Tree Management Policy

Strategic Reference	Objective 2; Infrastructure Strategy 2.1 – Enhance town pride and functionality through improving streetscapes. Strategy 2.2 – Develop community spaces through improving Council parks and gardens. Objective 4; Environment Strategy 1.1 – Work with community and relevant State departments to identify opportunities to protect and manage native vegetation.
File reference	AR16/1811
Responsibility	Roads & Infrastructure Department
Revision Number	2
Effective date	February 2016
Last revised date	October 2025
Minutes reference	279/25, 022/16
Next review date	October 2028
Applicable Legislation	Biodiversity Act 2025 (upon proclamation of legislation) Local Government Act 1999; Planning, Development, and Infrastructure Act 2016 Planning, Development, and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017 Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Fences Act 1975 National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 Native Vegetation Act 1991 Highways Act 1926 Road Traffic Act 1961 Heritage Places Act 1997 Electricity Act 1996
Related Documents:	Tree Management: Risk Management Guidelines for Local Government LGA Mutual Liability Scheme January 2013 Tree Management Procedure Roadside Vegetation Management Plan AS 4373 -2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees

1. Purpose

The Tree Management Policy (the Policy) provides a framework to manage, develop, protect, and conserve the environment of the Council area, in a manner that is reasonable, consistent and promotes the principles of sustainable development, within the resource allocation provided by Council.

It applies to all relevant Council operations and includes commitment to the following:

- To meet Council's overall obligations in relation to trees pursuant to the Community Vision Plan;
- To ensure that trees on roads, community land and other landscapes are planted and maintained in a consistent and reasonable manner underpinned by risk management principles and resources that are made available.
- To ensure that trees on roads, community land and other landscapes are planted and cared for in a fair way so all parts of the community benefit and continue to enjoy green spaces.

  To ensure that trees are properly managed and protected in line with risk management principles and legislative requirements.

2. Policy Statement

Coorong District Council recognises the important contribution trees and vegetation make to its area and community. Such assets provide environmental benefits by way of:

- Supporting flora and fauna
- Preparing for and adapting to changing environment conditions
- Provision of shade infrastructure to mitigate heat exposure
- Integration of plantings to complement public amenity
- Creating a living environment that maintains character; and
- Adding biodiversity to the natural environment.

This Policy provides guidance for the planting, maintenance, and, when necessary, removal of trees and vegetation on Council managed land and roads. It is to be applied alongside Council's Tree Management Procedure and relevant planning legislation.

3. Scope

The Policy shall apply to all trees under the care, control, and management of the Council and within the scope of relevant legislation.

4. Definitions

Community Land means Local Government land classified as community land pursuant to the Local Government Act 1999. Does not include roads or land excluded from Community Land classification.

Hazardous tree means a tree identified as having a defect or growth characteristic that may cause injury or property damage if not removed (e.g. structurally unsound with a high chance of failure within the next five years, dead, having exposed roots with a high potential as a trip hazard where no remedial action is possible; inappropriately located trees such as a tall tree adjacent to infrastructure or leaning over a road/path and pruning cannot correct the tree's form; causing or likely to cause major damage to public or private property or services).

Planting means the installation of a tree at an identified site.

***Regulated Tree*:**

a. a tree, or a tree within a class of trees, declared to be regulated by the regulations (whether or not the tree also constitutes a significant tree under the regulations); or

b. a tree declared to be a significant tree, or a tree within a stand of trees declared to be significant trees, by the Planning and Design Code (whether or not the tree is also declared to be a regulated tree, or falls within a class of trees to be regulated trees, by the regulations);

Reserve includes parks, gardens, reserves, playgrounds, ovals, and other areas such as water retention locations.

Risk Management means coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regard to risk (AS/NZ ISO 31 000).

Road means a public or private street, road, or thoroughfare to which public access is available to vehicles or pedestrians or both.

***Significant Tree*:**

a. a tree declared to be a significant tree, or a tree within a stand of trees declared to be significant trees, by the Planning and Design Code (whether or not the tree is also declared to be a regulated tree, or also falls within a class of trees declared to be regulated trees, by the regulations); or

b. a tree declared to be a regulated tree by the regulations, or a tree within a class of trees declared to be regulated trees that, by virtue of the application of prescribed criteria, is to be taken to be a significant tree for the purposes of the Planning and Design Code;

Sustainability and Ecological Sustainability means using, conserving, and enhancing natural resources so that the ecological processes on which plant life depends are maintained, preserved, or improved.

Tree means *a* perennial woody plant that has many secondary branches supported clear of the ground by a single or multiple dominant stems or trunks which is, or has the potential to grow to, 4.0 metres or more in height**.** Palms are included as trees in this definition. Dead trees are included in this definition.

Tree in poor health means a tree deleteriously affected by insects, parasites, stress, damage, or disease

5. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to provide a guide for planting, retention, maintenance, conservation, and removal of trees on Council land, including parks and gardens, reserves, and streets.

This Policy applies to all trees under the care, control, and management of Council to ensure that Council's approach to tree management is:

- Undertaken in a consistent and transparent manner;

- Fair and equitable to all parties involved;
- Achieves the best possible outcomes for Council and the community;
- Consistent with Council's legislative obligations and with Council's strategic, corporate, and financial directions; and
- Replacement and new tree plantings will be suited to the local environment and have regard for maintenance requirements
- Provide the Administration with a framework for detailed operational plans and guidelines regarding:
    - trees and understorey planting in streets, local and arterial roads;
    - trees and understorey plantings in reserves, parks and gardens and road reserves;
    - the important role the community can play in protecting and enhancing trees and vegetation in the Council area.
    - requests by residents to plant on a road verge or footpath

6. Key Principles

The key principles of the Policy are:

1. to ensure that Council effectively and reasonably manages trees on roads, community land and across the landscape.
2. to provide for effective maintenance, replacement and functional programs for planting and preservation of trees.
3. to coordinate and ensure that resources are allocated so that Council meets its strategic and operational obligations.
4. to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources to maintain and manage trees across the Council landscape.
5. to manage the requirements of the legislative framework for local government, including under the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act.
6. to focus on the provision of amenity, biodiversity, and environmental sustainability.
7. to consider the ongoing impacts to external stakeholders, including essential services.
8. to consult with the community and promote the positive influence trees provided to the general landscape.
9. To minimise and consider issues of conflict between trees and Council infrastructure using the principles of risk management.
10. To ensure that when Council removes a tree, a replacement tree will be planted in a similar location (where appropriate), or within another suitable Council-managed community space. Replacement trees will be selected and sited to enhance amenity, environmental value and long-term sustainability.

7. Customer Requests

Requests for pruning and/or removal (or claims seeking financial compensation for property damage) shall be assessed by a suitable qualified arborist in accordance with the Tree Management Procedure.

Trees with potential risks to a person or property will be inspected as soon as reasonably practicable, on receipt of a request, and in accordance with Council's Customer Service Charter.

Council will not permit or undertake the removal or pruning of existing street and reserve trees due to:

- Nuisance reasons (including but not limited to; leaf, bark, flower or fruit litter)
- Shading of roof top solar panels
- Aesthetic reasons (including interruption of views)
- Development where reasonable alternatives to conserve tree(s) are available

8. Tree Vandalism

It is an offence to poison, prune, remove, deface or otherwise interfere with, or cause damage to, trees on Council land. Proven non-compliance should be consistent with Council's Enforcement Policy.

9. Supporting Documentation

The Tree Management Policy is supported by the (inward facing) Tree Management Procedure.

10. Availability/Accessibility

The Policy is available for inspection at Council's officers during normal business hours and Council's website and will be emailed to interested parties on request)please lodge request in writing via email to council@coorong.sa.gov.au)

11. Document History

This Policy will be reviewed at least every three (3) years or more frequently if legislation or Council requires.

Version	Adopted	Minute No	Description of change(s)
1	16 February 2016	022/16	New policy
2	21 October 2025	279/25	Minor formatting throughout the policy document to align with corporate policy branding Refinement of policy purpose and statement Reordering of definitions Insertion of statement regarding maintaining tree cover Insertion of new clauses regarding tree vandalism and how customer requests will be managed Removal of the procedural component (annexed to policy); incorporated into inward facing procedures upon adoption