



DRAFT TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF TREES
LOCATED ON COUNCIL MANAGED LAND

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1. Purpose

This policy is intended to provide guidance and direction in relation to the planting of new trees and promote planting, focussed on conserving a greener City. The policy also provides guidance and direction on the continued maintenance, management and protection of trees located on Council managed land, including streets, roads, reserves and public open space.

It will provide a basis to make decisions on the management of trees with a particular vision to protect and conserve the environment in a manner that balances amenity and environmental goals with the inherent risk trees can pose to property and people.

The policy provides clarity on Council's tree management practices to enable efficient, effective and consistent communication and active response with the community on tree matters.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all trees on Council managed streets, roads, reserves and public open spaces that Council has management responsibility for.

This policy is applicable to all developers, builders, service providers, Council Facility tenants, residents, civil contractors, event organisers and Council officers undertaking activities in proximity to Council trees.

Trees excluded in this policy however may be covered by other policies and legislation include:

- Trees on private property
- Trees on land managed by Department of Transport
- Trees on land managed by DELWP or Parks Victoria
- Trees on land managed by Melbourne Water.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To recognise the importance of the tree canopy throughout the City
- To recognise the importance of street trees, bushland and indigenous trees and the ecological and economic role they play in the City
- To increase and enhance the extent of tree canopy throughout the City through planting of appropriately selected trees in streets, public spaces and bushland areas
- To provide workable assessment criteria for the management of trees on Council land. e.g. tree removal, pruning and planting
- To meet all legislative requirements and standards relating to the management of trees, including:
 - Electricity Safety Act 1998 and the Electric Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020

- Road Management Act 2004 (VIC)
- Local Government Act 2020
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (VIC)
- Flora and Fauna Act 1988
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992
- Heritage Act 1995
- AS 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees
- AS 4970 -2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites
- AS 2303-2015 Tree Stock for Landscape Use
- To implement best practise safety processes and principles to minimise risks to the community from trees on public land
- To meet the recommendation of the Tree Management Internal Audit report, February 2020
- To enable effective, efficient and consistent communication with the community on Council’s tree management approach and practices.

4. Background

Tree protection and preservation are central tenets in Monash’s vision of “an innovative and environmentally sustainable garden city: resilient, diverse and thriving” (*Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-2026*), as canopy provides intrinsic community and ecological value to Council. Monash City Council has an abundance of established trees within Council reserves, streets and private residences, all of which are essential to the surrounding environment and habitat. The importance of these trees therefore, in relation to the environment, community and sustainability, indicates the need for robust tree management policy which supports the protection of existing trees and promotes new tree planting.

One of the primary performance indicators for measuring Monash’s success for the protection, establishment and management of trees is the extent of canopy coverage across the city, which includes trees on both private land and public land. The Monash Urban Landscape and Canopy Cover Strategy identified a goal of 30% canopy cover by 2040, being an increase from 14% in 2018

To support the monitoring and reporting of the City’s performance against the canopy cover goal and tree protection and management in general, the City maintains an accurate database of all trees planted on public land through its asset management information system.

This policy is supported by an operational management plan (internal document), which includes further guidance and procedures to ensure Councils related objectives are achieved.

Guiding Principles

TREE RETENTION

Trees are a high value asset not easily replaced therefore protecting and retaining trees is a key principle.

PLANTING

Opportunities for additional tree planting on reserves will be identified proactively and actioned on an ongoing basis to assist in achieving the goal of 30% canopy cover by 2040.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Trees will be managed so that any risks to the public are minimised to the greatest extent possible.

PROPERTY PROTECTION

Trees will be managed so that any risks to property damaged now, and in the future, are minimised.

CUSTOMER RESPONSIVENESS

Residents and other customers concern with trees will be responded to promptly and with empathy, with the goal of resolving with the best possible outcome for tree retention and customer satisfaction.

GOVERNANCE

Plan, deliver, monitor and report on all tree maintenance activities to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, regulations, policies and plans.

5. Linkages

In implementing this Policy, particular reference will be given to the objectives identified in the following Monash Strategies and Plans:

Strategy/Document	Key Objectives/Outcomes related to tree management
Council Plan 2017-21	<p>Two strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Liveable & Sustainable City We value our natural environment and want to preserve and enhance the leafy and green character of our city. Monash’s desirability as a place to live, learn, work and play needs to be protected. • Inviting Open & Urban Spaces we will continue to improve our public infrastructure, meeting places and open spaces, providing inclusive, safe and inviting places for community use.
Enterprise Risk and Opportunity Management Policy and Framework 2020	<p>Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monash City Council is committed to applying risk and opportunity management principles at all levels of the organisation to enable its objectives to be achieved. <p>Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving the objectives of the Council Plan • Protecting people, assets, finances and Council reputation • Taking risks in accordance with approved policies and values • Adopting risk treatments that are fit for purpose, cost effective and designed to reduce risk to a tolerable level • Embedding a culture that promotes awareness and accountability for risk so it becomes a key part of decision making at Council.
Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-2026	<p>An innovative and environmentally sustainable garden city: resilient, diverse and thriving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where garden city character and natural assets have been protected and enhanced • Maintain and improve local biodiversity, tree canopy cover and the ecological health of ecosystems
Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase urban greening to create a more resilient landscape that contributes to community health and wellbeing now and in the future • Increase canopy cover across private and public land from 22% to 30% by 2040 to create a more liveable, sustainable and resilient city • Maximise the retention of existing healthy mature large canopy trees on public and private land to support liveability and cultural heritage values • Increase the presence of large canopy tree and greening in high density precincts

Street Tree Strategy 2016	<p>The Monash street tree canopy will be a source of neighbourhood and city pride. It will create a network of engaging and inviting green corridors, encouraging walking, cycling and street activity and delivering tangible benefits to local communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy is focused upon establishing high quality, consistently-planted and attractive avenues to enhance the city’s arterial, collector and local road network.
Urban Biodiversity Strategy 2018- 2028	<p>Council's vision for biodiversity is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thriving indigenous vegetation communities • Stable and sustainable refuges for native bird and other fauna • Resilient ecosystems that can adapt to environmental changes • An active and engaged community that participates in ongoing biodiversity protection
Open Space Strategy 2018	<p>The City of Monash has quality, diverse and accessible open space to drive the liveability, health and wellbeing of our community:</p> <p>Principles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental protection, enhancement and appreciation including the protection of canopy trees, habitat, flora and fauna and waterways.
Living Melbourne – Our metropolitan urban forest strategy	<p>Council has endorsed this “collaborative and strategic approach to connect existing greening and urban forest approaches across metropolitan Melbourne”.</p> <p>Its vision is thriving and resilient communities, connected through nature.</p>
Healthy and Resilient Monash Integrated Plan 2017-2021	<p>A city dedicated to optimal health and wellbeing for its Community > Healthy Communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Health is closely linked to the natural and built environments in the communities where we live.
Community Safety Framework 2015-2020	<p>An inviting and safe city with neighbourhoods and environments that are alive with activity; foster active community engagement and community spirit; celebrate diverse cultures; promote gender equity and create positive health and wellbeing outcomes.</p> <p>Including the following Council actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement locally based place management programs to capitalise on local community assets and to create public spaces that promote residents’ health, safety, happiness and wellbeing. • Maintain and improve the accessibility, safety and attractiveness of public places and spaces to increase levels of safety and community engagement. • Lead the way in creating safe physical, urban and natural environments through adherence to Safer Design principles including Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) where residents feel inspired to actively participate in community life and to go about their daily activities.

Electric Line Clearance Management Plan 2020-21	<p>The City of Monash ELCMP purpose is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the potential for contact between power lines and its tree population • Reduce the drastic pruning of trees near power lines outside of the Australian Standard AS4373-2007 “pruning of Amenity trees” • Minimise outages to its residents and businesses
Road Management Plan 2018	<p>The principal purpose of road management is to ensure that a safe and efficient integrated transport network is provided for the movement of persons and goods and that road reserves are available for other appropriate uses. In accordance with the Road Management Act, the Road Management Plan (RMP):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defines, in a Public Road Register, the roads Council considers are required for public use in an integrated network and will maintain to the defined standards; 2. Establishes a management system for the road management functions assigned to City of Monash as the Road Authority for local roads 3. Bases the system on policy and operational objectives within the resources available 4. Sets relevant standards for carrying out inspection, repair and maintenance functions for the road infrastructure.
Significant Tree Register (Yet to be developed)	<p>City of Monash does not currently have a register of significant trees, however one is planned for development in the future. A typical definition of a significant tree includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A tree declared to be a significant tree, or a tree within a stand of trees declared to be significant trees, by a Development Plan or Planning Scheme ▪ A tree that is deemed to be of benefit to the community ▪ A tree that has been identified as a single specimen, rare to the area/municipality or not frequently planted.

6. Definitions:

Community Land:

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

Open Space:

Open space refers to land that is publicly accessible and provided for community benefit (e.g. recreation park, linear trail, sportsground and natural areas).

Planting:

The installation of a tree at an identified site.

Reserve:

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

Road:

A public or private street, road or thoroughfare to which public access is available on a continuous or substantially continuous basis to vehicles or pedestrians or both and includes a bridge, viaduct or subway; or an alley, laneway or walkway;

Risk Management:

Coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regard to risk (AS/NZ ISO 31 000). Monash interprets this Standard through its Enterprise Risk and Opportunity Management Policy and Framework.

Australian Standard:

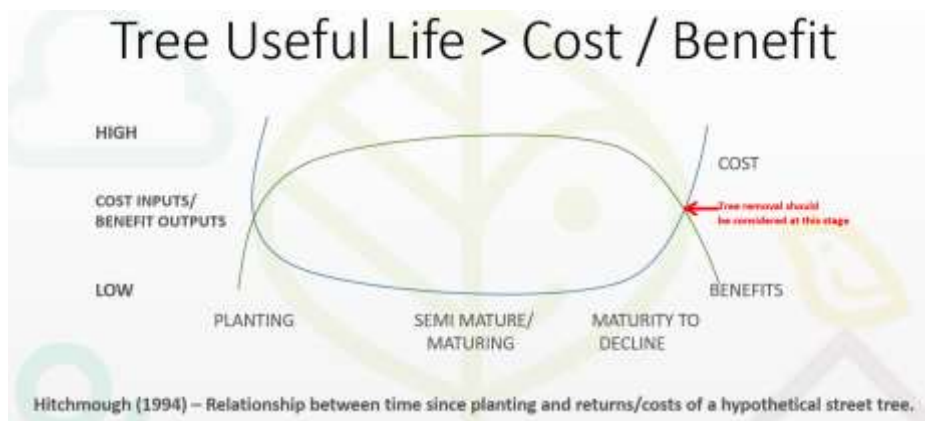
The objective of this Standard is to provide arborists, tree workers, government departments, property owners, and contractors with a guide defining uniform tree pruning procedures and practices in order to minimize the adverse or negative impact of pruning on trees.

Tree:

A tree is a woody plant with generally a single erect perennial trunk at least 75 millimetres in diameter at breast height (DBH). Most trees have definitely formed crowns of foliage and attain heights in excess of four (4) metres.

Useful Life Expectancy (ULE):

ULE is the safe 'with an acceptable level of risk' life expectancy of a tree modified by economic considerations (Jeremy Barrell,1996). The objective of an ULE assessment is to determine the relative value of individual trees for the purpose of informing future management options.



Hazardous Tree:

Are defined as:

Those trees that have a defect that may cause injury or property damage if not removed such as:

- *Structurally Unsound* – Bifurcation with high chance of failure within the next three to five years, excessive borer activity, dying or dead
- *Exposed Roots* – Having a high potential as a trip hazard (provided no remedial action is possible)
- *Inappropriately Located* – Tall tree species with structural defects under power lines; a tree leaning over road/paths/ property whose form cannot be corrected by pruning or other arboricultural methods
- *Trees Causing Major Damage* – Where tree branches/ roots are causing significant damage to Council, utility, or private infrastructure (provided no remedial action is possible)

7. Tree Management

7.1. Tree Protection and Development Sites

- 7.1.1. All Monash City Council trees will be protected from construction and works activities in accordance with Australian Standard AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development sites.
- 7.1.2. In planning the design of a development and undertaking the construction – the following should be considered:
 - Minimise or avoid potential conflict between trees and structures – on site and on any neighbouring properties

- Existing trees should be retained
 - Existing and future tree growth both above and below ground must be a consideration when building close to a tree
 - Building construction methods that will minimize the impact on trees and their root systems
 - Trees identified to be retained on the site and on adjoining land are to be protected in accordance with Australia Standard AS 4970- 2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites
 - Preliminary impact inspections are required for trees of value that may be impacted by a proposed development.
- 7.1.3. All Monash City Council trees to be retained and protected must be clearly identified on all submitted landscape plans. The plan must include:
- The exact location of all trees with each tree numbered
 - For each tree: the common and botanical name, height, canopy spread, trunk diameter at 450mm above ground level and number of trunks if more than one
 - Which trees will be retained, removed, pruned or transplanted
 - The Tree Protection Zone (TPZ).
 - The Structural Root Zone (SRZ).
- 7.1.4. A TPZ will be established for the duration of any works in proximity to any Council managed tree or tree shown on an endorsed plan to be retained.
- 7.1.5. TPZs will be calculated in accordance with the methodology outlined in *Australian Standard AS 4970- 2009 Protection of trees on development sites*.
- 7.1.6. The TPZ will be a restricted area delineated by sturdy fencing and the relevant signage, as specified in AS 4970- 2009, which will isolate the tree from disturbance so that it remains viable.
- 7.1.7. The TPZ must be established prior to the commencement of any works and approved by Councils arborist. Council will inspect trees that are subject to TPZ measures to ensure the protection stipulations/conditions in the building permit are being adhered to throughout the life of the project. Any failures will be issued a notice to comply.
- 7.1.8. The following are not permitted within the TPZ without written permission from a Council arborist:
- Machine excavation including trenching;
 - Stockpiling of building materials, debris or soil;
 - Vehicular traffic except on existing paved surfaces;
 - Parking of vehicles and plant except on existing paved surfaces;
 - Preparation of chemicals, including preparation of cement products;
 - Refuelling;
 - Wash down and cleaning of equipment;

- Placement of fill;
- Alteration of soil levels or structure;
- Temporary or permanent installation of utilities and signs;
- Severing of roots greater than 30mm;
- Installation of service pits or hatches;
- Permanent or temporary vehicular crossings;
- Physical damage to the tree, including any pruning works

7.1.9. Care will be taken at all times to ensure no damage is sustained to tree stems, crowns and roots.

7.1.10. For trees listed as Heritage or on the Significant Tree Register (to be developed), an Arboricultural Impact Assessment undertaken by a suitably qualified arborist (minimum Certificate IV) must be submitted with the development application.

7.1.11. Costs associated with private works that impact on Council trees will be borne by the person/s undertaking the works.

7.2. Tree Risk Management

7.2.1. Council will implement a systematic tree inspection schedule and best practice tree management to minimise tree risk for the community.

7.2.2. Council funds the delivery of both proactive and reactive tree management programs such as:

- Annual Cyclic Street Tree Pruning
- Open Space and Council Facility Cyclic Pruning
- Street Tree Planting and Establishment
- Reactive Maintenance includes inspections and works in response to hazards.

7.2.3. All trees located on Council managed land will be inspected by either suitably qualified (Cert. Level 5) Council and/or Contractor arborist to determine the useful life expectancy and ongoing management of the tree based on the assessment of the following:

- Tree characteristics and health
- Genus, species and common name
- Site conditions
- Condition/Hazard rating – recorded as either:
- Defect - High priority
 - Defect - Medium priority
 - Defect - Low priority
 - No Defect
- Description of tree defects (if any) and action required

- 7.2.4. The objective of a ULE assessment is to determine the relative value of individual trees for the purpose of informing future management options.
- 7.2.5. Council will support tree removal when a tree is dying or in decline because it:
- poses a higher risk to community due to likelihood of failure;
 - ceases to provide environmental and health and well-being benefits expected from a healthy tree; and or
 - typically requires higher levels of reactive maintenance.
- 7.2.6. Trees located in Very High to High Risk areas will be considered for removal within 5 years of useful life expectancy.
- 7.2.7. Trees located in Moderate to Low areas will be considered for removal within 3 years of useful life expectancy.
- 7.2.8. Council will undertake proactive tree inspections based on a location's level of risk. This is determined by the following three aspects:
- Roadway characteristics such as road type, traffic volume;
 - Public use and occupancy patterns within public areas; and
 - Tree characteristics such as species, age and location relative to use of area.

The table below provides a summary of the risk zones, examples of locations and frequency of inspection.

Risk Zone Category	Example Locations	Inspection Frequency
Very High Risk	Play grounds, early years facilities, high use open space reserve areas.	Annual
High Risk	Bushfire asset protection zones Aquatic and Leisure centres, Car parks in activity centres	Annual
Moderate Risk	Street trees – local and arterial roads shared paths, moderate use open space reserves	Annual Every two years
Low Risk	Vacant land Low use open space reserves	Every three to five years

- 7.2.9. Council will undertake reactive tree inspections on request, with a response of no greater than 10 working days, unless otherwise stated to customer.

7.3. Tree Removal

- 7.3.1. The overarching objective is to minimise the removal of any trees, to support the goal of 30% canopy cover by 2040. The Monash City Council will apply a risk-based inspection to the consideration of any tree removal request.

7.3.2. Residents and landowners are not permitted to remove any tree or trees from any road reserve or Council land. Under Local Laws, penalties will apply for removing Council trees without permission.

7.3.3. Any requests for removal of any Council tree by a resident or landowner must be accompanied by a valid reason which clearly meet the criteria for removal.

7.3.4. The removal of trees may be considered under the following circumstances:

- Any tree deemed by Council's qualified arborist to be dead, dying or in severe decline (with a useful life expectancy of less than 3-5 years) or hazardous (they pose an unacceptable risk to community in short term)
- A tree that has a defect requiring action that cannot be rectified without removal of the tree.
- Trees that are unviable, have a high probability of failure, or are structurally unsound.
- In the case of achieving regulated road and electrical line clearance, only once all practical solutions to maintain acceptable clearances have been exhausted.
- In the case of works and development, only once all practical design solutions to retain the tree have been exhausted.
- For pest, disease and biosecurity reasons that cannot be managed with the tree in situ.
- Trees proven to be causing damage to private infrastructure or services where all interventions to retain the tree have been exhausted.
- Trees that are recognised as inducing severe allergenic or toxic responses.
- As part of a project, whole street upgrade or capital works program which will result in a net increase in or improvement to green space that could not be achieved with the tree/s in situ.
- Trees that do not meet specific objectives of the City's Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy, Street Tree Strategy, a masterplan or a management plan for a location in which they are located.
- Non-indigenous trees within natural or bushland reserves that are considered weedy or incompatible with the conservation values of that reserve.
- When a tree is providing little or no amenity and a suitable replacement would do so.

7.3.5. Tree removal will not be considered for the following reasons:

- If the tree is considered healthy and structurally sound
- If there is a safe and practical means for tree retention
- For solar access
- For unjustified property or infrastructure damage claims
- To reduce tree litter and debris including fruit, leaves, berries and nuts. (Removal may be considered when risk is unacceptable to community and cannot be reasonably managed.)
- For causing minor allergenic and irritant responses

- To minimise obstructions of advertising signage
- To minimise obstructions of desired views
- For awnings, verandas or other projections over public open space
- To reduce the impact from any bird/bat/other animal waste or noise
- For superficial bush fire risk
- If the tree or trees provide an important biodiversity function
- For personal aesthetic preference
- The tree variety is disliked
- Trees listed as a 'significant tree' on either the City of Monash (to be developed) or National Trust registers
- If the tree is perceived as unsafe or risk to safety
- For minor property overhang.

7.3.6. Where a tree removal is approved by Council's Arboriculture Unit, the full amenity value associated cost of the tree, its removal, replacement and two year establishment shall be paid by the property owner or representative prior to its removal. The amenity value received will be received as income for direct re-investment into tree management activities such as planting and establishment of replacement and/or additional trees.

Refer to Section 7.7 for additional detail.

7.3.7. A tree amenity value will not be charged in the following instances

- Trees that are dead (except in cases of intentional vandalism or poisoning)
- Trees with a useful life expectancy of less than 3-5 years
- Where the tree is a declared weed species for a particular location
- Trees that have been assessed by a qualified arborist which meet Council's criteria for removal
- Trees proven to be causing damage to private infrastructure or services where all interventions to retain the tree have been exhausted.

7.3.8. Waste and debris generated from tree removal activities will be removed and, in most situations reused by Council as mulch to improve weed control and tree health in garden beds and/or logs placed to provide nature play or habitat opportunities for local fauna. Opportunities to retain a dead tree and maintain it as a 'habitat' tree will be considered as part of the decision making process. Habitat trees provide an important function by providing homes for local fauna.

7.3.9. Council may place conditions as it sees fit, including replacement.

APPROVALS

- 7.3.10. The Co-ordinator Arboriculture and Senior Arborist or delegated officer(s) may authorise the removal of a tree identified as significant in order to avoid unreasonable risk or damage where a tree is assessed as being HAZARDOUS.
- 7.3.11. Where a tree is identified as an IMMEDIATE HAZARD removal may be authorised by the inspecting Arborist and undertaken immediately. All inspection details should be recorded against the asset in Council's Asset Management Information System.
- 7.3.12. The approval for the removal of a tree 10m and under for any other reason other than hazardous is determined by the Coordinator of Arboriculture.
- 7.3.13. The approval for the removal of a tree over 10m for any other reason other than hazardous is determined by Coordinator of Arboriculture however in cases where there are multiple factors in play the Co-ordinator may seek advice from either the Manager and/or Director.
- 7.3.14. The approval and removal of multiple street trees in a single street or whole street is determined by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment by way of approving the community endorsed Street Tree Renewal plan.
- 7.3.15. Trees listed as a 'significant tree' on either the City of Monash register (to be developed) or National Trust register or listed as a heritage item may only be removed via approval from Council. A notice of motion must be prepared to seek Council resolution to proceed.

APPEALS

- 7.3.16. Residents or other interested parties may appeal a Council decision to have a tree removed or retained on Council Managed Land.
- 7.3.17. If a resident or other interested party insists on the removal or retention of a tree or group of trees despite advice and assurances from the, Coordinator of Arboriculture or delegated officer(s) that the contrary or an alternative is more appropriate, this request must be in writing and addressed to the Manager Horticulture Services.

Following receipt of the written request, the Manager Horticulture Services shall initiate the appeal process as outlined below:

The Senior Arborist or Coordinator of Arboriculture will provide a brief 'objective over-view' report to the Manager Horticulture Services that describes the arboriculture issues concerning the tree removal or retention.

Following a site inspection, the Manager Horticulture Services will either base their decision upon the information contained within the report from the Senior Arborist or Coordinator of Arboriculture; or

- Determine to obtain an independent report from a qualified arborist to confirm the arboriculture issues; or
- Refer the matter to the Director of Infrastructure and Environment for review in accordance with this policy.

The Manager Horticulture Services will inform the Ward Councillor of the issues regarding the tree removal or retention.

The Manager Horticulture Services will write to the resident to advise the decision on the matter.

7.4. Tree Pruning

7.4.1. Council is responsible for all formative pruning and maintenance pruning.

7.4.2. Residents and landowners are not permitted to prune Council trees.

7.4.3. Tree pruning will be carried out under the following circumstances:

- To maintain healthy trees
- To ensure road and power/service line clearance is maintained
- To prevent the impact or damage to property
- To prevent any occupational health, safety and welfare risk to the public
- For the correct development of young trees
- To ensure footpath clearance access
- To ensure sight line clearances for signs, crossovers and traffic lights.

7.4.4. Council will not allow unreasonable pruning of trees for the following reasons:

- For solar access
- To reduce leaf, fruit and litter debris
- For causing minor allergenic and irritant responses.
- To minimise obstructions of advertising signage and desired views.
- For awnings, verandas and other projections over public open space.
- To reduce the impact from any bird / bat / other animal waste or noise.
- For personal aesthetic preference.

7.4.5. Tree pruning will be in accordance with *AS4373-2007 Pruning of amenity trees*.

7.4.6. Council will reduce canopies over a property boundary however will do so not to compromise the integrity of the canopy and will be in accordance with *AS4373-2007 Pruning of amenity trees* to maintain the health of the tree. Repeat pruning will only be considered for excessive regrowth and excessive pruning will not be considered.

7.4.7. New developments that are constructed under existing canopies will not be pruned to the detriment of the tree.

ROAD CLEARANCE PRUNING

7.4.8. In the situation where well established trees may have developed prior to current vehicle height capacity, the introduction of more contemporary infrastructure and legislative changes on clearance requirements other than for power lines. Removal of structural branches may cause significant wounds, provide entry points for pathogenic organisms and decay, and cause undue harm to the trees. Council's Arborist and assigned contractors will aim to meet clearance requirements as best as possible while maintaining the integrity of the trees health and structure. Other controls Council may use to minimise risk are;

- Installation of reflective plates on low structural branches above the roadway
- Install white lines to direct traffic away from kerb
- Install warning signs in streets known to have low clearance.



*Note: The Road Management Plan is currently being reviewed and will further inform the final Tree Management Policy.

ELECTRICAL LINES CLEARANCE PRUNING

7.4.9. To achieve compliance with the Electricity Safety Act 1998 and the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, Council will review and update its annual Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan (ELCMP) by 31 March each year for implementation.

7.4.10. Street trees are inspected and pruned annually to comply with ELCMP objectives.

7.4.11. Pruning works within 3m of power lines can only be carried out by suitably qualified personnel.

7.4.12. Council will be responsible for appointing a power line pruning contractor to undertake tree pruning in accordance with the Guidelines to the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015.

7.4.13. Energy Safe Compliant Contractors must at all times where possible trim trees in accordance with *AS4373 Pruning of amenity trees*.

7.5. Vegetation Clearance/ Overhanging Trees

7.5.1. In compliance with Local Law 3, Council may order the residents or landowners to remove overgrown vegetation, cut back overhanging branches or to remove a tree if the vegetation, branches or tree creates or are likely to create danger or difficulty to persons using a public place.

7.5.2. Where private trees overhang Council property, footpaths or roadways, the maintenance of the tree is regarded as the owner's responsibility and the owner should undertake pruning when requested. If the owner does not comply with a request, an order for the pruning of overhanging branches can be issued by Council – especially if there is threat to life or property. Council may also undertake the necessary tree works and then recover the cost of the works from the tree owner. Note: Residents who are registered for National Disability Insurance Scheme may qualify for services to maintain vegetation.

7.5.3. Where Council street trees are overhanging into private property, residents should contact Council for the tree to be inspected.

7.5.4. Neighbours have the right to prune the branches of a tree overhanging their property. This pruning can only occur to the boundary line and should occur without crossing the boundary to undertake the pruning. It is advised to approach the neighbour prior to pruning.

7.5.5. 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. Information and support, to assist with resolving neighbour disputes is provided by the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria – Trees Section.

7.6. Tree Planting and Establishment

7.6.1. Council will proactively plant suitable species on road reserves, open space and on other Council managed land to support the goals and outcomes identified in various Council Strategies, in particular the objective of increasing overall canopy cover to 30% by 2040 (Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy).

- 7.6.2. Council will select species for planting that are suitable for, and perform well within the site, and that have the ability to contribute positively to the City's environment. In considering suitable species selection, the site criteria includes:
- Width of planting opportunity on nature strip, tree planting square, road shoulder or median strip
 - Soil depth and type
 - Street orientation and aspect for shade and sun
 - Width of planting opportunity on nature strip, tree planting square, road shoulder or median strip
 - Existing character or 'avenue of trees' in the street
 - Traffic volume and speed
 - Location of crossings and traffic lights
 - Overhead obstructions or constraints and underground services
 - Pedestrian and vehicle use and need for visibility
 - Access for street cleaning equipment and garbage collection vehicles
 - Choosing species that have performed well in similar sites or in the same street.
- 7.6.3. Before planting or authorising the planting of vegetation in a road, Council must consider the requirements of Section 232 of the Local Government Act 2020, amongst other considerations.
- 7.6.4. New tree plantings will consider:
- The guidelines for tree planting provided in the Urban Landscape and Canopy Vegetation Strategy (Refer Section 9.1);
 - The surrounding vegetation composition and any environmental or aesthetic considerations
 - The purpose of the road as well as the construction of the road and any impact the trees may have on it, or surrounding structures
 - The impacts the proposed trees may have on any services present, above or below the ground, taking into account Legislative requirements
 - The type of traffic using the road and potential impacts of road safety
 - The possible impacts on the safety of the public
 - The suitability of species and provision of summer shade and habitat
 - Any other matters which may be pertinent to the site.
- 7.6.5. Council will water street trees during summer for the first two years of the street tree being planted, or as required. Residents are also encouraged to water street trees.
- 7.6.6. Any street trees that have been planted by residents and landowners will not be watered by Council. Council may also request the tree to be removed if deemed unsuitable.
- 7.6.7. Trees in open spaces will be watered by Council during summer for the first two years, either by the reserve irrigation (if installed) or manual processes.

- 7.6.8. Trees will be monitored appropriately to ensure they are receiving enough maintenance to aid in establishment during the first two years or as required. This may include watering, mulching, weeding and staking.

7.7. Private Planting on Roadsides and Nature Strips

- 7.7.1. Property owners or occupiers are not permitted to plant trees on their nature strip. Only plants that will not grow higher than 0.5m are permitted, as per the City of Monash Nature Strip Guidelines.
- 7.7.2. Council may require that a resident or landowner remove or relocate a nature strip tree planted without prior approval. No compensation will be available to residents for the removal of trees and shrubs that have been planted without Council permission. Council may remove any privately planted tree if not removed by a resident after the allocated or requested time for removal.

7.8. Tree Valuation

- 7.8.1. A valuation of trees may be undertaken by a qualified arborist (Certificate Level 5) to assess the value of the tree as part of development plans and private development planning applications, and to set a value for compensation, where it is agreed the best overall outcome is a trees removal.
- 7.8.2. The valuation will be based using the Burnley Method and include the following approach:

Where a tree removal is approved by Council's Arboriculture Unit for development, construction or works, the associated cost of the tree, its removal and replacement shall be paid by the property owner or representative prior to its removal.

The costs associated with removal of a public tree in the City of Monash include:

A – Removal Costs	Amounting to the fees incurred by Council for physically removing the tree
B – Amenity Value	Calculated in accordance with Council’s Amenity Formula.
C – Reinstatement Costs	Calculated in accordance with the greening required to replace the loss to the landscape incurred by the removal, planting and establishment.

B – Amenity Value - The amenity value will be based on the following formula:

$$\text{Value (V)} = \text{Basic Value (\$)} \times \text{Species (S)} \times \text{Aesthetics (A)} \times \text{Locality (L)} \times \text{Condition (C)}$$

The above formula will be reviewed and updated annually.

7.9. Tree Replacement

- 7.9.1. All trees that are removed will be replaced as close as practically possible to the tree being removed to ensure that there is no net loss of trees from the immediate areas.
- 7.9.2. All costs associated with the removal and replacement of a tree or trees are to be borne by the resident or landowner who has requested the removal.
- 7.9.3. Replacement trees will be sourced and planted by Council in a future planting season.

7.10. Tree Damage

- 7.10.1. If a tree from a private property falls onto public roads and land under the Council’s care and control, Council may act in the interests of public safety to clear part of the fallen tree. Any part of the tree made safe by Council may be returned to the land owner for disposal. Total removal may be required and will remain the responsibility of the land owner. Responsibility or liability for any damage remains with the owner of the tree.
- 7.10.2. Council is not liable for any damage to property resulting from a tree planted in the road reserve (under section 245 of the Local Government Act 2020) unless the owner or occupier of property adjacent to the road has made a written request to Council to take reasonable action to avert a risk of damage

to property of the owner or occupier from the tree; and Council has failed to take reasonable action in response to the request.

7.10.3. Claims for indirect property damage should be accompanied by a report from a geotechnical or structural engineer that implicates tree root damage.

7.10.4. Should infrastructure damage be attributed to roots of a Council tree, an appropriate remedial solution will be sought. Such remedial solutions may include:

- Realignment of path
- Selective root pruning
- Casting concrete kerbs in situ
- Ramping and bridging over existing tree roots
- Increasing the tree planting/ plot area
- The installation of tree root barriers
- Replacing current infrastructure with material more tolerant to tree roots i.e.: asphalt rather than concrete.

7.10.5. Council will take preventative measures to minimise future conflicts between tree roots and infrastructure. Such preventative measures may include:

- Appropriate tree species selection and placement
- The adoption of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) treatments, structural soils and contiguous tree route trenches.

7.10.6. In the event of a claim being lodged against Council as a result of damage to property, Council will respond in timely manner to ensure the claim is investigated within 10 working days of receipt of the claim and aim to settle minor claims (up to \$5,000) within 10 working days of the investigation. To make a claim for damages it will need to be lodged via Councils website at mail@monash.vic.gov.au with all the relevant evidence of damages, costs, photos etc.

7.11. Asset Management

7.11.1. Monash City Council will deploy an effective, fit for purpose Asset Management Information System (AMIS) and linked geographic information system (GIS) that will store tree asset information to ensure that the City has detailed, reliable and secure information relating to the type, location, condition, risk rating, maintenance history and any customer interactions for trees on public land.

7.11.2. The objective will be to record and maintain up to date records of all trees under management on Monash City Council public land.

7.11.3. All trees that have been formally inspected will be recorded in Monash's AMIS and the information recorded will include (as a minimum):

- Genus and species name
- Date inspected
- GPS location
- Dated planted (if known) or age estimate
- Estimated height
- Trunk diameter at breast height (DBH)
- Risk rating
- Useful Life Expectancy (ULE)
- Actions to be taken
- Maintenance work undertaken (history)
- Customer requests (where applicable).

7.11.4. Asset records will be maintained and updated on a regular cycle in line with the proactive inspection program.

7.11.5. The individual asset record history will be retained permanently in the AMIS. When a tree is removed, its status will be changed to dead and this process is also used to identify locations for potential replacement.

7.11.6. The AMIS will have the capability to produce reports and information, either by individual tree or by grouped selection to facilitate decision making and compliance and performance reporting.

8. Community Engagement

8.1. All community engagement activities will be governed by Monash City Council Community Engagement Policy.

8.2. The community will be informed and consulted about all major projects involving tree removal and planting and any other specialised projects that involve Council trees.

8.3. The type and extent of community engagement will vary depending on the impact of the works on the local community and will be determined in accordance with a number of factors including; the prominence of the location, the significance of the tree, the size of the tree, the number of trees being impacted and the visual impact of proposed works.

8.4. Community engagement may include direct contact with the customer, letters to immediately affected residents, signage on site and information on the Council's website and social media.

8.5. The Monash City Council will assess customer requests regarding trees in line within the parameters of this policy.

- 8.6. All customer service requests will be responded to in a timely manner in accordance with Monash City Council's Customer Service Guarantee.
- 8.7. The Monash City Council has adopted the 'Green Shoots' approach which aims to educate and engage the community into a variety of Council's activities which both protect and enhance the urban forest. This approach aims to create collaborative efforts within the community to positively impact on both the community and environment. Examples include but not limited to; bush kinders, Gardens for Wildlife, Skink Link project and supporting our established and emerging Friends of Groups.

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