

Council Policy – Tree Management

Responsible Directorate	Infrastructure Services
Responsible Business Unit/s	Town Maintenance
Responsible Officer	Manager Town Maintenance
Affected Business Unit/s	Land, Property and Regulatory Services Media and Communications Facilities Roads and Civil Projects

Objective

The benefits of trees are numerous and include environmental, amenity, health and social benefits. The Shire of Ashburton (the Shire) plays an important role in seeking to balance safety, infrastructure and community expectations, with operational activities to do with those trees. The key objective of this policy is to promote the prior consultation of those activities.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, residents of, and visitors to, the Shire.

Policy Statement

Trees provide many benefits that have both economic and intangible values. The Shire recognises that trees contribute to water management, biodiversity, air pollution and the environmental amenity within the Shire. The Shire is also aware that trees assist in forming the identity of the region and, at a local scale, the local character. While appreciating the importance of this resource, the Shire is conscious of the many issues associated with managing trees within their environment.

Long-term tree management

Tree management needs to be undertaken with a long-term interest perspective and the following needs to be taken into account:

- Community safety in public places, including the potential to contribute to safety through traffic calming;
- Protection from damage caused to public and private infrastructure;
- Vegetation selection type (e.g., native varieties or otherwise) and location of plantings;
- Aesthetic qualities in terms of form, texture, colour, seasonal change, movement, sound and perfume;
- Environmental controls to reduce the effects of energy consumption, erosion, dust, atmospheric pollution, including smoke from fires, noise, and fire risk;

- Architectural potential for delineating space, enclosing, framing, screening/privacy;
- Heritage value, through recognition of historic, cultural and local significance;
- Potential to assist fauna by providing appropriate linkages and habitats; and
- Microclimate modification to reduce the effects of summer heat, reflection and glare, ultra-violet radiation, wind and evaporation.

Tree removal

The Shire recognises the contribution made by trees to existing park/streetscapes. It also recognises that in some cases, tree retention may not be desirable, feasible or reasonable, owing to the condition or possible location or species of the tree.

Circumstances where removal might be reasonable, include the following:

- The tree is a known pest such as Neem, Tamarind, Leucaena, Mesquite or Parkinsonia;
- The tree is known to have toxic qualities (e.g. Oleander);
- The tree is diseased and beyond remedial treatment, or dead;
- The tree has been assessed by the Shire as structurally weak and/or dangerous, placing the public at risk or jeopardising safety;
- The tree has been irreparably damaged (e.g. by a storm, vehicle crash);
- The tree is hazardous to motorists/pedestrians owing to interference in suitable sightlines presented by the tree's canopy, alignment or spacing;
- The tree is affected by road widening, service modification/relocation or other infrastructure and construction or building works and all possible options have been explored by the shire and there is no reasonable alternative to removal;
- The tree is in close proximity to overhead power lines or distributor wires to properties and where, for reasons of growth habit pertaining to the variety, selective pruning is not practical with the only option being severe lopping; or
- The tree precludes reasonable development of a lot, or an adjoining property and all possible developments options have been explored by the developer and there is no reasonable alternative to removal.

Consultation

Where a tree is to be removed:

- Reasonable efforts will be made to retain the tree(s); and
- Respective Ward Councillor(s) and nearby residents will be consulted where significant trees are proposed to be removed/replaced or the operational actions are anticipated to create high levels of community interest.

Relevant policies/documents

Australian Standards 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees

Council Policy – Community Engagement

Council Policy – Verge Lawns and Gardens

Relevant legislation/local laws

Planning and Development Act 2005

Office use only				
Relevant delegations	Nil			
Council adoption	Date	14 February 2023	Resolution #	019/2023
Reviewed/modified	Date		Resolution #	
Next review due	Date		Resolution #	