

Street and Reserve Trees

Policy Objective

This policy aims to provide consistent and effective management in relation to the promotion and protection of trees located on land vested with or managed by the Town.

To increase the overall canopy coverage within the Town, all tree planting opportunities will be identified and planted where practicable. The overarching aim is to achieve a continuous tree canopy throughout the Town with the planting of biodiversity corridors comprising different tree species, tree sizes, food sources for wildlife and the promotion of biodiverse vegetation (as addressed in the Town's *Verge Treatment Policy*).

Policy Scope

This Policy applies to trees located on land vested with or managed by the Town. Matters pertaining to trees on private property are addressed in *Local Planning Policy 13 – Tree Retention and Provision*.

Policy Statement

The Town recognises the significant contribution made by trees to both the aesthetic, social and environmental aspects of existing streetscapes and reserves within the Town. While the Town seeks to retain trees, it also recognises that in some cases, tree retention may not be feasible due to the condition or species of tree. Where tree location may be an issue retention should be prioritised with solutions explored, and removal a last resort.

Definitions

Reserve Tree:

means any tree located within Public Open Space and/or land reserved for Parks & Recreation.

Street Tree:

means any tree located on a verge.

Tree:

means a woody plant inclusive of its roots, canopy, stems and trunk(s) that is capable of growing taller than 3m in height at maturity.

Verge:

means that part of a thoroughfare between the carriageway and the land which abuts the thoroughfare, but does not include any footpath.

Canopy Area Potential

means the average canopy area that a tree of that species will attain after twenty years of moderate growth.

Aggregate Tree Canopy Area

means the sum of the Tree Canopy Area Potentials for every tree on a particular nature strip/verge

Street Tree Planting

1. To achieve the objectives of this Policy the Town shall fill all street tree planting opportunities so as to have as near a continuous street tree canopy as is practicable in all areas of the Town.
2. Species selection will be in accordance with the Town's *Street and Reserve Tree Planting List* informed by criteria within this Policy.
3. Tree planting programs will be carried out to improve canopy cover and the environmental values and visual amenity of streetscapes, reserves and parks.
4. Tree planting to achieve a continuous tree canopy will take priority over a residents' objection to accommodate street trees.
5. The Town will, in consultation with the property owner, give consideration to verge and home orientation and existing renewable energy devices installed. This will guide the selection of the species of tree to be used and its location, to maximise solar access for passive winter heating, summer cooling and renewable energy production.
6. Trees planted by a landowner or resident without the prior approval of the Town may be retained or removed at the discretion of the Town.
7. In the situation where a resident may object to a tree/s on an adjacent verge, the Town will consider such objections on compassionate grounds subject to the satisfaction of the Executive Manager Infrastructure.
8. The Town considers uniform avenues of street trees as desirable in certain situations and may designate locations to introduce this. Though desirable, the Town considers the concept of uniform avenues less important than the direct objective of increasing canopy cover and species diversity.

Street and Reserve Tree Criteria

The Street and Reserve Tree Planting List will be largely guided by:

- Specific location;
 - Climate and soil type;
 - Water table depth;
 - Susceptibility to plant pest and diseases;
 - Available soil volume/ verge width;
 - Canopy area potential;
 - Solar access and building orientation;
 - The provision of underground or overhead power lines
 - The creation of biodiversity corridors; and
 - Streetscape amenity.

Requests for Street Trees

1. The Town will consider all requests for street trees in relation to the Street Tree Planting Program. Requests for street trees will be prioritised based on the following:
 - a. A low number of existing trees in the surrounding streetscape;
 - b. Locations on higher traffic volume roads, public transport routes and verges adjacent to bus stops;
 - c. Key pedestrian, cycle and school routes; and
 - d. Where underground power, infrastructure or road projects have recently been completed.
2. A property owner may request the planting of additional trees if sufficient space allows:
3. Street tree requests will be assessed in accordance with the Town's *Street and Reserve Tree Planting List*.

Tree Maintenance

1. The pruning or maintenance of a verge tree is not permitted without the prior approval of the Town being first obtained.
2. Pruning or maintenance of trees is only permitted to be undertaken by the Town or by a suitably qualified arborist approved by the Town.
3. Requests for tree maintenance will only be considered favourably in the following circumstances:
 - a. To provide safe clearance to overhead power lines;
 - b. To ensure appropriate vehicle and pedestrian sight lines at crossovers and intersections;
 - c. To correct structurally unsound growth;
 - d. To provide appropriate clearance to footpaths; and
 - e. To mitigate unacceptable risk of harm or damage to infrastructure or reduce safety issues for adjacent properties or the public realm;
4. The Town will not support a request to prune or maintain or remove a tree for the following reasons:
 - a. The tree obscures or has the potential to obscure access to light;
 - b. The tree obscures or has the potential to obscure access to views;
 - c. The tree causes allergies or health issues, unless appropriate evidence from a medical practitioner is provided of ongoing detrimental health issues attributed solely to that particular tree without any alternatives for management;
 - d. The tree causes nuisance by way of leaf, fruit, nut or bark shedding; and
 - e. The species of tree is not preferred.

Tree Removal

1. Street trees will not be permitted to be removed to accommodate proposed crossovers or development unless otherwise approved by the Town in accordance with Clause 4;
2. The removal of a tree is not permitted without the prior approval of the Town;
3. Tree removal shall only be carried out by the Town, or a suitably qualified arborist approved by the Town.
4. Requests to remove trees will only be considered favourably where a report by a suitably qualified arborist is provided to the satisfaction of the Town, demonstrating that the tree is:
 - a. Dead, having less than 10% photosynthetic material or live tissue present in the canopy mass with no potential to recover;
 - b. Diseased and unlikely to respond to treatment;
 - c. A public liability risk determined by a recognised Tree Risk Assessment;
 - d. A species declared as a noxious weed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development;
 - e. The Town determines the tree is of no ecological, amenity or community value; or
 - f. Causing damage to property and infrastructure where all alternatives to removal have been explored and cannot be implemented.
5. The Town will not support a request to remove a tree for the following reasons:
 - a. The species of tree is not preferred;
 - b. The tree obscures or has the potential to obscure access to light;
 - c. The tree obscures or has the potential to obscure access to views;
 - d. The tree causes allergies or health issues. (Tree removal will only be considered where appropriate evidence from a medical practitioner is provided of ongoing detrimental health issues attributed solely to that particular tree without any alternatives for management); and
 - e. The tree causes nuisance by way of leaf, fruit, nut or bark shedding.

Protection of Trees

1. Any person who carries out works on the verge or likely to impact the verge shall ensure the following is carried out to protect any affected trees for the duration of the works:
 - a. Where requested by the Town, provide a report from a suitably qualified arborist approved by the Town to guide the management practices during the development;
 - b. No street trees are to be pruned, or damaged, and vehicles must not park within the dripline of any trees;

- c. Provide free standing open mesh fencing to form the tree protection zone which is a minimum of 2m from the base of the tree. The support shoes must not present a trip hazard to pedestrians and must be rotated parallel with the fence or be positioned behind the fence or be fully contained within the tree protection zone. The structure must be appropriately braced and regularly checked to ensure it has not moved out of the correct alignment;
- d. The establishment of a Tree Protection Zone in accordance with *AS 4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites* around all street trees within or adjacent to the worksite. The Tree Protection Zone should not be less than 2m or greater than 15m from the base of the tree;
- e. No excavation work is to be undertaken within the drip line of the tree canopy unless approved by the Town;
- f. Building materials or debris shall not to be placed or stored under the tree canopy;
- g. The use of appropriate sized machinery is to occur so that contact with the upper canopy of a tree does not occur at any time; and
- h. In the event that existing irrigation on the verge is to be removed or stopped, a supplementary watering program may need to be implemented pending advice from a suitably qualified arborist approved by the Town and reticulation reinstated at completion.

Unauthorised works

1. The Town will investigate the actions taken by any person who interferes with, removes, prunes, or damages a tree, in accordance with the Town’s *Tree Vandalism Policy*.
2. The Town will pursue appropriate legal or civil action, depending on the outcome of the tree vandalism investigation, against any person who interferes with, removes, prunes or damages a street tree.

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Chief Executive Officer.

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