

Council Policy

Pruning and Removal of Trees on City Managed Land



Legislation/local law requirements	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i>
Relevant Delegation	N/A
Related policy procedures and documents	Urban Forest Strategy

Introduction

The City of Kwinana (City) recognises the significant benefits trees provide to the community and environment. It is dedicated to preserving trees on City-managed land. The City will take reasonable measures to manage existing tree assets, to minimise the risk of injury to individuals and damage to public or private property. This commitment is aimed at protecting and enhancing the long-term viability of the City's trees.

Purpose

To specify the standards for the care, protection, and removal of street and reserve trees on City land, outside the scope of local planning policies. Highlighting that tree removal should only be considered in cases of absolute necessity.

Objectives

1. Contribute to achieving the objectives of the City of Kwinana's Urban Forest Strategy;
2. Mitigate the urban heat island effect;
3. Reduce air pollution;
4. Improve groundwater quality;
5. Support wildlife habitats, biodiversity, and ecological corridors;
6. Enhance community comfort through shade and glare reduction;
7. Provide neighbourhood amenity, character, a sense of place, and offer visual screening and privacy; and
8. Promote a diverse range of tree sizes and species to enhance visual interest and support a more resilient urban forest.

Scope

This Policy outlines how the City of Kwinana will responsibly manage trees on City owned or managed land.

The City acknowledges the beneficial role that trees and vegetation provide for the City's environment and community. The City conducts tree removal and pruning in both a planned and reactive manner, ensuring resources are directed to those trees that present the highest risks

Generally, trees will be allowed to develop their natural canopy and will not be pruned. The City will only undertake pruning or removal following assessment of the tree. Where pruning or removal is essential work, it will be carried out in accordance with relevant Australian Standard (*AS 4373—2007 – Pruning of Amenity Trees*) and *Guidelines for the Management of Vegetation near Power Lines (Government of Western Australia)*.

Policy Provisions

Definitions

Encroachment - **Tree** limbs directly overhanging a dwelling.

Dwelling – A building or portion of a building used, adapted, or designed or intended to be used for the purpose of human habitation on a permanent basis by a single person, as single family. Or no more than six person who do not comprise a single family.

Hazardous - A tree or limb that is deemed by the City to present an immediate or foreseeable risk to the public.

Qualified Arborist - A professional who is trained and experienced in the care and management of trees. According to Australian Standards, particularly *AS 4373-2007 (Pruning of Amenity Trees)* that possess a minimum qualification Certificate III in Arboriculture (or equivalent) from a Training Organisation that is registered with Australian Skills Quality Authority or The Training Accreditation Council.

Tree Parts - Any part of a tree such as, leaves, flowers, nuts, branches, roots and sap.

Urban Forest - A population of trees and other plants growing within an urban setting for the purpose of improving the liveability of that urban setting whilst providing social, economic and environmental benefits to the community.

Vandalism - The unlawful destruction, damage or injury to City owned tree assets which can include, but not limited to, poisoning, pruning, causing malicious damage, removal and/or ringbarking.

City Trees - All trees that are owned or managed or under the direct care of The City of Kwinana.

Unauthorised Pruning - Pruning activities conducted by any persons other than authorised City employees or authorised contractors.

Unauthorised Planting - Trees planted without the City's approval.

DPIRD - Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

PSHB - Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer.

Policy

Street Trees

Planting

To provide environmental services for the broader community, tree planting takes precedence over the individual preferences of nearby property owners. Street trees enhance community health by improving the appearance of streets, reducing urban heating, and providing shade and shelter for the environment.

Street trees will be planted on all available verge spaces in accordance with the City's Street Tree and Verge Treatment Policy. A normal residential lot will be allocated one tree, a corner property may be allocated two or more if space permits.

Residents can request a specific species from the approved list via the City's website during the designated application period, unless allocations are exhausted prior. Applications submitted after the advertised deadline will be added to the register for the next planting season.

The City will consider the request and determine the most suitable species for your address with consideration to;

- Above and below ground services
- Size and width of verge
- Vehicle and pedestrian sightlines
- Existing species in your street and area

The City will determine the appropriate location for the tree and will undertake manual tree watering for minimum two years after the tree is planted. Residents are encouraged to provide the tree with extra water.

Tree planting is typically carried out from May to August, although this is largely dependent on weather conditions and time frames may be adjusted as accordingly.

Unauthorised Planting

Trees are not to be privately planted on the verge without prior written approval from the City. Trees planted without the City's approval are considered unauthorised plantings.

Unauthorised street tree planting shall constitute any one of the following:

- A tree planted of an inappropriate species for verge planting;
- A tree planted out of alignment with a utility providers code of practise; or
- A tree of an undesirable species that has self-germinated.

Where an unauthorised street tree planting is identified, the City shall determine whether the planting will be retained or removed, dependent upon its conformity to the City's planting specifications.

Damage to City Trees

Trees provide both ecological and amenity services to the community. As such, damage to street and reserve trees affects everyone. Members of the community who witness vandalism to trees are encouraged to report this information. All reported incidents of damage to City trees will be investigated and responded to.

Resolutions of vandalism to trees may involve:

- Issuing of infringements under the City's *Local Government Property Law 2003*;
- Recouping the costs associated to any works needed to rectify the damage;
- Recouping costs for the full tree valuation, removal and replacement cost; including tree purchase and watering over its establishment period; or
- Further legal action.

Tree Pruning and Maintenance

The City is solely responsible for pruning and maintaining City trees. Unauthorised pruning or removal of any City tree is not permitted.

Pruning is undertaken in accordance with *Australian Standards AS4373: Pruning of Amenity Trees and Guidelines for the Management of Vegetation near Power Lines (Government of Western Australia)*.

Pruning or removal **will be undertaken** as part of the City's program, as determined by the City, in circumstances where:

- The tree is dead;
- The tree is in a state of decline to the point that survival is unlikely, and no further remedial techniques are appropriate;
- The tree is deemed hazardous by the City;
- The tree is in conflict with utilities and built structures where all reasonable engineering alternatives have been considered;
- The tree is structurally unsound, to the point of constituting imminent danger to persons or dwelling;
- to maintain clearance from dwellings where branches touch or overhang the structure;
- The tree requires selective pruning and weight reduction of limbs to protect the remainder of the tree;
- Maintenance pruning is required to remove dead, diseased, dying, defective branches to protect the remainder of the tree;
- Pruning is required for service lines excluding electrical service lines.
- Crown lifting is required for pedestrian or vehicular access;
- Pruning required for vehicle sight lines, signage, and *Road Traffic Act 1974* requirements;
- Removal is part of a tree replacement program; or
- The tree is obstructing a City approved works program, such as road or drainage projects. These works will be carried out in accordance with the relevant legislative process.

Where fauna habitat trees are identified, the City will remove the minimum amount necessary to make it safe, whilst still retaining habitat value (e.g. leaving a hollow stump for nesting birds).

The City places considerable value on all trees. While an individual property owner or resident may desire a tree to be removed for a variety of reasons, it must be recognised that trees on public land are public assets which provide critical environmental value to the wider community.

The following are **not** sufficient or justifiable reasons for the pruning or removal of City trees:

- To improve views;
- To improve solar power access;
- To discourage the presence of animals or insects;
- Topping/height reduction of trees;
- Emotive reasons;
- Trees inhibiting/lawn grass growth;
- Pruning of trees contrary to Australian Standards;
- Pruning that is outside what a particular species will tolerate, i.e. some species if pruned by more than 10% can be predisposed to further damage and deterioration;
- Pruning or removal of healthy and stable trees;
- Pruning or removal of trees for allergies and/or health problems;
- For the installation of non-essential crossovers or verge paving;
- Pruning or removal of trees found to be causing damage to minor ancillary structures such as footpaths and driveways;
- Pruning or removal of trees due to damage to underground services unless all reasonable engineering alternatives have been considered; or
- Pruning or removal to reduce natural debris such as leaves, flowers, fruit, bark or bird droppings.

Control of pest and disease in City trees will only be managed where they are considered to cause risk to the health or stability of the tree. The City will not perform work on trees that are not considered the responsibility of the City. As per schedule 3.2 of the *Local Government Act 1995* the City will only make safe a tree that presents serious or immediate danger, without having given the owner or occupier notice.

General Tree Pruning and Removal Requests

Residents can request an assessment of City trees for maintenance or removal. A qualified officer will evaluate the request and determine if any work is necessary, as well as its priority in relation to ongoing projects.

Requests that fall under the "Not Sufficient or Justifiable reasons for pruning or removal" section of this policy will not be considered.

If the City determines that pruning is required but is not urgent, then works will be incorporated into the next round of scheduled maintenance for the area.

If the City determines that pruning or removal requires an immediate response, it will be addressed on an as-needed basis. The resident or occupant will be notified of the outcome of their request through an appropriate communication method.

Responsibility of pruning costs will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Street Tree Removal for Development

Street tree removal requests for development purposes will only be considered during the Building Approval or Development Application process. Requests outside of these processes will not be considered.

Street tree removal will only be approved where it has been demonstrated that all other alternatives have been exhausted.

The property owner must engage an approved arborist as defined under this policy, to undertake removal of trees and is responsible for making payment directly with the arborist.

All costs associated with the planting of the replacement of tree must be paid to the City prior to building approval.

Tree planting is undertaken by the City, the property owner is not permitted to undertake the planting of a replacement tree.

Relocation

Upon request, the City will assess the feasibility of street tree relocation. The City reserves the right to determine whether relocation is viable; however, due to the high likelihood of compromising the tree's survival, relocation is generally not undertaken.

If approved, relocation shall be undertaken by the City at the expense of the property owner. All fees associated with the relocation are payable to the City prior to the commencement of the relocation process.

The property owner is not permitted to relocate the tree independently.

Where approval has been granted

The following conditions apply:

- The removal must be carried out by a qualified Arborist, as defined within this policy;
- The tree is to be dismantled down to the ground, with all debris removed from the site, and the stump ground out; and
- A suitable replacement tree will be planted by the City during the next planting season.

Where possible, the City will confirm the location of the replacement tree during the Building Approval process.

Polyphagous shot-hole borer (*Euwallacea fornicatus*)

The City of Kwinana is working with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development ('**DPIRD**') to help stop the spread of the invasive pest, Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer ('**PSHB**'). PSHN is a serious biosecurity matter across the Perth metropolitan area. The primary source of information on PSHB is the DPIRD website.

OFFICER USE ONLY

Officers may amend this section without council approval.

Responsible Team	Works Depot
Initial Council adoption	Date: 28 November 2012 Ref#: 241
Reviewed/amended	Date: March 2025 Ref#: 621
Next Review Date	Date: February 2028
Policy Document Number	D13/70157[v3]