

# Tree Management Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Council is responsible for the planning, establishment, replacement, and management of all trees on public land owned or managed by Council.

Council owns or is responsible for 3,895 ha of open space containing a large number of trees all of which require considerable resources, financial planning and ongoing investment to meet Council's various legal obligations and community expectations.

Council places a high value on the contribution trees make to beautify our streetscapes, recreation reserves, and public open spaces, by providing, shelter, habitat, climate resilience, shading of streetscapes and adding to our general health and wellbeing.

Trees however require careful planning and management to ensure they are safe and do not cause damage to public and private property and infrastructure.

This policy seeks to balance these interests to ensure trees provide a lasting and sustainable benefit to the environment and the community.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define Council's approach to the management of trees on Council owned or managed land within the Shire.

## 3. Scope

The policy applies to parklands, reserves, roadsides, nature strips and public spaces that applies to Councillors, Council staff, contractors, volunteers, developers, property owners and the community.

The Policy does not apply to trees on private property or on land that is not owned or managed by Council.

## 4. Policy objectives

The objectives of this policy revolve around, safety, amenity, community benefit, environmental benefit, and affordability.

- Council will take a proactive approach to tree planting, tree removal, species selection and ongoing maintenance, to ensure trees contribute positively to the built and natural environment to enhance its appearance and the wellbeing of the community.
- To ensure that proper consideration is given to the location, climate, species selection and ongoing maintenance of trees in the planning and design of relevant projects.

- To consider the respective attributes of tree species in the selection of trees, their debris, potential to cause allergies, by-products and how that may impact upon their location, health and safety and amenity.
- Council will make timely, informed and consistent decisions and resultant actions in tree related matters.
- To consider potential infrastructure damage through root intrusion or canopy growth and the impact on road users through site lines and canopy encroachment into traffic lanes.
- Council will take all reasonable steps to minimise risks that trees under Council's jurisdiction pose to the health and safety of the community.
- To ensure Council meets its legislative requirements in relation to trees.

To ensure Council owned trees are appropriately maintained and cared for with maintenance programs sufficiently resourced within Councils annual budget

## 5. Policy principles

The following principles outline Council's policy position.

- Public place trees are valuable community assets that enhance the well-being of the community and the built and natural environment.
- Council recognises the economic benefits that trees can make to the Shire.
- Council supports the avenues of Norfolk Island Pines as an iconic feature within our Shire.
- Council recognises that trees have a finite life and will develop tree replacement programs to replace trees including problem trees, to reduce maintenance costs and improve outcomes from time to time as circumstances require and resources allow.
- Council will consult the community and affected landowners where large-scale plantings, streetscape works or significant tree removal works are to take place.
- Where urgent tree removal or remediation works are required, Council will undertake emergency works without consultation in the interests of safety.
- Council will undertake regular condition assessments on its trees and undertake remediation works based on priority and risk. High profile and high visitation areas will be prioritised. Inspections of trees will focus on high-risk areas within town boundaries.
- Council will promote the development of staff skills in arboriculture and recruit suitably qualified or experienced staff when vacancies arise.
- Council will encourage community participation in Council led tree planting and management programmes where appropriate.
- Council will maintain a preferred tree species list published on Councils website to determine species selection. A mix of Indigenous and exotic species will be selected appropriate to the area, conditions and desired outcome.

- Council will consider the potential damage to infrastructure, powerline clearance legislation, maintenance costs and relevant legislation in species and location selection.
- The removal, lopping or potential damage of public place trees will generally not be supported to facilitate development or to enhance vistas for property owners.
- Council will take enforcement action when persons prune, damage, kill or remove Council owned trees without approval.

Urban design treatments and streetscape renewal schemes will incorporate measures to protect the health of proposed and existing trees and to prevent infrastructure damage

## 6. Relevant legislation / references

### External References:

- Electricity Safety Act 1998 and the Electric Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015 (and 2020 update)
- Road Management Act 2004 (VIC)
- Local Government Act 2020
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (VIC)
- Flora and Fauna Act 1988
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992
- Heritage Act 1995
- AS 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees
- AS 4970 -2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites
- AS 2303-2015 Tree Stock for Landscape Use
- Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

### Council Related Policies/Plans:

- Asset Management Policy 2022
- Asset Plan 2022 (Strategy report)
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation AMP
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Council Plan
- Governance Rules
- Community Engagement Policy
- Debt Management Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Issuing Infringements Policy
- Open Space Policy and Plans
- Road Management Plan

## 7. Policy owner

Director Infrastructure and Environment

### Document history

Version	Date Endorsed	Reason for change	Next review date
001	October 2023	Revoke superseded policies: Moyne Tree Plan 2006, Planting of Trees on Urban Nature Strips Policy and Planting of Trees and Other Vegetation on Municipal Roadsides Policy.	September 2027

*\*It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. **However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.***

### Definitions of key terms and acronyms used within this Policy

Term	Definition / Explanation
<b>Arborist (qualified)</b>	a person with a Certificate III in Arboriculture as a minimum (or equivalent) and a minimum of three years of relevant industry experience.
<b>Council owned trees</b>	trees on land owned or managed by Council located in public parks, reserves, nature strips, Council managed roadsides (excluding VicRoads roads).
<b>Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)</b>	a measurement taken at 1.4. metres above the ground, that being a convenient height at which to measure a tree's diameter.
<b>High risk –</b>	an identifiable tree defect or problem serious enough to be significantly compromising the anchorage or structural integrity of the tree, such that it creates a risk of failure in the immediate or near future and may cause injury to the public or damage to property.
<b>Low risk</b>	identifiable tree defects or emerging problems that don't yet warrant action but require re-inspection by an Inspections arborist.

Term	Definition / Explanation
<b>Medium risk</b>	identifiable tree defects or problems that require remedial action within a timeframe proportionate to the level of risk.
<b>Open Space-</b>	land in the Shire of Moyne that provides recreation and leisure benefits that is owned or managed by Council.
<b>Private trees</b>	trees located on private property.
<b>Problem trees</b>	– trees that pose a safety or health risk to the community, damage to infrastructure, or are unsuitable in a particular location.
<b>Structural defect</b>	A weak point in or on a tree causing its structural deterioration diminishing its stability in full or part.