



Street and Park Tree Policy

Policy Owner	Manager Parks and Assets Parks and Assets Department
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Please check Council's Intranet to ensure this is the latest Revision

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Purpose

To provide direction for the planting and continued management of street and park trees on Council owned or managed urban streets and parks. It will provide a basis to make decisions on the management of trees with a particular vision to balance amenity and risk.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all Council owned or managed urban street and park trees within the municipality of Mitchell Shire.

Introduction

Trees are significant assets to the Mitchell Shire environment. Mature trees are the dominant feature in many streets and parks and provide economic, social and environmental benefits to the community.

Trees soften the built form of buildings adding beauty to the landscape. They help screen unsightly views, create a sense of security, provide privacy and reinforce a sense of place and identity within a community.

Trees improve air quality by trapping pollutants, sequestering carbon and releasing oxygen back into the atmosphere. Trees reduce storm water runoff and erosion and provide habitat for wildlife while increasing the biodiversity within the Municipality. Trees help to maintain ecological processes and healthy ecosystems in urban areas.

Trees provide great economic benefits to the community including increasing property value, reducing building heating and cooling costs and reduce heat stress for people and infrastructure by providing shade and shelter.

Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Advanced trees</i>	Trees growing in containers of 18lt or more and are of minimum 1.5m in height.
<i>Bushland and Flora Reserve</i>	Reserves identified for their environmental values as listed in the Mitchell Shire Open Space Service Standards.
<i>Council</i>	Mitchell Shire Council.
<i>Park tree</i>	Trees situated in parks or reserves under the management of Mitchell Shire Council excluding bushland and flora reserves.
<i>Root barrier</i>	A physical or chemical treatment that redirects or inhibits tree roots from growing into an area requiring protection from possible damage.
<i>Significant tree</i>	A tree or group of trees worthy of protection due to unique, historical, rare or environmental importance.
<i>Street tree</i>	Trees situated within townships, in road reserves under the management of Mitchell Shire Council and bounded by the 60km/h or less road speed limit zones.
<i>Urban</i>	All space within townships bounded by the 60km/h or less road speed limit zones within Mitchell Shire.
<i>Urban street</i>	Street or road in Mitchell Shire townships bounded by the 60km/h or less speed limit zones.

Policy

1. Tree Management

Council will maintain urban street and park trees within the Municipality with a particular emphasis on mitigating risk to person and property, whilst also ensuring that amenity, environmental and heritage values are equally considered.

Council will look for operational efficiencies, internal and external, while striving toward meeting industry best standards in tree management for reactive works. Council will work within its budget and resource limitations to increase proactive works on urban street and park trees with a vision to maintain and enhance the tree population for inheritance by future generations.

2. Tree Planting

Council will plant advanced trees within urban streetscapes and parks that it is responsible for maintaining and provide guidance for suitable planting within any asset that Council will maintain.

Trees are often the dominant feature within the landscape. An effective way to improve the image and landscape character of a town is to upgrade streetscapes and parks with advanced tree planting. It is recognised that species diversity across the Shire is an important aspect to landscape character and tree stock sustainability; hence both native and exotic species will be equally considered.

Council will continue to increase the number of trees within its urban streetscapes and parks to create improved site specific planting, and streetscape planting themes in avenues and boulevards and to increase shade provision within streetscapes. Council will monitor the ageing tree population and consider succession planting where appropriate.

Trees planted as part of new developments will ensure a diverse mix of planting that may include native and exotic species and promote a high canopy cover on street trees so to reduce the impacts of climate change and the urban heat island effect.

3. Community Consultation

The community will be consulted and informed about major projects involving tree planting, tree removal works and other major tree management programs that are proposed to be performed on Council managed trees.

Council maintains and manages trees on all land that it manages on behalf of the community. Tree projects and works are accepted well when the community has been consulted or informed prior to the commencement of works. A successful outcome is achieved when the community is included in the process and well informed. Community consultation will be conducted as per Council's Community Engagement Strategy. Operational management of trees, such as pruning activities, will not be subject to community consultation. In the event of a tree presenting immediate risk to person or property, immediate risk mitigation works will result without consultation.

4. Tree Root Management

Council will investigate tree root damage claims involving infrastructure. Where practical, Council will minimise the impact to infrastructure caused by roots from trees situated on Council managed land.

Tree roots can cause conflict with infrastructure resulting in damage to assets. Council deals with this conflict on a case by case basis and explores all management options to mitigate the conflict, with tree removal being the last option.

5. Tree Protection

Council will protect trees from development, construction activities, temporary works and other activities that may have a negative impact on tree health.

Council owned or managed trees will be protected from all types of civil works or maintenance activities that could place trees under stress or at risk. The retaining of trees will be priority when considering applications for new development. Existing trees will be protected by redirecting infrastructure away from the trees so as not to impact the trees health.

6. Tree Removal

Council will remove and replace poor performing, dead and hazardous Council owned or managed trees.

All trees within the urban streetscape and parks have a finite lifespan and need to be removed and replaced at some point in time.

Trees will be removed as a last resort after all other management options are explored and an acceptable risk level cannot be achieved. Trees may be removed:

- To ensure public safety;
- To protect infrastructure;
- To facilitate approved development and infrastructure improvements as part of an agreed streetscape tree renewal program;
- For ecological restoration;
- For lack of amenity in the landscape, and
- To prevent spread of pest and disease.

7. Significant Trees

Council will maintain trees that are of a heritage or cultural significance or form part of a recognised avenue or boulevard.

Council will maintain and progressively record significant trees to preserve their unique, historical, cultural, rare or environmental importance for the benefit of current and future generations.

Responsibilities

The Manager Parks and Assets is responsible for maintaining/upholding policy.

Related Documents

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines

Australian Standard 4373:2007 Pruning of amenity trees

Australian Standard 4970:2009 Protection of trees on development sites

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978

Department of Environment and Primary Industries Committees of Management Responsibilities and Good Practice Guidelines 2014

Electricity Safety Amendment (Bushfire Mitigation) Act 2014

Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010

Infrastructure and Design Manual

Mitchell Open Space Strategy 2013-2023
Mitchell Planning Scheme
Mitchell Shire Environment Strategy 2008
Mitchell Shire Local Law No.1 Community and Environment 2013
Mitchell Shire Open Space Service Standards
Mitchell Shire Risk Management Policy
Planning and Environment Act 1987