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| Version Control and Objective ID | Version No: 1 | Objective ID: A11749704 |
| Adopted at Council Ordinary Meeting on | 19 June 2025 | |
| Date of Review | 30 June 2026 | |

1. Statement

Ipswich has a diversity of rural areas that provide significant opportunities for tourism development. To foster growth and sustainability in these regions, this policy offers incentives to encourage investment in small scale rural tourism activities, including for short-term accommodation.

Rural tourism development, such as eco-lodges, farm stays, and activity-based short-term accommodation, contribute to the local economy by attracting domestic and international visitors, preserving rural landscapes, and supporting local communities. This policy aligns with the Council's commitment to fostering vibrant and sustainable regional growth.

Ipswich has experienced consistent growth in visitors to the region correlating with the growing demand for local rural tourism opportunities within the region. In addition, a range of opportunities are likely to emerge as South-East Queensland prepares for the 2032 Olympics.

In recognition of this, Council is further encouraging the establishment and the expansion of these experiences by offering relief from infrastructure contributions and discounts on application fees. It is intended that this relief will facilitate the establishment and expansion of appropriate rural tourism experiences within rural areas of Ipswich and provide additional, rural tourism activities that will expand visitors to the region.

This policy recognises that rural tourism activities are generally small scale in nature and often occur ancillary to a rural activity or farming business while maintaining the primary production or environmental values on the land. Given their rural locality they are also likely to have limited impact on the existing or proposed trunk infrastructure network.

This policy provides a standard approach to incentives for the expansion and establishment of rural tourism activities, and a degree of certainty for applicants, Council and the community regarding the available relief from infrastructure contributions and application fee dispensation in these instances.

Where an applicant proposes a variation to this policy, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate relevant facts and circumstances to justify the variation.

2. Purpose and Principles

This policy provides incentives to promote the development of eligible rural tourist activities by offering a 100% infrastructure contribution relief, up to a maximum of \$65,000 per development and development application fee relief.

Development application fee relief is available where an expanded or proposed new use will result in negligible or minimal impact on existing infrastructure networks, and the use is suitable for the site and its surrounds at the discretion of Council.

3. Strategic Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan themes:

Vibrant and Growing
A Trusted and Leading Organisation

4. Regulatory Authority

Authority for Council to perform this function is determined by s.9 of the *Local Government Act (2009)* giving power to do anything that is necessary or convenient for the good rule and local government of its local government area.

5. Human Rights Commitment

Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision.

6. Scope

Application of this policy

This policy applies to the expansion of existing and the establishment of new eligible rural tourist activities that require a planning application to be made, assessed and determined by Council pursuant to the Ipswich planning scheme.

Two forms of relief are provided for:

a) Infrastructure contribution relief and deferral payment plan

For the expansion or establishment of an eligible rural tourist activity, a 100% reduction to the infrastructure charges contributions applicable for the development levied by Ipswich City Council to a maximum discount of \$65,000 per development.

The balance of any outstanding levied charges will also be eligible for the deferral of payment over a 5-year period subject to entering into an infrastructure agreement with Council.

The deferral payment plan will exclude indexation.

Water supply and sewerage trunk infrastructure networks are not Council infrastructure. This policy does not alter any applicable water supply and sewerage infrastructure charges levied by Urban Utilities.

b) Application fee relief

For the expansion of existing, or the establishment of a new eligible rural tourist activity, the development application fee for a code assessable application is discounted by 50% from the prescribed fee pursuant to the current Ipswich City Council Register of Fees & Charges.

Impact Assessable applications will be calculated based on the equivalent Code Assessable development application fee.

7. Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible for the infrastructure contribution and application fee relief offered by this policy, the proposal must satisfy the following criteria:

- (1) the proposal is for an eligible rural tourist activity;
- (2) the proposal is suitable for the site having regard to the character and amenity of the site and its' surrounds;
- (3) the proposal does not impose significant additional demand on existing infrastructure networks; and
- (4) the proposal does not give rise to unacceptable impacts through the relief being given.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all Council employees who are responsible for the assessment and determination of matters set out in Section 7 and recording as set out in Section 10.

9. Key Stakeholders

The following will be consulted during the review process:

- Planning and Regulatory Services Department in particular the City Design Branch and Development Planning Branch
- Finance Branch

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Register of Infrastructure Contributions and Credits

All discounted infrastructure contributions and the amount of the contribution relief shall be recorded in the Register of Infrastructure Contributions and Credits.

Fee Variations Register

All discounted application fees shall be recorded in the Fee Variation Register in accordance with the Variation of Development Applications Fees Procedure.

11. Infrastructure Agreement

Where a development is eligible for an infrastructure contribution discount and charges remain payable after the application of the maximum discount available, a deferral of the remaining charges is available subject to the proponent entering into an infrastructure agreement with Council prior to the commencement of the use using the Standard Deferral of Payments Infrastructure Agreement.

The deferral payment plan will provide for any remaining charges to be paid in five (5) equal amounts over a five (5) year period.

No indexation will be applied to these deferred payments.

12. Definitions

Definitions of contribution types and other terminology are found in the Ipswich planning scheme and Ipswich Adopted Infrastructure Charges Resolution.

Eligible rural tourist activity means development for a tourist activity in a rural area that:

- (a) has a maximum gross floor area of 250m² for the tourist activity;
- (b) may provide ancillary short-term accommodation for a maximum of 30 guests;
- (c) where provided consistent with the definition of tourist park, includes a maximum of six (6) accommodation sites; and
- (d) may include another use where ancillary to the tourist activity.

Ipswich planning scheme / planning scheme means the Ipswich planning scheme, or as varied from time to time.

Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area is as identified in the *ShapingSEQ 2023*, South East Queensland Regional Plan 2023.

Rural area means land identified as being in the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area Regional Land Use Category.

Short-term accommodation has the same meaning under the Ipswich planning scheme.

Tourist activity means a use listed in the 'tourist activity' defined activity group under Schedule 1 of the Ipswich planning scheme.

13. Policy Owner

The General Manager (Planning and Regulatory Services) is the policy owner and the Manager, City Design is responsible for authoring and reviewing this policy.