

URBAN FOREST POLICY

Policy Number:	4.1.9
Approved by:	Council
Date Approved:	December 2023
Date of Next Review:	December 2024
Applicable to Unit(s):	Whole Organisation
Responsible Officer:	Manager Natural Environment and Parks Open Space Planning Officer Coordinator Parks Services
Related Policies:	Significant Tree Protection Policy
Related Documents:	Open Space Plan 2014-2024
Statutory Reference:	Nil

OVERVIEW

To establish policy for the management of the urban forest.

THE POLICY

This policy provides a framework of reference in relation to the management of trees in urban areas throughout the Shire generally, with particular reference to the following matters:

- planting of new trees;
- maintenance of existing trees;
- removal of existing trees;
- conflict with other infrastructure;
- heritage trees;
- risk management;
- remnant native trees.

Principles

1. An acceptable level of risk to persons or damage to infrastructure, including buildings, streets, kerbs, footpaths, road users/vehicles and aerial and underground utilities.
2. To guard against the damage or unnecessary removal of trees in public areas.
3. Increasing biodiversity within the urban forest is imperative for the long-term health of the forest.
4. Targeting a 30% canopy cover in urban areas.

Where a public tree has been approved for removal by council, the value for the purpose of development, construction, or other works, associated with the tree in accordance with Council's Tree Valuation Formula is to be paid by the property owner or representative prior to its removal and works commencing. This is applicable to all developers, builders, service providers, residents, civil contractors, event organisers, State Government Departments or Federal Government Departments undertaking activities in proximity to public trees.

Council has a strategic plan in place to support its policy position on urban trees (e.g. Open Space Plan 2014-2024). This plan is available to staff via the Intranet. The responsibility to ensure that the maintenance and implementation of the guidelines accords with Council's policy position is vested in the Manager Natural Environment and Parks. Any matter specifically requiring a Council determination shall be reported by the General Manager Built and Natural Environment.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Wellington Shire Council is committed to upholding the Human Rights principles as outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* and referred to in Council's Human Rights Policy. The Human Rights Checklist has been completed and this policy accords with Council's policy commitment to uphold human rights principles.

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	MAJOR / MINOR UPDATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2022	Minor update	Strengthened the tree removal and amenity valuation
1.1	December 2023	Minor	Date of Next Review updated to: December 2024 Minor formatting changes