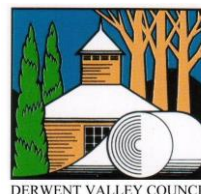


DERWENT VALLEY COUNCIL
Tree Management Policy 2014




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<p>Signed by: Stephen Mackey General Manager</p>	 <p style="text-align: right;">29 August 2014</p>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE2

DEFINITIONS2

PRINCIPLES3

OBJECTIVES3

POLICY PROVISIONS3

1. TREE ASSET MANAGEMENT 3

2. TREE SELECTION AND REPLACEMENT 4

3. TREE REMOVAL **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

4. TREE MAINTENANCE 4

5. TREES, URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL WORKS 5

6. SIGNIFICANT TREES 5

7. TREE RISK MANAGEMENT 5

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance for the maintenance and establishment of trees contained on Council land and aims to achieve a sustainable and well managed treed landscape within the Municipal Area.

The policy details the practices that are to be implemented associated with tree management on Community Land and Road reserves. The policy covers tree management practices responsibilities regulated under the Local Government (Highways) Act 1982 and Councils Planning Scheme 1993.

DEFINITIONS

“Council Land” includes all local government land that is owned by Council or under Council’s care and control. It includes Community Land and Road Reserves.

“Environmental Threat” something that is likely to bring danger or threaten the values of a certain environment.

“Natural Resources” includes-

- (a) Soil
- (b) Water resources;
- (c) Native vegetation, native animals and other organisms;
- (d) Ecosystem;

“Risk” is the risk of something adverse happening.

“Tree” (for the purpose of this policy) is defined as a woody plant having one or more erect stems or trunks, a crown of foliage and a height of 2.5m or more.

“Exotic tree” refers to any tree not indigenous to the area.

“Native Tree” refers to any tree indigenous to the Australian Continent.

“Locally Indigenous Tree” refers to any tree indigenous to the Derwent Valley.

“Weed” any herbaceous or woody self proliferating plant growing where it is not wanted.

PRINCIPLES

That Council, as a public body, has a degree of responsibility for ensuring that trees in the landscape are managed to ensure the character, amenity, heritage and environmental benefits they provide are protected and community safety issues are considered and addressed. A tree management policy will assist in integrating tree management across the various sections within Council for the benefit of the community and the environment.

That Council will communicate and engage with the community in the management of trees in accordance with this policy where Council is the relevant authority. Where Council is not the relevant authority this policy does not apply.

OBJECTIVES

- To manage trees in the landscape for community and environmental benefit and for the protection of biodiversity.
- To address safety issues associated with trees and to assess and manage trees to minimize risk to the public.
- To integrate street and Council land tree requirements with urban development, civil works and utilities to minimize conflicts between built and natural assets.
- To provide a consistent approach to tree management and planning to agreed standards in consideration of appropriate asset management and whole of life costs.
- To manage trees in streets and Council land in accordance with agreed standards and other Council policy documents and to comply with the relevant legislation.
- To provide for an appropriate level of delegation to Council staff for efficient and effective tree management.

POLICY PROVISIONS

1. Tree Asset Management

Council recognizes that trees in the landscape are valuable public assets which make a significant contribution to the sustainability of the community, environment and economy. Trees directly contribute to the natural heritage and character of the municipal area and the quality of life for its residents. Planning for, resourcing and implementing effective tree management will ensure ongoing community and environmental benefit. Council will incorporate long term tree management within its asset management planning process for trees within township boundaries that considers service level requirements and whole of life costs.

2. Tree Selection and Replacement

Council recognizes that the municipal area comprises a variety of different landscape types. These include many of the township areas where landscapes may include deciduous and other exotic trees not naturally occurring in the area, and the rural areas where locally indigenous species dominate. To preserve its environment, heritage and amenity, Council will select and utilize plant species to match local environmental conditions and planting program goals that are socially, environmentally, culturally and economically appropriate. Tree selection and replacement will consider the staging of rehabilitation projects. Records on tree replacements and planting programs will be kept in accordance with relevant Council asset management processes and procedures.

3. Tree removal

Council considers that the removal of established, healthy trees is undesirable but recognizes that it may be necessary in certain situations. Proposals for tree removal will consider environmental impacts (including habitat for native fauna), community interests and concerns and protection of environmental and built assets.

Proposals for tree removal will be assessed by a qualified Arborist. The General Manager has delegation:

- To authorize tree removal under the Local Government (Highways) Act
- For day to day tree management and removal
- For making application on behalf of Council for statutory approval under the Planning Scheme to remove trees.

Decisions for tree removal may be deferred to Council for a decision on occasions.

Where trees are proposed to be removed that are considered by Council officers to have high community impact, relevant plans will be developed and presented to Council. Council will consider such matters and determine whether to undertake community engagement if appropriate prior to decision making including whether or not to make application for the removal of significant trees.

All tree removal applications and approvals are to include a requirement to plant a replacement tree or shrub in a mutually agreed location.

4. Tree Maintenance

Council recognizes that professional tree management is essential to the sustainability and safety of the treescape. Council will endeavor to use accepted best practice arboricultural practices in all tree establishment and maintenance functions focusing on customer satisfaction, public and staff safety and sustainable tree management practices.

5. Trees, Urban Development and Civil Works

Council recognizes that vegetation is an integral part of urban infrastructure which in some circumstances may be in conflict with other community assets or private property. As an example, interaction between footpaths and roots can injure trees, damage footpaths and increase risk to pedestrians. Such conflict reduces community benefit and increases cost. Council therefore aims to manage the interaction between street trees and community assets to ensure environmental, social and financial outcomes and community benefits.

Civil works planning processes will document;

- The nature and condition of trees existing on the relevant community land and/or road reserve prior to works.
- The nature and condition of vegetation to be retained and/or established.
- Requirements for tree protection and maintenance before, during and after construction.
- Methods, materials and processes employed to prevent or minimize impacts between trees and other infrastructure.

Development applications will detail footing designs that are capable of withstanding all foreseeable impacts of existing and proposed trees in the vicinity, including impacts related to street trees and trees on community land.

Should developments require a driveway or service connection to the street, designs will avoid or minimize impacts on trees that are to be retained or established.

Installation or maintenance of underground services beneath established trees will utilize work methods which will minimize root impacts.

6. Significant Trees

Council recognizes that individual trees may possess or develop increased significance in relation to a range of criteria beyond those for which protection is currently provided.

7. Tree Risk Management

Council recognizes the benefits provided by trees are considerable, require continued public provision and that appropriate measures are necessary to effectively manage associated risk.

To minimize risk associated with public trees, tree planting processes will be consistent with the publication: *Trees: Legislation and Risk Management Guidelines for Local Government (Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme, 2004* as may be amended from time to time.

Priority will be given to tree maintenance works involving trees assessed as having highest risk to public or property.