

## Urban Street Tree, Street Verge and Nature Strip Maintenance Policy

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<b>AUTHORITY</b>	Council
<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>	Director Engineering

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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Trees and people are psychologically linked by culture, socialisation, and co-adaptive history. Urban street trees offer numerous social, environmental and economic benefits. Forest groves, as in parks and other urban spaces provide a focus for community life whilst urban trees plantings contribute to the value of real estate and tourism potential. Trees reduce urban heat island effects, conserve energy and absorb air pollutants responsible for numerous breathing ailments.
- 1.2 Long term benefits are gained when time is spent at the planning stage when due consideration is given to solving potential conflicts and problems. The long term success of urban tree plantings is the end result of a detailed process involving many players. It requires a detailed analysis of site conditions and design constraints. It requires an extensive knowledge of the inherent characteristics of a wide range of species.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Policy is to define the parameters for the preservation of existing trees, for new plantings and maintenance requirements of street trees and nature strips in the urban areas of Forbes Local Government Area.
- 1.4 This Policy is supported by the *Urban Street Tree, Street Verge and Nature Strip Maintenance Procedure*. The procedure is designed as a fluid document that provides clear guidance on the preservation of existing trees and the permitted species and maintenance of street trees and nature strips in the urban areas of Forbes Shire. The procedure includes assessment criteria developed to address individual site constraints and conditions.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Council Officials, including Contractors, undertaking works on urban street trees including design and maintenance.
- 2.2 This Policy applies to all residents of Forbes Local Government Area seeking to establish new planting, remove or maintain existing planting located on nature strips within the urban areas of Forbes Shire.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all street verges and nature strips within the urban areas of Forbes Local Government Area.

## 3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
<b>Act</b>	<i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i>
<b>Nature Strip, Street Verge</b>	Means any Council owned and/or controlled land located between a constructed road and a parcel of private property, that is, the street verge. It is generally that portion of the street verge that is grassed and may contain street trees, driveways and/or footpaths. It does not include land reserves for a public purpose or bushland.
<b>Areas of Public Significance</b>	Means main roads and locations such as town centres, strip shops, community facilities and high-profile public domain areas where a grassed nature strip or general maintenance requirement exist.

## 4 POLICY STATEMENT

### 4.1 Street Tree Planting

4.1.1 The selection and placement of new trees shall be undertaken in accordance with Council's *Urban Street Tree, Street Verge and Nature Strip Maintenance Procedure* using the assessment criteria to address individual site constraints and conditions.

4.1.2 Council's tree planting will be carried out utilising funds available.

4.1.3 Private planting on a nature strip or street verge is not permitted without prior, written approval from Council, subject to the following conditions:

- i. That planting only takes place with Council's written approval.
- ii. That any advice given by the Council is to be strictly adhered to.

4.1.4 Trees planted without prior approval under clause 4.1.3 are to be removed by the resident within 21 days if a direction to do so is issued by Council. Council's direction will give consideration to appropriateness of tree(s) species/variety and location. If the is not removed after 21 days Council shall remove the tree and replace with an appropriate species at the resident's cost.

4.1.5 Location of street trees are to be as follows:

- i. The roadside edge of trees should be no closer than 600mm, and no further than 1200mm from the back of kerb, except where existing plantings already exceed these distances.
- ii. At intersections the trees should be no closer than 9 metres from the boundary property line.
- iii. Trees should be no closer than 3.5 metres to driveway.

4.1.6 Types and location of trees to be planted must give consideration to the location of services, in particular overhead powerlines and sewer.

4.1.7 A maximum of two (2) trees are allowed per average sized residential block. For corner blocks a maximum of two (2) trees for each road frontage are allowed where possible. The maximum trees allowed for larger blocks at to the discretion of Council.

4.1.8 Further to clause 4.1.7, where existing trees are to be removed new trees may be planted to become established before the others are removed.

4.1.9 Where possible and practicable, trees of uniform species should be replanted.

### 4.2 Responsibility of Tree Maintenance

4.2.1 Regular maintenance of street trees is required to regulate the shape and vigour of trees and maintain sight distance so as not to obstruct pedestrian and vehicular traffic, of or traffic signage.

4.2.2 Tree pruning of any street trees by lopping, crown reduction, crown thinning or other methods is to be carried out using correct arboriculture techniques by Council staff only or a Council approved arborist.

4.2.3 Energy Utilities, in conjunction with Council, will be responsible for clearing any tree limbs interfering with power lines under the Electricity Supply Act 1995.

## 4.3 Tree Removal

4.3.1 Street trees are under the care and control of Council, and no person shall ringbark, cut down, lop, remove, wilfully injure or destroy any such tree. Persons found causing such damage may be subject to legal action.

4.3.2 Where Council receives a request for tree removal, Council will undertake an assessment of the tree(s) to determine whether lopping, trimming or removal of a tree is the appropriate course of action. This assessment will be undertaken in accordance with *Council's Urban Street Tree, Street Verge and Nature Strip Maintenance Procedure*.

4.3.3 All Tree removal must be done in accordance with Council's Tree Removal Criteria contained within *Council's Urban Street Tree, Street Verge and Nature Strip Maintenance Procedure*.

4.3.4 Any mature tree removed in accordance with *Council's Urban Street Tree, Street Verge and Nature Strip Maintenance Procedure* is to be replaced where possible with a tree of an approved species. Planting is to be in accordance with this policy and its supporting procedure.

## 4.4 Cost of Lopping, Trimming or Removal of a Tree

4.4.1 The following clauses only apply where the tree lopping, trimming or removal has received prior approval of Council:

- i. Where a tree that has been assessed in accordance with cl. 4.3.2 and has been determined by Council to not require lopping, trimming or removal, the person requesting the works will be charged 50% of the costs of all requested works.
- ii. Where a tree that has been assessed in accordance with cl. 4.3.2 and has been determined by Council to require lopping, trimming or removal, Council will bear the full cost of the works.

## 4.5 Grass Nature Strips and Verges

4.5.1 Forbes Shire Council may undertake to maintain nature strip or verge areas that meet any or all of the following general criteria:

- i. Areas of public significance;
- ii. Areas which are unusually large; or
- iii. Areas which are inaccessible.

4.5.2 In taking a decision to maintain such an area, Council will have regard to its statutory responsibilities, budget, safety and public liability issues and the priority of the area.

4.5.3 Grass nature strips and verges are expected to be mowed regularly by residents and kept neat and tidy, such that they contribute to the general appearance of the street.

- 4.5.4 A resident may apply to replace the grass verge or nature strip outside their property with low maintenance plantings or garden beds.
- 4.5.5 A written application (using Council's application form) must be made to Council outlining the proposed planting including species, layouts with dimensions, proposed maintenance to be undertaken. The following issues (but not limited to) will be assessed in determining the application and must be specifically addressed in the application:
- i. Overall appearance and consistency of the streetscape;
  - ii. Alienation of public land i.e. whether public land is being made to look like private land and/or used for private purpose;
  - iii. Any effect on access to kerbside parking;
  - iv. Any effect on access to adjacent properties;
  - v. Any effect on access along the street for the general public, a minimum access width of 1.8metres must be maintained along the nature strip;
  - vi. Any effect on visibility of motorists - vegetation must not protrude onto splays at corners, maximum height of plantings must not exceed 1.2metres with the exception of trees;
  - vii. Public liability issues, including falling limbs, trip and fall issues relating to roots, thorns, potentially toxic species of plants; and
  - viii. The public interest.
- 4.5.6 A written response to the application will be provided to the applicant within 14 days.
- 4.5.7 If Council agrees to the replacement of grass nature strips or verges outside private property with low maintenance plantings or garden beds, Council will not contribute financially to the cost of the works or the ongoing maintenance. This applies regardless of change of ownership/occupancy of the property.
- 4.5.8 Where a resident fail to maintain the installed garden or installs a garden without approval, Council will seek to recover costs incurred to remedy any issues after verbal and written requests to remove and rectify have been made.
- 4.6 Construction of New Services**
- 4.6.1 The location of new powerlines must be designed and located in a position to avoid unnecessary destruction or removal of existing trees.
- 4.6.2 Installation of new services (gas, water, sewer, telecommunications line, power, etc) in areas where there are existing trees:
- i. Should not cause excessive damage to the root system of the existing trees.
  - ii. Must be brought to the attention of Council prior to works commencing.
- 4.7 New Building and Subdivisions**
- 4.7.1 Existing trees on new building and subdivision sites are to be maintained where possible.
- 4.7.2 Where existing trees have damaged limbs, consideration must be given to appropriate tree surgery rather than complete removal of trees.

## 4.8 Approval of Species

4.8.1 Through assessment of interactions between trees and structures, site characteristics and risk zones of sites, Council has developed a series of tables identifying species of plants that are permitted, or not permitted, to be planted on street verges or nature strips of urban areas of Forbes Local Government Area, depending on certain factors and the property's Planting Zone location:

- i. Table 1: Tall growing and nut trees (not permitted under power lines)
- ii. Table 2: Trees permitted in road verge – without powerlines
- iii. Table 3: Trees permitted in road verge – near powerlines

## 5 VARIATION

5.1 Council reserves the right to vary the terms and conditions of this Policy subject to a report Council.

**Table 1 – Tall growing and nut trees (not permitted under power lines)**

Botanical Name	Common Name
Acacia species (large)	Wattle
Acer species	Maples (not Japanese)
Acmena species (large)	Lilly Pilly or Bush Cherry
Alnus species	Black and Evergreen Alder
Araucaria species	Bunya-Bunya, Hoop or Norfolk Island Pine
Bambusa species	Bamboo
Banksia species (large)	Banksia
Betula species	Birch
Brachychiton species	Lace-Bark, Flame and Kurrajong
Caesalpinia ferrea	Leopard tree
Casuarina species	She-Oak
Cedrus species	Cedar, also Fir and Spruce
Celtis species	Nettle tree
Cinnamomum camphora	Camphor Laurel
Cupressus species	Cypress trees
Delonix regia	Poinciana or Flamboyant
Erythrina species	Coral tree
Eucalyptus species	Gum tree
Ficus species	Fig tree
Fraxinus species	Ash
Gleditsia species	Honey Locust
Grevillea robusta	Silky Oak
Hymenosporum flavum	Native Frangipani
Jacaranda mimosifolia	Jacaranda
Ligustrum species	Privet
Liquidamber species	Liquid Amber
Lophostemon confertus	Brush Box
Magnolia grandiflora	Bull Bay Magnolia
Melaleuca species (large)	Paperbarks
Melia azedarach	White Cedar
Palm species	Palm
Pinus species	Pine
Platanus species	Plane tree
Populus species	Poplar
Quercus species	Oak
Salix species	Willow
Schinus species	Peppercorn tree
Stenocarpus sinuatus	Queensland Firewheel tree
Syncarpia glomulifera	Turpentine
Syzygium species	Lilly Pilly or Bush Cherry
Tamarix aphylla	Athel Pine
Tilia species	Linden or Lime tree
Tipuana tipu	Racehorse tree
Ulmus species	Elm
Zelkova serrata	Japanese Elm

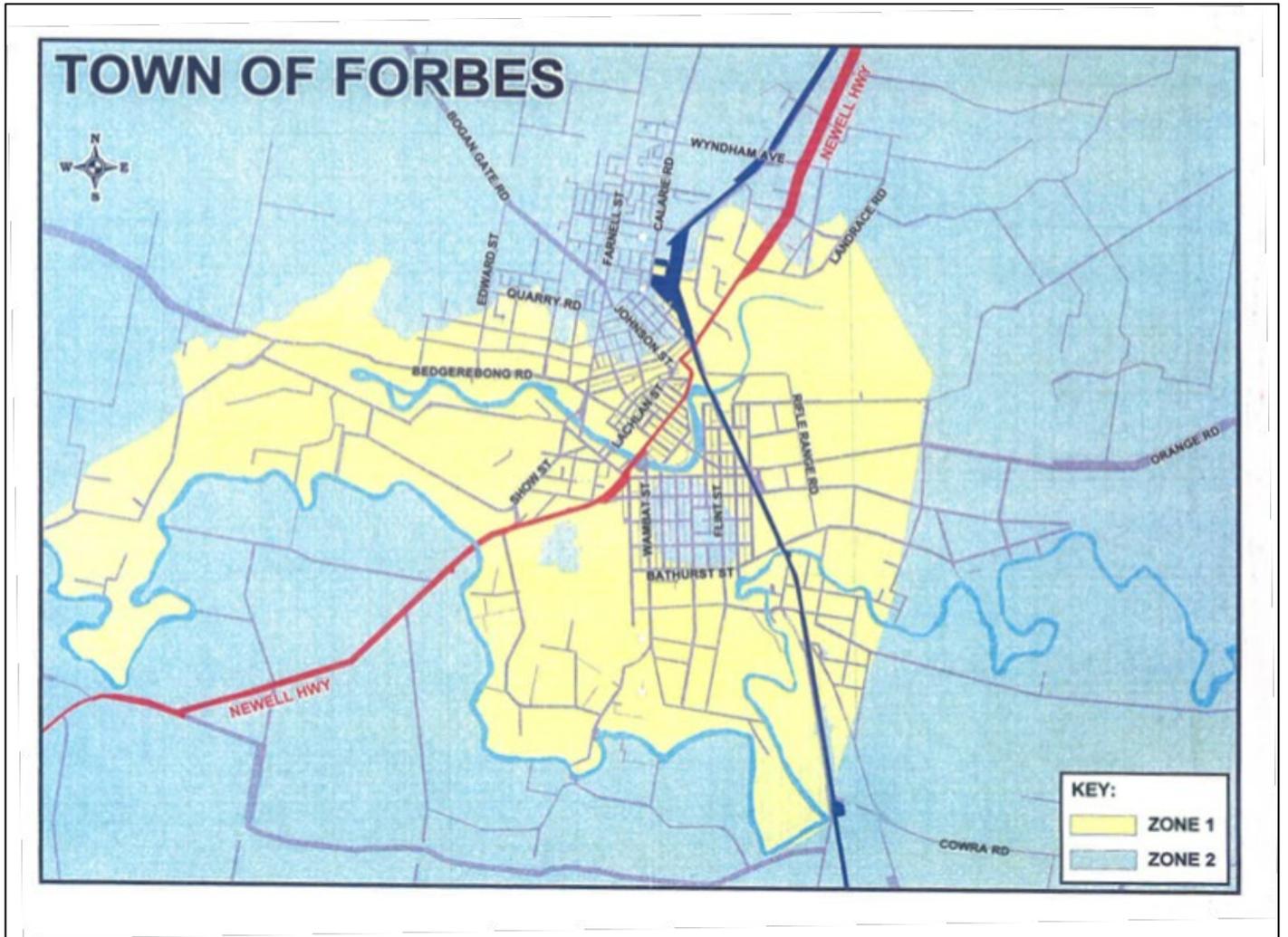
**Table 2 – Trees permitted in road verge (without powerlines)**

<b>ZONE 1 – Alluvial Soils or Lower Areas in Town</b>		
<b>Botanical Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Height (m)</b>
<i>Callistemon citrinus</i>	Red Bottlebrush	2
<i>Callistemon macropunctatus</i>	Scarlet Bottlebrush	5
<i>Callistemon paludosus</i>	River Bottlebrush	3
<i>Callistemon salignus</i>	Pink Tip White Bottlebrush	5
<i>Callistemon salignus 'Red'</i>	Red Flowering Pink Tip White Bottlebrush	5
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	Drooping Bottlebrush	8
<i>Callistemon viminalis 'Captain Cook'</i>	Captain Cook Bottlebrush	2
<i>Eucalyptus Campaspe</i>	Silver Topped Gimlet	6
<i>Eucalyptus lansdowneana</i>	Crimson Mallee	4
<i>Eucalyptus platypus</i>	Round Leafed Mort	5
<i>Eucalyptus torquata</i>	Coral Gum	4 to 5
<i>Eucalyptus viridus</i>	Green Mallee	6
<i>Fraxinus griffithi</i>	Evergreen Ash	6
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis 'Sunburst'</i>	Golden Gleditsia	8
<i>Koelreuteria bipinnata</i>	Pride of China	6
<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	Golden Rain Tree	6
<i>Melaleuca bracteata</i>	White Cloud Tree	5
<i>Melaleuca decussate</i>	Cross-Leaf Honey-Myrtle	5
<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>	Tea-Tree Paper Bark	3
<i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i>	Snow in Summer	5
<i>Melaleuca stypheloides</i>	River Paper Bark	5
<i>Xylosma senticosa</i>	Shiny Xylosma	5
<b>ZONE 2 – Hills, Clay Soils on Higher Areas in Town</b>		
<b>Botanical Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Height (m)</b>
<i>Callistemon macropunctatus</i>	Scarlet Bottlebrush	5
<i>Callistemon salignus</i>	Pink Tip White Bottlebrush	5
<i>Callistemon salignus 'Red'</i>	Red Flowering Pink Tip White Bottlebrush	5
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	Drooping Bottlebrush	8
<i>Callistemon viminalis 'Captain Cook'</i>	Captain Cook Bottlebrush	2
<i>Eucalyptus Campaspe</i>	Silver Topped Gimlet	6
<i>Eucalyptus platypus</i>	Round Leafed Mort	5
<i>Eucalyptus pathulata</i>	Swamp Mallet	6
<i>Eucalyptus stricklandi</i>	Strickland's Gum	6
<i>Eucalyptus torquata</i>	Coral Gum	4 to 5
<i>Eucalyptus viridus</i>	Green Mallee	6
<i>Geijera parviflora</i>	Wilga	8
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis 'Sunburst'</i>	Golden Gleditsia	8
<i>Koelreuteria bipinnata</i>	Pride of China	6
<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	Golden Rain Tree	6
<i>Xylosma senticosa</i>	Shiny Xylosma	5

**Table 3 – Trees permitted in road verge (near powerlines)**

<b>ZONE 1 – Alluvial Soils or Lower Areas in Town</b>		
<b>Botanical Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Height (m)</b>
<i>Callistemon citrinus</i>	Red Bottlebrush	2
<i>Callistemon macropunctatus</i>	Scarlet Bottlebrush	5
<i>Callistemon paludosus</i>	River Bottlebrush	3
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i> ‘Captain Cook’	Captain Cook Bottlebrush	2
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i> ‘Wildfire’	Wildfire	2
<i>Eucalyptus lansdowneana</i>	Crimson Mallee	4
<i>Grevillea</i> ‘Poorinda Constance’	Grevillea	2 to 4
<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i> cultivars	Rosa of Sharon	3
<i>Lagerstromia indicia</i>	Crepe Myrtle	
<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>	Tea-Tree Paper Bark	3
<i>Melaleuca halmaturorum</i>	South Australian Paper Bark	3
<i>Murraya paniculata</i>	Orange Jessamine	3
<i>Pittosporum phylliraeoides</i>	Butterbush	4
<b>ZONE 2 – Hills, Clay Soils on Higher Areas in Town</b>		
<b>Botanical Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Height (m)</b>
<i>Callistemon citrinus</i> ‘Endeavour’	Endeavour Bottlebrush	2
<i>Callistemon macropunctatus</i>	Scarlet Bottlebrush	5
<i>Callistemon paludosus</i>	River Bottlebrush	3
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i> ‘Captain Cook’	Captain Cook Bottlebrush	2
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i> ‘Wildfire’	Wildfire	2
<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judas Tree	4
<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> var. <i>augustifolia</i>	Broad Leaf Hop Bush	2
<i>Dodonaea truncatiales</i>	Propellor Bush	2
<i>Eucalyptus lansdowneana</i>	Crimson Mallee	4
<i>Grevillea</i> ‘Poorinda Constance’	Grevillea	2 to 4
<i>Grevillea rosmariinifolia</i> Cultivars	Grevillea	3
<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i> Cultivars	Rose of Sharon	3
<i>Lagerstromia indicia</i>	Crepe Myrtle	4
<i>Myoporum montanum</i>	Western Boobialla	4
<i>Pittosporum phylliraeoides</i>	Butterbush	4

Fig. 1 – Forbes Planting Zones



## Revision History

Version	Adoption Date	Authorised by	Approved by	Revision Date
V1	18/06/2020	General Manager	Council	18/06/2022
V2		General Manager	Council	

## Change History

Version	Change Details
V1	Initial Policy – amalgamation of the Urban Street Tree Policy and the Nature Strip Maintenance Policy
V2	Addition of cl. 4.3.2 regarding assessment of trees in response to requests for removal. Addition of cl. 4.4 Cost of lopping, trimming or removal of a tree to define financial responsibilities associated with these works.

## Related Documents

### Title

Local Government Act, 1993

Electricity Supply Act 1995

Forbes Shire Councils' Urban Street Tree, Street Verge and Nature Strip Maintenance Procedure

Forbes Shire Council's Street Tree Application Form

*Tree Species List* - Forbes Shire Council – Forbes Urban Landcare Group

Essential Energy's *Vegetation Management Plan* 18 April 2019

<https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/-/media/Project/EssentialEnergy/Website/Files/Safety/CEOP8008.pdf>

Essential Energy's *Plan Before you Plant*

<https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/our-network/managing-the-network/plan-before-you-plant>

Essential Energy's *Vegetation Management near Powerlines*

<https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/-/media/Project/EssentialEnergy/Website/Files/Our-Network/VegMgmtBrochure.pdf>