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|  | <h1 style="margin: 0;">TREE MANAGEMENT</h1> | Policy # | 6.6 / 14 |
| | | Issued: | 16 Dec 2015 |
| <h2 style="margin: 0;">POLICY</h2> | | Next review | Dec 2018 |

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| Category: | 10. Community Facilities and Services | Classification: | Public |
| First Issued: | 9 th July 1997 | Review Frequency: | Term of Council – 4 years |
| Legislation: | Local Government Act 1999, Sewerage Act 1929 and Regulations 1929, Electricity Act 1996 | | |
| Relevant Policies: | | | |
| Related Procedures: | Signed: | |  |
| Responsible Officer: | Manager Governance | | |
| Adopted on : | 16/12/15 | | |

1 Introduction

Under the Local Government Act 1999 Council has an obligation to ensure the appropriate management of street trees. The following policy is a set of guidelines to manage requests for removal, planting or pruning of street trees and assessments made by Council Officers.

2 Aim

Provide comprehensive Tree Management strategies to the District Council of Ceduna.

Assist to guide staff and elected members in matters relating to tree management.

Manage requests from residents in a timely, fair and equitable manner.

3 Objective

Council will deliver a service in the management of street trees in an efficient economic and innovative way. Officers from Council will assess each request independently and on merit.

When necessary, Council Officers will utilise the services of a consulting Arbourist to assist in decision making.

Council Officers may also refer the matter to Council's Elected Members for direction, including the need for Public Consultation.

4 Tree Removal

All requests for the removal of trees must be made in writing, stating the person's name, address and the reasons they believe the tree(s) require removal

All requests will be initially considered by the Parks & Gardens Supervisor and the Manager Technical Services and Works.

5 Tree Removal Assessment

The initial assessment will be based on merit and if the Parks & Gardens Supervisor and the Manager Technical Services and Works are able to make a qualified judgement, approval of the tree for removal can occur, pursuant to criteria outlined in Section 5.2 of this Policy being met. If they disagree then a Formal Tree Assessment (refer section 6 of this Policy) is to be considered by Council. The Officers will act in accordance with section 245, Chapter 11 of the Local Government Act 1999.

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5.1 Assessment Timeframe

Each request will be assessed within two weeks of receipt of the removal request.

5.2 Approval Criteria

At least one of the following criteria is required to be met relative to recommendations of the removal of street trees:

- 5.2.1 The tree is identified on a list of inappropriate species.
- 5.2.2 The tree is dead.
- 5.2.3 The tree is loose in the ground and clearly not growing or showing signs of deterioration.
- 5.2.4 The tree is severely storm damaged, or exhibiting obvious dangerous/diseased characteristics. (*See emergency tree removal*).
- 5.2.5 The tree is in poor health with no reasonable prospects to recovery.
- 5.2.6 The tree needs to be assessed as to its soundness and whether it is likely to become a danger to the public.
- 5.2.7 The tree is causing significant hardship to adjacent residents due to their having a proven medical condition provided specialist medical and botanical evidence as to the validity of any such claim is submitted to Council.
- 5.2.8 The tree is causing significant damage to buildings and other infrastructure, and acceptable root pruning or other engineering solutions cannot be undertaken which will prevent further damage.
- 5.2.9 The tree is causing significant hazard to road users and no economically viable alternative exists to removal.

All alternative to tree removal will be explored prior to approval being given

6 Formal Tree Assessment

Where warranted, a formal tree assessment will be presented to Council for a decision, containing the following information:

- The complaint / reason for the tree removal request,
- The Name and address of the Complainant,
- Soundness of the tree (as assessed by Council's Parks and Garden's Supervisor),
- Age of tree,
- Species of tree,
- Affects on other services,
- Other alternatives than removing the tree,
- Survey of other resident's in the immediate vicinity,
- Parks & Gardens Comment,
- Recommendation,
- Date,

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- Attached letter from the complainant.

7 Emergency Tree Removal

Street Trees shall be removed if severely storm damaged or exhibiting obvious dangerous/diseased characteristics and pose a high risk to public safety.

8 Inappropriate Species

Species of trees native to the district are the most appropriate to be planted. Some trees are inappropriate for the area or the location they are planted in, and may be prioritised for removal by the Parks & Gardens Supervisor and Manager Technical Services and Works. For further information on inappropriate species of trees and other plants contact should be made with Council's Parks & Gardens Supervisor and Manager Technical Services and Works in the first instance.

9 Method of Removal

Street trees will be removed under the supervision of Council's Parks & Gardens Staff, in accordance with Work Health and Safety regulations and Council's Hazard Management Policy and Procedures. In view of public safety, only Council staff or suitably qualified and equipped contractor/s, engaged by Council and operating within the above regulations will be permitted to remove trees under the care and control of Council.

10 Removal at Residents Expense

Where Council forms the opinion that the removal request is for the sole benefit of the resident, the removal will be at the resident expense. Payment of the removal cost is to be made prior to the work commencing where Council staff are engaged to undertake the work, or once approval has been granted the resident may directly engage with a suitably qualified contractor at their expense.

11 Unauthorised Removal of Trees

Removal or pruning of street trees/shrubs under the care and control of Council by members of the public is not permitted. Such removal shall be the subject of a report to Council, which by resolution, may institute proceedings against any person(s) who destroys, damages, injures or causes destruction of or any injury to any tree, pursuant to the provisions of section 221 Division 6, of the Local Government Act 1999.

12 Street Tree Planting

All street tree plantings will be in accordance with the Sewerage Act Regulations and the Electricity Act 1996. Indigenous species known to be successful in Ceduna will be utilised where possible, with other species being considered on their merit.

In selecting species suitable for street planting, Council shall give preference to hardy, low water requirement and wind tolerant trees so they are better equipped to cope with extreme weather patterns and possible changes in climatic conditions (e.g. high winds, prolonged periods of dryness).

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13 Planting of Trees by Residents

Council will, in accordance with Section 232 of the Local Government Act 1999, take into consideration all aspects when planting trees within the Council area.

Residents who wish to plant trees on Council land must receive written approval from Council before any works are undertaken, pursuant to Section 221 of the Local Government Act 1999..

When selecting trees for street planting the Council will consider the following elements:

- Its likely size at maturity
- Its potential to effect neighboring landowners
- Its suitability and spacing within the given environment
- Its tolerance to pests, disease, drought and climate change
- Any underground and overhead services and structures
- Existing crossovers
- Traffic & pedestrian lines of sight

14 Street Tree Maintenance

Council is committed to providing an aesthetically appropriate and safe environment for its residents. Periodical tree trimming is required for the following reasons:

(a) Safety

Council is concerned about the safe travel of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians on roads that it owns. To guide its tree trimming works for safe travel, Council will utilise the “Tree Management Guidelines” developed for Local Government that includes a “clearance envelope” which provides easy access for traffic for the full time between pruning.

(b) Maintenance of Community Assets

Sometimes trees will need to be pruned to provide access for Council vehicles, which need to carry out maintenance to other community assets. For example trees may need to be pruned to allow access for garbage trucks and street sweeping vehicles.

(c) Residents Requests – Hazardous Situations

Occasionally Council receives calls from residents who notice that trees or other plants are potentially hazardous. Inspected of the site will be by The Parks & Gardens Supervisor in the first instance, who will determine the best solution and will arrange for the necessary work to be carried out as soon as possible.

(d) Environmental Management

For many trees and plants, pruning is part of the normal management of a healthy micro environment. The extent of pruning varies between species.

(e) Footpaths

A 2.5m high clearance envelope will be provided over the width of the path.

(f) Residential Encroachments

If resident’s shrub or trees encroach onto Council land, Council may prune them for the same reasons previously described. Council encourages residents to keep any encroachment of their trees under control.

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15 Pruning of Amenity Trees

All tree trimming that Council does, will be in accordance with the Tree Management Guide. Trees will be trimmed in an arboricultural manner to suit the species of tree being trimmed.

16 Root Pruning

Tree roots are a major problem to infrastructure that Council/residents own. Once Council has been informed of a problem every endeavour will be taken to fix it. Root pruning will be an alternative that Council will embrace rather than removing the tree, removing the tree will be the last resort. The installation of "Root Barrier" will be installed in the trench when the root pruning is carried out to the manufactures specifications.

17 Litter from Street Trees

Litter from street trees is part of the natural cycle of the tree. Whilst every endeavour will be made not to plant trees that cause excessive litter in the future from time to time residents will complain and each case will be assessed on merit. Council will generally not removed trees on the basis of excessive litter from that tree (See Tree Removal Criteria), however, each case will be assessed on merit.