

# Tree Management Policy

<b>Policy Reference Number</b>	5979825
<b>Responsible Department</b>	Infrastructure, Planning & Sustainability Services
<b>Related Policies</b>	Risk Management
<b>Related Procedures</b>	Tree Procedures Manual
<b>Date of Initial Adoption</b>	21 September 2004
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## 1. Purpose

This Policy is intended to deal with trees across all areas of Campbelltown City Council's operations including:

- Formalising Council's strategic directions in relation to trees and streetscapes
- The selection, planting, management and removal of trees situated on land owned by Council or under Council's control and management comprising:
  - Roads
  - Community Land, including parks, gardens, reserves, playgrounds, ovals, sporting grounds, water courses and the like
  - areas of land specifically excluded from Community Land classification
- Trees on private property, where, as required under the provisions of the Development Act 1993, the Council is required to assess:
  - Regulated trees
  - Significant trees
- Civil and personal liability issues
- Direction for Employees in the management of trees throughout the City.

## 2. Introduction

### *Tree Management Policy Benefits*

The Policy will guide the Council, in accordance with its Strategic Plan, in the future development and enhancement of community and open space and streetscapes in the City:

- It provides information for the Community on the Council's goals and objectives in the management of trees;
- It guides Council's planners and private developers in the development of land adjoining roads and open spaces to minimise the impact on trees;
- It requires Tree management practices to be consistent and transparent.

The Policy is supported by a manual which sets out procedures and practices to be applied by Council Employees in implementing the provisions of this Policy.

### 3. Power to Make the Policy

This Policy incorporates the strategies required to fulfil the Council's obligations in all areas of tree management with regard to Sections 221, 232 and 245 of the Local Government Act 1999, the Development Act 1993 and Development Regulations 2008.

### 4. Strategic Plan Link

This Policy has the following link to Council's Strategic Plan 2024:

- Greening Our City (Goal 2)

### 5. Principles

#### Greening Our City

The Tree Management Policy is based on the fundamental belief that trees are an important community asset for the following reasons:

- Trees provide a softening influence on often harsh urban landscapes, providing an amenity to residents and visitors through the introduction of colour, form and texture to either highlight or mask architectural and natural features.
- Trees have practical as well as aesthetic benefits for the community as a whole. These include a capacity for reduction in noise and air pollution, reduction of erosion, positive effects on the micro-climate of the surrounding area in modifying extremes of temperature and wind, as well as influencing in a positive way, the human psyche, and promoting health and wellbeing in the community.
- Trees have an important role in the retention of natural habitats for indigenous plants and animals. This is particularly applicable to those parts of the City that are to be preserved in their natural state for future generations and to retain their biodiversity.
- In accordance with the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide 2017, update, develop and maintain a green liveable city and ensure urban green cover is increased by 20% in metropolitan Adelaide by 2045. Particular focus will be placed on ensuring that urban infill areas maintain appropriate levels of urban greenery.
- The Resilient East partnership, between the State Government and eight eastern Adelaide Local Governments, collaborates on regional climate adaptation issues. The key priorities focus on improving staff and community awareness of the impacts of climate change, collection and use of regional environmental data to develop strategies for adaptation, and trialling and understanding adaptation measures such as greening and water sensitive urban design.

#### Why Manage Trees?

The value of trees to the urban environment cannot be overstated. However, there are many factors that need to be taken into account in maintaining or introducing trees to the landscape which, at least potentially, can have an adverse effect.

Poor selection, placement and management of trees can result in:

- risks of personal injury to residents and visitors to the City;

- hazards to property through the failure of trees and tree limbs, and the potentially adverse influence of root systems on soils supporting built structures, especially in the reactive soils predominating in the City of Campbelltown;
- interference in the provision of infrastructure and services (roads, power, sewer and water) through the use of inappropriate species adjacent to these services;
- fouling of waterways and the introduction of pest plants; and
- the proliferation of animal pests, especially introduced bird species.

## 6. Definitions

Definitions for the purpose of this Policy are:

**Community Land:** Includes all land owned by Council or under Council's care, control or management, except roads or land that Council has resolved to exclude from Community Land classification.

**Open Space Strategy** The key strategy for Council that guides development of open space in the City (including vegetation types and biodiversity).

**Planting:** The installation of a tree at a site.

**Reserves:** Includes parks, gardens, reserves, playgrounds, ovals, sporting grounds, water courses and the like.

**Recognised Tree Amenity Valuation Method** Council uses the modified Burnley Method of Valuation as its preferred method to value trees greater than five years old.

**Regulated Tree:** Means a tree within a class of trees declared to be Regulated Trees by the Development Regulations 2008; or a tree declared to be a Regulated Tree, or a tree within a group of trees declared to be Regulated Trees, by a Development Plan.

- A trunk circumference of 2 metres or more measured at a point 1 metre above natural ground level (in the case of trees with multiple trunks, it is those with trunks with a total circumference of 2 metres or more and an average circumference of 625mm or more measured at a point 1 metre above natural ground level).
- A number of tree species are exempt from regulated tree controls, either through their location or their species.

**Significant Tree:** Means a tree within a class of trees declared to be Significant Trees by the Development Regulations 2008; or a tree declared to be a Significant Tree, or a tree within a group of trees declared to be Significant Trees, by a Development Plan. A trunk circumference of 3 metres or more measured at a point 1 metre above natural ground level (in the case of trees with multiple trunks, it is those with trunks with a total circumference of 3 metres or more and an average circumference of 625mm or more measured at a point 1 metre above natural ground level).

<b>Streetscape:</b>	The vegetation, including trees, along a street or road, which provides local tree benefits and amenity.
<b>Tree:</b>	Means any 'woody' plant, including shrubs or vines if they are pruned into a tree like shape and excludes groundcovers, annual or perennial plants, or indoor plants. Most larger palms are also included as trees even though they are not 'woody'.
<b>Tree Health:</b>	A tree may be deleteriously affected by insects, parasites, disease, environmental damage, or other problems. Its ability to resist these problems characterises its degree of health. A tree in poor health infers the tree as a whole is malfunctioning and survival may be threatened. A tree in excellent health has good vigour and few if any pest problems.
<b>Urban Tree Fund</b>	Where an applicant prefers not to plant replacement trees they may make a monetary contribution to a designated urban tree fund in lieu of planting. The amount required to be paid is determined by legislation

## 7. Policy

### 7.1 General

The Campbelltown City Council has the following strategic objectives in relation to the trees under its influence and control to:

- Formally recognise the value of trees as fundamental and intrinsic landscape elements in the urban environment.
- Improve local streetscapes by introducing trees appropriate to the local environment and urban services present.
- Pursue a planned, consistent and coordinated approach to the planting and replacement of trees throughout the City in accordance with agreed tree selection criteria, and to provide direction to residents and Council Employees on the care and management of trees.
- Formally recognise that indigenous and exotic tree species each have a practical and aesthetic role in the improvement of the City's amenities.
- Wherever possible, preserve indigenous tree species seed base.
- Protect and enhance the integrity of the natural landscape features of the City.
- Create bio-diverse corridors along waterways (e.g. river, creeks) and vegetated areas through tree planting and re-vegetation initiatives.
- Plant, where appropriate, species that are tolerant of low water requirements or are drought-resistant and low maintenance.
- Support tree assessment procedures and management practices which deal with tree hazards, risks and complaints in a timely and efficient manner.
- Conduct all tree planning, selection, planting, assessment, maintenance, removal and arbitration practices in accordance with the provisions of Council's Risk Management Policy.

- Implement a system to provide a broad picture of the urban forest. This includes air pollution and meteorological data to quantify urban forest structure, environmental effects, and the value to the Community including carbon capture benefits.
- Document the Cities trees on Council's land, within a database to ensure best practice can be utilised in managing their health and sustainability.
- Refer to the Open Space Strategy when considering planting and vegetation management.
- Observe and comply with all relevant requirements, policies and guidelines.

## 7.2 Planning and Development Issues

Trees are living organisms that are sensitive to changes in their environment. Any encroachment, disturbance or compaction of the soil around a tree is likely to damage or destroy a tree's fine absorbing roots that are responsible for the collection of water and nutrients. Injury caused by cutting or crushing, suffocation through raising of the grade, poisoning or site contamination, and moisture stress by inundation or dehydration, can result in the decline or death of the tree. Injuries caused during development adjacent to trees may not be apparent for many years, but can significantly affect the health and viability of the tree many years later.

The Development Act 1993 and associated Regulations require development approval for any tree-damaging activity to regulated trees as defined by the Development Regulations 2008.

The Council's Development Plan contains the principles of development control that any applications must be assessed against.

Development applications must indicate the presence of any regulated trees on or adjacent to the subject site that may be affected by the proposed development.

Where a tree on a road adjacent to a proposed development impacts the development application, the Applicant must explore options for retention of the tree as Council default position is always to retain the street tree. If no resolution can be found, the Applicant must seek approval from Council to remove the street tree as part of their development application from which Council will seek compensation for the tree loss.

Application must be lodged through Council as a Road and Verge Authorisation Form Section 221. The application will be assessed and a total value formulated for the Tree with the amenity value, the cost of removal and the planting of the replacement tree, being determined using the Burnley method. The application will be assessed on a case by case basis and does not imply that tree removal will be granted.

The preservation of trees already growing on the road or in other Council properties adjacent to development, or the planting of new trees in these circumstances must comply with the provisions of this Policy and conform to the procedures outlined in Council's Tree Procedures Manual.

### **7.3 Other Authorities/Agencies**

Other Authorities/Agencies have responsibility for managing their own infrastructure on Council land including the management of trees and services. Tree management agreements with these other authorities will be sought to avoid any last minute or unforeseen conflicts which may result in poor tree health, aesthetic, or safety outcomes.

### **7.4 Planting Objectives**

To improve the quality and suitability of the trees across the entire City, the increase in the number of appropriate plantings on Council land will occur in line with the availability of resources and the Council's capacity to maintain all trees planted to acceptable standards.

Planting objectives will be guided by Council's Open Space Directions and Strategies document.

Records will be kept of the site and species assessment process used in determining the suitability of tree species used, and all tree planting operations will be carried out in accordance with the Tree Procedures Manual.

#### **7.4.1 Planting Trees on Roads**

The selection and management of trees for planting in road reserves will be planned with great care and will have regard to local conditions, safety, existing infrastructure, and compatibility with existing plantings, and be designed to enhance the character and amenity of the streetscape. Species used must come from the approved list of street trees in the Tree Procedures Manual and other supporting guidelines.

New tree plantings will take into account:

- The surrounding vegetation composition and any environmental or aesthetic considerations;
- The capacity for planting a single tree species to develop and achieve a consistent uniform planting (an 'Avenue Effect') with trees having a similar size, shape and look where possible;
- The purpose of the road, as well as the type of construction of the road and any impact the trees might have on it, or surrounding structures;
- The impacts the proposed trees may have on any services present, above or below the ground, taking into account Legislative requirements e.g. Sewerage Act 1929, Electricity Act 1996;
- The preference of the adjacent resident with regards to the tree species;
- The type of traffic using the road and potential impacts on road safety (sight distances);;
- The possible impacts on the safety of the public; and
- Any other matters which might be pertinent to the site.

Where tree planting is likely to have a significant impact on local residents, business proprietors, or other stakeholders, Council will ensure that public consultation occurs according to the provisions of its Public Consultation Policy.



An ongoing program will ensure all Council roads suitable for planting will be planted with trees, and a management plan consistent with this Tree Management Policy will be developed to support these plantings once the data audit has been completed.

#### **7.4.2 Planting Trees on Community Land**

Council will approach the selection, planting and maintenance of trees on Community Land, as per the Policy details, 'Planting Trees on Roads' in the previous section.

While recognising the need to maintain adequate open space, Council may consider reserving land for development or treed corridors, linking and extending areas of native vegetation for wildlife, or for other passive recreational pursuits, following appropriate examination of the circumstances in each case. This process will consider the positive environmental benefits and a risk management assessment of the project.

#### **7.4.3 Unauthorised Planting**

Tree planting by persons other than Council officers in roads and Community Land requires authorisation by Council.

Where a tree has been planted by a resident in any road or Community Land, and the Tree Management Officer is of the view that the species and/or site of the planting is contrary to this Policy, the Tree Management Officer may report the matter to Council for consideration. Any development within Council's road verge requires a Section 221 application.

#### **7.4.4 Tree List**

The list of tree species suitable for planting in the City will be reviewed annually. Council Employees will periodically review the list to ensure it remains up to date via the introduction of new tree species, while non-performing species or species where undesirable attributes have become apparent should be withdrawn from use. The approved tree list is included in the Tree Procedures Manual.

### **7.5 Tree Maintenance Objectives**

Council will ensure that all trees growing under its care and control in the City, be they on roads or Community Land, are adequately maintained in accordance with tree maintenance procedures suitable for the circumstances.

To assist with tree maintenance and best practice an electronic system recording trees within Community land will be developed and maintained to ensure Council's tree register is sustainable for the long term.

The allocation of resources by Council for managing trees will determine the extent of implementation of any maintenance programs developed for the purpose. Therefore the implementation of maintenance programs will be prioritised based on the level of funding and resources available.

Maintenance programs will be developed which aim to:

- promote long term tree sustainability with health and habitat benefits;
- promote biodiversity and conservation values where appropriate;

- manage the level of risk to provide adequate public safety;
- improve the amenity values provided for the community of all vegetation;
- reduce the intrusion of public tree roots onto private property where appropriate;
- ensure the compatibility of proposed and existing trees with local infrastructure and site uses; and
- record all aspects of planning and management.

Maintenance programs will be reviewed on an 'as needs' basis, and where the maintenance program is conducted by other Utility organisations such as SA Power Network, Council Employees will request that the stakeholders affected by the tree maintenance program are consulted by the Utility companies according to the provisions of Council's Public Consultation Policy.

Trees on land specifically excluded from the Community Land classification, however still on land under Council's direct care and control, will be managed as per this Policy. The development of maintenance programs for these areas will occur based on the assessment of risk levels for a particular location and determined need for action.

#### **7.5.1 Unauthorised Pruning**

No pruning of street trees is to be undertaken by residents or ratepayers without Council approval.

### **7.6 Tree Removal**

#### **7.6.1 Trees on Council Land**

##### **7.6.1.1 Criteria for Removal at Council Cost**

Where a tree is approved for removal, the removal and replacement will be at Council's expense when:-

- To Council's satisfaction, the tree requested to be removed is a health hazard as certified by a recognised allergist or recognised medical practitioner.
- The tree requested to be removed is causing significant damage to property (either private or Council) and is supported by an independent arborist report and engineer's report
- The tree requested to be removed is significantly leaning, diseased, deformed or possesses poor health which renders the tree uneconomical or unsafe for retention, or is in the opinion of the Council causing significant nuisance to a resident.

##### **7.6.1.2 Removal for Development**

When authorisation is granted to remove a tree due to development of adjoining land, Council may place a monetary value on the said tree by a recognised valuation method. Removal and replacement will be at the applicant's expense with payment to be made prior to work being commenced.



The applicant will pay the following:

- Tree Amenity Valuation
- Arborist and Valuation report cost
- Removal cost
- Cost of replacement tree

All building applicants are to be advised of their liability for damage/loss of any street tree on the site frontage and that Council may seek to recover costs in respect of any damage/loss of public trees.

#### **7.6.1.3 Removal for Resident Benefit**

Where approval is granted for the removal of a tree for the benefit of a resident, Council may place a monetary value on the tree using a recognised valuation method. Removal and replacement will be at the resident's expense with payment made prior to work being commenced.

When a Council tree is:-

- located in an extension to or in a supplementary driveway to a property,
- located on a street boundary and is therefore subject to cost share with Council,
- an unauthorised planting on Council property by any person,

the resident may pay or share the following:

- Tree Amenity Valuation.
- Valuation report cost.
- Removal cost.
- Cost of replacement tree.

#### **7.6.1.4 Removal After Vehicle Impact**

Where a Council officer attends reported damage/removal of a tree by vehicle impact, the officer will, where possible, obtain the driver's name and address and accident details which will then be the subject of a report to the General Manager Infrastructure Services. In such cases Council may seek to recover costs or part thereof of:

- Tree Amenity Valuation.
- Valuation report cost.
- Removal cost.
- Cost of replacement tree.

### **7.6.1.5 Unauthorised Removal**

Responsibility for the care, control and management of trees and shrubs on land under the care, control and management of the Council is vested in the Council.

It is an offence for a person to cut, saw, poison or remove any tree or shrub on any land under the care, control and management of the Council. Should Council wish to prosecute the offending person consideration should be given to the recognised valuation method

## **7.6.2 Trees on Private Land**

### **7.6.2.1 Fallen Trees Onto Public Land**

Where a tree on private property is felled and obstructs a public road and the Council causes the fallen tree to be removed from the public road, the Council may seek to recover the cost of such removal from the owner of the property from which the tree originated.

Such cost will include:

- Labour charge
- Cartage
- Chipping
- Damage to public property (such as street trees and infrastructure)
- Cost of any contracts

### **7.6.2.2 Regulated tree removal**

Council must apply conditions that replacement trees, of a kind determined by Council, are planted on a site where regulated or significant trees are approved for removal or at the request of the applicant payment may be made in lieu of planting replacement trees in to an Urban Tree Fund of an amount specified in the Development Regulations 2008.

- For every 'regulated tree' approved for removal, 2 replacement trees are required to be planted.
- For every 'significant tree' approved for removal, 3 replacement trees are required to be planted.

Any replacement tree planted must satisfy any criteria prescribed by the Regulations.

Applicants have a right to appeal any condition of approval.

### **7.6.2.3 Shared tree pruning or removal**

In the case of a tree that has not been planted by Council, where it has been determined the main trunk straddles / overlaps Council land and the property owner's land:

- Council will negotiate with the land owner to share the costs of the pruning works required
- Council will only consider sharing the cost to remove a tree if the tree is dead or structurally compromised.
- Written confirmation to the agreement and payment must be made prior to any work commencing.

### **7.7 Storm Events**

Where a storm event in the Council area results in significant clean up requirements in respect to trees, Employees will prioritise the works in the following order:

- Matters of public safety
- Street trees
- Reserves with scheduled Council events
- Reserves
- Other locations requiring clean up

### **7.8 Pest Trees**

Tree species which occur outside of their intended environments and reproduce freely, impacting on the viability of native species and habitats, or causing a nuisance through prolific regeneration, will be controlled.

A list of currently identified pest trees is included in the Regulations and Tree Procedures Manual.

There will be regular monitoring by Council Employees of potential pest trees occurring in waterways, reserves and other natural areas under Council's control.

Periodic checks of all Community Land will be conducted for the purpose of monitoring pest trees and identifying newly emerging species that may gain pest tree status from time to time.

Trees on the 'Pest Tree' list growing in private gardens as ornamentals, or planted in roads as street trees, need not be automatically considered for removal, unless they form part of a removal and replacement strategy, or where it can be clearly shown that they are a seed source contaminating areas affected by the said species' pest tree status.

### **7.9 Independent Arborists**

Advice will be sought externally from Independent Arborists to assist in planning, assessments, monitoring, species selection and other tree management decision making processes where circumstances dictate.

The level of advice sought will be consistent with the person's experience and qualifications (but the minimum level of qualification is to be Level 5 Consulting Arborist).

## **8. Review & Evaluation**

Within twelve months of each new Council term, Council will review this policy. Following this initial review, this policy will be reviewed at least biennially by Staff with minor administrative adjustments being approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

## **9. Availability of the Policy**

Copies of this Policy will be available at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours and at Council's website [www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au](http://www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au).