

# Policy

## Urban tree management on Council controlled land

Responsible Manager (Title)	Open Spaces and Facilities		
Adopted by Council	Date	Minute Number	
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Document(s) this policy Supersedes	V4.0 15.203/18 November 2018		
Community Plan Linkage	<b>4.8 Environment - Enhanced maintenance of green space in a way that encourages responsible use</b>		

### 1 Purpose

The Policy provides guidance on Council's management of trees on Council controlled land in parks and reserves and streets in urban areas.

### 2 Definitions

Biodiversity – the variety of life found in a given area.

Local provenance – plant populations that naturally grow in a given area, containing local genetic variations.

### 3 Background/legislative requirements

Urban trees play a significant role creating liveable neighbourhoods and increasing the health and wellbeing of communities.

These trees are important assets for communities and councils, bringing aesthetic appeal to towns and cities, along with many other benefits, including:

- Biodiversity support and provision of important habitat corridors for native plants and animals

- Lowering heat through transpiration, shade and passive cooling

- Increasing energy efficiency by reducing the need for air conditioning

- Improving air and water quality

- Increasing human health and wellbeing

- Enhancing water absorption by slowing stormwater and reducing peak flows

Enhancing property values

Reducing noise

## 4 Policy statement

Council is committed to maintaining, managing and protecting trees on Council controlled land including, with removal being a last resort.

Council supports a diversity of species including local provenance, native and flowering trees.

Council supports the maintenance of Jacaranda Avenues in Grafton.

## 1 Implementation

### 4.1 Tree works

#### 4.1.1 Council tree works may include:

1. removal of weed species, unsuitable or hazardous trees
2. selective pruning, and weight reduction of limbs
3. maintenance pruning to remove dead, diseased, dying or defective branches
4. selective pruning to remove branches causing conflict, such as a building encroachment
5. root pruning of trees to manage damage to built and natural structures
6. pruning for service lines, excluding electrical service lines
7. crown lifting for pedestrian or vehicular access
8. pruning for vehicle sight lines, signage, and Road and Maritime Services (RMS) requirements
9. removal of trees in conflict with utilities and built structures where all engineering alternatives have been considered
10. minimum work to make trees safe.

#### 4.1.2 Council tree works will not include:

1. work on trees not considered to be our responsibility and not located on Council controlled land
2. remove trees for views, unless identified within a council plan
3. remove trees for solar access, leaf, fruit or sap drop, bird or bat droppings, damage to sewer pipes/built structures unless all engineering alternatives have been considered
4. remove healthy and stable trees
5. pruning trees contrary to Australian Standards 4373

6. undertake any pruning work outside what a particular species will tolerate
7. undertake tree work for emotive reasons
8. remove trees inhibiting grass growth
9. use chemical controls unless deemed absolutely necessary, such as termite control on nature strips
10. remove trees for allergies unless they can be medically linked to allergy by a specialist
11. remove trees that cause damage to minor ancillary structures such as footpaths and driveways
12. take requests for topping/height reduction of trees.

## **4.2 Management of views**

When undertaking maintenance or new tree plantings in public areas, consideration will be given to existing street tree masterplans or vegetation management plans.

### **1.1.1 Private views**

When undertaking new tree plantings, Council will endeavour to select species that do not substantially detract from private views.

### **4.2.1 Public views**

Consideration is given to the following criteria when considering maintenance of public views from Council controlled land.

1. Level of built and service infrastructure at the location
2. Level of public and tourist use of these areas
3. Type of view and land/seascape
4. Environmental impact and sensitivity for any estuary or coastal dunal systems
5. Requirements of any related Plans of Management for reserves in the locality
6. Financial cost and benefit to maintain the areas.

## **4.3 Vandalism**

Vandalism to trees and vegetation will not be tolerated and when reported or observed, evidence will be collected for prosecution.

The following mitigating actions may be applied to reduce the incidence of vandalism:

1. managing views for public benefit only at approved locations
2. planting species that will enable views to be substantially retained in locations where those views may be enjoyed by the public and preserve views by planting and maintaining vegetation between the view corridors with species that do not exceed the view corridor heights

3. public awareness and education initiatives
4. rehabilitation of the vandalised area
5. the covert and/or overt camera-monitoring of locations of concern
6. the offer of reward of up to five thousand dollars for information that results in a conviction for, or Court finding of illegal activity of, vandalism or deliberate damage to vegetation or public property
7. the strategic placement of signs that are not larger than 600mm square to warn that camera-monitoring may be in use, offer of a reward and likely penalties for those of vegetation damage, vandalism or other illegal activity in public spaces.

## **5 Related Documents**

Draft Urban Tree Strategy

Clarence Valley Biodiversity Strategy

Yamba Street Tree Masterplan

Enforcement Policy

Green Infrastructure Strategy