

Height Overlay

Regulates the height of new buildings and structures whilst protecting the character and amenity of the local area and neighbourhood.

What is an overlay?

Overlay mapping and overlay codes within planning schemes identify specific matters that must be considered when undertaking development (e.g. flooding, building height limits, heritage sites). Overlays must be considered alongside other relevant provisions (e.g. zone codes, use codes). Some overlays can change the level of assessment for development and require a planning application.

Why are building heights important on the Sunshine Coast?

Building heights are central in shaping the character of a place. They define the proportion and scale of streets and public spaces and have a relationship to the physical and visual amenity of both the public and private realms.

A predominantly low to medium-rise built form and, specifically, an intentionally limited extent of 'high rise', has become a core part of the Sunshine Coast's character and identity, reinforcing the experience of the natural landscape being distinctly dominant over the built landscape.

The maintenance and enhancement of these values, at a Sunshine Coast wide, local and neighbourhood level, has necessitated a continuing strong focus on regulating building height in the proposed planning scheme.



What is the role of planning schemes in regulating building heights?

It is common for planning schemes to include provisions that regulate building height. The proposed planning scheme contains detailed mapping and provisions that determine the maximum height of new buildings, thereby helping to shape the future character of the Sunshine Coast, as well as providing greater certainty for the community and the development industry.

What is the Height Overlay?

The Height Overlay Map in the proposed planning scheme identifies maximum height in storeys and metres on a site-by-site basis. New buildings and structures will need to comply with the proposed maximum height specified. There are some exemptions to the height limits specified on the map.

Height Overlay information sheet

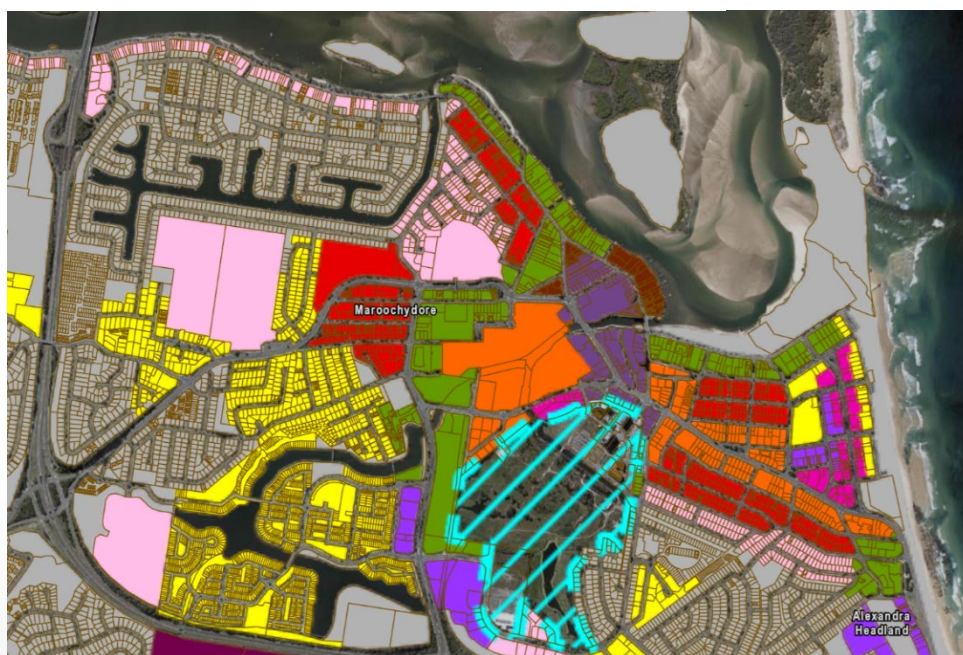
Height in storeys is only applicable to residential and business uses and, for these uses, both parameters (storeys and metres) must be complied with. Height limits for dwelling houses are specified in the Dwelling House Codes and are provisionally set at 8.5 metres.

Where the specified maximum height is proposed to be exceeded, the level of assessment is elevated to impact assessment, which means public notification is required.

The proposed Height Overlay Code provides the assessment benchmarks that manage maximum building height and applies to most new buildings and structures. The code requires development to:

- comply with the planning scheme's maximum height limits
- not adversely impact on the intended character of the local area and neighbourhood
- not result in an unreasonable loss of amenity for surrounding development

Height Overlay Map example (Maroochydore Area)



Maximum Height of Buildings and Structures (Proposed Planning Scheme)

- 2 storeys and up to 8.5 metres
- 2 storeys and up to 10 metres
- 3 storeys and up to 12 metres
- 4 storeys and up to 15 metres
- 5 storeys and up to 18 metres
- 6 storeys and up to 22 metres
- 7 storeys and up to 25 metres
- 8 storeys and up to 28 metres
- 10 storeys and up to 35 metres
- 12 storeys and up to 41 metres
- 14 storeys and up to 47 metres
- 18 storeys and up to 60 metres
- Unspecified maximum height
- Emerging Community Zone land with specific height requirements, as specified in the relevant local plan.

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- provide articulated roof forms and
- appropriately transition height, especially in residential areas.

What are the key changes to the proposed Height Overlay?

Change to regulate height in storeys and metres

The current planning scheme regulates height in metres only. The proposed planning scheme uses both metres AND storeys. Storeys are proposed to only apply to residential and business uses.

Regulating height in storeys helps to more clearly convey the built form that can be expected and supports Sunshine Coast Design principles in terms of encouraging greater floor to ceiling heights and roof articulation - both of which are often not prioritised where height in metres is the only consideration.

Whilst greater floor to ceiling heights are not mandated, it is important to Council that the policy settings do not penalise applicants who choose to provide them, for example, through

reducing yield that could otherwise be "squeezed" into a maximum height in metres allowance, which is what is occurring under the current planning scheme.

Regulating height in metres provides certainty in relation to a defined upper height limit. Importantly, the maximum height in metres specified in the overlay mapping includes 'built-in' allowances for design outcomes such as higher floor to ceiling heights, articulated roof forms and basements which means the maximum height in metres for a site may be higher than it is now. However, because of this, and because storeys are also a regulating factor, development that does not choose to provide higher floor to ceiling heights in each storey is unlikely to come close to the maximum height in metres.

As a general rule, the translation from height in metres in the current planning scheme to storeys and metres in the proposed planning scheme has sought to retain the yield in storeys available under the current planning scheme. However, where a locality is considered particularly sensitive to height increases (e.g. due to view lines or other local sensitivities), maintaining the maximum height in metres has been prioritised and some reduction in yield may therefore result from the proposed change.



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Changes to the Height Overlay Map

The height limits in the proposed planning scheme have been determined based on detailed local assessment, including consideration of local identity and character, reinforcing the hierarchy of activity centres, creating vibrant urban villages, retaining locally and regionally significant views and achieving desired urban design outcomes. Whilst height limits have been maintained in most areas, some changes are proposed.

Increases to height limits are proposed in some targeted areas close to employment, infrastructure and services, aligning with proposed zones and the intended built form and character for the particular local area. In particular, uplifts are proposed in and around major centres such as Maroochydore, Caloundra, Kawana Shoppingworld, and Nambour and within key nodes along the Coastal Corridor.

The proposed planning scheme also seeks to provide a better correlation between zones and maximum building heights, particularly in residential zones. This means the zoning of some areas is proposed to change even where the height limit is not.

New administrative definitions

- The proposed planning scheme includes new administrative definitions to provide clarity on what is considered to be 'low rise', 'medium rise' and 'high rise' in a Sunshine Coast context:
 - **Low rise** refers to buildings with a height of 1 - 3 storeys
 - **Medium rise** refers to buildings with a height of 3 - 6 storeys

- **High rise** refers to buildings with a height of 7 or more storeys.
- A new administrative definition for '**maximum height exemption**' is also proposed to consolidate all height exemptions in one location. Examples of height exemptions include structures for an industrial use in an industrial zone; rooftop gardens; affordable build to rent; accommodation hotels; and areas subject to flooding. A full list of exemptions is provided in the definition in Schedule 1 (Definitions) of the proposed planning scheme.

How can I find out more?

- Go to the following parts of the [proposed planning scheme](#):
 - Height Overlay Code
 - Height Overlay Planning Scheme Policy
 - Table of Assessment for Height Overlay
 - Dwelling House Code or Dwelling House (Small Lot) Code - for maximum height limits for dwelling houses
- Find out the height limit, zoning and other overlay mapping that is proposed [for your property](#).
- If you have a question about the proposed planning scheme provisions relating to height limits, contact Council's planning scheme team:
 - Email: newplanningscheme@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au
 - Phone: 07 5409 0570

To explore the proposed planning scheme or make a submission, scan the QR code or visit:

<https://haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/newplanningscheme>



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