



**TREE
MANAGEMENT
POLICY
&
PROCEDURE**

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TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT:

Council is committed to the maintenance and improvement of its “urban forest” environment including the proper management of trees and shrubs growing on the lands over which it has control.

This policy provides for the planting, maintenance and, where necessary the removal, of trees and shrubs on Council controlled property.

The provisions of the Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Act 2006 No 126 may also require council action from time to time.

SCOPE:

This policy shall apply to all trees and shrubs that are growing on any property under Council’s control including operational land, community land, nature strips, road corridors, public reserves etc.

The health, safety and welfare of Council staff and the community, and the protection of public and private property is paramount, and these considerations shall take precedence in any determination regarding existing plantings, preferred or prohibited species selection or any individual tree.

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

Budget allocations in support of this Tree Management Policy shall be made on the basis that maintenance of existing trees or plantings of new or replacement trees, is costed and funded in accordance with recognised risk management principles to ensure tree asset protection, community safety, risk and resource priorities and best value.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This Tree Management Policy is supported by a Tree Management Procedure, Inspection Checklists and hazard ratings. All these supporting documents form part of the formal records of Coonamble Shire Council.

INTRODUCTION

Council is committed to the efficient and effective management of trees on land under council control, including operational land, community land, nature strips, parks and reserves. Council also recognises that being the Road Authority under the Roads Act 1993, it has a responsibility for the management of trees and the vegetation that may create a risk in the road reserves, within the local government area.

OBJECTIVE

This Procedure supports the Tree Management Policy by providing guidance on how Coonamble Shire Council will establish a Tree Management process to develop and maintain the “urban forest” environment, whilst recognising that trees will present risks to persons, property and infrastructure assets that have to be managed, giving due consideration to priorities and resources available.

It is acknowledged that Council has responsibility to manage the risks that may arise from existing trees on both council controlled land and private property. These risks could result from the interaction between the trees and structures, the characteristics of the tree species may impact of human and animal health, or create a nuisance to a third party.

This Procedure is not a technical guide on arboriculture and related matters. It is a guide for council to establish a management system that provides strategies to minimise the risk associated with trees in the urban environment, both existing trees and new plantings, and the trees that may present risks to life and property in the road reserves.

EXISTING TREES

A past Court ruling has defined a tree either planted by, or under control of council, as an artificial structure, and consequently all necessary steps must be taken to eliminate or minimise exposures caused by the tree.

It is therefore necessary to establish a Tree Inventory of all existing trees in the urban areas within the control of this council.

The Tree Inventory shall include the following details:

- Species of tree
- Location details (Street/Reserve Name etc. and GPS reference)
- Estimated Size of tree
- Health and condition of tree
- Comments column for complaints, actions or maintenance history record.

As trees are replaced, or new plantings occur, the new tree is added to the Tree Inventory and the existing tree is noted as removed or other relevant comment.

Tree Preservation Orders

Whilst Council endorses the philosophy of tree preservation in the urban environment, where it is demonstrated that a particular tree presents a risk to persons and/or property, appropriate action will be taken to eliminate such risk, including removal of part or whole of the tree.

Existing Tree Risk Assessment

Any complaints or actions will be recorded against the relevant tree in the Tree Inventory. Where a tree complaint has been received from a source that can be established to have a Council Property File, a copy of all relevant documents and actions will be recorded on the relevant "P" File as well as in the Tree inventory.

Physical examination of individual trees will require the use of the Tree Inspection Checklist (Appendix E). The Inspecting Officer will complete the Hazard Rating calculation and submit the completed Tree Inspection Checklist to their Supervisor for Council Office action.

The Hazard Abatement Recommendation will be completed by a nominated officer within council and a Tree Risk Assessment or the services of an Arborist may be required.

Following the examination of the existing trees an appropriate control strategy will be prepared to efficiently and effectively manage any risk associated with these trees. It is recognised that there may be some trees that are no longer appropriate for the current urban environment, but for historical or sentimental reasons need to be retained.

A Plan of Management, incorporating any or all of the tree hazard control measures detailed in Appendix F, shall be prepared. This Plan shall also include any relevant actions or recommendations resulting from Hazard Abatement Recommendations, Tree Risk Assessments or Arborist Reports. Replacement plantings for existing trees will also be considered as part of the Plan of Management, given that these trees will eventually have to be replaced for a variety of reasons.

The effectiveness of the Plan of Management for existing and significant trees will be periodically monitored, and where necessary reviewed and amended.

Road Reserve Trees and Vegetation

As previously stated Council, as the Road Authority under the Roads Act 1993, has a duty of care to the travelling public to, as far as possible, ensure that trees and vegetation in the road reserve do not present a risk to life or property.

In order to fulfil its duty of care it will be necessary for staff involved in road construction, maintenance and road inspections to be aware of trees and other vegetation that may present a risk to road users. This will be especially important following high wind or storm events.

The use of Tree Inspection Checklists and Tree Risk Assessment and associated procedures as detailed above will apply where appropriate. Budget and resource allocations will be made in accordance with usual council processes and competing priorities. Funding for emergency actions will be allocated as the need arises.

SPECIES CHARACTERISTICS

To assist in the implementation of strategies to manage the risks associated with trees (new and existing) Council will prepare a list of suitable species (Appendix A).

This list will provide the following tree characteristics details:

- Botanical Name
- Common Name

TREE PLANTING

- 1) Council will provide suitable trees to plant on nature strips and authorise residents to plant trees provided that:-
 - a) a written application is made for such plantings containing an undertaking from the applicant that the trees, once planted, will be watered and otherwise maintained by the applicant;
 - b) the trees so provided shall not be of a type that is contained in Council's "Suitable Species" list (see Appendix A),
 - c) the total number of trees on any section of nature strip (including existing trees) does not exceed two (2) for each property frontage, except where the Manager may determine that additional trees are warranted, where the property frontage is significantly longer than normal or other unusual circumstances exist.
- 2) Residents or land owners may provide and plant additional trees on nature strips at their own cost provided that such trees are not of a type listed on Council's "Unsuitable Species" list and provided that such plantings are located so as to minimise future problems in regard to Council's facilities (such as kerb and gutter, water mains etc.) or with the safety of pedestrians or traffic.
- 3) The General Manager may require a resident, or land owner, to remove or relocate any nature strip tree planted without prior approval if he/she is of the opinion that the location or type of tree will, in the future :-
 - a) cause damage to water mains, sewer mains, drainage lines, footpaths, kerb and gutter or other Council facilities or utilities, or
 - b) cause fouling of power lines, or
 - c) cause a safety hazard to pedestrians or vehicular traffic.

A form suitable for making application for the provision and planting of street trees is attached at Appendix B.

TREE MAINTENANCE

The maintenance of trees and shrubs on Council controlled property shall be undertaken, where possible, by Council work staff. Council officers shall ensure that appropriate techniques and equipment are used for these activities, and that Council's Occupational Health and Safety provisions are adhered to.

Should the consideration of the above factors place the tree maintenance/removal activities outside of Council's abilities or expertise, Council shall engage the services of a contract arborist.

The General Manager may arrange, either independently or in conjunction with Country Energy, for the trimming of trees on Council controlled property to prevent them fouling power lines.

The General Manager may arrange for the trimming or lopping of any tree on Council

controlled property that poses a serious and significant threat to the safety of persons, animals, property or the operations of vehicles or aeroplanes.

Written applications for the heavy trimming or lopping of trees on Council controlled property may be determined by the General Manager in accordance with the following guidelines:-

Criteria which **may be** considered as justifying action:

- serious and significant danger to life and / or property,
- proven trigger for allergic reactions,
- inhibits initial commercial or industrial development of a site,
- proven harbour for white ants or other infestations which cannot be effectively and economically treated by other means,
- serious damage to footpaths or other facilities,
- the payment by the applicant of the full cost of determined action.

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

- dropping of leaves, twigs or other litter,
- overshadowing of property,
- inhibits residential development,
- inhibits additional commercial or industrial development of a site,
- obscures, or otherwise detracts from advertising signage.

A form suitable for making application for the heavy trimming or lopping of trees on Council controlled property is attached at Appendix C.

TREE INSPECTION REGIME

All trees listed in the Tree Inventory will be inspected by either council staff with appropriate arboriculture qualifications or contract specialists.

Council has developed a Tree Inspection Checklist (Appendix E) to guide staff conducting routine inspections. The Checklist requires the following sections to be inspected and noted by the Inspecting Officer:

- Tree characteristics and health
- Site conditions
- Target
- Tree defects
- Hazard Rating calculation
- Hazard Abatement measures (Council "Office Use Only" section)

It is recognised that ground level inspections may not identify some conditions that may render the tree as hazardous. Above ground inspections will be conducted where considered appropriate. The provisions of NSW WorkCover Code of Practice for the Amenity Tree Industry and Council's Working at Heights procedure will apply to these operations.

TREE RISK ASSESSMENT

As a result of the Tree Inspection each tree will be given a “hazard rating”.

Preventive or Corrective control measures may need to be applied as a result of a Trees hazard rating.

TREE REMOVAL

The removal of trees and shrubs on Council controlled property shall be undertaken, where possible, by Council work staff. Council officers shall ensure that appropriate techniques and equipment are used for these activities, and that Council’s Occupational Health and Safety provisions are adhered to.

Should the consideration of the above factors place the tree removal activities outside of Council’s abilities or expertise, Council shall engage the services of a contract arborist.

The General Manager may arrange for the removal of any tree on Council controlled property only under the following circumstances:

- The continuing existence of the tree poses an imminent and serious threat to the safety of persons, animals, property or the operations of vehicles or aeroplanes;
- The undertaking of Council’s operations will be seriously impeded if the tree is not removed; or
- The tree is obviously dead.

Applications for the removal of any tree on Council controlled property, other than for the above reasons, shall be determined upon consideration of the following:

- Written application from a resident and/or a Council officer stating reasons for removal; and
- Inspection and report by a qualified arborist.

In practice – applications for tree removal may not be considered individually but may be collected and held for consideration by a consultant arborist and, ultimately, the Council Committee every 4 to 6 months.

If the removal of a tree is approved, the Council may place conditions as it sees fit including replacement.

A form suitable for making application for the removal of trees on Council controlled property is attached at Appendix D.

APPENDIX A

SUITABLE SPECIES LISTS		
LIST A; TREES UNDER POWER LINES		
Trees and Shrubs planted no closer than two metres from sewer or drains		
BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	HEIGHT
EVERGREEN		
Callistemon viminalis	Weeping Bottle Brush	6
Callistemon viminalis "Hannah ray"		5
Callistemon Kings Park		5
Fraxinus Griffithii	Himalayan Ash	8
Geigeria parviflora	Wilga	8
Photinia x fraseri "Robusta"	Photinia	6
Eucalyptus platypus	Round - leaf mort	5
Pittosporum rhombifolium	Queensland Pittosporum	8
Pittosporum undulatum	Native Daphane	6
DECIDUOUS		
Acer palmatum	Japanese Maple	5
Albizia distachya	Cape Leeuwin Wattle	8
Lagerstromea indica	Crepe Myrtle	8
Sapium sebiferum	Chinese Tallowood	8
LIST B; WHERE THERE IS NO HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS		
Trees and Shrubs planted no closer than two metres from sewer or drains		
BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	HEIGHT
EVERGREEN		
Acacia species (large)	Wattle	5
Alnus glutinosa	Black Alder	20
Eucalyptus nicholli	Small leaf Peppermint	12
Brachychiton populneus	Kurrajong	12
Lophostemon confertus	Brush Box	15
DECIDUOUS		
Acer negundo Box	Elder Maple	10
Calodendrum capense	Cape Chestnut	12
Celtis australis	Hack Tree	15
Fraxinus velutina	Velvet Ash	10
Fraxinus oxycarpa	Desert Ash	12
Fraxinus "Raywoodii"	Claret Ash	12
Jacaranda mimosifolia	Jacaranda	15
Liquidambar formosana	Liquidambar	30

APPENDIX B

APPLICATION FOR SUPPLY OF STREET TREES

The General Manager
Coonamble Shire Council

Dear Sir/Madam

I/we hereby request that Council supply and plant the street trees listed below on the nature strip of my property at:

(Street No.)	(Street Name)

Note: in accordance with Council's Policy, street trees will be supplied and planted free of charge to any property owner, provided that the total number of trees on any section of nature strip (including existing trees) does not exceed two (2) for each property street frontage, however, trees may be provided at the discretion of the Director of Technical Services if the property has a street frontage(s) longer than normal or if there are other circumstances so warrant.

If this application is approved, I/we agree to regularly water and otherwise maintain the trees on Council's behalf.

(Signature)

(Name)

(Date)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Received By: _____ Referred to: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

APPENDIX C

APPLICATION FOR THE TRIMMING OR LOPPING OF STREET TREES

The General Manager
Coonamble Shire Council

Dear Sir/Madam

I/we hereby request that Council Trim / Lop the tree(s) described below from the nature strip of my property at:

(Street No.)

(Street Name)

Description of Tree(s): _____

To assist Council's considerations I submit the following information to support this request:

(Signature)

(Name)

(Date)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Received By: _____ Referred to: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

APPENDIX D

APPLICATION FOR THE REMOVAL OF STREET TREES

The General Manager
Coonamble Shire Council

Dear Sir/Madam

I/we hereby request that Council remove the tree(s) described below from the nature strip of my property at:

(Street No.)

(Street Name)

Description of Tree(s): _____

To assist Council's considerations I submit the following information to support this request:

(Signature)

(Name)

(Date)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Received By: _____ Referred to: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

APPENDIX E**TREE INSPECTION CHECKLIST**

Site Address:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> Road Reserve	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Tree Characteristics and Tree Health

Species:		Photo:	
No. of trunks:		Height:	
Spread:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Young	<input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Mature	<input type="checkbox"/> Mature	<input type="checkbox"/> Old

Pruning History

<input type="checkbox"/> Crown cleaned	<input type="checkbox"/> Crown raised	<input type="checkbox"/> None
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Special value

<input type="checkbox"/> Specimen	<input type="checkbox"/> Heritage/historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Street tree	<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous
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Foliage colour

<input type="checkbox"/> Normal	<input type="checkbox"/> Brown/dead	<input type="checkbox"/> :Yellow/dropping
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Foliage density

<input type="checkbox"/> Normal	<input type="checkbox"/> Sparse
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Growth obstructions

<input type="checkbox"/> Stakes/Guards		<input type="checkbox"/> Wire/ties		<input type="checkbox"/> Curb/pavement	
Epicormics:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Twig dieback:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Site Conditions**Site Character**

<input type="checkbox"/> Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Open Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural	<input type="checkbox"/> Woodland	<input type="checkbox"/> Road Reserve

Pavement lifted

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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Obstructions

<input type="checkbox"/> Lights	<input type="checkbox"/> Signs	<input type="checkbox"/> Line of sight
<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Overhead lines	<input type="checkbox"/> View

Tree Defects**Root Defects**

Suspected root rot?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
Mushroom/bracket fungus present?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
Exposed roots:	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Nil
Undermined	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Nil
Root pruned: (distance from trunk in metres)				
Restricted root area	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	
Potential for failure	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	

Lean

Lean from vertical	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural	<input type="checkbox"/> Unnatural	<input type="checkbox"/> Self corrected
Soil heaving	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Roots broken:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Soil cracking:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Lean severity	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

Crown Defects

Indicate presence of individual defects and rate their severity (s=severe, m=medium, l=low)			
Defect	Root Crown	Trunk	Branches
Cracks/splits			
Wounds			
Decay/Cavities			
Deadwood / stubs			
Borers/Termites			
Previous failure			
Epicormic growth			
Previously lopped			
Overhang on Road			

Hazard Rating

Tree part most likely to fall:				
Inspection period:	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual	<input type="checkbox"/> Biannual	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Failure potential:	1 low	2 medium	3 high	4 severe
Size of part:	1 (<15cm)	2 (15-45 cm)	3 (45-75 cm)	4 (> 75cm)
Area rating:	1 Occasional use	2 intermittent use	3 frequent use	4 constant use

HAZARD RATING = FAILURE POTENTIAL + SIZE OF PART + AREA RATING

Hazard Rate Calculation

Failure Potential	Size	Target Rating	Hazard Rating
+	+	=	

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Position/Title: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Hazard Abatement Recommendation

Hazard Rating Result: _____

3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Do nothing	6-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up in 3 months
8-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove the defective part	10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove tree

Arborist Services required? YES NO

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Position/Title: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F**TREE HAZARD CONTROL MEASURES**

Strategy	Description
Monitor trip points	Where no other practical method can be employed to prevent this occurring, a regular trip point inspection program should be instigated and pavement replaced or repaired as necessary.
Flexible pathways	Use of flexible material such as bitumen, paving, or rubber compounds for footpaths and tree surrounds, will reduce the occurrence of trip points and is less expensive and easier than concrete to maintain or replace when necessary.
Bridging Footpaths	Self-supporting construction methods, such as pier and beam could be used to raise pathways above the roots, allowing for root expansion without damaging the pavement. Timber bridges are an effective option
Root pruning	Non-structural roots could be pruned on a predetermined basis under the guidance of a qualified Arborist. This practice could be combined with installation of root barriers where appropriate.
Root barriers	Where future problems are perceived, barriers could be installed to deflect roots away from pavement or services.
Tunnelling for services	Tunnelling (directional boring) rather than open trenching for underground services, will greatly reduce public risk as well reducing injury to tree roots. If located deeply, root contact with the pipeline may be minimised as the majority of roots of most species will remain within the top 1 metre of soil (based on a soil with medium texture).
Preventative tree maintenance	Trees in public areas should be regularly inspected and maintenance, such as dead-wooding and developmental pruning carried out as prescribed. Pruning should always be undertaken in accordance with AS 4373-1996.
Enlarging root zone	Where space allows, a designated area above the root zone of the tree should be enlarged/created to accommodate surface roots. Rather than turf, this area could be formed into a garden bed, mulched or covered with a suitable tree grate.
Formative pruning	Early pruning will reduce the development of structural weaknesses in older trees. Refer to AS4373 <i>Pruning of Amenity Trees</i> .
Remove target	In some situations it is preferable to remove a potential target, such as a seat rather than to remove a tree in order to abate a hazard.
Remove the defect	This could include pruning of live or dead branches or the removal of co-dominant stems.
Tree removal	In some situations it may be preferable to remove a tree and replace with a more suitable species, perhaps in an alternative location. In all cases of tree removal it is necessary to ensure that the removal is mitigated in order to ensure the future integrity of the urban forest.

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