



Tree Management Policy

Policy Number	E18
Responsible Officer(s)	Manager Strategic Asset Planning
Policy Adopted	April 2023
Minutes reference	2023/04-12
Next review date	April 2027
Applicable Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1999; Native Vegetation Act 1991; Water Industry Act 2012; Electricity Act 1996; Planning, Development & Infrastructure Act 2016; Road Traffic Act 1961</i>
Related Documents	Council's Tree Planting Specifications; Austroads Guides; Guidelines for the Management of Roadside Native Vegetation and Regrowth Vegetation; Wakefield 2030 Community Plan

1. POLICY PRINCIPLE

Wakefield Regional Council is committed to promoting attractive landscapes and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

To provide direction on how Council will effectively and reasonably manage trees on its land to ensure a diverse environment while minimising risks.

3. POLICY DETAIL

This Policy is for the management of trees, this will include:

- Programmed tree plantings (along corridors, Trees for Life, Bushcare sites etc);
- Street trees planted as part of beautification/streetscape works;
- Reserve trees planted as part of beautification/amenity works;
- Remnant trees in road corridors;
- All other remnant, significant, or regulated trees;
- Maintenance, planting, retention of trees stock and removal of trees.

This policy does not cover trees within private properties, trees not under Council's responsibility, or native vegetation as defined in the *Native Vegetation Act 1991*.

3.1 Maintenance of Trees

The implementation of maintenance programs will be prioritised based on the level of funding, available resources and any risk assessment undertaken on the trees.

Residents will be encouraged to water their street trees during establishment. Council's tree maintenance programs will aim to:

- Promote long term tree sustainability with health and habitat benefits;
- Promote biodiversity and conservation values where appropriate;
- Manage the level of risk to provide adequate public safety;
- Improve the amenity values provided for the community of all vegetation;
- Ensure the compatibility of proposed and existing trees with local infrastructure and site uses;
- Facilitate safe pedestrian movements on footpaths;
- Align with the Guidelines for the Management of Roadside Native Vegetation and Regrowth Vegetation, and any relevant Council road specifications, and;
- Preserve trees under this policy.

Council's tree maintenance program will not accommodate pruning, trimming or removal of trees solely for the following reasons:

- Tree shade falls on a private garden or solar installations;
- Tree causes a nuisance by way of leaf litter (fruit, debris or bark shedding), or by way of habitat to wildlife (noise, droppings, litter etc), unless a risk has been identified;
- Tree obscures advertising signage;
- Tree obscures views or potential views.

Requests for trimming or pruning of trees can be lodged in writing to Council. All requests will be assessed and prioritised for action as part of Council's annual tree trimming program.

3.2 Planting of Trees

The selection and management of trees for planting in road reserves will be planned with great care and will have regard to local conditions, safety, and compatibility with existing plantings, and be designed to enhance the character and amenity of the streetscape and urban environment. Species used must come from the approved list of street trees in Council's Tree Planting Specifications.

New tree plantings will consider:

- The surrounding vegetation composition and any environmental or aesthetic considerations;
- The capacity for planting a single tree species to develop and achieve a consistent uniform planting (an 'Avenue Effect') with trees having a similar size, shape and look where possible and in accordance with Council's Tree Planting Specifications.
- The purpose of the road as well as the type of construction of the road and any impact the trees might have on it, or surrounding structures;
- The impacts proposed trees may have on services above or below the ground, considering any legislative requirements e.g. *Water Industry Act 2012*, *Electricity Act 1996*, *Road Traffic Act 1961*;
- The type of traffic using the road and potential impacts on road safety;
- The possible impacts on the safety of the public; and
- Any other matters which might be pertinent to the site.

Where Council has committed to significant roadworks within an urban street as part of its capital program, consideration will be given to a holistic approach for the installation and/or replacement of street trees in accordance with the following guiding principles.

The following tree planting principles have been developed to address the various site conditions found in our streetscapes:

- Symmetrical planting - similar tree species on both sides of the road. This is the preferred layout

but is not always possible because of site constraints.

- Asymmetrical planting- different sized species and/or form on either side of the road. This layout is appropriate where powerlines occupy one side of a road, or where a narrow street allows planting on one side only.
- Formal planting - a formal streetscape is created where the roadway forms a grid pattern, usually at right angles to each other. Formal planting should be symmetrical and use a single tree species at regular spacing intervals at one tree per frontage of an urban residential allotment
- Informal planting - random placement of trees. Appropriate in some rural road settings where street/road locations have a direct or visual relationship to a natural environment, such as a river or bushland.
- Single tree species per street - generally a single street tree species is desirable, and should be pursued unless restricted by site constraints. Feature specimen planting may be considered at key intersections, central business zones, pedestrian crossings and the like.
- Solar orientation in certain situations street planting can be designed to provide shade and also allow winter sun.

All requests for plantings along both township and rural roads must be lodged in writing to Council. These trees shall be planted in a position that is visible from the road and that will not impede any services in the future.

Note: This policy does not cover the planting of vegetation by private parties on the Council verge.

3.3 Removal

Council recognises that from time to time it is necessary to trim, alter and in some instances remove trees for safety, risk management or other reasons. It is Council's policy to retain all trees which are growing on its land except in the following circumstances:

- The tree is considered by Council to be a danger to, or remains a risk the public or is a pest plant;
- The tree is dead, damaged or diseased and offers limited habitat for wildlife;
- The tree is unsuitable in the location;
- The tree has caused or has the reasonable potential to cause damage to Council's assets or any other utility service
- The tree affects public utilities in a way which requires such harsh pruning that will limit the future development of the tree;
- The tree significantly obstructs the view of oncoming traffic such that sight lines in accordance with Austroads Guides cannot be achieved;
- A road is to be widened or reconstructed (or will be in the foreseeable future) and it is not possible to avoid trees; and/or the implementation of a new streetscape following the reconstruction of the street;
- The tree is on a fence line.

Council also recognises other methods of tree and root control which could be applied before removal, particularly in consultation (where necessary) with an arborist. These methods could include but not be limited to (for example) root barrier systems, canopy trimming or others to mitigate damage, risk and safety to immediate and nearby environs.

In addition to the above Council will also consider removal of trees in the following special circumstances:

- Where a tree has been identified as an obstruction for access upon, and in conjunction with, a

lodged Development Approval Application.

- A tree has been identified by a medical practitioner to have a detrimental effect on the physical health of an adjacent resident; and
- There is evidence the tree roots have caused or are likely to cause significant damage to infrastructure on adjacent private land and alternative methods for minimising the impact will not be effective.

In these instances, Council will remove the tree at its cost and replace in accordance with Council's Tree Planting Specifications.

3.4 Request for Relocation of Trees

From time to time, trees on the road verge adjacent allotments may be located near a proposed building, driveway or be impacted by the landowners landscaping. All requests for relocations shall be directed, in writing to Council. It is an offence for any person to cut, saw, damage or remove any tree or shrub on any land under the care, control and management of Council and may result in prosecution under the *Local Government Act 1999*.

4. REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed every 48 months, or more frequently if required by legislation or Council.

Document history:

Version	Adopted	Description of Change
1.0	March 2016 – Min 204	New Policy.
2.0	March 2019 – 2019/03-25	Word changes and reconfiguration, addition of principle, changes to reflect new template and change to review period to 48 months (unless required earlier).
3.0	April 2023	New policy template; minor word changes; reference to Roadside Vegetation Plan replaced with the Guidelines for the Management of Roadside Native Vegetation and Regrowth Vegetation; reference to Council's Street Tree Planting Specifications replaced with Council's Tree Planting Specifications.