

Street and Park Tree Management Policy 2026

Community engagement summary report

October 2026

Bayside City Council

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2 Overview

Bayside City Council sought community feedback on proposed changes to its Street and Park Tree Management Policy. Key policy aspects tested through engagement included development-related tree removal, the fairness of proposed approaches, evidence required for property-damage claims, and balancing public-tree protection with private-property interests.

Council received 272 survey submissions and one email submission during the consultation period between 3 September and 4 October 2026.

Overall, a majority of respondents supported each of the four proposed approaches tested through the survey, although the strength of support and the concerns raised varied between the proposals.

- **Exploring alternatives before development-related tree removal:** 171 of 271 respondents (63%) supported or strongly supported requiring applicants to demonstrate that reasonable alternatives had been explored. Comments emphasised removal as a last resort and sought clearer guidance about the evidence required and how competing impacts would be assessed.
- **Applicants paying tree value and associated costs:** 149 of 270 respondents (55%) considered the approach fair or very fair, while 82 (30.5%) considered it unfair or very unfair. Comments reflected support for a user-pays approach, alongside concerns that payment could make removal appear purchasable and that costs may be disproportionate for individual homeowners compared with commercial developers.
- **Requiring evidence of tree-root damage to property:** 227 of 272 respondents (83.5%) supported or strongly supported requiring evidence before Council assessed a claim – the strongest level of support among the four proposed approaches tested. Comments sought a proportionate evidence requirement and greater clarity about who would arrange and pay for specialist investigations.
- **Considering practical alternatives before removing a tree causing property impacts:** 196 of 268 respondents (73%) supported or strongly supported exploring practical alternatives before removal. Comments generally supported removal as a last resort but sought clearer guidance about when recurring damage, failed treatments, ongoing safety risks or disproportionate costs would justify removal.

Respondents sometimes selected the same survey response for different reasons, reinforcing the need to interpret the quantitative results alongside written comments.

Balancing public trees and private property: Of 267 respondents, 112 (42%) selected equal consideration should be given to public tree and private property, 96 (36%) prioritised public trees, 58 (21.7%) prioritised private property.

Customer experience: Among respondents who had previously contacted Council about a public tree, negative ratings exceeded positive ratings for clarity of Council's decision and overall experience. Views on process fairness were almost evenly divided, highlighting opportunities to improve communication, consistency and follow-through.

Key considerations include:

- **Tree protection, canopy and habitat:** The most frequent theme in comments concerned the protection and value of established trees, canopy, habitat, biodiversity,

cooling and neighbourhood character. Respondents also raised the cumulative loss of trees through development and removal decisions.

- **Property and infrastructure impacts:** Respondents described impacts involving roots, branches, leaves, fruit and debris and sought clearer pathways for investigating, resolving and funding responses to confirmed damage.
- **Safety and proactive management:** Respondents called for regular inspection, preventative maintenance and prompt action where branches, roots, fruit, declining trees, footpaths, drainage or visibility created demonstrated risks.
- **Tree selection and planting location:** Respondents supported matching species and mature-tree characteristics to the available space and nearby infrastructure. Species preferences differed, but comments commonly supported a site-appropriate approach.
- **Policy clarity, costs and responsibilities:** Respondents sought clearer and more proportionate rules about evidence, valuation, costs, liability, compensation, repairs and responsibility for Council-managed trees.
- **Implementation, compliance and communication:** Feedback called for stronger monitoring of development conditions and replacement planting, as well as clearer decisions, timeframes, progress updates, follow-through and consideration of local observations.

Next steps

Council will consider this report's community engagement findings when deciding whether to adopt the revised Policy at its meeting on 17 November 2026.

3 Background

The Street and Park Tree Management Policy guides Council's management of public trees, wildlife and green spaces, while balancing safety, private property, infrastructure and development considerations.

The policy was last adopted in 2024. A review was brought forward to reflect updated legislation, Australian Standards, arboricultural best practice, long-term urban forest objectives and the need for clearer, more transparent decision-making.

Related Council documents and consultations

- Draft Street and Park Tree Management Policy 2026
- Street and Park Tree Management Policy 2024
- Urban Forest Strategy 2022–2040

4 Consultation process

4.1 Consultation purpose

The consultation was designed to provide the community with an opportunity to comment on proposed changes to Bayside's Street and Park Tree Management Policy and to identify concerns, suggestions and implementation considerations before the policy was finalised.

The consultation sought views on whether the proposed changes were fair, understandable and appropriately balanced tree protection with community needs. Community feedback could influence final policy wording – particularly Sections 6.5 and 7 – development-related tree-removal requirements, investigation and decision-making processes, policy clarity, customer experience and information provided to the community. Legislation, Australian Standards, arboricultural best practice, Council's urban-forest commitment, existing strategies, individual operational decisions and emergency safety decisions were outside the scope of influence.

4.1.1 Consultation methodology

Community engagement was undertaken from 3 September to 4 October 2026 at the Consult level of participation. The engagement program was designed to broadly reach Bayside property owners, developers and builders, arborists and industry professionals, environmental and community groups, people who had previously contacted Council about a public tree, and the broader Bayside community.

Feedback opportunities included:

- an online survey on Council's Have Your Say website
- an online question-and-answer forum
- direct correspondence to Council.

The online survey collected information about respondents' connection to Bayside and previous experience contacting Council about public trees. It also sought responses to proposed policy requirements and approaches, including development-related tree removal, evidence requirements for alleged root damage, and the balance between protecting public trees and private property. Respondents could provide additional open-text feedback and comment on whether they had sufficient information to participate.

Details	Activity
Online **272 survey submissions** **1 Q&A submission** **1,038 visitors** **1,496 views**	**Have Your Say website** • Online survey – 272 responses Community members and stakeholders responded to closed questions and provided open-text feedback on development-related removal, property impacts, service experience and public-tree management. • Q&A forum – 1 question/statement received.
Direct **1 submission**	**Correspondence** • 1 email with attached submission was received. The participant supported a more considered approach to tree selection and retention, favouring appropriately sized species that provide canopy and amenity while reducing conflicts with powerlines, footpaths, infrastructure and private property, and questioning the suitability of large trees in constrained streets and development sites.

Communications

The consultation was promoted through the Have Your Say project webpage (1,038 visitors), Council's website and e-newsletters (12,500+ subscribers, 4 issues), social media posts (7 and 29 September), and direct email to Have Your Say members (5,300).

5 Participant profile

Most respondents lived in Bayside (261) and/or owned property in Bayside (156). Other respondents volunteered in Bayside (42), worked in Bayside (32), belonged to a community group or organisation (31), regularly visited Bayside (18), operated a Bayside business (13), or worked in planning, development, construction, engineering or arboriculture (7).

Age and gender were not collected because these characteristics were not relevant to the consultation questions or required to interpret views on the proposed policy changes.

	Demographic	Bayside 2021 Census	Participants (%)
Suburb	Beaumaris	12.8%	44 (16.5%)
	Black Rock	6.2%	32 (12%)
	Brighton	23.7%	55 (21%)
	Brighton East	15.6%	20 (7.5%)
	Cheltenham	3.9%	13 (5%)
	Hampton	13.6%	43 (16%)
	Hampton East	4.9%	11 (4%)
	Highett	7.6%	12 (4.5%)
	Sandringham	11.8%	33 (12.5%)
	Outside Bayside	-	4 (2%)
	Did not respond	-	5 (2%)

Responses were received from all Bayside suburbs. Brighton recorded the most respondents (55), followed by Beaumaris (44) and Hampton (43). Four respondents lived outside Bayside, while five did not provide a suburb.

Representation note
Participants came from across all Bayside suburbs and had varied connections to the municipality, including as residents, property owners, workers, volunteers, visitors, business operators, community-group members and relevant professionals. As participation was self-selected, the findings may not represent the views of the broader Bayside community.

6 Consultation findings

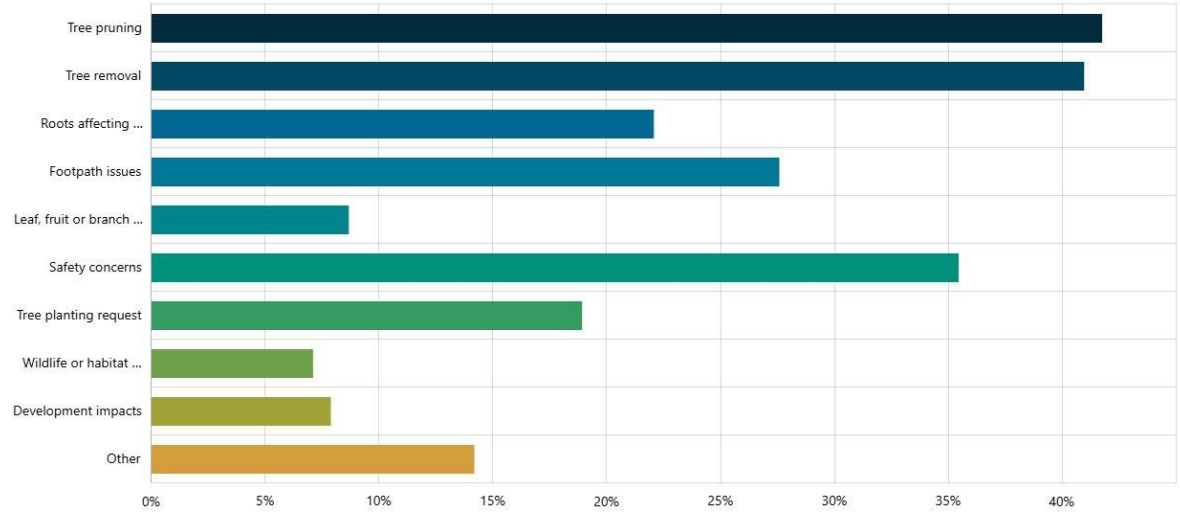
The following section summarises the key themes which arose in community feedback on the Street and Park Tree Management Policy 2026.

The survey tested separate policy propositions. Quantitative survey results are considered alongside written comments so the report shows both the level of support and the likely reasons, concerns and suggestions behind it. Individual quotes are not included to protect privacy.

6.1 Customer experience

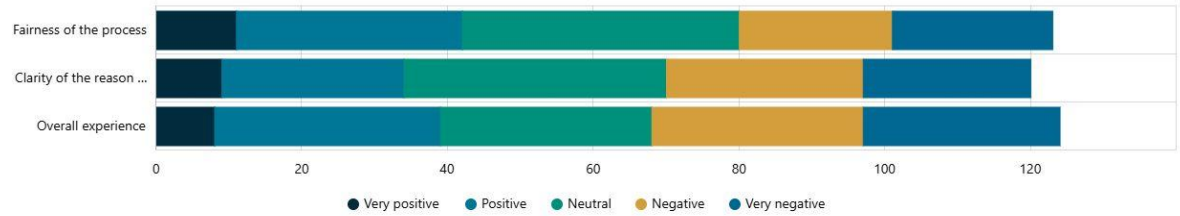
Of the 272 survey respondents, 127 (46.7%) said they had previously contacted Council about a public tree. These respondents were asked to rate their most recent interaction. Understanding respondents' previous interactions with Council helped identify opportunities to improve customer experience through implementation of the revised policy.

Respondents who had previously contacted Council reported enquiries covering a wide range of public-tree issues. The most common matters related to pruning, safety, footpath impacts, tree removal and roots affecting property or infrastructure. Other enquiries concerned planting requests, leaf, fruit or branch litter, wildlife or habitat, and development impacts. As respondents could select more than one enquiry type, the results reflect overlapping concerns rather than mutually exclusive categories.



Respondent feedback showed **mixed service experiences** and helps explain why specific issues featured strongly in comments received throughout the survey. Negative ratings exceeded positive ratings for both clarity of Council's decision and overall experience: 50 of 120 respondents (41.7%) rated clarity negatively, compared with 34 (28.3%) positively; and 56 of 124 (45.2%) rated their overall experience negatively, compared with 39 (31.5%) positively.

Views on process fairness were more evenly divided, with 43 of 123 negative ratings (35.0%) and 42 positive ratings (34.1%). Comments focused not only on the outcome of a request, but also on whether it was acknowledged promptly, assessed consistently, clearly explained and followed through to completion.



These ratings reflect respondents' perceptions of their most recent tree-related interaction with Council. They do not establish whether individual technical decisions were correct. They do, however, identify opportunities to improve confidence in the process and implementation of the new policy.

6.2 Public trees and development

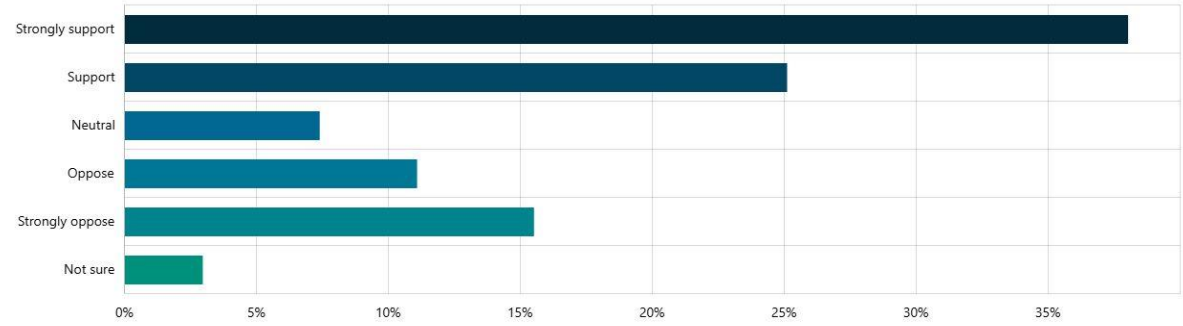
Community feedback on tree removal for development reflected a shared concern that removal decisions should be carefully considered, but there was no single view on how restrictive the policy should be. Many participants wanted strong protection for established

trees, while others wanted case-by-case flexibility where retention created significant safety, property or development impacts.

6.2.1 Alternatives before development-related removal

The survey explained that the current policy generally does not allow the removal of public trees valued at more than $20,000 to facilitate development. The draft policy would remove this threshold and instead assess each application individually. Participants were asked: To what extent do you support requiring applicants to demonstrate that all reasonable alternatives have been explored before a public tree can be removed? It is important to note that this closed question tested the requirement to explore alternatives; it did not separately measure support for removing the $20,000 threshold.

Broad but qualified support: 171 of 271 respondents (63.1%) supported or strongly supported the requirement. Seventy-two (26.6%) opposed or strongly opposed, 20 were neutral and eight were unsure.



In comments received throughout the survey, supporters generally considered public-tree removal should be a last resort. They wanted applicants to design around established trees where practical and recognised that mature canopy, habitat and neighbourhood character cannot be replaced quickly by small new trees.

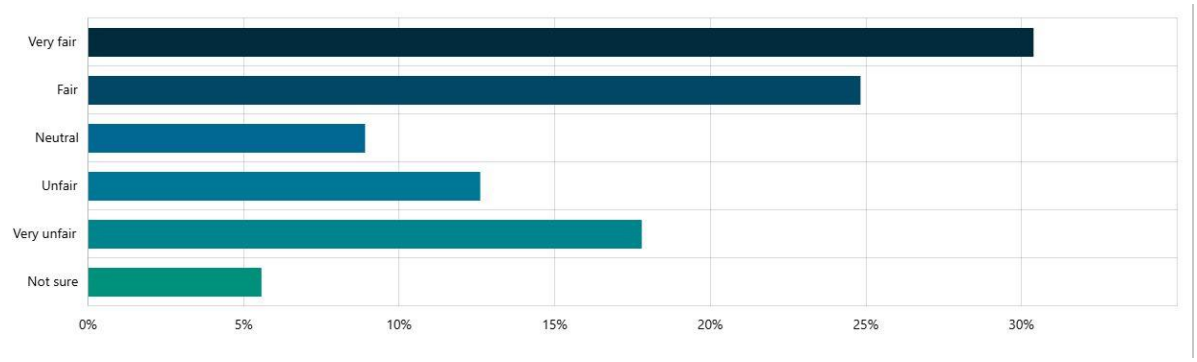
Support was also often conditional. Participants wanted Council to explain what applicants must do to demonstrate that alternatives have been genuinely explored, who assesses the evidence and how tree value, development feasibility, safety and property impacts are balanced.

Opposition came from different directions. Some participants considered removing the existing $20,000 threshold would weaken tree protection and make removal easier for well-resourced applicants like developers. Others wanted greater flexibility where a tree was unsafe, unsuitable for its location, damaging infrastructure or significantly constraining reasonable development.

6.2.2 Tree value and associated costs

Participants were advised that, if development-related tree removal were approved under the proposed Policy, the applicant would pay the tree's assessed value and associated costs. Associated costs may include assessment, removal, replacement planting, establishment and maintenance, and site reinstatement. Tree values vary significantly according to species, size, age, condition, canopy cover and environmental contribution.
Survey participants were then asked how fair they thought this approach was.

Mixed or contested views: 149 of 270 respondents (55.2%) considered the approach fair or very fair; 82 (30.4%) considered it unfair or very unfair, 24 were neutral and 15 were unsure.



Drawing from comments received throughout the survey, participants who supported the approach generally considered that the person benefiting from removal should meet the cost, rather than ratepayers funding assessment, removal, replacement planting, establishment, maintenance and site reinstatement. Some also considered a substantial payment necessary to recognise the wider public and environmental value of mature trees.

Participants who questioned the approach did so for different reasons. Some considered that payment could make removal appear purchasable and could not replace lost canopy, habitat or cooling. Others considered the indicative values excessive, particularly for individual homeowners (rather than commercial developers) or where a tree was unsafe, unsuitable or causing damage.

The feedback indicates a community benefit in explaining how tree value is calculated and how collected funds are used.

Topic	What respondents said
Removal as a last resort	Many respondents said development should be designed around established public trees wherever practical and that removal should occur only after genuine alternatives had been considered. They emphasised that mature canopy, habitat, cooling and neighbourhood character cannot be quickly replaced by new planting. Others wanted flexibility where a tree was unsafe, unsuitable for its location, damaging infrastructure or significantly constraining reasonable development.
$20,000 threshold	Some respondents wanted the $20,000 threshold retained because they considered it an objective safeguard against the loss of highly valued trees, particularly where developers could absorb removal costs. Others preferred individual assessment rather than a fixed monetary limit, especially where a tree was unsafe, unsuitable or causing significant impacts. Several comments indicated that the survey question did not clearly separate removal of the threshold from the requirement to explore alternatives.
Tree valuation	Supporters considered that applicants benefiting from removal should pay the assessed tree value and associated costs rather than transferring these costs to ratepayers. Some also viewed substantial valuations as recognition of the public, environmental and amenity value of mature trees. Critical comments took two forms: some said payment could make removal appear purchasable and could not compensate for lost canopy or habitat, while

	others considered valuations excessive or insufficiently connected to actual costs.
Different applicants	Some respondents distinguished between commercial developers and individual homeowners. They considered developers should meet full costs and stronger requirements because removal may facilitate a commercial benefit. Others were concerned that the same evidence or payment requirements could be disproportionate for residents dealing with an unsafe, unsuitable or damaging Council tree.
Construction protection	Respondents called for stronger protection of retained trees during construction. Suggestions included tree-protection plans, bonds or deposits, site inspections, monitoring during works and enforcement where trees were damaged, poisoned or removed contrary to a decision. Some also wanted Council to follow up refusals and approved conditions to confirm that commitments were met.
Replacement planting	Respondents wanted removed trees replaced promptly with suitable species in appropriate locations. Feedback called for replacement planting to account for lost canopy and habitat, with establishment care, watering, supports, protective barriers and monitoring of survival. Some suggested multiple or advanced trees where appropriate, while others stressed that replacement planting does not immediately reproduce the benefits of a mature tree.

6.3 Public trees and private property impacts

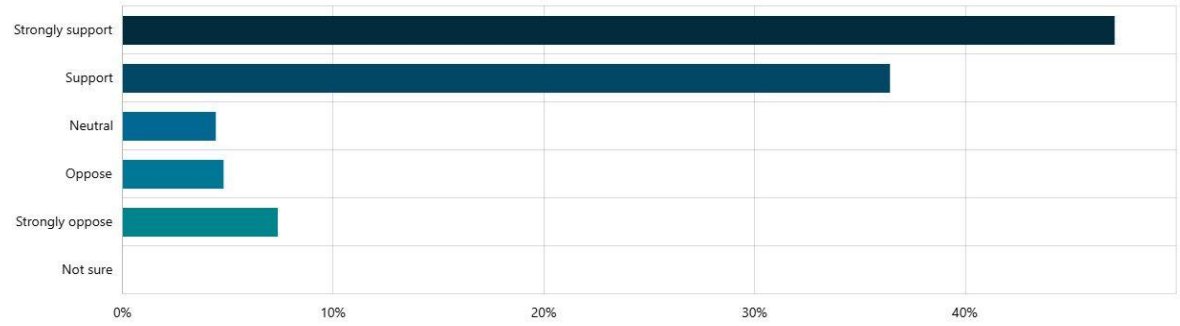
Property impacts generated some of the strongest and most detailed feedback received through the survey. Participants generally supported evidence-based decisions and supported considering alternatives before removal, but they also wanted greater clarity about who is responsible for investigating, paying for and resolving confirmed impacts.

6.3.1 Evidence before assessment

The survey explained that the draft policy proposes introducing a new framework for managing situations where public-tree roots may be affecting private property or infrastructure. Under this framework, evidence and investigation would be required before tree removal is considered, and alternative solutions would need to be explored first.

Survey participants were asked whether they supported Council requiring evidence before assessing claims that tree roots are causing property damage.
Examples included photos of the damage, reports from a plumber or engineer, exploratory excavation findings, or other information showing that tree roots are likely responsible.

Strong consensus on the principle: All 272 respondents answered. A total of 227 (83.5%) supported or strongly supported requiring evidence, 33 (12.1%) opposed or strongly opposed and 12 were neutral.



Through comments received, supporters considered evidence important to establish whether a public tree was actually responsible and to avoid unnecessary removal.
Participants recognised that apparent tree damage may require investigation and that professional input may be appropriate in complex cases.

The main disagreement concerned how the requirement should operate. Some considered photographs, visible damage or an initial Council inspection should be enough to start an assessment. Others accepted that plumbing, engineering, arboricultural or excavation evidence may be required where causation is unclear.

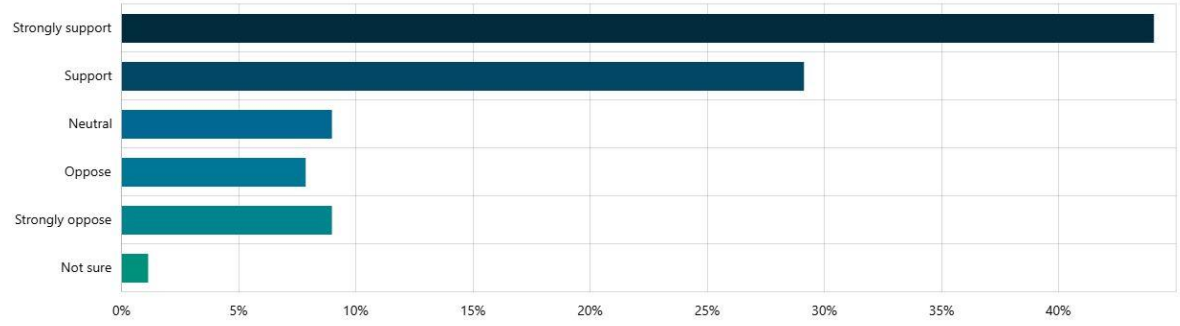
A recurring concern was cost. Some participants considered it unfair for a resident to pay for specialist reports before Council would assess possible damage from a Council-managed tree. Suggestions included Council completing the initial assessment, funding or reimbursing reports where responsibility was established, or using a staged process, so expensive evidence was requested only when necessary.

6.3.2 Alternatives before removal

The draft policy proposes practical alternatives are considered before tree removal, including root pruning, root barriers, infrastructure repair or relocation, and modified infrastructure design. Tree removal would only be considered where other practical options were not effective or reasonable.

Participants were asked to what extent they supported this approach.

There was **broad support with clearer limits requested:** 196 of 268 respondents (73.1%) supported or strongly supported the approach; 45 (16.8%) opposed or strongly opposed, 24 were neutral and three were unsure.



Through comments provided, many participants supported removal being treated as a last resort. They wanted root management, repair or design changes considered where these could resolve the problem while retaining a healthy tree.

Others questioned whether repeated repairs were reasonable where roots continued to grow and damage recurred. These participants sought a clearer point at which failed treatments, continuing safety risks, an unsuitable species, repeated expense or disproportionate

treatment costs would justify removal and replacement. Comments supported considering root pruning, barriers, infrastructure repair, relocation or redesign before removal, while also seeking clearer limits where these measures had failed or no longer provided a durable and proportionate solution.

Topic	What respondents said
Tree suitability and planting location	Several respondents linked property and infrastructure impacts to species that were too large or otherwise unsuitable for constrained sites. They wanted mature size, root behaviour and canopy form considered alongside nearby pipes, walls, footpaths, driveways, roads and powerlines. Detailed species and planting feedback is provided in the Species selection and planting location section.
Removal threshold	Many respondents supported trying root pruning, barriers, infrastructure repair or redesign before removal. Others wanted the policy to define when alternatives were no longer effective, durable or reasonable. Circumstances raised included repeated damage after repairs, failed treatments, significant safety risks, unsuitable species or planting locations, and costs that were disproportionate to the likely benefit of retaining the tree. Other respondents cautioned that inconvenience alone should not justify removal.
Repeated damage	Respondents described recurring impacts to footpaths, stormwater and other pipes, fences, walls, lawns, roads and gutters. They questioned the value of repeatedly repairing infrastructure where roots continued to grow and damage returned. Feedback sought clearer guidance on when failed treatments, repeated expenditure, ongoing safety risks or continuing property impacts would justify a different response.
Preventative action and early intervention	Respondents wanted Council to identify and address emerging issues before damage became more serious. Suggestions included earlier inspection, proactive maintenance, root management and timely treatment where visible changes indicated increasing risk. Safety-related concerns—including footpath hazards, falling branches, low clearance and road visibility—are discussed in the Safety, footpaths and proactive inspection section.
Timeliness and responsiveness	Respondents raised delayed responses, unresolved requests and the need to report recurring concerns more than once. They sought prompt acknowledgement, clearer assessment and works timeframes, progress updates and confirmation when agreed action was completed. Broader service feedback is discussed in the Service experience, communication and responsiveness section.
Council responsibility	Some respondents wanted Council to take a more active role because the alleged source of damage was a Council-managed asset. They sought earlier inspection, practical assistance to establish causation, clear ownership of the

	investigation and a commitment to resolve confirmed impacts. Others supported evidence requirements to ensure public trees were not removed without a demonstrated link to the damage.
Repairs and compensation	Respondents wanted the policy to explain what happens once a Council tree is shown to have caused damage. Suggestions included Council contributing to or covering repair costs, addressing damage to fences, paths, drainage and other property, monitoring whether treatments worked, and considering removal where impacts could not be resolved. Some also sought clarity about liability when a tree had previously been inspected.
Who pays	A recurring concern was who should pay for the initial assessment, specialist reports, exploratory excavation, repairs and any eventual removal. Some respondents considered residents should not have to fund costly investigations into damage allegedly caused by a Council-managed tree. Suggestions included Council undertaking the initial assessment, paying for reports, or reimbursing costs when causation was established.
Acceptable evidence	Respondents generally supported evidence-based assessment but wanted the evidence required to match the complexity of the claim. Photographs, visible lifting or cracking, plumbing history and an initial Council inspection were suggested as reasonable starting points. Where responsibility was unclear, respondents accepted that excavation or reports from plumbers, engineers or arborists may be needed. Several cautioned against automatically requiring expensive specialist reports when the cause appeared clear.

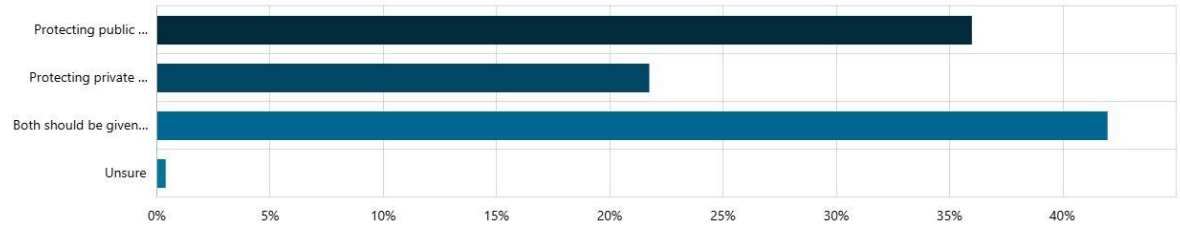
6.3.3 Balancing public tree protection and private property

Participants were asked which of the following statements best reflected their view on balancing public-tree protection with impacts on private property:

- Protecting public trees should generally take priority
- Protecting private property should generally take priority
- Both should be given equal consideration
- Unsure

The question was designed to understand the broad principle the community wanted Council to apply when the benefits of retaining a public tree needed to be weighed against impacts on private property. It tested whether respondents preferred either interest to generally take priority or supported a balanced, case-by-case approach. Responses showed no single preferred position, with the highest support for equal consideration.

Clearly mixed views: Of 267 respondents, 112 (42%) selected that equal consideration should be given to public trees and private property, 96 (36%) prioritised public trees, and 58 (21.7%) prioritised private property.



Participants who prioritised public trees focused on climate adaptation, shade, canopy, habitat, biodiversity, public amenity and the cumulative loss of mature trees through development, through their comments across the survey. They emphasised that replacement planting takes many years to provide comparable benefits.

Participants who prioritised private property focused on damage, safety, recurring personal expense and the limited control property owners have over a Council-managed asset. Some described frustration with unresolved impacts or repeated maintenance.

Participants selecting equal consideration generally supported case-by-case assessment. Their comments suggested that equal consideration did not mean identical weighting in every case, but that Council should transparently consider tree value, evidence, severity, safety, available alternatives, cost and long-term consequences.

Theme	What respondents said
Equal consideration (112 respondents; 42%)	This was the most selected option, although it did not achieve majority support. Comments generally favoured transparent, case-by-case assessment rather than an automatic priority. Respondents wanted Council to consider tree value, evidence of damage, severity, safety, available alternatives, cost and long-term consequences. Equal consideration did not necessarily mean giving both interests identical weight in every case.
Public tree priority (96 respondents; 36%)	Respondents emphasised climate adaptation, shade, canopy, habitat, biodiversity, public amenity and neighbourhood character. They were concerned about the cumulative loss of mature trees through individual development and removal decisions, and noted that replacement planting takes many years to provide comparable cooling, habitat and canopy benefits.
Private property priority (58 respondents; 22%)	Respondents focused on demonstrated property damage, safety risks, recurring personal expense and the limited control owners have over a Council-managed asset. Some described unresolved impacts, repeated repairs or maintenance, and wanted greater weight given to private-property interests where evidence showed significant or continuing harm.
Evidence and severity	Across the different positions, respondents wanted decisions grounded in evidence. Comments distinguished between inconvenience or general concern and demonstrated damage, recurring impacts or significant risks. Participants also wanted the evidence requirement to be proportionate to the complexity of the matter.

6.4 General management of public trees

Two open-text questions were included in the survey. The first invited respondents who have previously contacted Council about a tree issue to suggest changes to Council's management of public trees and the second, for all participants, was to provide feedback for consideration when finalising the Policy.

Each substantive open-text comment was reviewed and assigned to one or more themes. A contribution was counted no more than once within each theme but could be represented in several themes where it raised more than one issue. The open-text themes show issues raised by survey respondents. The first question was available to respondents who had previously contacted Council about a public tree, while the second was available to all survey participants.

Theme	What respondents said
Protection of mature trees, canopy and habitat (57 respondents)	Respondents raised the value of retaining established trees, protecting canopy and habitat, and maintaining the environmental and neighbourhood benefits provided by trees. Comments referred to shade, cooling, biodiversity, wildlife, screening, amenity, ecosystems and neighbourhood character. Respondents also raised the cumulative loss of trees through development and removal decisions, the time required for replacement trees to provide equivalent benefits, and the need to consider shrubs and broader vegetation as habitat. Some supported stronger protection of public and private trees, significant trees and native vegetation, while others supported tree protection subject to demonstrated safety and property impacts.
Property and infrastructure impacts (52 respondents)	Respondents described impacts involving roots, branches, leaves, fruit and debris. These included impacts on pipes, stormwater drainage, fences, walls, paths, roads, gutters, gardens, buildings, vehicles and private property. Comments sought clearer and more timely pathways for investigating and resolving confirmed damage. Suggested responses included root management, infrastructure repair, pruning, replacement or removal, depending on the evidence, severity, recurrence and practicality of available treatments. Respondents expressed different views about who should arrange and pay for investigations, repairs and removal.
Safety, inspection and proactive maintenance (52 respondents)	Respondents raised concerns about falling or overhanging branches, declining trees, fruit and gumnuts, uneven or obstructed footpaths, low clearance, road and driveway visibility, drainage and flooding. Comments included calls for more regular inspection, preventative maintenance, earlier intervention and prompt action where risks were identified. Some respondents considered Council should act before damage or injury occurred, while others cautioned that claims

	of possible risk should be assessed carefully and should not automatically lead to removal of a healthy tree.
Species selection and planting location (50 respondents)	Respondents raised the importance of matching tree species, mature size, root behaviour, canopy form and maintenance requirements to the available space and surrounding conditions. Comments referred to powerlines, footpaths, roads, driveways, intersections, drainage, buildings, private gardens and visibility. Species preferences varied. Some respondents preferred local indigenous or Australian native species for habitat value, while others supported smaller-growing, deciduous, exotic or fire-resistant species in particular locations. The common principle was that the tree should be suitable for the site and its long-term context.
Policy clarity, costs and responsibilities (44 respondents)	Respondents sought clearer policy wording, decision criteria and responsibilities. Comments covered evidence requirements, application and removal costs, tree valuation, liability, compensation, pruning rights, responsibility for investigation and repairs, and who should pay when a Council-managed tree is alleged or shown to have caused damage. Some considered current or proposed costs excessive or disproportionate, particularly for individual residents. Others considered substantial valuations and penalties necessary to recognise tree value and deter avoidable removal or damage. Comments also called for clearer distinctions between residents, commercial developers and other applicants.
Communication, responsiveness and local input (28 respondents)	Respondents raised acknowledgement, response times, progress updates, explanations for decisions, access to relevant officers, completion advice and follow-through on agreed action. Some described unresolved or delayed requests or the need to report an issue more than once. Others sought advance notice of removal, direct discussion with a tree assessor, and greater consideration of residents' day-to-day observations of local trees and conditions. Positive comments about Council communication and current tree management were also received.
Development protection, compliance and replacement planting (26 respondents)	Respondents sought stronger protection of trees during development and construction. Suggestions included tree-protection plans, bonds or deposits, monitoring during works, site inspections and enforcement where trees were damaged, poisoned or removed contrary to requirements. Comments also called for follow-up after refusals and approvals, including checking that required replacement planting had occurred and survived. Some respondents were concerned that tree-removal charges may be absorbed as a development cost and may not adequately deter removal of established trees.
Pruning quality, timing and contractor	Views on pruning differed. Some respondents sought more frequent or faster pruning for safety, clearance and property

oversight (22 respondents)	protection. Others considered pruning excessive or damaging to tree form, health, amenity and habitat, particularly around powerlines. Comments called for consistent arboricultural standards, appropriate timing to avoid wildlife breeding seasons, coordination with utility providers and stronger oversight of contractors. Some also questioned pruning around obsolete or unused cables.
New-tree establishment and additional planting (13 respondents)	Respondents raised watering, supports, protective barriers, establishment care, survival monitoring, succession planting and timeframes for replacing dead, missing or removed trees. Some sought additional planting in streets, parks or areas they considered to have lower canopy or green-space provision. Other comments sought multiple or advanced replacement trees where established trees were removed. Respondents also noted that replacement planting does not immediately reproduce the canopy, habitat or amenity benefits of a mature tree.
Other feedback	Additional matters raised included public education about tree value; coordination with electricity and utility providers; undergrounding or separating powerlines; management of nature strips and roadside vegetation; perceived differences in canopy, planting and green-space provision between suburbs; the need to consider accessibility and the experience of people with limited vision or mobility; the use of local indigenous, native, exotic, deciduous and fire-resistant species in different settings; the role of private trees and vegetation; and requests for First Nations perspectives to inform how tree value is understood. Some respondents provided positive feedback about Council's existing tree management, planting, canopy and open-space work, supported the proposed policy, or asked Council to continue its current approach. Other respondents expressed low confidence in Council or its contractors and sought more transparent, consistent and responsive decision-making.

7 Project Evaluation

Overall assessment

The consultation achieved its main purpose of testing community views on the proposed policy approaches and identifying issues to consider before the policy is finalised. The survey produced clear quantitative results for the four proposed approaches, while the two open-text questions provided detailed feedback on implementation, service experience and broader public-tree management.

Participation and reach

The consultation attracted 272 survey submissions, one direct email submission and one Q&A contribution. The Have Your Say page received 1,038 visitors and 1,496 views. Responses were received from every Bayside suburb and from residents, property owners, workers, volunteers, visitors, business operators, community-group members and relevant professionals. The participation profile provided a useful range of perspectives, particularly

from people with direct experience of Council-managed trees. However, participation was self-selected and was not demographically representative of the broader Bayside community. Brighton, Beaumaris and Hampton generated the most responses, while some suburbs were represented by comparatively small numbers. Age and gender were not collected because they were not needed to interpret the policy questions, but the absence of broader demographic data limits assessment of whether the engagement reached all parts of the community equally.

Information and consultation experience

Most respondents found the consultation information accessible: Of the 260 respondents who answered this question, 215 (83%) found the information easy or very easy to find and understand, 22 (8.5%) found it somewhat or very hard and 23 were unsure.

Effectiveness of engagement methods

The online survey was effective in generating a substantial volume of structured and open-text feedback within the consultation period. Promotion through Council websites, e-newsletters, social media and direct email supported broad awareness, and the online format enabled participation across all Bayside suburbs.

Limitations

The self-selected sample also means the results should be interpreted as the views of participants rather than as representative of the Bayside population.

