

Tree Management Policy

Policy type	Business Operating Procedure
Function	Infrastructure Services
Policy Owner	
Effect date	

1. Policy Statement

Council recognises the value and important role of trees across the landscape and aims to balance risks against the social, economic and environmental benefits of public trees.

2. Purpose/Objective

The purpose of this policy is to provide:

- Commitment to the retention and effective management of the region's public trees.
- Strategic direction in relation to planting of new trees, continued maintenance, management and protection of trees located on Council controlled land.
- Address key recommendations in Local Government Mutual Services Tree Risk Management Guide 2021.
- Strategic direction for implementation of Local Law No.4 (Local Government Controlled Areas and Roads)

The Tree Management Policy is one of a suite of documents used to manage trees on public land in the Cassowary Coast Region and is the over-arching document to which the others reference and are guided and informed by.

3. Principles

Trees on public land are fundamental to the Cassowary Coast region's biodiversity and ecological values, landscape character, and amenity. Trees form the aesthetic backdrop for the regions outstanding natural environmental values. They also provide shade, cool and soften buildings, enhance streetscape amenity, and provide habitat and food for wildlife. As such, trees have a significant value to Cassowary Coast Regional Council and the community.

Council's activities and resources shall be prioritised upon the following order of principles:

1. Manage risks to public safety.
2. Manage risks to property or infrastructure.
3. Preserve and maintain the health and structural soundness of the Cassowary Coast region's public trees.
4. Improve the regions image, liability and the wellbeing of the community by prioritising the integration of public trees.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all the trees that Council has management responsibility for on Council controlled lands (roads reserves, parks, cemeteries and public open spaces).

This tree management Policy is intended for use by:

- Council workers and contractors – as a guide for the provision and management of trees on Council controlled lands.
- Landholders and developers – to assist in the selection of tree species and understanding of

Councils management of trees.

- The Community – to promote better understanding of tree management.

This policy does not apply to:

- Trees on private property.
- Trees on State controlled land.
- Trees within council area where vegetation management is explicitly stated as the responsibility of the Lessee.
- Declared Plant species as listed in Biosecurity Act 2014 and as identified in Cassowary Coast Local Area Biosecurity Plan.

5. Objectives

This Policy is underpinned by the following objectives:

- Increase and enhance the extent of tree canopy throughout the region through planting of appropriately selected trees in streets, public spaces and bushland areas.
- Where it is unavoidable that trees are to be removed from public land, Council will arrange an offset planting.
- Recognition of the importance of tree cover throughout the region.
- Trees are recognised and valued.
- Council will maintain a consistent approach to assessing risks and benefits posed by trees in accordance with defined criteria.
- Implement best practice safety processes and principles to minimise risks to the community from trees on Council controlled land.
- Enable effective, efficient and consistent communication with the community on Council's tree management approach and practices.
- Unauthorised interference with trees on Council land is prohibited and will be managed in accordance with local laws and relevant legislation.

6. Content

6.1 Tree Planting

Council will plant the “right tree, for the right location” with consideration given to their whole of life maintenance requirements and the possible impacts to private and Council infrastructure, and public safety. Tree planting throughout the region will be undertaken to support and enhance existing avenues, establish new avenues and increase canopy cover across the Open Space network.

Policy Statements:

Objective:	Policy Statements:
Tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species selection is based on careful consideration to the environmental, social, and historic character of individual urban areas and townships across the region. An approved list of suitable species is located in the Council Planning scheme. • Council prefers the planting of sizable and long-lived tree species, where environmental conditions, community support and site factors allow. • Council will consider the growing characteristics of tree species before they are planted to reduce the potential for conflict between services, infrastructure and trees.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All approved Public Tree removals will be offset by Offset Tree Plantings, which should achieve no net canopy loss within three (3) years of the approved Public Tree removal. The canopy area of the original Public Tree shall be used to determine the quantity of replacement trees required. • No new memorial trees will be planted on Public Land.
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6.2 Tree Protection

To realise the benefits provided by public trees, their protection and retention shall be given a high priority during the assessment of development applications, delivery of infrastructure, performing maintenance activities, and when assessing event applications likely to cause impact to public trees.

Policy Statements:

Objective:	Policy Statements:
Development applications & Operational works applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will require that applicants provide all necessary information relating to the potential impact of development activities on public trees. • Council will apply tree protection and retention conditions, as required, to ensure that development activities do not have negative impacts on either the long-term health or structural integrity of a public tree.
Operational activities (undertaken by Council or external parties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will safeguard trees during its operational and maintenance activities by following the guidelines outlined by the FNQROC Development Manual Version 8. • Activities or works likely to cause harm to a public tree will be avoided or redesigned and/or managed to ensure the level of harm is eliminated (in the first instance) or reduced to an acceptable level.
Management of Council controlled trees around overhead power lines, service installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will engage with service providers to advocate for the protection of public trees. • Council will investigate options in partnership with service providers to relocate and redesign existing infrastructure away from public trees. • Council will require that new services (above and underground) are not installed within close proximity to a public tree.

6.3 Tree Asset Management:

Council is committed to managing its tree assets in a proactive and efficient manner to maximise tree asset longevity, enhance amenity and achieve excellent tree health outcomes whilst managing risks to public safety, property, or infrastructure.

Policy Statements:

Objective:	Policy Statements:
Asset management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will embrace modern technology and methods to improve the efficiency and outcomes achieved by its tree maintenance activities. • Council will conduct its tree maintenance activities in line with industry standards, current research, and best practice guidelines. • Public trees are acknowledged as vital components of public infrastructure and the public realm.
Council as a steward and efficient manager of trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will provide educational information on its website and through other community engagement tools to promote the benefits provided by trees, their care and upkeep, species selection, economic value and Council's management objectives and approach.

6.4 Tree Pruning or Removal

Council regularly receives requests to remove part or all of trees on land under its control. Decisions as to whether to act on these requests will be made by Council's qualified staff and/or consultant arborists. Trees will only be removed or pruned after consideration of potential risks and benefits.

Policy Statements:

Objective:	Policy Statements:
Council tree pruning & removal considerations	<p>Council <u>may agree</u> to the following works if the risk presented outweighs the benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of trees that have been professionally assessed as presenting an unacceptable hazard. • Removal of trees in conflict with utilities and built structures if there are no other practicable solutions available. • Maintenance pruning to remove dead, dying, diseased or defective branches only where they present an unacceptable safety risk. • Selective pruning to remove branches causing conflict i.e., encroachment onto buildings. • Vegetation works above and below ground service connections (water/sewer/power/telecommunications). • Vegetation works to reduce unacceptable hazards to pedestrians or vehicular access. • Pruning for vehicle sight lines, public signage, and the requirements of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the Australian Standard, the Queensland Guide to Temporary Traffic Management and Austroads. • Root pruning of trees to ameliorate damage to built or natural structures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal vegetation works to trees that are identified as providing habitat to specific species. Council will remove the minimum amount determined to make it safe, whilst still retaining habitat value (e.g., leaving a hollow stump for nesting birds, roost trees).
Tree pruning & removal requests not supported by Council	<p>Council <u>will not</u> undertake the following works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal or pruning of trees to provide benefit to private views. Removal of trees for leaves, flower, fruit, minor branch or sap drop, or animal faeces. Removal of trees which are inhibiting grass growth, shading property, or shading solar panels. Removal of trees which are claimed to be damaging buildings, water, or sewage pipes, unless certified evidence is provided that indicates that tree roots are the cause of the damage. Removal of trees for private insurance purposes. Removal of healthy and stable trees that do not present an unacceptable risk. Removal of trees to facilitate private construction works including fences. Pruning of trees for private and commercial signage. Vegetation works that will cause the tree health to decline or die.
Management of public trees around overhead power lines, service installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will engage with service providers to advocate for the protection of public trees. Council will investigate options in partnership with service providers to relocate and redesign existing infrastructure away from public trees. Council will require that new services (above and underground) are not installed within close proximity to a public tree.

6.5 Unlawful Tree Removal:

Council is committed to ensuring that trees on Council controlled land are protected from interference to maintain the regions biodiversity, conservation, scenic, amenity and cultural value.

Policy Statements:

Objective:	Policy Statements:
Undertake routine inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will proactively inspect Council controlled land to detect and deter the interference with trees.
Investigate interference with trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will investigate all instances of interference with trees on public land and manage in accordance with Local Laws and relevant legislation.
Management actions to be undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At all sites identified by council officers as being unlawfully cleared, a visible barrier (Para webbing) is to be erected immediately surrounding area with a sign stating unlawful vegetation removal has been detected in this area and is currently under investigation.

Re-vegetate lands where interference/removal has occurred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council is authorised to revegetate in whatever manner seems appropriate and may erect shade cloth screens to the pre-existing vegetation height until the new vegetation is established.
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7. Responsibilities

The Director, Infrastructure Services is responsible for ensuring this policy and any supporting standards, guidelines or procedures are understood by all council workers and contractors working on Council controlled land.

All council workers, managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to.

8. Definitions

‘Arborist’ – means a specialist in the cultivation and care of trees, including tree surgery, diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and management of tree diseases. Council considers an arborist to be an individual who has obtained a minimum of AQF level 3 in Arboriculture.

‘Community’ – refers to the broader population of the Cassowary coast.

‘Council’ – Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

‘Council Controlled Land’ – in this policy, refers to land under Council freehold ownership or Crown land managed by Council under trust. It also includes Council controlled road reserves and State controlled road reserves that are managed by Council under the Road Maintenance Performance Contract (RMPC).

‘Delegated Officer’ – a suitably qualified person holding the power to provide approval on behalf of Council.

‘Hazard’ – means any source of potential damage, harm or adverse health effects on something or someone.

‘Public Tree’ – means any woody or perennial plant or any plant resembling a tree in form or size within the Local Government area that has part of its trunk growing from Council controlled land.

‘Public Open space’ – publicly accessible lands set aside for informal and formal community use.

‘Road Reserve’ – areas of land set aside for road reserves extending from property boundary to property boundary.

Related forms, policies and procedures	<p>Local Laws 2022</p> <p>Recreation and Natural Areas Asset Management Plan</p> <p>CCRC Local Area Biosecurity Plan</p> <p>CCRC Planning Scheme</p>
Relevant legislation	<p>Federal Government</p> <p>Biosecurity Act (2015)</p> <p>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)</p> <p>State Government</p> <p>Biosecurity Act (2014)</p> <p>Electrical Safety Act (2002)</p> <p>Environmental Protection Act 1994 Local Government Act (2009)</p> <p>Local Government Regulations (2012)</p> <p>Planning Act (2016)</p> <p>Nature Conservation Act (1992)</p> <p>Coastal Protection Act (1995)</p> <p>Disaster Management Act (2003)</p> <p>Queensland Heritage Act (1992)</p> <p>Vegetation Management Act (1999)</p> <p>Fisheries Act (1994)</p> <p>Neighbourhood Disputes (Dividing Fences and Trees) Act 2011</p> <p>Local Government</p> <p>Local Law No. 1</p> <p>Local Law No. 4</p>
Reference and resources	<p>Australian Standard 31000:2009 Risk Management</p> <p>Australian Standard 31000:2009 Risk Management Principles</p> <p>Australian Standard 4373:2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees</p> <p>Australian Standard 4970:2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites</p> <p>Wet Tropics Roadside Management Guideline's</p>

Policy Number	
Approved by	<div>Approval date</div>
Review date	