

Small Scale Abattoirs

Fact Sheet – February 2025

The development and construction of a small scale on-farm abattoir requires adherence to a range of regulations and standards from Local, State and in some cases Federal Government agencies.

The operation of an abattoir can pose a risk to both the environment and amenity if not properly designed, managed and located. Consequently, consultation with regulatory agencies and compliance with legislative requirements is important in this process.

The key agencies include:

State Government - PrimeSafe

PrimeSafe is Victoria's independent food safety regulator and is the key regulatory agency for small scale abattoirs. They are a State Government body and are responsible for licencing of all meat processing facilities. All abattoirs regardless of scale require a licence from PrimeSafe.

State Government - Agriculture Victoria

Although abattoir operators do not require licensing or permissions from Agriculture Victoria, they must ensure that animal welfare codes and regulations regarding livestock management and welfare, and the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) are adhered to. The Agriculture Victoria [online E-guide](#) is an excellent source of information and a great place for interested developers to start (link also listed under Where to get Advice).

Local Government – Statutory Planning Departments

Amendment VC290, effective 15 August 2025, changes the Victoria Planning Provisions by making 'micro' abattoirs a Section 1 use (no planning permit required) in the Farming Zone (FZ), Green Wedge Zone (GWZ), and rural Activity Zone (RAZ).

According to the explanatory report, "micro-abattoirs" play an important role for small and medium-scale farmers to help secure Victoria's food supply and enhance rural economies" (p.1). VC290 is intended to implement one of the recommendations of the parliamentary report *Securing the Victoria Food Supply* (November 2024) which recommended reducing regulatory barriers for small scale abattoirs in rural areas.

Of the three affected zones, only the FZ applies in Macedon Ranges. Prior to the amendment, 'Abattoir' was a section 2 use in the zone meaning that a permit was required in all cases. VC290 facilitates 'micro' abattoirs by only requiring a permit for the use above certain thresholds. To be considered a micro-abattoir, the use must:

- Be used in conjunction with Animal production on or next to the land.
- Be small in size (less than 200m² gross floor area) and scale of operation (processing less than 120 tonnes per year).
- Meet strict wastewater requirements.
- Be located over 100m from a sensitive use, eg. A dwelling in separate ownership, residentially zoned land, hospital.

Where an abattoir proposal meets the above and other criteria in the zone, it does not require a permit for the use. A planning permit may still be required for buildings and works.

Local Government - Environmental Health Departments

Environmental Health departments regulate waste-water treatment systems and other environmental health related matters. If there is no existing access to a reticulated sewerage system, a permit may be required for an on-site waste-water management system to manage liquid wastes.

Building Permits - Local Government Building Departments & Private Building Surveyors

Construction works (new building work and alterations to existing buildings), a change of building use and structures of a temporary nature require a building permit to be obtained from a suitably qualified and experienced building surveyor registered in Victoria.

State Government - Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria

The EPA manages regulatory responsibilities for prescribed permissions activities (including abattoirs), organic waste processing, waste-water management and waste management.

Federal Government - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)

DAFF are responsible for supervision of livestock processing in export abattoirs and issuing of meat export licences where applicable.

Where to get advice:

Primesafe

info@primesafe.vic.gov.au

[Enquiry](#)

Agriculture Victoria E-guide

E-guide designed to explain the approvals required to develop an on-farm small scale abattoir.

[Small scale abattoir F1](#)

Agriculture Victoria Planning and Advisory Service

agvic.planning@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Local Government

[Council contacts list | Vic Councils](#)

EPA

1300 372 842

contact@epa.vic.gov.au

[Enquiries and feedback - EPA Interaction Portal](#)

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

<mailto:ecodevadmin@mrsc.vic.gov.au>