

Local Planning Policy 9.1 – Sea Containers

1. Citation

This policy may be cited as Local Planning Policy 9.1 – Sea Containers and it has been prepared under Schedule 2 of the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.

2. Introduction

This policy establishes the Shire of Ashburton's position in relation to the use of sea containers.

While sea containers provide a convenient, safe and secure storage option for remote transient populations, the design and appearance of sea containers can present issues for achieving attractive urban streetscape outcomes.

This policy seeks to provide guidance and controls to mitigate potential adverse impacts on local streetscapes and settings. The application of this policy is limited to sea containers used for storage purposes. Separate policy guidance will be provided for other second hand or transportable structures that may be used for staff rooms, accommodation, office spaces or other similar functions.

2.1 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Sea Container

"A resealable metal transportable structure designed for the storage, unitised freight handling and/or transport of goods from one location to another by road and sea."

Screening

"A solid 1.8m high fence or similar permanently fixed device that obscures visibility."

3. Objective

1. To ensure that sea containers are visually integrated with the surrounding area, do not result in an adverse impact on sightlines, amenity, character, the streetscape, or detract from the appearance of other buildings in the vicinity.
2. To guide the Shire's decision making in respect to the appropriateness of the installation and use of sea containers.

4. Application

This Policy applies to land zoned and Reserved under Local Planning Scheme No. 7.

This policy only applies to unmodified sea containers. It does not apply to transportable offices/staff rooms/accommodation units or similar structures.

4.1 Exemptions

Development approval will not be required for the following:

- a) Temporary storage associated with approved construction works;
- b) Temporary storage when associated with relocating for up to 14 days or period otherwise agreed by the local government in any 12 month period;
- c) For Residential zoned land where the proposal is
 - a. located behind an existing dwelling and complies with the setback requirements of the Residential Design Codes or;
 - b. located to the side an existing dwelling and complies with the side and maximum front setback requirements of the Residential Design Codes; and
 - c. is safely and appropriately secured.
- d) For land zoned Commercial and Civic, Tourism Zone, Mixed Business or Community where the proposal is permanently screened within a fenced enclosure that is not located within the front setback or forward of an existing building line.
- e) For land zoned Urban Development where:
 - a. the land is subject to an approved structure plan or a Local Development Plan and;
 - b. there is an existing permanent building on the property, and it complies with the criteria listed for the specific zone; and
 - c. is linked directly to approved subdivision or development works and required for storage of equipment and will be removed on completion of these works.
- f) For land zoned Industry, Industrial and Mixed Business Development, Strategic Industry, Airport and General Industry where:
 - a. located behind the front boundary setback;
 - b. located behind or to the side of a main building;
 - c. setback in accordance with side and rear boundary setbacks;
 - d. stacked no more than two sea containers high;
 - e. clear of drainage areas, septic tanks, or vehicle access ways.
 - f. screened if visible from an abutting residential street or tourist zone.
- g) For land zoned Rural and Rural Living Zone where screened from the public realm.
- h) For all reserved land where screened from the public realm.

Prior to the commencement of development, any other licences, permits, or approvals required must be obtained in accordance with any other law.

5. Policy Provisions

5.1 Table 1 below provides the criteria for the suitability of sea containers within specific zones contained in Local Planning Scheme No.7.

Table 1 –Criteria for Sea Containers

Zone	Requirements
Residential Zone	Sea container(s) may be permitted where: 1) they do not project forward of an existing dwelling; or 2) match the established setbacks of the street.
Commercial and Civic Zone Tourism Zone Mixed Business Community Zone Education Zone	Sea container(s) may be permitted forward of an existing building line where: 1) they will not adversely impact the established streetscape; and 2) do not unreasonably obstruct sight lines or access to doorways, pedestrian paths or access to natural light for building(s) on site; and 3) are not in a prominent location; and 4) confined to a single location; and 5) are screened.
Urban Development Zone	Sea container(s) may be permitted where: 1) setback or located to minimise visibility from public spaces or residential areas; 2) screened from public receptor points; and 3) are contained within a clearly delineated location.
Industry Zone Industrial and Mixed Business Development Zone Strategic Industry Airport General Industry Zone	Sea container(s) may be permitted where: 1) they are located and orientated to minimise visibility from the street or public realm; 2) they do not obstruct access to essential infrastructure; and 3) they do not obstruct sight lines to building entry points or carparking areas.
Rural Zone Rural Living Zone	Sea container(s) may be permitted where they are: 1) setback at least 100m from a public road; and 2) not located in visually prominent locations, including main access routes to townsites or recreational or tourist attractions.

All reserves	Sea container(s) may be permitted where they do not 1) detract from the established streetscape in terms of setbacks, built form, building orientation, colour; and 2) are essential for supporting activity consistent with the intent of the reserve.
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- 5.2 Notwithstanding Table 1 above, if the Shire considers that a sea container is likely to have a detrimental effect on the local amenity, or has the potential to visually impact, detract from the exterior design or appearance of other buildings, or sightlines in the vicinity, the application will be refused.

6. Relevant policies/documents

[Shire of Ashburton Local Planning Scheme 7](#)

7. Relevant legislation/local laws

[Planning and Development Act 2005](#)

[Planning and Development \(Local Planning Schemes\) Regulations 2015](#)

Responsible Business Unit/s	All
Responsible Officer	Coordinator Planning and Lands
Affected Business Unit/s	All

Document Control		
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1.	21 July 2026	Adoption (Council Decision xxx/2026)
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
WAPC Approval Required <i>If yes, include a brief reason (refer to clause 4(3A) of the Regulations).</i>	N/A	WAPC Approval Date (if applicable)

