



WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY NO. 11.5.2

POLICY FOR MANAGEMENT OF TREES AND TREE ROOTS

Adopted: 15 June 2017

1. **Title:** Policy for Management of Trees and Tree roots

2. **Number:** Policy Number 11.5.2

3. **Purpose**

The purpose of Policy for Trees and Tree Roots Management is to provide direction and guidance to Council staff in relation to the management of existing trees under Council control and the selection & placement or replacement of new trees aimed at managing risks to people and structure in order to reduce potential Public Liability and Professional Indemnity exposure.

4. **Application**

This policy applies to all the trees under Council control.

5. **Associated legislation and Other References**

- Local Government Act 1993
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Tree Management Act 2006
- Civil Liability Act 2002

6. **Supporting Documents**

Other documents to be taken into account (as amended) are:

- Statewide Mutual Best Practice Manual: Trees and Tree Roots, Version 6, September 2011.
- AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management - Principles and guidelines
- Policy 5.1.3 – Tree Preservation and Removal
- Policy 11.3.2 – Management of Street Trees
- Procedures for Management of Trees and Tree Roots

7. **Definitions**

- Council - Weddin Shire Council
- Trees under Council control - trees located in lands, parks & gardens, reserves, and road reservations either owned, operated or cared and controlled by Weddin Shire Council.
- Public Liability Claim - Covering injury, illness, loss or damage suffered by a member of the public resulting from Council negligence, commission or omission.
- Professional Indemnity Claim - Covering injury, illness, loss or damage suffered by a member of the public resulting from Council negligence, commission or omission in technical advice or professional design or service delivery.

8. **Policy**

8.1 **Background**

Trees provide economic, social, environment and ecological benefits and contributions. They beautify and soften streetscapes, provide wildlife habitat and play a significant role in determining the character of Council's urban areas. Trees are critical in the maintenance of a healthy urban environment as they produce oxygen, trap airborne pollutants and absorb carbon dioxide. While trees play an important role in the urban landscape, it is also recognised that the trees of the wrong type or growing in the wrong place can create problems and risks that are not reasonable in the urban environment. The interactions between trees and the built environment like roads, car parks, footpaths, underground & overhead services, buildings and other structures are complex and not well understood, and so these potential interactions must be given proper consideration when designing for new trees and when developing strategies to manage existing trees.

8.2 Strategic Direction

Council's Delivery Plan 2012/2016 (as amended) objective of particular relevance to this policy is to carry out a programme of street tree planting and maintenance in order to preserve and enhance the natural environment

8.3 Management of Existing Trees

8.3.1 Tree Inventory

An inventory of trees situated in CBD area, Parks & Gardens and Cemeteries will be developed containing all relevant information including at least the location, species, size, approximate age, health & condition, comments (recording complaints, actions and maintenance history). A tree inventory for village surrounds will also be developed in future, when resources are available. As the stock of trees under Council control is large and Council has limited resources, high use areas and known problem areas are prioritised first to the establishment and maintenance of a Tree Inventory.

8.3.2 Customer requests/notifications

8.3.2.1 Customer Service Requests;

Like other Customer Service Requests, requests regarding potential problem caused by trees under Council control will be registered in the records management system and notified to the Engineer/ Overseer as soon as practicable for initial investigation. If the problem is significant, a remedial action will be carried out or Council will engage an arborist for further investigation. Where an issue concerns another Government authority, Council is to forward full details to that authority as soon as practicable.

The requests/notifications, remedial actions, maintenance and other works will be recorded against tree inventory or property location, if appropriate.

8.3.2.2 Tree Preservation Order Applications;

The applications for cutting down or pruning or lopping or removing trees will be assessed in accordance with Council's Policy for Tree Preservation and Removal.

8.3.3 Management of Trees beneath the power lines

The trees beneath the power lines must be managed in accordance with Council's Policy for Management of Street Trees and this Policy.

8.3.4 Risk Management Strategy

A flow chart for the systematic approach to determine an appropriate risk management strategy for trees will be developed. A list of control strategies will also be prepared.

8.3.5 Tree Inspection

Accessing the tree must comply with NSW WorkCover Code of Practice for the Amenity Tree Industry. A tree inspection form will be developed.

8.3.5.1 Trees Listed in the Tree Inventory;

All the trees listed in the tree inventory (refer also 8.3.1) will be inspected by either Council staff with appropriate arboriculture qualifications or contract specialists. As a result of the tree inspection, each tree will be given a "hazard rating". Tree inspecting officer will submit the completed form to their Supervisor for Council office. Preventive or corrective control measures may need to be applied as a result of a trees hazard rating.

8.3.5.2 Trees not listed in the Tree Inventory;

In order to fulfil its duty of care, it will be necessary for staff involved in road construction, maintenance and road inspections to be aware of trees that may present a risk to road users. This will be especially important following high wind or storm events.

8.4 Selection and Placement or Replacement of New Trees

8.4.1 Selection of Species

A flow chart for selection of species will be developed. A list of preferred tree species that can be planted in Council controlled/owned parks & reserves and road reserves will also be developed.

8.4.2 Placement or replacement of Trees beneath the power lines

New trees including replacements, which are to be planted beneath power lines, must be planted in accordance with Council's Policy for Management of Street Trees and this Policy.

8.4.3 Noxious Plants

Council will not plant any tree species listed as either Weeds of National Significance under the National Weed Strategy or Declared Weeds under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993.

9. Responsibilities

9.1 General Manager

- Ensures that Council complies with the requirements of Civil Liability Act 2002 and the standards and requirements issued under the Act
- Ensures that Council complies with other legislation relating to Trees and Tree Roots Management

9.2 Director Engineering

- Ensures that the management of trees and tree roots is adequately resourced.
- Has ownership of the Trees and Tree roots Management Policy.

9.3 All Employees

- Comply with Trees and Tree Roots Management Policy and Procedures.

10. Review and Amendment

- This policy shall be reviewed by September 2021 and thereafter at four (4) yearly intervals, to ensure it meets all statutory requirements and the needs of Council.
- This policy may be amended or cancelled by Council at any time without prior notice or obligation to any employee.

11. Adoption

- This policy commences as from the date of adoption by Council, being 15 June 2017.

12. History

Version	Details
11.5.1	Adopted 16 May 2013
11.5.2	Adopted 15 June 2017