

1 Policy History

Revision No.	Council Meeting Date	Minute No.	Adoption Date
1	9 Oct 2007	0357	9 Oct 2007
2	9 Sep 2008	0363	9 Sep 2008
3	11 May 2010	0142	11 May 2010
4	13 Aug 2013	0255	13 Aug 2013
5	22 Aug 2017	17/205	22 Aug 2017
6	23 Aug 2022	22/209	23 Aug 2022

2 Policy Objective

2.1 Tree Policy Aims

Introduction

This policy (document) is designed to help residents, property owners, authorities, Council officers, contractors, developers and those working with Council to understand the City's requirements for tree management.

The Policy Aims

1. The aim of the tree policy is to improve the quality of streetscapes, parklands and private land in urban areas within the Council area:
 - (a) Establishing and maintaining maximum tree canopy cover within the City including an optimal level of age and species diversity.
 - (b) Promoting efficient and cost-effective management of the urban trees.
 - (c) Integration of tree management with corporate goals and other policy objectives.
 - (d) Maintaining trees in a healthy condition through appropriate and recognised current practices.
 - (e) Providing criteria for the selection of trees and parklands that provides a more cohesive approach throughout the City.
 - (f) Selecting, situating, and maintaining trees appropriately to maximise their benefit and minimise hazards, nuisance, infrastructure and hard surface damage and maintenance costs.
 - (g) Providing a framework to ensure retention of trees where appropriate through the development process.
 - (h) Residents are to be aware that, when planting trees and shrubs, some areas in the Council have a high salt table.

- (i) Soil erosion should also be taken into consideration at all times and steps taken to overcome it.
- (j) Providing a framework to ensure space for the planting of trees (especially large trees) within the suburban development process.
- (k) Defining a framework and criteria for the listing and management of significant trees.
- (l) Informing and educating the community in regard to public tree management.
- (m) Maintaining an up-to-date computerised tree management system for street trees and trees in public open space.
- (n) Provides a mechanism which places a monetary value on Council's street trees.

3 Policy Statement

3.1 Tree Establishment and Protection for Private Development Sites

The City **considers** trees and vegetation important elements of the physical environment and understands the range of benefits they provide the community.

A fundamental aspect to the successful establishment of the new trees and preservation and management of existing urban trees is the provision of sufficient space to allow trees to grow and develop without conflicting with surrounding infrastructure with private development sites. This includes the protection of established trees from damage when changes to their surrounding environment occur.

Private developers will be **required** to protect large healthy trees through the development process and to set aside landscaped areas for new tree planting.

- (a) Landscaped envelopes that provide sufficient space to facilitate successful tree planting and establishment and will form an integral component of maintaining a treed city. The requirement for landscaped envelopes will encourage developers and residents to provide adequate space and undertake tree planting on private sites.
- (b) To assist with the preservation of established elements of Griffith's urban trees, protection of trees suitable for retention within development sites and those trees adjacent to development sites identified as potentially being impacted by such development will require protection. Property owners therefore will be required to protect identified trees.
- (c) Council will develop and maintain a set of tree protection guidelines (and Development Assessment conditions) to assist with preservation of trees on or adjacent to development sites (refer to "*Tree Preservation Policy*"). The retention of trees identified for preservation will be facilitated by the requirement to establish a Tree Protection

Zone (TPZ) during development works. Tree protection zones establish a buffer zone around established trees sufficient for successful tree retention.

- (d) Preparation of a *Tree Management Plan* (TMP) will be required for development applications where retained trees within the site or adjacent the site will potentially be impacted by the development. The development site Tree Management Plan will be required to demonstrate adequate tree protection measures for individual or groups of trees to be retained.

3.2 The Value of Trees

Trees are highly valued in the City of Griffith and there is overwhelming support for the provision of treed landscapes. Trees are important to the liveability and identity of the city and provide a fundamental contribution to the amenity of our streets and parks. Trees are considered valuable as they:

- (a) Soften the built environment and lessen the visual dominance of buildings, creating a more pleasing environment for pedestrians and motorists.
- (b) Provide aesthetic benefits creating seasonal interpretation, providing texture, form, colour and scents which bring our streets to life. Trees can attract fauna and provide wildlife corridors through our villages.
- (c) Add economic value to properties and increase the desirability of a neighbourhood. They increase the attractiveness of commercial areas and can moderate the otherwise stark appearance of industrial areas.

Council places the following monetary values on trees to protect the new and existing trees that are on Council's streets and road verges.

- \$7000 for large established tree over six metres,
- \$5000 for trees between four and six metres and
- \$3000 for smaller trees

Good tree management is based on an understanding of the dynamic nature of the resource, balancing aesthetic and safety requirements, public attitude and perception and Council's commitment to engaging and working with the community.

All trees have a finite lifespan eventually requiring removal and replacement where appropriate. As trees age they require increasing management to maintain them in a safe and attractive condition. Therefore in order to sustain the landscape, maintain safety and meet public expectations, a well managed and coordinated approach is necessary when trees are planted and established, maintained and removed and refer to *Best Practice Manual – Tree and Tree Root Management*

3.3 Tree Assessment

Upon receipt of a request to remove a tree, an authorised, **qualified** Council officer or approved person shall assess the tree for its condition, suitability and significance. Assessment of condition shall be based on:

- Health
- Structure
- Form
- Useful life expectancy
- Safety
- Damage caused

Assessment of suitability will be based on:

- Compatibility with surrounding streetscape or landscape
- Compliance with any existing streetscape policy or management plan
- Potential to cause damage
- Suitability of species to growing space and conditions

Criteria which **will not** be considered as justifying action:

- dropping of leaves, twigs or other litter,
- overshadowing of property,
- obscures, or otherwise detracts from advertising signage.

A tree will be considered significant if it:

- Has a major impact on the streetscape or landscape
- Has outstanding visual appeal
- Is very large (more than 15 m high or 10 m wide)
- Is very old (more than 40 years)
- Is one of locally rare species
- Provides a habitat for native fauna
- Has historical associations
- Is a remnant specimen

Note: Refer to Best Practice Manual – Trees and Tree Root Management by Statewide and Australian Standard AS4343 – 2007: Pruning of Amenity Trees.

3.4 Tree Planting

Replacement of trees is an essential component of the management of Council's tree assets.

The planting of trees on nature strips is an activity which is generally well received by residents and one for which Council receives much praise and very little criticism.

Management issues associated with street tree planting are prioritising of planting sites, planting locations, species selection and post planting maintenance.

3.4.1 Tree Planting – General

Griffith encourages community ownership and pride in public spaces and promotes tree planting as a means of achieving this aim.

To ensure a high level of consistency in tree quality and to assist with tree management:

- (a) Consistent street tree themes are implemented to prioritise community based street tree plans.
- (b) Rationalise inappropriate plantings – remove trees and shrubs that are adhoc or contribute to a perception of an unsafe place.
- (c) All tree planting undertaken on public managed land throughout the City are to comply with the Council requirements contained in this document and other relevant documents (refer to Best Practice Manual - 'Trees and Tree Root Management' by Statewide).
- (d) Tree planting proposed for developments and new subdivisions are to generally comply with the City of Griffith recommended species list and the City of Griffith tree retention, planting and establishment specifications (refer to Best Practice Manual – 'Trees and Tree Root Management' by Statewide).
- (e) Where appropriate, Council will provide advice to community members wishing to plant trees on private land to complement the landscape character of the City.

3.4.2 Tree Planting by Property Owners and Residents on Council Land

- (a) Residents must first seek and obtain permission from Council before planting trees and shrubs within the nature strip, other sites within the road reserve, within a Council managed park or any other public open space.
- (b) Residents can request Council to undertake tree planting within their street or road reserve. Council officers will advise the appropriateness and priority for tree planting and designate suitable tree species based on any relevant site master plan or existing street tree theme.
- (c) Council may be obliged to remove unauthorised plantings in nature strips or other sites within the road reserve, within a Council managed park or any other public open space.
- (d) No compensation will be available to persons for the removal of trees or shrubs planted on Council land without consent.
- (e) Where unauthorised vegetation is required to be removed, Council will generally provide notification to allow residents to remove the vegetation themselves. If a request to remove vegetation is not actioned within four

weeks, Council staff or contractors will remove the planted material without further notification.

3.5 Planting Location

Selection of an appropriate planting site is a crucial factor in determining the long term viability and cost effectiveness of a street tree. A poorly positioned tree has the potential to diminish the visual appeal of a streetscape, cause structural damage, become hazardous or require excessive spending on maintenance and pruning.

Planting sites should be chosen to comply with existing landscape character of the street and the preferences of adjacent residents, while allowing for the functional limitations imposed by the street environment.

3.6 Species Selection

Species selection shall take into account and be based on the following:

- Existing streetscape character.
- Environmental conditions.
- Growing space and conditions.
- Traffic conditions.
- Scale of the street.
- Existing themes.
- Proximity of underground services.

3.6.1 Utilities and Services

Trees shall not be planted:

- Within 1 metre of a storm water drain/sewer
- Within 1 metre of a residential water supply main including a water service or future connection to water mains.
- Within 2 metres of a fire hydrant or drainage pit.
- Within 1 metre of a Utility Provider's inspection pit.
- Within 1 metre of underground electricity cables.
- Within 3 metres of an electricity pole (except for species which at maturity, have a canopy spread of less than 4 metres and a potential height of no more than 4 metres).
- Gas Mains within 1m.

3.7 Traffic Safety

- (a) Trees shall not be planted within 10 metres of an intersection or pedestrian crossing.
- (b) Shrubs over 600mm in height shall not be planted within 10 metres of an intersection or pedestrian crossing.

- (c) Only trees with a clean trunk to 2 metres shall be planted at least 10 metres from an intersection or pedestrian crossing.
- (d) Only trees with a clean trunk to 2 metres or shrubs lower than 600 mm shall be planted within 5 metres of a vehicle crossover.

3.8 Planting in Parks

Tree planting in parks shall be in accordance with park management plans. Where no management plan exists and there is community pressure for tree planting in a particular park, the park shall be assessed by the Parks and Gardens Manager and prioritised according to:

- Existing tree cover
- Level of community interest
- Level of park usage

Where planting is deemed to be warranted and no management plan exists, species selection shall be made by Parks and Gardens Manager based on:

- Existing landscape character
- Environmental conditions
- Submissions by residents
- Effect on local fauna Fire Safety

3.9 Trees Planted by Residents

Planting of trees by residents should only be undertaken with the cooperation of Council officers as part of a community planting scheme.

Unauthorised planting of street trees by residents shall be discouraged but recently planted trees shall be allowed to remain provided they are:

- Of a suitable species which is compatible with the surrounding streetscape,
- Good quality specimens.
- In a suitable location.
- Planted to Council standards.
- Species non-threatening to underground services.

Where a tree does not meet these conditions, the Council may remove the tree or arrange for its appropriate pruning in accordance with Clause 3.4.1(c).

3.10 Tree Pruning Goals

Council trees shall be pruned to:

- Maintain public safety through the removal of structurally unsound limbs.
- Maintain tree health through the removal of dead or diseased material.

- Maintain prescribed clearances from services and traffic thoroughfares.
- Maintain tree form through the removal of misshapen limbs.
- Minimise future work requirements through the removal of potential problems at an early stage.

3.11 Standard

Tree pruning shall be in accordance with Australian Standard *AS4373 - 2007: Pruning of Amenity Trees* for Tree Pruning

3.11.1 Tree Pruning

Griffith City Council will maintain appropriate tree management standards. Any operation that is known to be detrimental to long-term tree health would not be appropriate.

- (a) All pruning undertaken on trees within the Griffith Local Government Area will comply with *AS4373 - 2007: Pruning of Amenity Trees*. This Standard describes methods for pruning of trees and encourages correct and uniformed practices. It is for use on amenity trees and includes formative pruning, hazard reduction, selective pruning and thinning.
- (b) Council will maintain tree clearances in accordance with current and relevant State Government legislation and relevant standards.
- (c) Council will prune under and around electrical services, with overhead pruning to be carried out by the Utility Provider or their agent. Council will assist with clearing.
- (d) If a resident requires the pruning of a Council tree, residents or property owners are advised to request the pruning service be carried out by the Council.
- (e) Residents have the legal right to prune overhanging foliage and branches from a tree, whether public or private that overhangs their property line. However residents must endeavour to undertake any pruning of overhanging trees in accordance with *AS 4373-1996: Pruning of Amenity Trees*. Council will request residents to notify Council prior to works being undertaken.
- (f) No resident is entitled to remove branches or foliage outside their property line on public land.
- (f) Should residents or property owner damage a Council Street or park tree, make a tree structurally unsound or compromise the aesthetics of the tree through inappropriate pruning, Council will seek reimbursement of the damage for lost amenity and value of that tree.

3.12 Pruning of Council Trees by Residents

Pruning of Council owned trees by anyone other than Council staff or contractors engaged by Council shall not be permitted.

3.13 Clearances

Trees shall be pruned to maintain the following clearances:

Powerlines:	As per the Utility Provider's Guidelines.
Footpaths:	2.5 m to lowest foliage or limb.
Driveways:	3.0 m to lowest foliage or limb.
Roadways:	3.5 m at kerb, 4.5 m over road to lowest structural limb.
Street Names:	to be visible from 50 m in either direction.
Traffic Sight Lines:	vehicles approaching an intersection must be visible to pedestrians and other vehicles from the following distances:

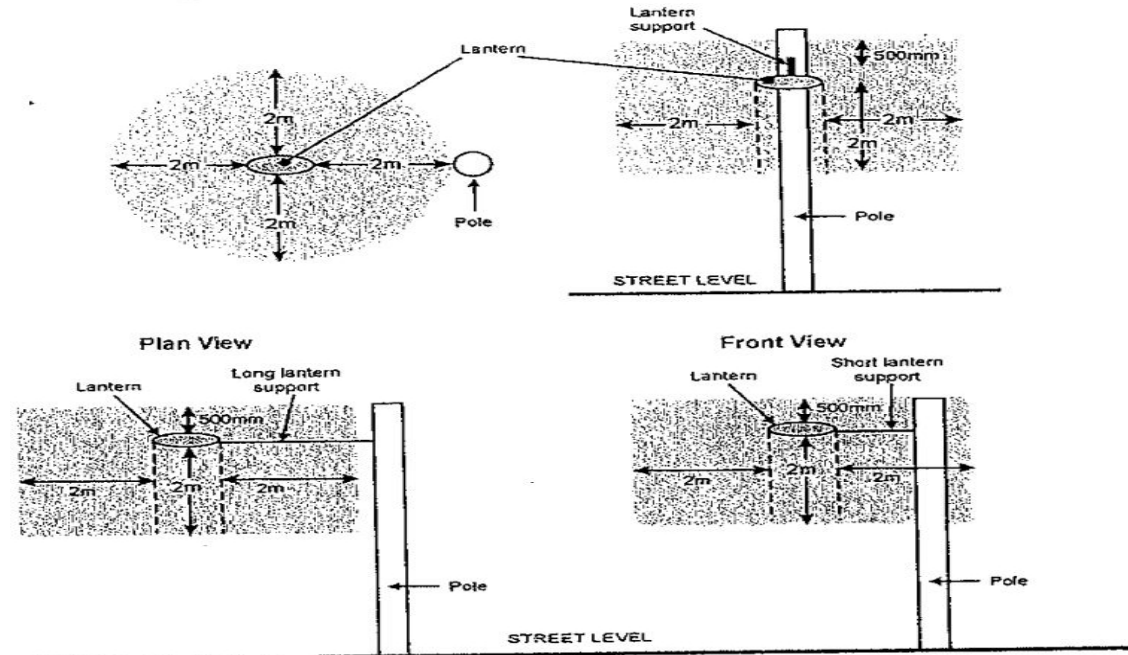
Speed Limit (kph) Distance (m)

40	40
60	60
80	80
120	120

Road Signs: must be visible from the distance outlined above.

Street Lights: must be able to radiate clearly to ground level at 45 degrees. Vegetation trimming clearances for street lights shall be in accordance with the requirement specified below.

Vegetation Trimming Clearances – Street Lights



Note

1. Vegetation is to be trimmed to allow a minimum of 2 metres horizontal clearance from the head of the lantern and extending in the vertical plane from 500mm above the lantern to 2 metres below the lantern. Trim any vegetation which is encroaching within the clearance envelope or will encroach within the clearance envelope during the next growing/inspection cycle (typically one year).

3.14 Tree Removals - General

Griffith City Council will maintain healthy and aesthetically pleasing landscape by removing dead, poor performing, hazardous and inappropriate trees.

- (a) Council will only authorise the removal of trees when one or more of the Tree Removal Criteria in the *Best Practice Manual 'Trees and Tree Root Management' by Statewide* are met. This may include but is not restricted to dead or dying trees, trees that demonstrate an extreme public nuisance, trees included in the street tree rejuvenation programs and trees that pose a hazard to public safety.
- (b) Residents **will** request the removal of a tree within public land by submitting a request for removal to the Council Parks and Gardens Department. Council will authorise resident and property owner requests for tree removal when one or more of the criteria set out in the "Tree Removal Criteria" in the *Best Practice Manual 'Trees and Tree Root Management' by Statewide* are met.
- (c) As appropriate to the scale of the works, Council may inform and consult with residents and affected persons on street tree removal decisions prior to the works being undertaken in a road reserve. In circumstances where Council decides to inform **friends of groups**, the community **and** residents immediately adjoining or adjacent to the site ("visually" affected by the tree's removal) shall be given fourteen (14) days written notice of the proposed action.

- (d) Residents may make written submissions objecting to the decision to remove a tree, which will be considered before any works occur unless the tree is deemed to be hazardous.
- (e) If a resident or developer requests the removal of street trees on Council's road reserves and streets to allow development then the following may be payable to Council if the removal is approved within the policy guidelines
- \$7000 for large established tree over six metres
 - \$5000 for trees between four and six metre and
 - \$3000 for trees under four metres.

3.14.1 Tree Removals in Parklands and Other Council Managed Land

- (a) As appropriate to the scale of the works, Council may inform and consult with residents and affected persons on the tree removal decisions prior to the works being undertaken in parklands and other Council managed land. In circumstances where Council does inform the community, residents immediately adjoining or adjacent to the site ("visually" affected by the tree's removal), Park Committees and Friends of Groups are to be given fourteen (14) days written notice of the proposed action.

3.14.2 Tree Removal – Dead or Dangerous

- (a) Where a street tree or tree in parkland or other Council managed land is determined by Council or an approved contractor to be dead or diseased Council is not obliged to inform affected residents. The rationale for this is that the tree may be dangerous and therefore pose a hazard to public safety.

3.14.3 Tree Removal Associated with Infrastructure Improvements by Council or Public Authority

There will be instances where utilities, Council and other public authorities require the removal of trees to facilitate the construction of new infrastructure or the maintenance of existing infrastructure.

- (a) When alternatives to tree removal cannot be established and the infrastructure works require the removal of the trees or the works will have detrimental impact on the health and structure of the trees the affected residents may be notified of the proposed tree removal.

3.15 Significant Trees

Significant trees within Griffith City Council will be identified by listing in a register and appropriately managed. Once identified, protection for individual trees or groups of trees within the local government area will be provided as appropriate. Significant trees may include but not be limited to those trees that may be of environmental, historical or cultural, or botanical significance to the City of Griffith.

3.15.1 Significant Trees

Trees which are considered significant shall not be removed unless;

- They are dead or dying;
- They pose a hazard which cannot be alleviated through means other than removal;
- They are causing structural damage which cannot be alleviated through means other than removal.

AND

A thorough consultation process has taken place which shall include:

- Notification in writing to affected residents, community groups and landowners;
- Report to Council;
- A press release to local newspapers;
- An appropriate period for lodgement of objections.

Where the Parks and Gardens Manager has recommended that a tree be removed but has received objections from concerned parties, he/she shall attempt to allay the concerns of the objector or pursue alternatives to removal. If removal remains the preferred option but the objection remains, the matter shall be referred to Council for consideration.

4 Definitions

None

5 Exceptions

None

6 Legislation

None

7 Related Documents

Tree Preservation Order Policy – PG-CP-401

8 Directorate

Infrastructure & Operations