OVERVIEW
The information contained in this fact sheet is only applicable where a building approval is required for building works associated with a single residential dwelling. This information is a guide only and not intended as a substitute for consulting the relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. Retaining walls requiring building approval are defined as a class 10b structure under the Building Code of Australia.

BUILDING APPROVAL
In accordance with the Queensland Building Act 1975, a building approval is required for the construction of a retaining wall where any of the following apply:

- has a surcharge loading over the zone of influence for the wall (refer to Figure 1 for example); or
- the total height of the wall and of the fill or cut retained by the wall is more than 1m above the wall’s natural ground surface; or
- the wall is closer than 1.5m to a building or another retaining wall.

**Surcharge loading** means a load applied to a soil stratum that has, or may have, the effect of consolidating the stratum, other than a load arising only from—
- persons or vehicles on, or moving over, the stratum; or
- the effects of rain on the stratum.

**Zone of influence**, for the retaining wall, means the volume of soil stratum behind the wall that affects the wall’s structural integrity.

**Natural ground surface** means the finished surface level when the lot was created on the plan of survey.

For assistance with lodging a building application with Council, refer to the Building Application Lodgement Checklist.

OTHER APPROVALS
Additional approvals may be required for the proposed work. Please refer to the General Building Guidelines for Residential Properties diagram on the last page of this fact sheet.

ADJOINING PROPERTIES
If the proposed building or structure has the potential to impact on a neighbour, it is recommended that you consult with that neighbour before starting any work. Consultation with your neighbour may help to avoid disputes later. Further information about avoiding disputes can be found on the Queensland Government website.

If the **adjoining property owner is Council**, contact Council’s Property Team on (07) 3810 6617 to discuss your proposal.

FURTHER INFORMATION
All retaining walls must be designed by a suitably qualified person eg Structural Engineer. Some retaining wall systems have manufacturer specifications and installation details which should be followed.

Additional links:
- Ipswich City Council applicable fees and charges.
- The [Queensland Building and Construction Commission](https://www.buildingcommission.qld.gov.au) provides a fact sheet on licensing requirements of the construction of retaining walls.
- [Timber Queensland](https://www.timberqueenland.com) provides a technical data sheet - Timber Retaining Walls for Residential Applications.
- [Concrete Masonry Association of Australia](https://www.cmaa.com.au) provides manuals for concrete retaining walls.
The information contained in this document is general in nature, and before relying on the material in any important matters, users should carefully evaluate its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purpose. This document is not intended as a substitute for consulting the relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. The Ipswich City Council does not accept responsibility or liability for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred as a result of the use of, or reliance on, information contained in this document. These guidelines are not intended to be, and should not be relied upon as, the ultimate and complete source of information on retaining walls.

For further information, please contact Council’s Planning and Development Department on (07) 3810 6888.
**General Building Guidelines for Single Residential Properties**

*Date: 1 December 2019  Version: 3.0*

### BUILDING APPROVALS

The following types of building work undertaken on a residential property will require a building permit:

- Dwelling/Dual Occupancy (Class 1 habitable)
- Decks, Balconies, Verandas, Awnings and the like - more than 10m² in area after the building work is completed (e.g. 3.1m x 3.2m);
- Decks, Balconies, Verandas, Awnings and the like - more than 2.4m high;
- Decks, Balconies, Verandas, Awnings and the like - with a mean height of more than 2.1m;
- Decks, Balconies, Verandas, Awnings and the like - longer than 5m along any side;
- For a deck that is rooted or higher than 1m above the deck's natural ground surface*.

*BUILDING LOCATION ENVELOPE (BLE)*

If the property is subject to a Building Location Envelope (BLE), contact Council’s Planning and Regulatory Services Department on (07) 3810 6888 to determine the extent of work that is permissible within and outside of the BLE.

### AMENITY AND AESTHETICS REFERRAL PROVISIONS

In addition to design and siting provisions, the Amenity and Aesthetics Referral Provisions 2019 apply to particular Class 1 and 10 buildings and structures. Where identified within the provisions, a referral agency response from Council will be required before a building permit can be issued. Referral items include:

- Demolition or removal of a building or structure;
- Relocation of a building or structure;
- Class 10 buildings or structures exceeding certain dimensions;
- Carpentry within the prescribed road boundary setback; and
- Awnings and the like or a Character listed property.

For further information refer to the Amenity and Aesthetics Referral Provision 2019 and the following Implementation Guidelines:

1. Transportable Buildings (Shipping Containers, Train Carriages, Demountable Buildings and the like)
2. Oversized Class 10 Buildings and Structures
3. Demolition, Removal or Relocation of a Building

### RETAILING WALLS, FENCES AND SCREENS

The following boundary setback provisions apply except for boundary truncations. The height refers to the total height of any retaining wall, screen, fence or combination thereof from natural ground surface (i.e. the finished surface level when the lot was created on the plan of survey).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Siting Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 2.0m</td>
<td>To boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 2.0m</td>
<td>Boundary setbacks apply in accordance with dwelling setback criteria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Any retaining wall, screen, fence or combination thereof which exceeds 2m, regardless of where it is located, will require an Amenity and Aesthetics approval except where a siting variation is already required.

### BOUNDARY TRUNCATIONS

1. Fences, screens, retaining walls and other structures built within the 6m x 6m corner truncation area are not more than 1m high.
2. No building or structure over 2m high is built within a 9m x 9m corner truncation.