



Earning a  
Star Rating  
for  
your **SELF**  
**CATERING**  
Property

Standards, guidelines and property reviews explained

# Introduction

**Star Ratings are about standards – your standards, our standards and the standards expected by your guests.**

They are basically a mark of quality, regardless of the number of Stars you have been awarded.

So, if you have a 1 Star Rating, your customers are assured that you have met the standards expected of a quality 1 Star property. If you have a 5 Star Rating, you have met the standards expected of a quality 5 Star property.

This document explains how you can earn a Star Rating for your property. It outlines what we expect before we award a Star Rating and how we assess the standards of your property; it also breaks down the criteria into the different areas of your property so you can ensure you've got all the boxes ticked for the Star Rating you think your property deserves.



Star Ratings are an internationally recognised symbol for quality accommodation standards. They are used in more than 70 countries worldwide and reflect the cleanliness, quality and condition of guest facilities.



# Are Star Ratings still relevant?

Stars are a gateway to decision making, and the number of Stars displayed by a property – whether they're online or hung outside the door – still conveys a huge amount of information to your future guests.

# 85%

*of Australian travellers told us that they recognise and use Star Ratings when they choose accommodation.*

When they're searching online, they use Stars to make decisions: for instance, if they're in the market for a 3 Star property, they will filter listings to show all 3 Star properties, and then begin exploring consumer reviews or ratings. Put another way – your Star Rating gets you onto their short list.

Before making an online hotel reservation, consumers visit approximately 14 different travel-related sites with about three visits per site combined with almost nine travel-related searches. Consumers often use hotel classifications as a filter mechanism, with guest reviews used to make a final selection. *UNWTO, Online Guest Reviews and Hotel Classification Systems – An Integrated Approach, October 2014*



# How do we define one Star Rating from another?

Whether your property has earned a 1 Star or a 5 Star Rating, your guests are assured of one thing: that you have been independently reviewed according to Australian standards of quality, cleanliness and condition.

Potential guests might use your Star Rating as a quick guide to the level of facilities, amenities and services being offered. They might also use them to get an indication of the associated price point of the property.

But what do we expect within the different Star Rating bands? What do we expect of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 Star properties?

The adjacent principles are what we use to define each Star Rating band. You can use them as a guide to the Star Rating which best suits your property.



Properties that typify luxury across all areas of operation. Guests will enjoy an extensive range of facilities and comprehensive or highly personalised service relevant to the accommodation type. Properties at this level will display excellent design quality and attention to detail.



Properties which achieve a deluxe guest experience. A wide range of facilities and superior design qualities is typically complemented by service standards that reflect the varied and discerning needs of the guest.



Properties that deliver a broad range of amenities that exceed above-average accommodation needs. Good quality service, design and physical attributes are typically fit for purpose to match guest expectations.



Properties that focus on the needs of price conscious travellers. Services and guest facilities are typically limited to keep room rates affordable and competitive but may be available upon request or fee-based.



Properties that offer budget facilities without compromising cleanliness or guest security. Guests may access fee-based services or facilities upon request.

**Half Star Ratings** Indicate modest improvements in the quality and condition of guest facilities.



# Scheme entry criteria

To be eligible to enter the Star Rating scheme, properties must comply with the following criteria:

- The property holds all relevant insurances, including workers compensation as well as public liability, to the value of \$10,000,000.
- The property complies with all relevant and applicable legal and/or regulatory obligations, including compliance with all Competition and Consumer Act, Consumer Affairs, and Occupational Health and Safety obligations.
- The property is effectively maintained and clean for all guests at all times.
- The property can provide evidence of formalised housekeeping procedures.
- Guests have 24 hour ease-of-access to their accommodation.
- All guest accommodation has lockable entry doors and secure windows.
- All guest accommodation has effective visual and physical privacy from exterior areas or locations.
- Clear and visible signage is displayed for the property, including the display of the official Star Rating relevant for that property and in a visible position for all guests.
- The property owner/manager has notified Star Ratings Australia of all rooms that are available for guest accommodation.
- The property agrees that Star Ratings Australia reserves the right to request a physical assessment at any time and according to the relevant category standards (subject to reasonable prior notification).
- The property has a dedicated website and/or email address and can accept bookings year-round.
- The property complies with the Star Rating Scheme Code of Conduct.
- The operator has notified Star Ratings Australia of all units of accommodation inventory available at the property and that inventory is available for temporary or holiday guest accommodation (as distinct from any form of temporary, permanent or semi-permanent residential accommodation).
- Failure to comply with the Scheme Entry Criteria will result in the suspension of the property's Star Rating application or removal of the property from the Star Rating Scheme.



# What's expected of a Star Rated property?

As a Star Rated property the proprietor/manager must observe the Star Ratings Australia **Code of Conduct**. He or she must:

- ✓ Give conscientious attention to guest care and service. Rude, indifferent or poor service is unacceptable.
- ✓ Regard all guests with equal respect and consideration.
- ✓ Give full consideration to the particular requirements of guests with disabilities and guests with special needs, and make suitable provision where applicable.
- ✓ Ensure all guest enquiries, requests, bookings, refunds and correspondence are dealt with promptly and courteously.
- ✓ Advise guests at the time of booking, and subsequently if requested, differences in the accommodation and facilities provided from that promoted by the property.
- ✓ Ensure guests are informed of all the terms and conditions of the booking contract including the terms of payment and any cancellation conditions, prior to or at the time of making the booking.
- ✓ Unless required by law, information concerning an individual guest to another entity, without the guest's permission, will not be provided.
- ✓ Operate on an ethical, business-like basis.
- ✓ Ensure that advertising (including brochures or other printed or electronic media) is accurate and truthful, and free of ambiguity which could create a misleading impression or otherwise be contrary to the guest's interests.
- ✓ Establish and maintain procedures for the effective handling of any complaints. Ensure all complaints are dealt with properly and reasonably.
- ✓ Act in an environmentally responsible way.
- ✓ Be professional in all dealings with Star Ratings Australia and representatives. Rude, insulting or threatening behaviour is unacceptable.

We take consumer complaints seriously. If a Star Rated property is found to breach our Code of Conduct, or if severe cleanliness or condition issues are substantiated, we will contract mystery guest services to verify the complaint.



# Category Requirements

Star Ratings are awarded to properties across six accommodation categories:

1. Hotels
2. Motels
3. Serviced Apartments
4. Self Catering
5. Hosted Accommodation
6. Caravan-Holiday Parks

Criteria can vary between categories. To be eligible for a **Self Catering** Star Rating your property should meet the following requirements:

- Guests must be able to contact a property representative in the case of an emergency; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Contact details and phone numbers must be clearly displayed in-room and/or onsite.
- All wardrobes, drawers and cupboards on the property must be clear of owner/manager belongings.
- Property must include shower and toilet facilities.
- Self Catering properties must offer all guests:
  - Minimum fridge and sink.
  - Minimum dining setting (table and chairs), and crockery, cutlery and glassware for each guest.
  - Minimum of microwave; or one hot plate; or electric frypan (including appropriate utensils).
  - Minimum dustpan/brush and broom or vacuum cleaner in each cabin, apartment, villa, house, unit, or cottage.



# How the ratings work

Your property will be reviewed for a Star Rating once every three years. This cycle is designed to support industry best practices for 'soft' and 'hard' property refurbishments, as well as to help you manage your asset and get the most return on your investment.

Following each property review we can identify areas for improvement to maintain or even increase your Star Rating. This not only helps you plan quality refurbishments, it helps you attract quality guests.

'Out of Cycle' reviews can be requested at a cost of \$250 (including GST).

## Primary Star Ratings

A Primary Rating is the Star Rating awarded to 60% or more of the accommodation in your property. So:

If your self catering property has 60% (or more) rooms that are rated 5 Star and 40% (or less) rooms rated 4.5 Star, you will be awarded a primary Star Rating of 5 Stars.

Conversely, if your self catering property has 59% (or less) rooms that are rated 5 Star and 41% (or more) rooms rated 4.5 Star, you will be awarded a primary rating of 4.5 Stars.





# How the ratings work (con't)

## Additional Star Ratings

An additional Star Rating may apply if you offer different accommodation types or standards in the same property.

If you have a minimum of four rooms or 20% of total rooms that you regard as being of a higher or distinct standard you can have them assessed on their own to earn an additional Star Rating.

Let's say you offer two room types, 'Standard' and 'Deluxe':

Of your self catering property's total 20 rooms, you regard 16 rooms (80%) as 'Standard' and four (20%) as 'Deluxe'. You may apply for an additional Star Rating.

Your 16 Standard rooms earn a 4 Star Rating – so your Primary Rating is 4 Stars.

### Primary Rating - Standard Room



Your four Deluxe rooms, reviewed separately, earn a 4.5 Star Rating – so you can also display an additional Star Rating of 4.5 Stars for this room type only.

### Split Rating - Deluxe Room



Provided a room standard meets the 20% minimum you can apply for an additional Star Rating.

An additional Star Rating may also apply where you have different accommodation types or categories available for guest bookings (e.g. self catering accommodation as well as serviced apartments).

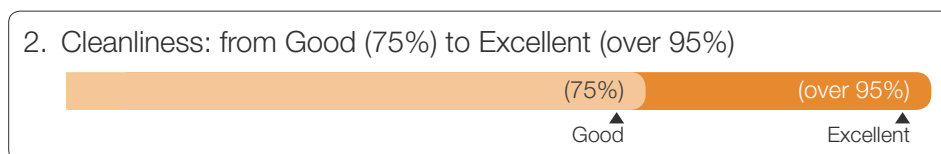


# Standards – and how they affect your rating

Your official Star Rating is awarded according to how highly you score in three key areas of assessment:

1. Quality and Condition
2. Cleanliness
3. Facilities and Services

A percentage score is calculated for each of these three areas:



# Standards – and how they affect your rating (con't)

Your score in each area will be accorded a Star Rating: **the lowest score you earn out of the three areas is the Star Rating you will receive.**

The table below shows the results for a 4 Star self catering. Note how it achieves excellence for cleanliness and has a superior range of guest facilities, but is rated according to the lowest result – 4 Stars for the quality and condition of guest facilities.

| Star Rating | Quality & Condition   | Cleanliness         | Facilities & Services |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| ★★★★★       | Excellent (90–100%)   | Excellent (95–100%) | Excellent (85–100%)   |
| ★★★★☆       | Superior (75–89%)     |                     | Superior (70–84%)     |
| ★★★★        | Very Good (65–74%)    | Very Good (85–94%)  | Very Good (60–69%)    |
| ★★★☆☆       | Good (55–64%)         |                     | Good (50–59%)         |
| ★★★         | Reasonable (45–54%)   |                     | Moderate (30–49%)     |
| ★★☆         | Moderate (35–44%)     | Good (75–84%)       |                       |
| ★★          | Adequate (30–34%)     |                     | Acceptable (20–29%)   |
| ★☆☆         | Satisfactory (25–29%) |                     |                       |
| ★           | Acceptable (20–24%)   |                     |                       |



# The things that count most to guests

A 'Consumer Importance Weighting Index' is a proven evaluation technique originally developed by the Sustainable Tourism CRC at Victoria University.

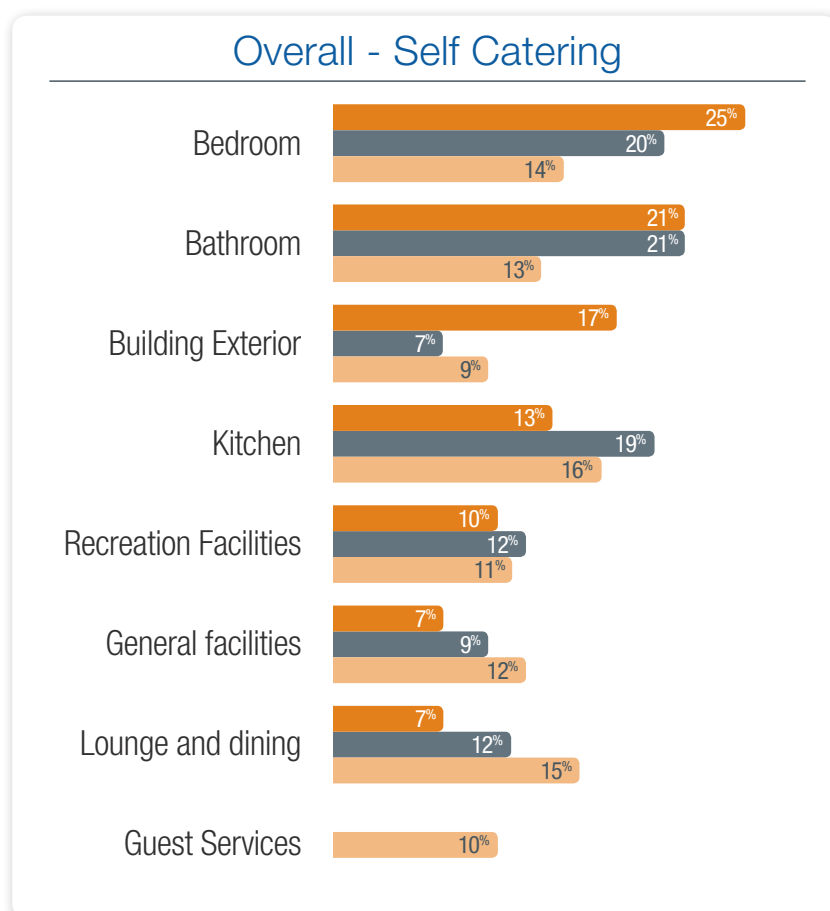
Each of the three key assessment areas – Facilities and Services, Cleanliness, and Quality and Condition – are applied to different aspects of a property, for instance, bedrooms, bathrooms, recreational facilities, in-room facilities and so on.

Each of these aspects has been ranked by Australian travellers according to how important they're considered by guests. It is no surprise that the bedroom and bathroom are the most important and carry the most weight. That's where your guests spend most of their time!

Within each of these aspects, guests have similarly placed greater and lesser value on things that make up their experience. So, within the bedroom, guests place most value on the bed/size of the mattress, followed by bedding and window coverings/privacy.

Look carefully at those things that guests value most and compare your standards across the three areas of assessment. They carry more weight in the assessment of your property and this way help you improve your chances of earning the Star Rating you expect.

Download the Star Rating Criteria for Self Catering document from [starratings.com.au](http://starratings.com.au) to familiarise yourself with our standards and quality guidelines.



# Licence Benefits

Once you have been awarded a Star Rating, you will:

- ✓ 12 month licence to use the Star Rating trademarks
- ✓ A FREE dashboard of online guest reviews about your property
- ✓ Support for your direct bookings and distribution plans - a FREE property listing on starratings.com.au
- ✓ An exclusive Travellers' Rating score from more than 100 websites in 45 different languages
- ✓ Exclusive offers from our Corporate Partner

Your Star Rating licence will be renewed annually at the beginning of each financial year.



# Licensing Process

- Scheme Entry Criteria
- Star Rating Licence Agreement
- Property Review
- Property Review Report Audited
- Property Review Report Issued
- Property Review Report Disputed\*
- Star Rating Licence Confirmed

\* You may dispute our Star Rating if you believe the criteria have been incorrectly applied. If the dispute cannot be resolved between you and Star Ratings Australia management, the matter will be referred to an independent industry panel chaired by the Accommodation Association of Australia.

## Licence Fees

| Accommodation | Fee       |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1-5 Rooms     | \$ 360.00 |
| 6-25 Rooms    | \$ 490.00 |
| 26-100 Rooms  | \$ 616.00 |
| 101+ Rooms    | \$ 936.00 |

| Caravan-Holiday Parks | Fee       |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Sites                 | \$ 360.00 |
| 1-10 Cabins           | \$ 425.00 |
| 11-25 Cabins          | \$ 500.00 |
| 26+ Cabins            | \$ 721.00 |

A once off application fee of \$100 applies when joining the Star Rating scheme. For an additional Star Rating licence a fee of \$110 (incl. GST) applies.

