
TREE POLICY (Trees On Council Owned or Managed Land) 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

Clarence City Council values trees for their social, environmental, and economic benefits.

Trees benefit the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our communities. Trees provide shaded comfortable spaces to socialise, they cool the city, filter air and water, and store carbon for an environmentally sustainable future.

Trees shade buildings, which reduces energy costs and makes places more attractive and comfortable which increases land values for an economically viable city.

Council will plant and manage trees on council owned or managed land to grow an urban forest network, for an environmentally responsible and people friendly city.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- facilitate the development of strategic documents including but not limited to an Urban Forest Strategy and Precinct Planting Plans to guide the planning, planting and management of trees on council owned or managed land
- guide and encourage the planting and growing of an urban forest network on Council land within urban areas of the city including encouraging residents to plant the verge / nature strip in front of their homes with suitable trees under 5m
- reduce the incidence of tree vandalism by establishing and promoting timely protective, investigative and response actions
- reduce the incidence of the removal of healthy trees by establishing clear guidelines outlining the criteria under which tree removal will be considered
- give effect to council's strategic plans strategic goal areas to develop a people friendly city and an environmentally responsible city

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to trees on existing and future council owned or managed land.

This policy does not apply to trees on private or Crown land unless subject to Planning Scheme requirements or other legislative or regulatory requirements.

4. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Arborist	Means a person professionally qualified in the practice of the cultivation, management and scientific study of trees, who holds a formal qualification in arboriculture
Council	Means the Clarence City Council.
Council works zone	Means where a council crew or a contractor engaged by council is undertaking works on community infrastructure (e.g. in streets, parks or community facilities).
Council land	Means all publicly owned or managed land including parks, gardens, reserves, beaches, foreshores, sports and recreation grounds and playgrounds, streets, laneways, forecourts, squares and car parks.
Exceptional circumstance	Means a tree that is high-risk (in whole or in part) causing or is threatening to cause injury to people or substantial damage to property.



Hazardous tree	Means a tree with recognisable features that impact on its structural integrity and elevate the potential for failure of branches, trunks or roots and likely injure people or property. Some of the more common features are extensive decay, bark inclusion at forks and poor branch attachment, poor root development or damage and significant tree decline.
Planning Scheme	Means the Tasmanian Planning Scheme as it applies to the City of Clarence, or any successor to that scheme.
Precinct Planting Plans	Means local street and neighbourhood planting plans that provide an assessment of streets suitable for tree planting, identify suitable tree species and planting locations within the street. The precinct planting plans will be implementation tools for the Urban Forest Strategy.
Tree	<p>A woody perennial plant, typically having a single stem or trunk growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.</p> <p>Reference: <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>, 2020, Oxford University Press, UK.</p>
Urban forest	<p>The urban forest is the art, science and technology of managing trees in and around urban community ecosystems for the physiological, sociological, economic and aesthetic benefits trees provide society.</p> <p>Reference: Dictionary of Forestry quoted in JC Schwab (Ed) 2009, <i>Planning the Urban Forest</i></p>
Vandalism	Means an action involving, but not limited to, deliberate destruction of or damage including poisoning, ringbarking, pruning or removal of trees on council owned or managed land.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy provides a framework for the protection of healthy trees from removal, planning, planting, and managing trees on council owned or managed land with a focus on proactively increasing the number of trees across the city.

6. RELATIONSHIP TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

The following objectives are identified in Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2031:

- **A people friendly city**

Enhancing the liveability of activity centres, community hubs and villages through urban design projects.

Continuing to develop and maintain a quality open space network

- **An environmentally responsible city**

Protecting natural assets within council-managed land through the development and review of strategies in relation to bushfire, weed, land and coastal management.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

The legislation and documents listed below form the framework to give context to this policy:

LEGISLATIVE (ACTS, REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS)

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Clarence
- AS 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees
- AS 4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites
- *Neighbourhood Disputes About Plants Act 2017*
- Clarence City Council Public Places By-Law 2018

COUNCIL POLICY, PLANS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

- Clarence City Council Strategic Plan 2021 - 2031
- Clarence City Council Open Space Policy 2013
- Clarence City Council Managing Trees on Council Land Procedure 2021

8. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Council will achieve the policy purpose by:

- Developing and implementing an Urban Forest Strategy, and Precinct Planting Plans that will guide the planning and planting of trees in consultation with the community.
- Prioritising tree pruning to mitigate risk high traffic areas (i.e. child care centres, streets and car parks)
- Limiting the removal of healthy trees
- Investigating acts of tree vandalism

URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

The Urban Forest Strategy aims to green the city for a more liveable and sustainable future, the strategy will guide greening via planting trees. The strategy will identify challenges and opportunities, prioritising tree planting localities and providing an implementation framework.

PRECINCT PLANTING PLANS

The city will be divided into precincts, each precinct will be assessed for tree planting opportunities and have a ten-year planting plan showing current canopy conditions and future canopy conditions as we move to a more densely planted, greener and liveable city.

TREE PRUNING PRIORITIES

Tree pruning priorities will be based on mitigating risk and best practice arboriculture standards.

Pruning priorities include:

- Childcare centres (reported / inspected after high wind events)
- Damaged trees reported to Council-by-council staff or members of the community
- Trees damaged in a storm event
- Trees impeding public use of footpaths or roads, and
- High volume areas (streets, playgrounds, council car parks).

TREE REMOVAL

Trees will not be removed because they obstruct views, advertising, or signage, are disliked, produce leaf, and bark litter, or cause minor allergic or irritant responses, block solar access, utilities, or public infrastructure.

Trees that are suspected to be hazardous, diseased, or dying and thereby posing a risk to public safety will be assessed by an arborist. Council will implement the arborists recommendations.

Trees will be removed if they are hazardous, diseased, or dying and pose a risk to public safety, where trees are removed, they will be replaced either in the same, similar or alternative location to ensure no nett loss of tree canopy.

Trees that require removal will be replaced in accordance with the Urban Forest Strategy, Precinct Planting Plans, Master Plans and Reserve Activity Plans to ensure no nett loss of tree canopy across the city.

Tree removal will be limited or mitigated within council works zones; Council will design civil infrastructure as to maintain existing healthy street trees. If removal is required, trees will be replaced in accordance with the Urban Forest Strategy and Precinct Planting Plans.

Tree removal of healthy trees may be permitted under Exceptional Circumstances as defined in this Policy, or where council makes an alternative decision at a council meeting.

TREE VANDALISM

Damage, pruning or removal of a tree on council land by an unauthorised person is an offence under Council's Public Places By-law 2018. Identified offenders will be fined in accordance with the *Penalty Units and Other Penalties Act 1987*.

Council will develop a program to increase public awareness of tree vandalism to reduce the incidence of tree vandalism.

Where an act of vandalism is identified, council:

- will investigate the vandalism to identify those responsible, may offer a financial reward for information leading to a successful conviction, and issue an infringement notice or commence a prosecution in circumstances where an offender is identified.
- will replant trees to restore the streetscape or landscape to the condition it was in prior to the vandalism, and where possible retain the main trunk of large trees to create habitat
- will replant trees in accordance with the Urban Forest Strategy and Precinct Planting Plans
- may install tree vandalism signage and other visual and physical aids (i.e., fencing, cloth, banners) deemed suitable to identify the site of the vandalised tree to notify the public and to deter further tree vandalism. The signage and aids will remain in place until the replacement tree/s have grown to a height deemed sufficient by the General Manager. If signage or aids are removed by unauthorised persons, they will be replaced.

9. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The Manager Environment and Recreation and the Operations Group Manager are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

This policy will be communicated via:

- council's website, and
- Internal circulation to staff

10. REPORTING

The following statistics will be reported in councils annual report:

- tree inspections and reports completed by an independent arborist
- tree removal requests from the community
- trees removed
- trees planted in accordance with the Urban Forest Strategy and Precinct Planting Plans
- incidence of tree vandalism and the outcome



11. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

TABLE OF AMENDMENTS

No.	Date	Brief Details

APPROVAL

GM APPROVAL DATE	1 November 2021
REVIEW	Every 5 years
RESPONSIBLE POSITION	Manager Environment and Recreation
ECM REFERENCE	