relating to housing choices
- **Single women** who often have less money in their retirement superannuation than men
- **Landowners who have space or land** and wish to have extra income; rental or B&B or extra space when family come to visit
- Farmers needing housing for transient workforce **Individuals or organisations** focused to provide solutions for homelessness, emergency housing or disaster relief.

The Media and Good News Stories

Tiny homes all the rage, but they can come with a huge amount of red tape

By Bec Whetham

Posted Sun 23 Sep 2018 at 7:58am



Sustainable housing consultant Valerie Bares said without their own housing category or building code, there was little certainty for Australia's aspiring tiny-home owners.

"A lot of what puts people off is the fact that there's a lot of uncertainty from a planning regulation perspective," she said.

"They're not sure whether they'll be allowed to do it so they're not willing to take that next step and actually go ahead and make that investment."

You can download the Tiny House Resource created that helped to open the discussion on THOWs:

<http://www.tinyhousecompany.com.au/tiny-house-planning-resource>

A Place for Tiny Houses
Exploring the possibilities Tiny House Planning Resource for Australia 2017

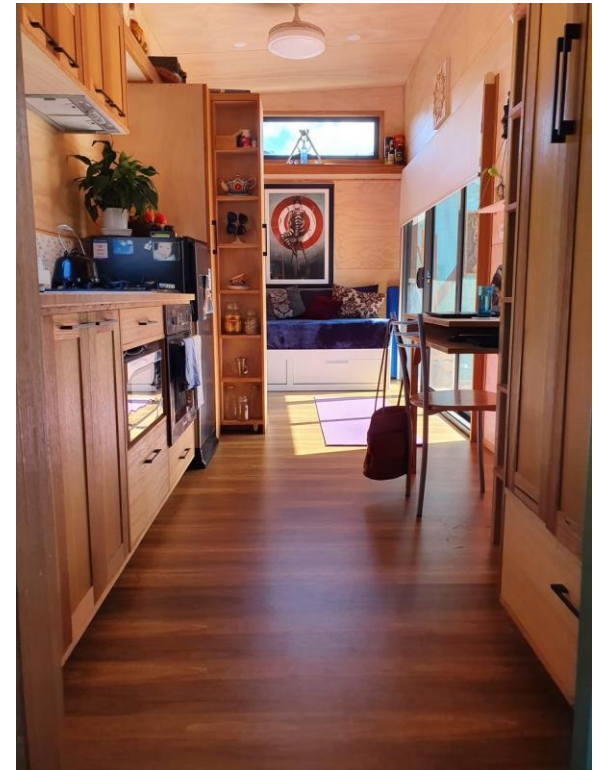
The image shows a grid of ten small images. The top row contains five images: a modern house, a tiny house, a green square with a white downward arrow, a house with a red roof, and a house with a grey roof. The bottom row contains five images: a house with a red roof, a house with a grey roof, a tiny house, a house with a blue roof, and a house with a grey roof.

esc consulting TINY HOUSE PLANNERYco
SHELTER Griffith UNIVERSITY TINY

BRIEFING

'It isn't a move for the faint hearted': Aussies describe what it's really like living in a tiny home

SHARON MASIGE 
DEC 31, 2020, 2:09 PM



The sustainability factor was a major reason Elle Paton decided to live in a tiny home. She had initially thought of getting a shipping container home but after realising it would take up more space than she needed, she opted for a tiny house instead.

Paton works with the [Tiny Non-profit](#), an advocacy group that uses tiny houses as a way to have conversations around housing issues. The organisation partnered with Melbourne-based business Tiny House 2 Go to build a tiny house in St Kilda, which Paton lives in.

"I pay them for the use of the tiny house in the form of a rent," she said.

It took 20 months to get approval from the Port Phillip council to place the off-grid tiny house in a city environment, with the project taking a total of three years.

Courtesy: Elle Paton of Tiny Non Profit

Couple wins right to keep tiny house in backyard of larger Brisbane property

By [Andree Withey](#)

Posted Thu 1 Dec 2016 at 12:48pm, updated Fri 2 Dec 2016 at 9:49am

Share



A Brisbane couple living in a tiny house on wheels has won the right to keep their home in the backyard of an inner city property.

In a landmark decision, the Queensland Building and Development Dispute Resolution Committee ruled tiny homes with wheels should be treated like caravans and thus do not require a building permit.

Lara Nobel and Andrew Carter were facing the prospect of having to move following a complaint from a neighbour and a decision by the Brisbane City Council that their tiny home required a building permit to stay on site.

"It's not a fixed structure so you can't get a building approval for it," Ms Nobel said.

The pint-sized house, measuring a compact 18 square metres of floor space, comes with a self-composting toilet and a demountable deck — all of which can be moved within a few hours as it sits on a registered trailer.



Working within current planning and regulatory frameworks this Project set out to demonstrate a progressive cohousing model that provides another option for those who are unwilling or unable to 'buy into' the conventional housing market.

It offers one possibility for reimagining the backyard by reframing it as a flexible asset that can sustainably return financial and social benefits to the landowner, the household members and the broader community.

This Project specifically set out to respond to the following objectives:

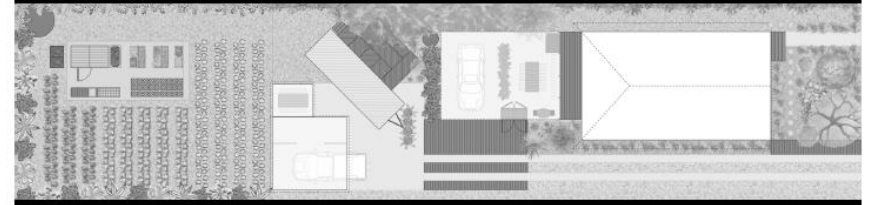
- Preserving the Backyard while addressing housing pressure
- Contributing to Sustainable Communities
- Enhancing Social Connection, particularly for older people.

MEDIA RELEASE

REIMAGINING THE BACKYARD

A TINY HOUSE ON WHEELS IN THE SUBURBS

BY CO-AUTHORS | KYLIE BICKLE + VALERIE BARES & RIKKI PIETERS



<https://www.facebook.com/reimaginingthebackyard>

Tiny houses up for sale, thanks to Australian charity tackling homelessness

By James Hancock

Posted Thu 22 Mar 2018 at 6:42am, updated Thu 22 Mar 2018 at 3:07pm



Tiny Houses aren't something new for **Kids under Cover**. It's been installing one and two-bedroom self-contained studios in gardens for 30 years to tackle youth homelessness by keeping young people living with family or carers.

Kids under Cover has set up its own business, called **Nestd**, selling a trendy micro home with a starting price tag of \$120,000. Nestd is headed by general manager Kieran Callan. "[It] fits on a footprint of 30 square metres, two storeys," Mr Callan said.

Thank you for listening

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