

## DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINE



<b>TITLE:</b>	VEGETATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE
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<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Assets
<b>UNIT:</b>	Works
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Parks and Gardens Team Leader

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<b>EXPIRY DATE:</b>	26 July 2025
<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	<i>This guideline will be reviewed every four years or as required by any legislative or council changes.</i>

<b>AVAILABILITY:</b>	Staff – Organisation Wide	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Public	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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## 1. References

Glenelg Shire Council, Urban Tree Policy CPO-ASSETS-WRKS-002 (DocSetID: 2575569)

Glenelg Shire Council Urban Street Tree List (DocSetID: 2535849)

Glenelg Shire Council Significant Tree Register (DocSetID: 1330489)

Glenelg Shire Council Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines (DocSetID: 2346446)

Glenelg Shire Council Nature Strip Landscaping Species List (DocSetID: 2130154)

Glenelg Shire Council Electric Line Clearance Management Plan (ELCMP) (DocSetID: 2074689)

Glenelg Shire Council Road Management Plan (DocSetID: 2334848)

Glenelg Shire Council, Records Management Policy OPO-CORPS-RECM-001 (DocSetID: 1933907)

Glenelg Shire Council Vegetation Management Guideline Technical Notes (DocSetID 2686370)

Diagram - City of Melbourne - Street tree clearance guidelines  
<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/tree-protection-management/Pages/tree-protection-and-management.aspx#clearance>

Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017)  
[https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0021/91146/Guidelines-for-the-removal,-destruction-or-lopping-of-native-vegetation,-2017.pdf](https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/91146/Guidelines-for-the-removal,-destruction-or-lopping-of-native-vegetation,-2017.pdf)

[AS4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees](#)

Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020, S.R. No. 50/2020 as at 27 June 2020

## 2. Purpose

This Vegetation Management Guideline (hereinafter referred to as “this guideline”) is designed to guide and inform all internal and external stakeholders of the requirements for management of street and reserve trees covered by the Glenelg Shire Urban Tree Policy. The Vegetation Management Guideline Technical Notes provide additional information which supports this Guideline.

This guideline will be used to:

- Establish planting programs, and selection of planting sites (i.e. high-profile sites, for example entrances to the towns, commercial precinct or major roads, parks, nature strips, median strips, and traffic treatments where space allows)
- Identify unsuitable street trees (for example, high maintenance trees under powerlines, prioritising removals and replacement with appropriate species)
- Manage significant trees
- Develop and improve inspection schedules
- Determine and manage service levels.

### 3. Scope

Glenelg Shire Council (Council) manages vast numbers of trees over a large area and within many varied landscape contexts. Council is responsible for approximately 1007 ha of open space and over 7100 street trees.

Successful tree management demonstrates an understanding of the dynamic nature of trees, reflects an understanding of the aesthetic and safety requirements of trees, and commits to engaging and working with the community, whilst recognising all trees have a finite lifespan and at some point need to be removed and/ or replaced.

This guideline applies to:

- Trees along streets and reserves within township boundaries
- Trees in public open spaces, reserves and playgrounds
- Trees of significance and avenues of honour
- Other Council managed land containing buildings and facilities.

The Portland Botanic Gardens (PBG) has a Conservation Management and Landscape Masterplan as the primary management document for that location. However certain provisions in this guideline will be relevant to the PBG in respect of maintenance and inspection regimes, including removals of hazardous trees.

Trees not encompassed by this policy are any trees:

- Outside township boundaries
- On private property
- On Crown land managed by others (i.e. Committees of Management, Regional Roads Victoria, VicTrack, etc)

Key stakeholders, who may be responsible for (or) impacted by trees covered by this guideline, include the general public, users of open space, facilities and road reserves, as well as residents and businesses adjoining land managed and maintained by Council.

Other stakeholders may include State and Federal Governments and agencies, for example Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Committees of Management and other agencies that have management responsibilities for trees on their land.

## 4. Departmental Guideline

### 4.1 Glossary

#### Arboriculture

Is the cultivation, management and study of individual trees, shrubs, vines and other perennial woody plants.

#### Australian Native

An Australian native plant is any plant indigenous to Australia as included in the Australian Plant Census except those identified therein as naturalised.

#### Deciduous

(Of a tree or shrub) shedding its leaves annually.

#### Epicormic

(Of a shoot or branch) growing from a previously dormant bud on the trunk or a limb of a tree.

#### Root Plate

That part of the root system (excluding the small outermost roots) needed to keep a tree windfirm.

#### Tree

A woody perennial plant, typically having a single stem or trunk growing to a considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.

#### Tree Canopy

The uppermost branches of a tree.

#### Tree Crown

The upper branching or spreading part of a tree or other plant.

### 4.2 Tree Species Selection

A list of recommended tree species for use within streetscapes and reserves is available from Council and is titled the Urban Street Tree List (Species) (Appendix 1). This list should not be considered definitive as new varieties of trees are developed and regularly introduced into the market.

Council has developed Nature strip Landscaping Guidelines (refer to Appendix 4) and a Nature Strip Landscaping Species List (refer to Appendix 5) to accommodate circumstances where traditional street tree planting may not be possible.

### **4.3 Native Vegetation**

Native vegetation provides habitat for plants and animals and delivers a range of ecosystem services that make land more productive and contribute to human well-being.

In Victoria, a permit is usually required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation. These regulations are known as the native vegetation removal regulations and are primarily implemented through Council's planning schemes. Removal of native vegetation needs to comply with Clause 52.16 and Clause 52.17 of the Victorian Planning Provisions Guidelines (the Guidelines) for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017).

Native vegetation should only be removed when there are no suitable alternatives to removal.

If you cannot avoid native vegetation removal you must remove the minimum amount necessary.

Any tree works proposed on Crown land, under the care of Council as Committee of Management, needs to be approved by the governing state agency (usually DELWP) before any works are undertaken.

Removing 0.5 ha or more of native vegetation will require a detailed assessment of the activity. This is approximately a rectangle of 100 metres long and 50 metres wide or 7 large scattered trees or 16 small scattered trees. It may require offsets to be secured and purchased.

### **4.4 Tree planting**

Council will select species of trees for planting that are suitable for each site and that will contribute to the landscape amenity of the shire.

Planting of trees will generally take place from early May to early September.

Single species plantings in streets will be undertaken in some locations to provide unity in the landscape where appropriate.

New plantings in parks and streets will consider any significant cultural and indigenous local vegetation associations.

Generally, trees are to be planted at regular intervals and at a density that will provide a sense of continuity and scale to the streetscape. Where possible, one tree will be planted in front of each property within urban areas.

Properties located on corners or intersections may have space for two or more trees, with growth characteristics of the tree and the capacity of the street determining spacing.

#### 4.5 Tree Pruning

In an urban environment trees often require pruning to maintain clearance for utility services and buildings or to improve the safety, structure, health, and beauty of a tree.

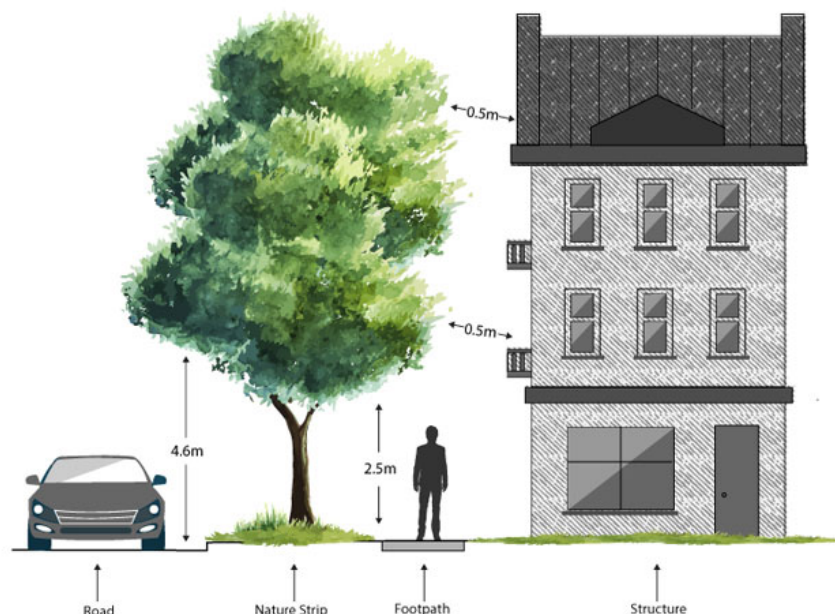
Trees are pruned:

- from powerlines in accordance with Energy Safe Victoria vegetation clearance requirements
- from roads in accordance with Glenelg Shire Road Management Plan 2017 (RMP) and Regional Roads Victoria requirements
- to maintain sight lines and clearance for road and pedestrian traffic
- to provide clearance from buildings.

All pruning undertaken on trees within the shire will comply with the Australian Standard (AS 4373-2007) Pruning of amenity trees. This describes methods for pruning of trees and encourages correct and uniform practices.

##### 4.5.1 Electric Line Clearance Requirements

Glenelg Shire Council is responsible for maintaining clearance space from electric lines in the declared area of Portland as per the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2020. All other areas in the shire are under the responsibility of Powercor Australia.



#### 4.6 Tree Planting and Pruning by Residents

Unless approved by Council, residents are not permitted to plant or prune trees or other vegetation on nature strips or other Council managed land.

#### 4.7 Tree Removal

Council will consider removing a tree if:

- it is diseased or dying and there are no remedies to save the tree
- it is a safety hazard to the public
- its planting by a resident doesn't meet Council guidelines
- the ongoing remedial works required due to damage by a tree are too costly
- Council approved its removal as part of a streetscape plan or works program
- a different tree is required in the streetscape after powerlines are removed
- a tree is indicated in a property development plan - to Council's required format and standard - and is approved by Council, provided the developer meets the cost of tree valuation, removal, and replacement
- it is causing damage to property or public utilities, and the cost of ongoing remedial works becomes uneconomical, for example, the cost of the perceived ongoing repairs outweighs the value of the tree and there is no reasonable alternative to solve the problem.

The Parks and Gardens Team Leader, nominated officer and approved Parks Contractors may, without further authorisation, remove trees that are assessed as hazardous, dead or dying.

Council will not remove a tree for any of the following reasons:

- falling leaves, bark, gum nut or flower debris
- to provide vistas
- the tree is growing over a property, blocking light, shading lawn, or a pool
- the tree is considered too big or too old
- where it has been assessed by a suitably qualified officer or contractor engaged by Council and removal or trimming is not considered necessary
- where someone would like an alternative species of tree
- it is causing droppings by a bird, bat, possum, or other wildlife
- it causes an insect issue, such as spiders, bees, or ants
- to provide solar access for solar panels
- the tree shades the nature strip or resident's garden
- the surface root growth of the tree restricts mowing heights.

In the case of allergies, medically verified allergy testing results need to be provided before Council will consider a request to remove a tree for this reason. Property alterations and developments requiring a crossover to be relocated will be assessed on a case by case basis considering options for offset planting.



#### 4.7.1 Removal Requests

Tree removal requests may be generated by a customer request, Council Officers, utility providers, or by Council contractors. All requests for tree removal shall be inspected, assessed and, where it meets the requirements of this guideline, approved by the Parks and Gardens Team Leader or nominated officer. An arborist inspection will be required if the tree is considered Significant (refer to Appendix 2 for the listing of Significant Trees).

#### 4.7.2 Approvals and Non Approvals

Where removal is not approved the customer will be advised and details of the communication recorded in Council's record management system.

#### 4.7.3 Appeals

Residents may appeal a decision to have a tree on Council managed land removed or retained.

Following receipt of an appeal, the Parks and Gardens Team Leader shall provide a recommendation report to the Works Manager that describes the arboricultural issues concerning the removal or retention of the tree or trees. In consultation with the Director Assets, the Works Manager will decide using the data available. Should a decision not be possible with the information available, a second opinion/ report will be commissioned.

#### 4.7.4 Cost of Tree Maintenance/Removals

Tree maintenance and removal costs shall be met by Council. However, if through an appeal process, removal of a healthy tree is approved and this tree does not comply with any of the criteria for removal, the party requesting the tree removal may incur the full cost imposed upon Council for the tree removal, provision of a replacement tree and for a two-year maintenance period of the replacement tree.

#### 4.7.5 Notification of Tree Removals

In the case of tree removal Council will send a letter which details arrangements for removal, reinstatement and tree replacement (if appropriate) to residents closest to the impacted tree(s). An example of a notification letter is in Appendix 6.

When more than 50% of street trees are to be removed from a given street or location, additional resident and Councillor(s) notification will be undertaken. Council may decide to hold a wider public consultation process in accordance with Council's commitment to community consultation and engagement.

When significant community concern is expressed following notification of the removal of a tree or group of trees, an arborist may be engaged to provide an independent review and report.

In emergency situations notification prior to removal of a nature strip tree may not be possible. In these instances, notification to the surrounding properties will occur within two (2) workdays.

#### **4.8 Root Zone Management**

Tree growth is strongly influenced by below-ground conditions. Tree roots are opportunistic and will proliferate wherever moisture, aeration, nutrition and soil structure are favourable. Tree root growth in the urban environment is highly modified and is not governed by property boundaries.

There are a number of common conflicts with tree roots in the built environment related to direct and indirect damage.

##### Direct damage

Direct damage is the distortion of built structures as the growing tree root exerts pressure. Direct damage by tree roots is usually limited to light built structures such as pavements and low walls and can also be witnessed in buildings of sub-standard footings.

##### Indirect damage

Indirect damage is the distortion of built structures as the growing tree root takes up soil moisture. Often there are multiple factors contributing to foundation movement and are seldom associated with tree root growth alone. For this reason, claims of indirect tree root damage must be accurately investigated.

Leaking pipes (as a result of poor construction, old earthenware, cracked and faulty joints and degradation) can create a moisture gradient that encourages tree root growth in the direction of the pipe.

The property owner is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement from the legal point of discharge, usually near the property boundary kerb. Council should always be given the opportunity to inspect the pipes and offending tree roots prior to the property owner undertaking repair works. However, the property owner is responsible for the connection and maintenance of sewer and stormwater from property to the kerb.

Council will seek to resolve tree root conflicts in the following manner:

- all claims of direct tree root damage from trees will be investigated
- council will seek practical solutions to reduce the risk of damage to infrastructure from trees
- every effort will be taken to ensure that replacement trees will not result in similar damage to built structures
- claims of indirect tree root damage to built structures will be investigated if a geotechnical or structural engineering report implicates tree root damage
- should tree root growth cause foundation movement, Council will seek a viable arboricultural solution to rectify the situation and to retain the tree

- the removal of trees for indirect property damage will only be considered if a geotechnical or structural engineer's report attributes the damage to tree root growth and if no practical alternative arboricultural solution can be obtained
- council will not remove trees for unjustified claims of pipe or sewer damage from tree root activity.

#### 4.9 Significant Trees

Significant trees within the Shire are identified and appropriately managed through a Significant Tree Register (refer to Appendix 2).

Once a tree or group of trees is registered as significant, they can be afforded heritage overlay protection in the Glenelg Shire Planning Scheme under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the Victorian Heritage Act 2017.

#### 4.10 Inspection Regimes

Council has a tree inspection regime which provides a systematic process for inspecting trees, using a Geographic Information System (GIS) and Asset Management Systems (AMS). The captured data is used to enable the prioritisation of the works programs.

The tree inspection regime identifies:

- general tree health
- canopy, trunk and root plate hazards and defects
- pruning requirements.

##### 4.10.1 Programme Inspection Frequency

The following table shows the frequency of programmed inspections based on the location of the trees.

Category	Location	Frequency of Inspection
1.	Facilities including carparks, kindergartens, community buildings and gardens.	Annual
2.	High profile streetscapes, including high profile recreation areas and sportsgrounds For more detail please see Appendix 7.	Annual
3.	Open space, parks and reserves.	3 Yearly
4.	Street trees under powerlines in the Declared Area Portland for electric line clearance.	(as detailed in the Electric Line Clearance Management Plan)
5.	Street Trees other than those included in categories 1 – 4 above.	3 Yearly

6.	<p>Significant tree populations including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portland Botanic Gardens</li> <li>• Digby Avenue of Honour</li> <li>• Henty Street Pear Trees</li> <li>• Portland and Nelson Norfolk Pines</li> <li>• Drik Drik, Avenue of Honour.</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to inspection frequency above, these trees will also have a 5 Yearly Arborist Inspection utilising a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) and assessment tool or similar</p>
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#### 4.10.2 Inspection Types

Inspections will be used to provide a cost-effective approach to assess large areas or long sections of roadside vegetation. This method may also be used after storm events, where damage to trees or fallen branches may be visible from the road. Refer to the below table.

Inspection Type	Definition and Purpose
Programmed Inspection	Inspection undertaken in accordance with a programmed inspection schedule, specifically to identify deficiencies in the structural integrity of the various components of the tree, which if untreated are likely to adversely affect the level of risk to public safety. Inspection timeframes are shown in 4.10.1.
Reactive Inspection	Inspections undertaken in response to a customer request, specifically to identify deficiencies in the structural integrity of the various components of tree, which if untreated are likely to adversely affect the level of risk to public safety.
Incident Inspection	This inspection enables an incident report to be prepared in Council's Safety Management System. This may also assist in the circumstance of potential legal proceedings and the gathering of information for the analysis of the causes of the incident and the planning and implementation of tree management and safety measures.

#### 4.10.3 Reactive Inspection response times from customer request

Reactive Inspections in response to a customer request shall be completed and the vegetation in question 'made safe' within 24 hours or as practicable in the case of major incidents where a number of tree issues occur.

Any additional works required will be incorporated into the Council vegetation management program of works to meet the following rectification times:

- impacting infrastructure: assessed depending on impact and infrastructure involved
- defects detailed in the ELCMP to be addressed in accordance with the ELCMP
- defects detailed in the RMP to be addressed in accordance with the timeframes in the RMP
- other, for example fallen limbs not a considered a hazard, will be programmed in with other works for efficiency.

#### **4.11 Works Programs**

The data collected and recorded during programmed and reactive tree inspections will be incorporated into the works and planting program. The program is maintained regularly and includes all work relating to vegetation management, including both programmed and reactive works.

#### **4.12 Vegetation Management Guideline Review**

The Council Vegetation Management Guideline should be reviewed every four years. Appendices shall be reviewed annually or more frequently as a result of inspections.

It is proposed that the appendices attached to this guideline will be the working document to facilitate tree management activities from planting to removal.

Administration of this guideline will be under the supervision of the Works Coordinator, reporting to the Works Manager within the Assets Department. The Director Assets will refer necessary matters to the Executive Team where required.

### **5. Records Management**

All Council records created and managed as a result of implementing this guideline will be managed in accordance with the Council's Records Management Policy.

The Records Management Policy assigns responsibilities for records management to employees, supervisors, volunteers and other specific positions.

No Council records are to be destroyed without consideration of the requirements of the Act(s) that govern the functions relevant to this guideline. Prior to destruction, advice must be sought from the Records Management Unit, with consideration to the requirements of the appropriate Retention and Disposal Authority (RDA).

## 6. Victorian State Legislation Copyright Acknowledgement

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## 7. Appendices

### **Appendix 1 – Urban Street Tree Species List**

Available Upon Request (Internal Reference DocSetID: 2535849)

### **Appendix 2 – Glenelg Shire Council Significant Tree Register**

Available Upon Request (Internal Reference DocSetID: 1330489)

### **Appendix 3 – Significant Tree Criteria**

Available Upon Request (Internal Reference DocSetID: 2688798)

### **Appendix 4 – Nature Strip Landscaping Guideline**

Available Upon Request (Internal Reference DocSetID: 2346446)

### **Appendix 5 – Nature Strip Landscaping Species List**

Available Upon Request (Internal Reference DocSetID: 2130154)

### **Appendix 6 – Tree Removal Notification Letter Template**

Available Upon Request (Internal Reference DocSetID:2689006)

### **Appendix 7 – High profile streetscapes**

Available Upon Request (Internal Reference DocSetID:2872896)