

Public Spaces (Unattended Property)

The Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021 (NSW) sets the rules for how items left in public areas are managed. It applies to a wide range of property, not just vehicles. The aim is simple: people are responsible for their belongings and must not leave them unattended in public places in a way that causes problems for others.

What is “Unattended Property”?

Unattended property is anything left in a public place without someone looking after it. This can include:

- **Vehicles** – cars, caravans, boats, trailers
- **Personal items** – bicycles, scooters, sporting equipment
- **Shared items** – shopping trolleys, share bikes
- **Animals (in some cases)** – livestock or other non-companion animals

When is it a Problem?

Council may take action if property is left in a public place and:

- blocks or restricts access (for vehicles, pedestrians, or emergency services)
- creates a safety risk
- damages or impacts the environment
- interferes with the community’s use and enjoyment of the area
- has been left in the same place for too long

Even if something looks harmless, leaving it unattended for an extended period can still be an issue.

What Happens If Property Is Left Unattended?

Council will usually:

1. Attempt to contact the owner or issue a notice
2. Require the item to be removed within a set timeframe
3. Take possession of the item if it is not removed

In some situations, Council may act more quickly if there is an urgent safety risk.

Costs and Penalties

If Council needs to act:

- Fines may apply
- Costs for removal, storage, or disposal can be charged to the owner

Your Responsibilities

To avoid action being taken:

- Do not leave vehicles or trailers parked in public places long-term
- Store personal belongings on private property
- Make sure animals are properly contained and supervised
- Remove items promptly if asked by Council

Why This Matters

These rules help to:

- keep roads and footpaths clear
- improve public safety
- protect the environment
- ensure everyone can enjoy shared community spaces

Report Unattended Property

To report unattended property in a public space, contact Council:

1300 459 689

mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au

in person at our Cootamundra or Gundagai offices