Council Policy

Street and Park Tree Management Policy 2026

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Background

Street and park trees are among Bayside City Council's (Council) most valuable community assets, contributing to the municipality's character, liveability, environmental health and landscape identity. They provide shade, enhance neighbourhood amenity, support biodiversity, improve community wellbeing and create attractive public spaces that are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The effective management of these trees is essential to maintaining a safe, healthy and resilient urban environment.

The Bayside 2050 Community Vision (the Vision) identifies the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, environmental sustainability, and the preservation of open spaces as key aspirations for the municipality. The Vision seeks to ensure Bayside remains a healthy, liveable and attractive place for current and future generations, with a strong connection to its natural assets and public landscapes. Street and park trees play a significant role in achieving these aspirations by contributing to the quality and character of Bayside's public realm.

The Council Plan 2025-2029 (the Plan) reinforces Council's commitment to protecting Bayside's amenity, managing open spaces and public assets responsibly, and ensuring the municipality remains an attractive and sustainable place to live. The ongoing management of street and park trees supports these objectives by balancing public safety, environmental outcomes, community expectations and long-term asset stewardship.

The Street and Park Tree Management Policy (the Policy) is further supported by the Urban Forest Strategy 2022-2040 (the Strategy), which provides a long-term framework to increase, protect and diversify Bayside's urban forest. The Strategy recognises the importance of trees and vegetation in creating cooler, greener and more wildlife-friendly neighbourhoods, improving urban amenity, and strengthening the resilience of Bayside's landscape. It also guides Council's approach to tree retention, replacement and new planting to ensure a healthy and sustainable urban forest for future generations.

This Policy establishes the principles and decision-making framework for managing trees on Council-managed streets, parks and public open space. It provides a consistent and transparent approach to tree maintenance, retention, removal and replacement, ensuring decisions are based on sound arboricultural practice while supporting Council's strategic objectives and urban forest outcomes

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1. Purpose

This Policy provides the framework for the management, maintenance and protection of Public Trees on land owned or managed by Council. It aims to support informed and consistent decision-making that balances environmental, social and amenity benefits with Council's responsibility to manage risk and maintain public safety.

The Policy also establishes clear principles and requirements for the protection, retention, maintenance and removal of Public Trees, and provides transparency to the community regarding Council's tree management practices.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all trees within the municipality that are owned or managed by Council, including:

a) Trees located within streets, roads, reserves and public open spaces managed by Council;
b) Trees owned by the Department of Transport and Planning (formerly VicRoads) where management responsibilities have been assigned to Council under the Road Management Act 2004;
c) Trees located on Crown land where Council is appointed as the Committee of Management.

For the purposes of this policy all trees that Council holds responsibility for will be known as Public Trees.

Council manages 70,000 Public Trees as part of its urban forest. This Policy applies to Council officers, contractors, utility providers, developers and any other party undertaking activities that may affect a Public Tree.

The requirements contained within this Policy are based on contemporary arboricultural best practice and relevant Australian Standards, including AS 4373-2007 *Pruning of Amenity Trees*, AS 4970:2025 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites*, and AS 2303:2018 *Tree Stock for Landscape Use*. These standards provide guidance for the pruning, protection, retention, establishment and management of trees within the urban landscape. Authorised Council Arborists may determine appropriate tree management responses and impose additional protection or management measures where site conditions, development impacts, tree value, or tree characteristics warrant a higher level of protection.

3. Policy objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

a) Recognise and safeguard the contribution of Public Trees as essential assets within Council's urban forest;
b) Maintain and enhance tree canopy cover across the municipality;
c) Support the long-term health, structure and viability of Public Trees;

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d) Ensure Public Trees are appropriately considered during planning, design, construction and maintenance activities;
e) Minimise impacts to Public Trees arising from development, infrastructure works, events and other activities;
f) Establish consistent requirements for tree protection, pruning and removal;
g) Promote best practice arboricultural management in accordance with relevant legislation, industry standards and Australian Standards; and
h) Provide a clear and transparent framework for decision-making relating to Public Tree management; and
i) Minimise conflicts between trees and infrastructure and manage associated risks in a practical, balanced and evidence-based manner/

4. Public Tree Protection during Planning, Design and Development

4.1 Principles of Tree Protection

Public Trees are valuable community assets that contribute to environmental sustainability, neighbourhood character, urban cooling, biodiversity and community wellbeing. The protection and retention of Public Trees must be considered at the earliest stages of planning and design to avoid or minimise impacts and support their long-term health, structure and viability.

4.2 Arboricultural Assessment

In accordance with AS 4970:2025 Protection of Trees on Development Sites, any proposed works involving Major encroachment into a Public Tree's Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) or Notional Root Zone (NRZ) or otherwise expected to result in a Moderate or greater impact to a Public Tree, must be supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) prepared by a suitably qualified Arborist holding a minimum AQF Level 5 qualification in Arboriculture or equivalent.

The AIA must assess the potential impacts of the proposed works, identify feasible avoidance and mitigation measures, and demonstrate how impacts to retained trees will be avoided or minimised.

4.3 Applications and Approvals

An AIA must be submitted with any application, permit or proposal involving Major encroachment into a Public Tree's TPZ or NRZ, or where the proposed works are expected to result in a Moderate or greater impact to a Public Tree.
Where removal of a Public Tree is proposed, the AIA must demonstrate that all reasonable retention options have been explored and that the proposal satisfies the criteria established under this Policy.
Where required by Council, a site-specific Tree Protection Plan (TPP) must be prepared based on the approved AIA and submitted to Council for approval prior to the commencement of works.

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4.4 Tree Protection During Works

A Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) and Notional Root Zone (NRZ) must be established and managed in accordance with AS 4970:2025 for the duration of approved works.
No excavation, soil disturbance, grade alteration, material storage, vehicle access or other activity likely to adversely affect a Public Tree may occur within the TPZ or NRZ unless approved by Council and supported by appropriate arboricultural advice.
All tree protection measures specified within an approved Tree Protection Plan must remain in place until works are complete and Council has authorised their removal.

As a condition of approval, Council may require the applicant or developer to provide a Tree Protection Bond prior to the commencement of works. The bond serves as security for the protection of Public Trees and may be used by Council to recover costs associated with tree damage, remedial actions, arboricultural assessments, ongoing maintenance, monitoring requirements, or replacement planting where approved tree protection measures have not been implemented or where impacts to Public Trees have occurred.

4.5 Public Events and Activities.

Where a community event, festival, market, filming activity or other temporary use of Council land has the potential to impact a Public Tree, Council may require the event organiser to prepare and submit a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) for approval.

The TPP must identify all Public Trees that may be affected by the proposed activity and detail measures to avoid or minimise impacts to tree canopies, stems, root systems, Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) and Notional Root Zones (NRZs). The TPP may include requirements for tree protection fencing, ground protection measures, vehicle exclusion zones, site access routes, infrastructure placement, monitoring and arboricultural supervision.

No infrastructure, temporary structures, vehicle access, excavation, soil disturbance, storage of materials or other activity likely to adversely affect a Public Tree may occur within a TPZ or NRZ unless approved by Council and supported by appropriate arboricultural advice.

Council may require the event organiser to provide a Tree Protection Bond prior to the commencement of the event to ensure compliance with approved tree protection measures. The bond may be used to recover costs associated with damage to Public Trees, remediation works, arboricultural assessments or replacement planting where impacts have occurred.

Event organisers must consult with Council during the planning stages of an event to determine whether a Tree Protection Plan, arboricultural assessment, Tree Protection Bond or other tree protection requirements apply.

5. Public Tree Inspections and Maintenance

5.1 Maintenance Objectives

Council will proactively inspect and maintain Public Trees to:

- Support tree health, structure and longevity.

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- Maintain a safe and resilient urban forest.
- Fulfil Council's obligations as a responsible person under section 84C of the *Electricity Safety Act 1998* by maintaining appropriate clearance between Public Trees and electric lines in accordance with the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2026*.
- To maintain required road corridor clearances in accordance with Council's Road Management Plan.
- Maintain appropriate clearance for pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, buildings and utility services.
- Reduce risks to people, property and infrastructure.
- Maximise the environmental, social and amenity benefits provided by Public Trees.

5.2 Scheduled Tree Inspections

Council aims to inspect all street trees on a scheduled 26-month inspection cycle. Inspections assess tree health, age, size, structure, surrounding site conditions, and, where required, tree risk. Inspection outcomes are used to identify, prioritise, and schedule proactive maintenance works in accordance with the Tree Maintenance Objectives outlined in this Policy.

Trees within reserves and on land where Council acts as the Committee of Management will be inspected based on a risk-based methodology. Inspection frequency and priority will be determined by factors including tree location, the characteristics and occupancy of target areas, and the probability and consequence of harm.

Additional inspections may be undertaken in response to customer requests, significant weather events, reported damage, changes in site conditions, or the identification of emerging risks.

5.3 Scheduled Tree Maintenance

Scheduled tree maintenance is delivered through Council's approved tree maintenance service provider in accordance with Council's contractual, legislative and operational requirements. Works may include:

- Pruning to maintain clearance from electric lines in accordance with Council's annual Electric Line Clearance Management Plan.
- Pruning trees to comply with Council's Road Management Plan.
- Pruning to maintain appropriate clearance from buildings, houses and other structures.
- Removal of dead, damaged or defective branches.
- Structural, formative and remedial pruning.
- Other arboricultural works identified through Council's inspection program.

All pruning and maintenance works must be undertaken by suitably qualified personnel in accordance with applicable legislation, Australian Standards, Council requirements and current arboricultural best practice.

5.4 Customer-Initiated Tree Inspections and Pruning Requests

Residents may request an inspection of a Public Tree where they consider pruning, maintenance or further assessment is required. Upon receipt of a request, a Council Arborist will inspect the tree and determine whether any works are required.

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Pruning requests will be assessed against the tree's health, structure and site conditions, together with Council's electric line clearance, road management, public safety and asset protection obligations. Works will only be approved where there is a demonstrated need and must be consistent with arboricultural best practice and the Tree Maintenance Objectives established in this Policy.

Council will advise the resident of the inspection outcome and any proposed action. Approved works will be prioritised according to the assessed level of risk and operational requirements. Where works are not urgent and scheduled maintenance is due within the following six months, Council may incorporate the works into the scheduled maintenance program.

Pruning will not be undertaken solely to satisfy individual preferences where there is no demonstrated impact, risk or maintenance requirement.

5.4.1 Pruning Requests That Will Not Be Approved

Council will not prune a Public Tree solely to:

- Reduce leaf, fruit, flower, bark or other natural tree debris.
- Address debris or activity associated with birds, wildlife or other fauna.
- Increase sunlight or solar access.
- Address minor allergy or irritant concerns.
- Improve or restore views.
- Increase the visibility of advertising or business signage.
- Provide clearance for privately installed awnings, verandas or other structures that project over Council-managed land.
- Remove all branches extending over private property or prune a tree back to the property boundary.
- It is affecting the growth of nearby vegetation

5.4.2 Circumstances Where Pruning Requests May Be Approved

Council may prune a Public Tree where:

- An inspection identifies an unacceptable risk to people, property or infrastructure.
- There is a demonstrated impact on private infrastructure.
- Pruning is required to comply with Council's Road Management Plan.
- Clearance is required for pedestrians, cyclists or vehicles.
- Clearance is required from a dwelling, building or other structure.
- Pruning is required to maintain clearance from electric lines.
- Structural, formative or remedial pruning is required to support tree health, structure or longevity.
- Works are otherwise required to achieve the Tree Maintenance Objectives established under this Policy.

Pruning to provide building clearance will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will not automatically include the removal of all branches overhanging a building or private property.

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Unless otherwise determined by a Council Arborist, Council's standard clearance requirements are:

- 4.0 metres above 'local' roads.
- 2.5 metres above footpaths, walkways, and nature strips.
- 2.0 meters from buildings on private property.

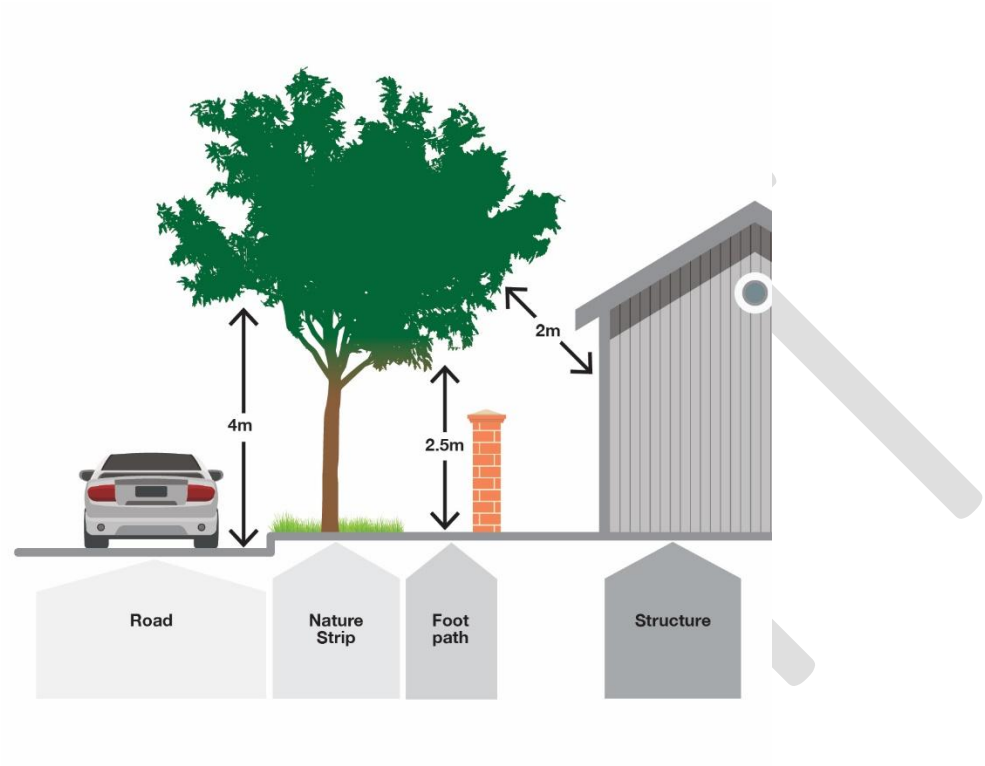


Figure 1 Bayside Pruning specifications.

5.5 Unauthorised Pruning

Members of the community must not prune, lop, remove branches from, poison or otherwise damage a Public Tree. Unauthorised works are considered tree vandalism and may result in enforcement action under Council's Local Law or other applicable legislation, including section 9 of the *Summary Offences Act 1966*, which addresses wilful damage to public or private property.

6. Public Tree Removal

6.1 Requests to Remove Public Trees

Council will prioritise the retention of Public Trees. Removal is an action of last resort and will only be approved where reasonable arboricultural, design and management options have been exhausted.

All removal requests will be assessed by a Council Arborist against the tree's condition, risk, useful life expectancy, environmental and amenity value, site constraints and the criteria established in this Policy.

6.2 Circumstances That Do Not Support Removal

Council will not remove a Public Tree solely:

- Where practical options exist to retain the tree or its canopy.
- Where the tree can be safely retained, including as habitat.
- To reduce leaf, fruit, flower, bark or other natural tree debris.
- Because of birds, wildlife or other fauna using the tree.
- To address minor allergenic or irritant concerns.
- To improve or restore views.
- To improve the visibility of advertising or business signage.
- To increase sunlight or solar access.
- In response to an unsubstantiated property damage claim.
- Because the tree may pose a risk to surrounding assets in the future.
- Because of insects, animals, parasites or pathogens, including concerns that the tree may harbour termites.
- Because the tree is affecting the growth of nearby vegetation.
- Based on a preference for a different tree species.
- To accommodate a new or modified vehicle crossover where a practical alternative exists.
- Where appropriate pruning, root management, infrastructure modification or another reasonable management response can retain the tree.

6.3 Circumstances Where Removal May Be Approved

Council may approve the removal of a Public Tree where a Council Arborist determines that:

- The tree is dead or in irreversible decline, and retention as a habitat tree is not appropriate.
- The tree presents an unacceptable level of risk, and no reasonable intervention can reduce that risk to an acceptable level.
- The tree has sustained significant damage or canopy loss, and remedial works are unlikely to support its viable retention.
- The tree cannot reasonably be managed to meet Council's statutory electric line clearance or Road Management Plan obligations.
- Removal is necessary to enable urgent repairs to essential infrastructure or utility services.
- The tree is causing substantial, demonstrated damage to private and or public infrastructure and no reasonable alternative can resolve the issue.
- All reasonable design alternatives and construction methodologies have been exhausted, and the tree cannot be retained as part of an approved development or infrastructure project.
- Removal is necessary to deliver a demonstrated improvement to public open space, community infrastructure or the streetscape that cannot reasonably be achieved while retaining the tree.
- Removal forms part of an approved streetscape renewal or coordinated tree replacement program.
- The tree is a poor specimen with limited remaining useful life and provides minimal environmental, habitat or amenity value.
- The tree forms part of an approved strategic renewal, redevelopment, landscape upgrade, or species transition program intended to improve the long-term sustainability, diversity, resilience, safety, functionality, or amenity of the urban forest or open space area.

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- Exceptional circumstances exist that justify removal in accordance with this Policy.

Where a request is made for the removal of a Council managed tree on health grounds, Council may require supporting evidence from a qualified **Environmental Health Physician** or **Occupational and Environmental Medicine Specialist**. The specialist report must clearly identify the diagnosed medical condition, provide evidence of a direct and significant causal relationship between the condition and the specific tree, and demonstrate that the tree is the primary source of exposure contributing to the health impact. The report should include details of any relevant clinical investigations, allergy or exposure testing, assessment of symptom severity, and consideration of other potential environmental or biological factors. The specialist must also address whether reasonable management measures, such as medical treatment, pruning, maintenance, or exposure mitigation, could adequately manage the condition. Council will generally only consider tree removal where objective medical evidence demonstrates that retention of the tree poses a significant and ongoing health risk and that removal is likely to result in a substantial health benefit that cannot reasonably be achieved through alternative means.

6.4 Suspected Tree Poisoning or Vandalism

Where a Public Tree is suspected of being poisoned or deliberately damaged, Council will investigate the incident and assess the tree's condition and public safety risk. If poisoning or deliberate damage is confirmed, the tree will remain in place for a minimum of two years from the date the damage is confirmed, including where the tree has died, unless removal is necessary to address an immediate and unacceptable risk to public safety.

During this period, Council may retain the tree as evidence, install public signage, undertake monitoring or remedial treatment, restrict access to the affected area and pursue enforcement action. At the end of the two-year period, Council will determine whether the tree can be retained, managed as habitat or removed and replaced.

6.5 Tree Removal to Facilitate Development

The removal of a Public Tree to facilitate private development will only be considered after all reasonable design alternatives, construction methods and tree protection measures have been investigated and demonstrated to be unachievable.

6.5.1 Development Removal Criteria

Council may approve the removal of a Public Tree to facilitate development where:

1) The applicant has demonstrated, to Council's satisfaction, that the development cannot reasonably proceed while retaining the tree.
2) The applicant agrees to pay the value of the tree and all costs associated with its assessment, removal, replacement and site reinstatement, as determined by Council in accordance with this policy.
3) The applicant has obtained all required planning permits and other statutory approvals.
4) Removal is approved in writing by Council prior to the commencement of any works.

6.5.2 Tree Valuation and Removal Costs

Where Council approves the removal of a Public Tree to facilitate development, the property owner, applicant or authorised representative must pay the full amount determined by Council prior to the commencement of development or associated works.

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The amount payable will be calculated in accordance with Council's adopted Tree Valuation Method, based on the City of Melbourne Tree Valuation Methodology, and may comprise one or more of the following:

- Tree amenity value.
- Ecological services value.
- Arboricultural assessment and administration costs.
- Tree removal and disposal costs.
- Replacement tree supply and planting costs.
- Establishment and maintenance costs.
- Site reinstatement costs.
- Any other reasonable costs incurred by Council as a result of the removal.

For the purposes of this Policy, the amenity value of a Public Tree will be determined using Council's adopted Tree Valuation Method, incorporating the City of Melbourne Tree Valuation Formula:

Value (V) = Basic Value ($) x Species (S) x Aesthetics (A) x Locality (L) x Condition (C)

Payment does not transfer ownership of the tree or provide authority for the applicant to undertake its removal. All approved removal and replacement works must be undertaken by Council or its approved Contractor.

6.5.3 Council Development Works Exception

The provisions of Section 6.5 relating to the removal of Public Trees to facilitate development, including the payment of tree valuation and removal costs, do not apply where Council is undertaking approved capital works, infrastructure projects, or other development activities within land owned, managed or controlled by Council. In such circumstances, the removal, retention, protection, replacement and offset requirements for Public Trees will be determined by Council in accordance with this Policy, relevant management plans and project-specific assessment processes.

6.6 Approvals

Where a tree is identified as an Immediate Hazard, removal may be authorised by the inspecting Arborist and undertaken without delay. Details of the inspection, assessment, and subsequent actions must be recorded in Council's works management system.
Trees exceeding 10 metres in height are considered significant for the purposes of this Policy. The removal of any tree greater than 10 metres in height, unless it has been assessed as Hazardous or an Immediate Hazard, requires the approval of the Coordinator Open Space Operations.

In determining whether a tree should be removed, the Coordinator Open Space Operations may consider factors including arboricultural condition, amenity value, environmental benefits, community expectations, infrastructure impacts, and operational requirements. Where a proposal involves complex or sensitive matters, the coordinator may seek advice from the relevant Manager and/or Director prior to deciding.

7. Tree Root Interactions with Infrastructure

Council will take a practical, evidence-based approach to managing interactions between Public Tree roots and infrastructure. Tree retention will be prioritised where reasonable; however, Council will balance the value and condition of the tree against the extent of the

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damage, safety implications, infrastructure function, mitigation costs and the likely effectiveness of available solutions.
Management options may include:

- Root and/or canopy pruning.
- Root barriers.
- Alternative construction materials.
- Repair, realignment or relocation of infrastructure.
- Modified infrastructure design.
- Tree removal where other options are not practical or proportionate.
- Other site-specific arboricultural or engineering solutions.

Root pruning must be assessed and approved by a Council Arborist. It must not be undertaken where it would create an unacceptable risk to the tree's health, structure or long-term viability.

7.1 Impacts on Private Infrastructure

Where Public Tree roots are alleged to be damaging private infrastructure, the property owner must provide evidence demonstrating the nature, location, extent and likely cause of the damage. Evidence may include photographs, plumbing or drainage reports, engineering advice, exploratory excavation, or other information reasonably requested by Council.

Once sufficient evidence has been provided, a Council Arborist will inspect the tree and surrounding site. Council may undertake or require further investigation where the cause or extent of the damage remains unclear.

Where Council determines that Public Tree roots are causing or materially contributing to verified damage, Council will assess the tree and consider reasonable arboricultural, engineering and infrastructure abatement solutions. This assessment will consider:

- The significance and extent of the damage.
- The tree's health, structure, value and remaining useful life.
- The cost, feasibility and expected life of available mitigation measures.
- The likelihood of the damage recurring.
- The responsibilities of the infrastructure owner.
- The impacts and benefits of retaining or removing the tree.

Council may remove the tree under Section 6 where mitigation is unavailable, unlikely to be effective, or unreasonable when considered against the scale of the damage, the condition and value of the tree, and the cost of retaining it.

Council will not remove a Public Tree in response to an unsubstantiated claim of damage to pipes, drains, sewers or other infrastructure. Property owners remain responsible for maintaining private infrastructure in a sealed, serviceable and fit-for-purpose condition.

If a member of the public wishes to submit a claim against Council, information on the process is available on Council's website. Claimants should be aware that the burden of proof rests with them. Providing relevant supporting information and documentation at the time of submission will assist Council in assessing and responding to the claim in a timely manner.

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7.2 Raised Tree Roots in Nature Strips

Raised surface roots are a natural characteristic of some street trees and do not automatically justify root pruning or tree removal. Council will take a practical approach where roots create a verified obstruction, access issue or safety concern.

Where raised roots are reported to be obstructing pedestrian access, a Council Arborist will inspect the site. Council will consider the tree's condition, the level of obstruction and the feasibility of alternative treatments, which may include modifying the surrounding surface, providing an alternative access route, undertaking limited root pruning or removing the tree.

Where there is no constructed footpath on either side of the street, the matter may be referred to the relevant Council department for assessment of access, infrastructure or traffic management options. Root pruning or tree removal may be approved where other solutions are not practical, effective or proportionate.

8. Tree Planting and Species Selection

8.1 Selection of Planting Sites

Urban Forest Precinct Plans (Precinct Plans) have been developed for each suburb in Bayside to guide and prioritise local tree planting. The plans identify areas of greatest need, including:

- areas with the lowest existing percentage canopy tree cover
- Major Activity Centres and areas of high-density development or construction activity to help mitigate the Urban Heat Island Effect
- areas with declining canopy cover or ageing tree populations
- highly trafficked pedestrian routes
- areas with gaps or vacancies in public planting.

Each Precinct Plan has been informed by community consultation and provides guidance that responds to the individual needs, challenges and aspirations of each suburb. The plans are performance-based and establish desired outcomes for streets and public spaces without prescribing specific species for individual locations. A broad species palette is provided within each Precinct Plan to guide appropriate species selection across the municipality.

The selection of planting sites will also be guided by the Open Space Strategy, the Park Improvement and Habitat Linkage Plan (PIHLP), and any subsequent Council strategies, policies or master plans. These documents seek to increase tree canopy cover, strengthen habitat linkages, enhance biodiversity and improve public open space outcomes across the municipality.

Council will seek to plant trees in all suitable vacant locations on Council-owned and managed land to support the Urban Forest Strategy target of increasing canopy cover from 20 per cent to 30 per cent by 2040. Most property frontages in the municipality can accommodate at least one street tree and, where site conditions and available space allow, additional trees may be planted to maximise future canopy cover.

Council will annually identify suitable locations for tree planting as part of its planned planting program, which generally occurs between April and September.

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8.2 Selection of Tree Species

Council's urban forest comprises indigenous, native and exotic tree species that collectively contribute to canopy cover, biodiversity, neighbourhood character, climate resilience and community amenity.

Council will adopt a "right tree, right place" approach to species selection. Tree species will be selected based on site conditions, available growing space, surrounding land use, environmental constraints, desired landscape outcomes and the tree's ability to establish and thrive throughout its expected lifespan.

When selecting tree species, Council will consider:

- the objectives and character described in the relevant Urban Forest Precinct Plan
- opportunities to increase canopy cover and shade
- climate resilience, including tolerance to heat, drought, wind and projected future climate conditions
- biodiversity and habitat value
- site dimensions and available soil volume
- proximity to buildings, roads, underground and overhead services, and other infrastructure
- public safety, visibility and access requirements
- maintenance requirements and whole-of-life management considerations
- species diversity across the urban forest to improve resilience to pests, diseases and changing environmental conditions
- contribution to local landscape character and neighbourhood identity.

Council supports increasing the use of indigenous species where they are suited to the site and contribute to biodiversity, habitat creation and ecological connectivity. However, indigenous species will not be used to the exclusion of native or exotic species where alternative species are better able to achieve canopy, amenity, streetscape, heritage or site-specific objectives.

The use of indigenous species will be prioritised in environmentally sensitive locations, including:

- within areas where Vegetation Protection Overlay 3 (VPO3) applies.
- between areas where the VPO3 applies and south of Highett Road.
- nature strips immediately adjoining Conservation Reserves, where indigenous species of local provenance will be used.
- locations within 150 metres of Conservation Reserves, where species with recognised weed potential will not be selected.

Council recognises that established native and exotic species form an important part of the character and identity of many Council streets, parks and neighbourhoods. Native and exotic tree species may be planted where they are consistent with the desired character of an area, contribute to urban forest diversity and represent the most suitable species for the planting location.

In all cases, Council's objective is to maximise the long-term benefits of the urban forest by selecting species that are appropriate for the site, resilient to future environmental conditions, and capable of achieving sustainable canopy, biodiversity and community outcomes.

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8.3 Wildlife Habitat Provision

Council recognises that trees and vegetation provide important habitat for native wildlife and contribute to biodiversity across the municipality. Habitat features including tree hollows, deadwood, bark, flowers, fruit and foliage support a range of birds, mammals, reptiles, insects and other fauna.

Where safe and practicable, Council will retain and enhance habitat values within streets, parks and reserves by:

- protecting habitat trees, particularly mature trees with hollows or other ecological values
- retaining dead or declining trees where risk can be appropriately managed
- incorporating wildlife habitat considerations into tree management, planting and renewal programs
- establishing vegetation that provides food sources, shelter and movement corridors for native fauna
- supporting habitat connectivity between open spaces, conservation reserves and other areas of ecological significance.

Habitat trees will be assessed using recognised arboricultural and ecological assessment methodologies, including Council's habitat assessment processes, to balance habitat values with public safety and asset management requirements.

Where habitat features cannot be retained in their existing form, Council may implement alternative habitat measures, including:

- retaining sections of trunks or branches as habitat structures
- relocating hollow-bearing timber or habitat logs within suitable open space areas
- installing nest boxes or other artificial habitat structures
- incorporating habitat elements into landscape and revegetation projects.

Pruning, maintenance and tree removal activities will seek to minimise impacts on wildlife and habitat values wherever practicable. Where required, works may be modified or staged to protect wildlife or significant habitat features.

Council will undertake periodic monitoring and maintenance of habitat trees, habitat structures and associated vegetation to support long-term biodiversity outcomes across the municipality.

9. Pests and Disease

Council will proactively manage pests, diseases and pathogen threats to maintain the health, resilience and longevity of Council’s urban forest.

Council will seek to identify, monitor and respond to pest and disease issues affecting public trees using modern arboricultural and biosecurity management practices.

In managing pest and disease risks, Council will:

- monitor the condition and health of Council-managed trees
- investigate reports of pest infestations, diseases or declining tree health
- implement appropriate treatment, control or containment measures where required

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- apply best-practice hygiene and biosecurity measures to minimise the spread of pests, diseases and soil-borne pathogens
- support species diversity across the urban forest to improve resilience to emerging pest and disease threats
- work with relevant government agencies and industry bodies where regulated or significant pest and disease outbreaks occur.

Consistent with Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and other relevant strategies, best-practice management standards will be applied to minimise the spread of pests and diseases, including soil-borne pathogens such as Phytophthora and Armillaria.

Suspected pest and disease outbreaks affecting Council-managed trees should be reported to Council for assessment and appropriate action.

10. Community Engagement

Council recognises that street and park trees are highly valued by the community and that changes to the urban forest can be of significant interest to residents and stakeholders.

Council will provide timely and appropriate information to the community regarding significant tree planting, renewal and removal programs undertaken on Council-managed land.

Where a street, park or precinct is identified for tree renewal or replacement, Council will inform affected residents and stakeholders about the proposed works, the reasons for the works and the intended replacement planting outcomes. Community engagement activities will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy and any relevant operational procedures.

Where practicable, residents may be invited to express a preference for the species of a new or replacement nature strip tree from a selection of suitable species nominated by Council. Final species selection will remain at Council's discretion and will be based on the principles outlined in Section 8 of this Policy.

Council will provide information to residents regarding the establishment and care of newly planted trees, including Council's maintenance responsibilities and opportunities for residents to support tree establishment.

Planned tree removals will be communicated using methods appropriate to the scale, significance and location of the works. Notification may include on-site signage, letterbox drops, direct correspondence, digital communications or other suitable engagement methods.

Requests, enquiries and feedback regarding Council-managed trees will be considered in accordance with this Policy and relevant Council procedures. While community views will inform Council's decision-making, all tree management decisions will balance environmental, social, operational, financial and risk management considerations.

Council's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy provides the overarching framework for engagement on matters relating to Council-managed trees and the urban forest.

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11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Council will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this Policy through the collection and analysis of urban forest, tree asset and operational performance data.

Monitoring and evaluation will support evidence-based decision-making and assist Council in achieving the objectives of this Policy, the Strategy and other relevant Council strategies and plans.

Council will maintain records relating to the condition, maintenance and management of Council-managed trees through its tree asset management systems and associated databases. These records will be used to:

- monitor the health, condition and performance of the urban forest
- inform tree planting, replacement and renewal programs
- identify opportunities to increase canopy cover and address planting gaps
- support risk management and maintenance planning
- measure progress towards Council's urban forest objectives and performance targets
- inform future strategic planning and investment decisions.

Council may periodically assess urban forest indicators, including canopy cover, species diversity, age distribution, tree health and habitat values, to evaluate the effectiveness of urban forest management programs and identify emerging issues or opportunities.

This Policy will be reviewed at least every five years, or earlier where required due to legislative changes, emerging best practice, policy updates or significant changes to Council's strategic direction.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

The Manager City Infrastructure is responsible for approving, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this Policy, and for providing strategic oversight and advice regarding the management of Council-managed trees and the urban forest.

The Coordinator Open Space Operations is responsible for the operational delivery of this Policy, including overseeing tree planting, maintenance, risk management, renewal programs, contractor performance and the implementation of adopted urban forest objectives.

Council Arborists are responsible for providing specialist arboricultural advice to support the implementation of this Policy. This includes informing management of Modern industry standards and best practice, undertaking tree assessments, identifying and managing tree-related risks, informing species selection and planting programs, and supporting the sustainable management of Council's tree assets.

All Council employees and contractors undertaking works on or around Council-managed trees are responsible for ensuring their activities are undertaken in accordance with this Policy, relevant procedures, legislative requirements and accepted industry standards.

Consider the following table instead of the above paragraphs:

Role	Responsibility

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Manager City Infrastructure	• Approve, implement, monitor, evaluate and review this Policy. • Ensure compliance with the Policy and associated requirements. • Provide strategic oversight of Council's urban forest and tree management activities. • Provide leadership and advice on the sustainable management of Council-managed trees.
Coordinator Open Space Operations	• Lead the operational implementation of this Policy. • Oversee tree planting, maintenance and renewal programs. • Manage tree-related risk management activities. • Monitor contractor performance relating to tree management services. • Support the delivery of Council's urban forest objectives and strategic priorities.
Council Arborists	• Provide specialist arboricultural advice and expertise. • Monitor and apply contemporary industry standards and best practice. • Undertake tree assessments and inspections. • Identify, assess and manage tree-related risks. • Support species selection, planting programs and asset management decisions. • Contribute to the sustainable management of Council's tree assets.
Council Employees and Contractors	• Conduct all works on or around Council-managed trees in accordance with this Policy.

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	• Comply with relevant procedures, legislative requirements and industry standards. • Take reasonable care to avoid damage to Council-managed trees. • Report identified tree hazards, incidents or issues through appropriate channels.

12.1 Appeal Process

Where a person believes a decision has not been made in accordance with this Policy, they may submit a written request for review.

Reviews will be assessed against the principles and criteria contained within this Policy and any relevant supporting information.

The review process is as follows:

1. Coordinator Open Space Operations
2. Manager City Infrastructure
3. Director City Services (final decision).

An appeal will not be considered where:

- the decision is based on objective arboricultural, engineering, medical or other specialist evidence
- the decision is required by legislation, permit conditions or statutory approvals
- works are required to address an unacceptable risk to public safety, property or infrastructure.

The lodging of an appeal does not prevent Council from undertaking works required to meet its safety, operational or statutory obligations.

Related Documents

Legislation	- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*(Vic) and the Bayside Planning Scheme - *Road Management Act 2004*(Vic) and the *Code of Practice, Management of Infrastructure in Road Reserves April 2016* - *Electricity Safety Act 1998*(Vic) and the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2026* - *Summary Offences Act 1966*(Vic) - *Bayside City Council Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2026*
Policies	- *Bayside City Council Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy 2021*

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Strategies/Plans	- *Bayside City Council Urban Forest Strategy 2022 - 2040 and the Bayside City Council Urban Forest Strategy Precinct Plans* - *Bayside City Council Biodiversity Action Plan 2018–2027* - Bayside City Council *Park Improvement and Habitat Linkage Plan 2022* - *Bayside City Council Electric Line Clearance Management Plan* (updated annually) - Bayside City Council *Open Space Strategy 2025*
Procedures/Processes	- *Bayside City Council Local Law Guidelines, Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2021* - Bayside City Council *Guidelines for Tree Reward and Vandalism 2024* - Bayside City Council *Large Scale Tree Replacement Procedure 2019* - Bayside City Council *Methods for Assessing Tree Habitats 2019*
Other	- Australian Standard *AS 4970:2025 Protection of trees on development sites* - Australian Standard *AS 4373:2007 Pruning of amenity trees* - Australian Standard *AS 2303:2018 Tree stock for landscape use.*

Please note: This policy is current as at the date of approval. Refer to Council's website (https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/council/plans-strategies-and-policies) to ensure this is the latest version.

Compliance Considerations

Human Rights and Equity Considerations

This Policy has been assessed against the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and is considered compliant with these requirements. An Equity Impact pre-assessment was completed and determined that a full Equity Impact Assessment was not required.

Governance Principles

In the development of this Policy, the requirements of the Governance Principles as per the *Local Government Act 2020* have been considered and are summarised below:

LGA S 9.1	Governance Principle	Consideration
a)	Compliance with the law	The legal implications of this policy have been considered and noted in the policy.
b)	Achieve best outcomes for the community	This policy reflects Council's commitment to customer experience it provides greater clarity regarding service levels.
c)	Promote the sustainability of the municipality	This policy aligns with the Urban Forest Strategy and Precinct Plans which incorporate opportunities for innovation in planning for habitat corridors and

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		improved response to the declared climate emergency.
d)	Engage the community in strategic planning and decision making	The policy reflects the significant community engagement that was undertaken in the development of the Urban Forest Strategy and Precinct Plans.
e)	Strive for innovation and continuous improvement	This policy aligns with the Urban Forest Strategy and Precinct Plans which incorporate opportunities for innovation in planning for habitat corridors and improved response to the declared climate emergency.
f)	Collaborate with all other levels of government and government agencies	This policy reflects the legislative requirements regarding Electric Line Clearance.
g)	Secure the ongoing financial viability of Council	This policy defines the scope for business-as-usual activities and clarifies what is considered out of scope work.
h)	Strategic planning and decision making must take into account plans and policies in operation at all levels.	All related Council policies and strategies have been noted and referenced in the Street and Park Tree Management Policy.
i)	Council decisions, actions and information must be transparent.	The policy will be available for public access, and information uploaded to the website for ease of access.

8. Glossary - Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
Amenity Value	The assessed value of a tree based on its environmental, landscape, social and community benefits, determined using an approved valuation method.
Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)	A report prepared by a suitably qualified arborist that evaluates the potential impacts of proposed works on a tree and recommends measures to avoid or minimise those impacts.
Council Arborist	A suitably qualified arborist employed or authorised by Bayside City Council to assess and provide advice on the management of Public Trees.
Habitat Tree	A tree that provides existing or potential habitat for native fauna, including hollows, deadwood, bark features or other ecological values.
Local provenance	Plant material originating from the local geographic area and adapted to local environmental conditions
Notional Root Zone (NRZ)	The area immediately surrounding a tree trunk containing roots critical to the tree's structural stability, as defined in AS 4970.

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Public Tree	Trees on public land that is Council-owned or managed land. This includes trees located on land where Bayside City Council is the Committee of Management.
Tree Protection Plan (TPP)	A plan that details the tree protection measures required before and during works to protect retained trees from damage.
Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)	The area surrounding a tree that is identified for protection to maintain the tree's health and viability during works, as determined in accordance with AS 4970.
Tree Vandalism	The unauthorised pruning, removal, poisoning, damage or destruction of a Public Tree.
Useful Life Expectancy (ULE)	The estimated period that a tree can be retained in the landscape while continuing to provide its intended benefits at an acceptable level of risk.

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