

TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Review Frequency	4 yearly or as required
Status	LGA Recommended
Last Reviewed	January 2019 (16 March 2020 Resolution Ref: ACM20528)
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File Number	18.63.001 / PL202074
Responsible Division	Leadership
Related Documents	Alexandrina Council By-Law No. 2 – Local Government Land Australian Standard 4973 Alexandrina Council Community Strategic Plan Environmental Action Plan Guidelines for the Provision of Infrastructure and Other Assets Roadside Vegetation Management Plan Town Maintenance Themes and Species Planting Lists Tree Management Procedure
Applicable Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1999, section 221(2)(e)</i> <i>Development Act 1993 (SA)</i> <i>Electricity Act 1996 (SA)</i> <i>Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)</i> <i>Heritage Places Act 1993 (SA)</i> <i>Highways Act 1926 (SA)</i> <i>Local Government Act 1999 (SA)</i> <i>National Parks & Wildlife Act 1972 (SA)</i> <i>Native Vegetation Act 1991 (SA)</i> <i>Natural Resources Management Act 2004 (SA)</i> <i>Road Traffic Act 1961 (SA)</i> <i>Water Industry Act & Regulations 2012 (SA)</i>

Definitions

In this Policy, unless the contrary intention appears, these words have the following meaning:

‘*Council*’ means Alexandrina Council and includes any member of Council staff acting under delegation.

‘*Council land*’ means any land owned by Council or which is under Council’s care, control and management including community land, road reserves, and land that is excluded from community land classification.

‘*Individual*’ means any person and includes contractors, Elected Members, employees, ratepayers, residents and volunteers of Alexandrina Council.

‘*Pest tree*’ means any plant declared for control under the *Natural Resources Management Act 1994* or any tree or plant listed as a pest tree in Council’s *Tree Management Standard Operating Procedure*.

‘*Pre-European Landscape*’ means the tree species and landscape character that prevailed prior to European settlement.

‘*Verge*’ means the area of land located between the roadside kerb and the footpath.

‘*Roadside*’ means the strip of land between the road formation and the boundary of the road reserve.

Purpose

Council recognises its responsibility to plant and effectively and reasonably manage and care for trees located on Council land to minimise risks and maximise benefits on behalf of our community.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a guiding framework for the planting, maintenance, conservation and removal of trees on Council land including parks & gardens, urban biodiversity reserves, rural reserves, urban streets and rural roads.

This Policy applies to all trees under the care, control and management of Council to ensure that Council's approach to tree management across the Council district is:

- undertaken in a consistent and transparent manner;
- fair, equitable and achieves the best possible outcomes for the community; and
- consistent with Council's legislative obligations and with Council's strategic, corporate and financial directions.

This Policy should be read and utilised in conjunction with Council's *Tree Management Procedure*, which provides more detailed guidance regarding tree-related activities and requests. Relevant information, including application forms, will be published on Council's website.

1. The Value of Trees

Alexandrina Council recognises that trees are valuable community resources with many economic, social and environmental benefits. Council is therefore committed to maintaining and increasing, in collaboration with our community, the number of trees across our district so as to "green" our townships, contribute to community wellbeing and enhance biodiversity. In recognition of these benefits, Alexandrina assigns a monetary value to its trees according to the method outlined in the Tree Management Procedure.

2. Enhancing Biodiversity

Where consistent with the function, character and amenity of the land in question, Council's tree management activities will place emphasis on enhancing biodiversity by giving consideration to species selection, landscape connectivity, habitat availability and the use of local provenance plantings with reference to the district's pre-European Landscape. In accordance with Council's commitment to "greening" our townships, non-indigenous trees will be planted and retained where they are consistent with the landscape character of the area and are valued for their shading, aesthetic and/or historical values. Council will support the removal of pest trees through ongoing pest tree control programs, and by favourably viewing applications from individuals and organisations who wish to remove pest trees from Council land.

3. Protecting Cultural Heritage

Council's tree management policies will continue to be sympathetic to the historical, cultural and scientific value of certain trees. The Ngarrindjeri and European cultural heritage and scientific value of trees will inform tree management activities undertaken pursuant to this policy and the Tree Management Procedure.

4. Risk Management & Resource Availability

Appropriate resources will be allocated to tree planting and management so that Council can meet its strategic and legislative obligations. Risk management principles and practices and Council's commitment to urban greening will inform our approach to tree management to ensure that available resources are used effectively and efficiently to reasonably manage trees across the Council landscape in a manner that minimises risk to Council and the community.

5. Tree Planting

In urban streets and township parks & gardens, Council will plant trees in accordance with relevant *Town Maintenance Themes, Species Planting Lists and SA Power Networks Powerline Friendly Species List*. Species selection will be guided by the existing or desired character and use of the area, climatic conditions, potential impacts on infrastructure and public safety and the minimisation of ongoing maintenance requirements. The tree planting species list will be made publically available on the Council's website. Council will consult the local community in circumstances where tree planting is likely to have a significant impact on residents, nearby business or advertisers in the area.

6. Tree Maintenance

Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of all trees on Council land, including those that have been planted by residents on Council verges. Residents & ratepayers are not authorised to prune trees on Council land without prior written approval from Council.

7. Roadside Vegetation

Native Vegetation on roadsides is managed in accordance with Alexandrina Council's Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP). The RVMP will be regularly reviewed in accordance with legislative requirements under the *Native Vegetation Act 1991*.

8. Tree Removal

Council views the removal of healthy, established trees as undesirable but recognises it may be required on rare occasions. The removal of a living tree (other than pest trees) will be treated by Council as the option of last resort.

The removal of any tree on Council land without prior approval from Council is strictly prohibited and should be expected to result in penalties including prosecution.

Individuals or organisations seeking removal of a tree from Council land must submit a written application as prescribed in the Tree Management Procedure. Council will maintain a Tree Removal Register which will be available to the public on the Council website.

9. Tree Replacement

Council will offset the removal of trees on Council land pursuant to this policy through its annual tree planting plan. The number of trees planted during the regular planting season will be not less than twice the number of trees removed in the previous year. Where reasonably practicable, Council will prioritise plantings in locations from where trees were originally removed.

10. Tree Vandalism

It is an offence to poison, prune, remove, deface or otherwise interfere with or cause unauthorised damage to trees on Council land. Proven non-compliance should be expected to result in penalties including prosecution.

11. Trees on Private Land

The management of trees located on private land, including the impacts of such trees on neighbouring property, are the responsibility of the land owner.

Council may require the owner or occupier of land to maintain vegetation encroaching onto Council land (such as a footpath, road or urban biodiversity reserve). If this is not undertaken in a timely manner, Council staff are authorised, under the *Local Government Act 1999*, to undertake the work and recover costs of such work from the owner or occupier of that land.

12. Plant, Seed, Flower and Fruit Collection

Native plants or parts of native plants including seeds, flowers or fruit must not be collected from trees or other vegetation on Council land (including parks, reserves, urban streets and rural roads) without prior written approval from Council and the relevant State government authority. Proven non-compliance should be expected to result in penalties including prosecution.

13. Roadside Timber

Public collection of roadside timber is not permitted. Council will not provide approval or issue permits for the collection of roadside timber. Proven non-compliance should be expected to result in penalties including prosecution.

14. Climate Change

In the face of a changing climate, Council recognises the beneficial effects of trees in ameliorating urban heat island effects, providing refuge for biodiversity and acting as vital carbon sinks. Council will adopt a proactive approach to climate change adaptation by regularly reviewing its tree management practices and species planting lists to ensure the effects of climate change and extreme weather are considered.

15. Exemptions

The restrictions in this policy do not apply to a Council employee acting in the course and within the scope of their normal duties, or to a Council contractor or volunteer while performing work for Council and acting under the supervision of a Council employee.

16. Delegations

Council acknowledges that the Chief Executive Officer may sub-delegate matters related to this Policy to staff or other persons employed or engaged by council.

17. Documentation

To assist in demonstrating that the above processes are fair, transparent and accountable, cost effective and meet community needs, all requests, assessments and outcomes in relation to Council's tree management activities will be documented. A register of tree removal decisions will be made available to the public on the Council website.

18. Availability of Policy

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council's offices during normal business hours and on the Council's website www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au. Copies can also be provided to interested members of the community upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.