



WAVERLEY
COUNCIL

Tree Management Policy

Policy owner	Assets and Operations
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Relevant Legislation/Codes/Acts/Regulations/Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australian Standard for pruning of amenity trees (AS 4373-2007) - Australian Standard for the protection of trees on development sites (AS 4970-2009) - Australian Standard Tree stock for landscape use (AS 2303-2018) - Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979) - Workcover Code of Practise – Amenity Tree Industry (1998) - Electricity Supply Act 1995 - Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014 - Roads Act 1993 - Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Act 2006 - State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021
Policies/Plans/Procedures/Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waverley Development Control Plan - Waverley Local Environment Plan - Waverley Environment Action Plan - Street Tree Masterplan 2008 - Waverley Tree Management Guidelines - Tree and Vegetation Vandalism Policy - Significant Tree Register - Community Strategic Plan 2022-32 - Plans of Management - Urban Canopy and Greening Strategy - Public Domain Technical Manual - Drain Blockage Guidelines 2022
Related forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tree Permit Application - Review of Tree Determination - Off-Set Tree Planting Application

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We pay respect to the Bidjigal and Gadigal people, who traditionally occupied the Sydney coast and the land and sea country of Waverley, and to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the survival and ongoing resilience of indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. By respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' intrinsic relationship with the land and waters, we can value, learn and strengthen protection of our environment.

2. Background

The Tree Management Policy (TMP) provides the framework for the management of all trees within the Waverley Local Government Area.

The previous Policy was adopted in 2007 and reviewed in 2019. Following the adoption of the Waverley Community Strategic Plan 2018-2029 and a public consultation process, a comprehensive study followed to ensure Council adopts a best practice approach to managing the risks associated with trees.

Trees play a critical role in the urban environment. They provide cooling benefits, improve the aesthetics of our parks and streetscapes, improve air quality, provide habitat for local biodiversity, and have health benefits to the local community. While the benefits are significant, it is important to recognise, that trees of the wrong species, poor health or growing in an unsuitable location can create risks in Waverley.

A key aspect of tree management in the urban environment is finding a balance between the risks and the benefits that trees offer, to achieve the best outcomes.

The TMP's purpose and objectives will be achieved through the implementation of Waverley Council's Tree Management Guidelines which outline best arboriculture practice for tree management functions.

Council is committed to tackling climate change and tree management, planting and protection is one of the simplest and most effective ways. Council has committed to prepare and implement an Urban Greening and Canopy Strategy to apply stronger controls and mechanisms to protect and increase urban greening and enhance climate resilience.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to

- Reinforce Waverley's commitment to the sustainable management of its urban forest
- Define the current and future strategic direction for tree protection, planting, maintenance, and overall management of its urban forest
- Identify and address tree management issues on both public and private land in Waverley LGA
- Clarify Council and community roles and responsibilities
- Ensure best practice is implemented across all processes
- Provide a clear and consistent framework for both residents and Council staff to ensure the effective and coordinated management of trees
- Acknowledge trees as a vital living asset in our policy and strategic planning documents

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all trees located within the Waverley Local Government Area (LGA).

5. Policy Content

5.1 Policy Objectives

The objectives of the Tree Management Policy are to

- Prioritise maintaining and protecting the existing tree population
- Manage trees strategically to maximise the benefits trees can provide.
- Increase Waverley tree canopy cover and manage species diversity and maturity, size, quality and quantity of Waverley's canopy cover
- Identify and protect trees in terms of heritage, cultural, social, and ecological criteria
- Communicate the economic, environmental, and financial benefit of trees to the community, staff and developers.

5.2 Policy Framework

The Tree Management Policy is divided into five key areas

- Tree Protection
- Tree Establishment
- Tree Replacement and Removal
- Tree Asset Management
- Community Consultation and Engagement

5.3 Tree Protection

Council recognises the benefits that trees provide in terms of social, economic, and environmental aspects. To safeguard these benefits, protection of trees will be given high priority within the LGA.

The following Policy principles will apply

- Tree Management Controls
- Significant tree register
- Development Applications
- Bonds
- Tree Vandalism, unauthorised works

5.3.1 Tree Management Controls

Tree management controls within the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021, Waverley Local Environmental Plan and Waverley Development Control Plan provide the legislative framework for the protection of all trees located within Waverley LGA.

Council will regulate all appropriate tree maintenance, removals, and protection in accordance with this framework and the Waverley Tree Management Policy and Tree Management Guidelines. Standardised assessment criteria and processes undertaken by Tree Management staff will ensure a consistent and uniform approach to tree management throughout the LGA.

5.3.2 Significant Tree Register

Council respects and recognises the history and cultural value trees offer to the community. Waverley will ensure this contribution continues through a register of significant trees and the retention and protection of significant trees.

5.3.3 Development Applications/Activities

Council will ensure that all development applications comply with the Waverley Development Control Plan and include all necessary information to allow full assessment of the potential impact on trees to be retained and appropriate standard for planting replacement trees. Trees will be protected from construction works and other activities by The Australian Standard for the protection of trees on development sites (AS4970).

5.3.4 Bonds

Council will impose Tree bonds on developers and event organisers to ensure protection and retention of trees.

5.3.5 Tree and Vegetation Vandalism

Council will investigate unauthorised tree and vegetation pruning, removal or poisoning and pursue enforcement action where appropriate in accordance with the Tree and Vegetation Vandalism Policy and other relevant regulations.

5.4 Tree Establishment

Council will proactively identify opportunities to increase the quality and quantity of the urban forest and canopy cover across the Local Government Area by using the methodology documented in the Waverley Urban Canopy and Greening Strategy and the Waverley Street Tree Masterplan.

For the public domain, Council will regularly review and investigate new tree species in line with aesthetic, functional and environmental requirements if necessary to find a species that will survive successfully in a particular area.

5.4.1 Street Tree Master Plan (STMP)

Council will refer to the STMP to ensure a coordinated and clear direction to planting in streetscapes. The individual species list ensures streetscapes are attractive, planted with relevant species and coordinated with the urban surroundings.

5.4.2 Public Domain Technical Manual

The Public Domain Technical Manual (PDTM) provides standard specialised details and establishment procedures to be used by contractors and developers to guarantee successful establishment of newly planted trees throughout the LGA.

5.4.3 Park and Reserve Trees

Council recognises the high value of tree planting in open spaces to maximise screening, shade, biological diversity and define local character. Future planting projects will be addressed through Parks Plans of Management or through general park upgrades.

5.4.4 Nursery Stock

Council will only use quality nursery stock that meets the NATSPEC guide Australian Standard 2303:2018 *Tree stock for landscape use*.

5.4.5 Tree Planting and Selection

Council will increase diversity throughout its tree selection to improve tree resilience, canopy, longevity and habitat. Tree selection lists for the public domain will be available in the Public Domain Technical Manual, Street Tree Masterplan and relevant Plans of Management while tree planting in habitat corridors will be guided by the DCP.

New plantings in the public domain will consider the impact on views and appropriate size species will be selected and placed as not to impede pre-existing views.

5.5 Public Domain Tree Asset Management

Waverley Council recognises trees as a living asset and the importance and significance of their role in the public domain. It is the responsibility of Council to provide specialised maintenance programs to ensure the continued health and amenity of trees.

5.5.1 Pruning and Maintenance

Council will manage tree health and reduce associated risks, through best practice tree pruning programs. Regular maintenance and tree audits will ensure high quality delivery standards are met.

Council will prune trees in the public domain to address safety concerns, promote tree health and structure, as well as to provide minimal clearances for roads, pathways and properties.

Tree pruning will not be permitted for the shedding of leaves, fruit, flowers, reduce animal noise or droppings, or to facilitate views.

Council will consider tree pruning to retain a previously established view if there is a history of the identified tree(s) being pruned to restore pre-existing views.

5.5.2 Tree Asset Database

The Public Domain Tree Asset Database will inform Council of strategic and operational decision making, and prioritising resources for managing current tree assets. New technologies in tree inventory management will also assist Council in identifying and managing crucial green infrastructure assets.

5.5.3 Future and Current Risk Mitigation

Council will proactively manage trees for risk to limit damage or injury caused by trees while maintaining the benefits provided by trees. The updated Tree Asset Database will help Council take reasonable steps to manage trees in the public domain.

5.5.4 Trees as Habitat

Council will manage trees for habitat by proactively planting in habitat corridors, selecting species that support the urban ecology of Waverley and ensuring that no fauna is harmed when tree works are required.

5.6 Public Domain Tree Removal and Replacement

Council will investigate all tree management and mitigation options before recommending or supporting a tree removal.

On Council managed land, Council will replace trees that are removed, including dead trees unless this is not feasible and implement tree planting programs whilst also investigating new planting opportunities.

Tree removal will not be considered for the shedding of leaves, fruit, flowers, reduce animal noise/droppings or to facilitate views.

5.6.1 Visual Tree Assessments

For both public and private trees, Council will conduct Visual Tree Assessments (VTA), a widely accepted arboricultural assessment to determine the current health, structural integrity, useful life expectancy and visible damage of the tree. This will provide a consistent approach in determining pruning request applications, root pruning and tree removal.

A Landscape Significance Assessment may also form part of the criteria when assessing a tree. Some factors include the trees' prominence and contribution to the local amenity.

5.6.2 Emergency Situations

Where the risk is immediate and present at that moment to human life or substantial property damage, priority will be given in the pruning/removal of the tree(s).

5.6.3 Capital Works Programs

For all new or current infrastructure projects Council will continue to preserve tree cover and increase tree plantings. If a tree is required to be removed, then replacement plantings will take place.

5.6.4 Dead Trees

Generally, where a tree has died, it will be removed and replaced with a tree of similar or suitable species.

5.7 Private Domain Tree Removal and Replacement

5.7.1 Tree Preservation Orders

Tree Preservation Orders provide for the protection and preservation of trees and vegetation on private land. The orders are developed in accordance with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021), and Waverley Council's Development Control Plan Part B3 Vegetation Preservation specifies the species, kind and size of trees protected from damage or removal in the LGA.

5.7.2 Offset Planting

When permission is granted to remove a tree or trees on private land and there is insufficient planting space on site to accommodate a mature tree(s) of similar dimensions, the applicant will be

asked to contribute to offset tree planting on public land in accordance with the Pricing Policy, Fees and Charges. Refer to the Tree Management Guidelines, Section 5 “Trees on Private Land”, sub-section “Offset tree planting” for further details.

5.8 Community Engagement and Consultation

To improve the recognition and importance of trees in the community, Council will promote public awareness of the value, care and positive contribution of trees.

5.8.1 Notification of Removal

Where substantial or prominent trees may need to be removed, Council will notify adjacent residents two weeks in advance. The tree identified for removal is marked with appropriate high visibility tape and an accompanying sign explaining why the tree is being removed, the planned date of removal and the replacement tree species where possible.

Notification is not required for emergency works or dead trees.

When Council is notified of trees planted on public land without authorisation from Council, we will consult and discuss with residents to reach a suitable outcome. However, if there are no alternatives, we will reserve the right to remove inappropriate trees and replant where possible, with a more suitable tree consistent with Council's Street Tree Masterplan.

5.8.2 Website Updates

All tree management plans and policies, including FAQs can be found on Council's website and are updated regularly to reflect any ongoing changes in the tree management environment.

5.8.3 Resident Requests

A qualified arborist will consider and assess all resident requests for tree pruning, removal and planting in streetscapes, parklands, and open spaces. All actions associated with each request will be guided by the relevant policies and plans.

5.8.4 Neighbouring Trees

An application to prune overhanging branches or remove trees from a neighbouring property must have the written consent of the owner of the tree/s.

Council does not have the regulatory powers to compel neighbours to prune or remove trees that may be causing damage or a nuisance to their neighbour, nor can Council mediate in disputes. Conflict over the management of private trees on neighbouring properties is the responsibility of both neighbours to discuss and resolve.

5.8.5 Community Consultation

Waverley will continue community consultation of the benefits of trees in the urban environment or any planned works that impact the community. Council staff will use these opportunities to help educate the community regarding tree management.

6. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 10 years or as required in the event of legislative changes or requirements.

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>LEP</i>	Local Environmental Plans (LEP) guide planning decisions for local government areas through zoning and development controls. They provide a local framework for the way land can be developed and used. LEPs are the main planning tool to shape the future of communities by ensuring local development is carried out appropriately
<i>DCP</i>	Development Control Plan supports the controls outlined in the Local Environmental Plan with more specific planning and design guidelines
<i>PDTM</i>	The Public Domain Technical Manual Guides Council officers, external consultants, and contractors on the use of materials, finishes, furniture, design treatments and details
<i>LGA</i>	Local Government Area is an administrative division of a country that a local government is responsible for
<i>Significant or Heritage Trees</i>	Those trees that make a major contribution to the everyday landscape and are therefore of special value to the community and registered as such in the Tree Asset Database
<i>Urban Canopy</i>	Urban tree canopy is a measurement which encompasses the totality of tree and shrub canopies as viewed from above. Often expressed as a percentage and used to measure the urban forest
<i>Visual Tree Assessment</i>	Widely accepted arboricultural assessment based on the current health, structural integrity, useful life expectancy and visible damage to the tree
<i>Vegetation</i>	Plants, shrubs, groundcovers, whether native or exotic, immature or mature including that which is defined in the biodiversity map of the Waverley Local Environment Plan
<i>Weed Species</i>	A weed is any plant that colonises and persists in an ecosystem in which it did not previously exist. They may affect the economy, the environment, human health and amenity. Many plants introduced into Australia in the last 200 years are now weeds

<i>TPO</i>	Tree Preservation Orders apply to species, kinds of trees or other vegetation prescribed in Council’s Development Control Plan
<i>Habitat</i>	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism
<i>Vandalism</i>	Vandalism is the unlawful destruction, damage or injury to trees and/or vegetation through methods including, but not limited to poisoning, pruning, cutting, washing of chemicals, ringbarking or removal and excavation or altering of soil levels
<i>STMP</i>	Street Tree Masterplan is a guide on how we plant trees. The STMP provides a framework and co-ordinated approach to species selection and planting conditions
<i>AS 2303:2018</i>	Establishes the criteria for tree stock for landscape use, specifying the above and below-ground characteristics of tree stock that can be supplied for landscape use
