

## TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY (ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY)

### 1 Scope:

This policy applies to trees located in urban and suburban parts of the Region and in the public realm under Rockhampton Regional Council's control.

This policy excludes trees on private properties.

### 2 Purpose:

To ensure a consistent and transparent approach to planting, maintenance, preservation, removal and replacement of trees within the public realm.

### 3 Related Documents:

#### Primary

Nil

#### Secondary

*Land Act 1994*

*Neighbourhood Disputes (Dividing Fences & Trees) Act 2011*

*Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*

Local Law 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities and Roads) 2011

Australian Standard AS 4373-2007 – Pruning of Amenity Trees

Australian Standards AS 4970-2009 – Protection of Trees on Development Sites

Capricorn Municipal Design Guidelines

Road Planning and Design Manual – 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Department of Transport and Main Roads)

Rockhampton Region Planning Scheme 2015 – SC6.13 Landscape Design and Street Trees Planning Scheme Policy

### 4 Policy Definitions:

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

Council	Rockhampton Regional Council
Road	As per section 59(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> : (a) An area of land that is dedicated to public use as a road; or (b) An area of land that – (i) Is developed for, or has as one of its main uses, the driving or riding of motor vehicles; and (ii) Is open to, or used by, the public; or (c) A footpath or bicycle path; or (d) A bridge, culvert, ford, tunnel or viaduct
Park	An area primarily for recreational use and managed by Council.
Public realm	Collective term including park, reserve, road and public areas or spaces.

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Reserve	An area primarily for recreational use and managed by Council on behalf of the State of Queensland.
Significant Tree	Trees that are rare, culturally or naturally important and add to the overall landscape of an area.
Weed	Species of tree that are listed as 'prohibited invasive plants' or 'restricted invasive plants' by Biosecurity Queensland.

## 5 Policy Statement:

The urban tree population provides a range of social, economic and environmental benefits. This policy seeks to maximise these benefits for our community by ensuring appropriate planting and industry best practice maintenance, preservation, removal and replacement of trees.

Priorities for the Region will be the:

- Establishment of healthy vegetation (including suitable species characterised by long-lived single stemmed trees); and
- Preservation of existing vegetation to the greatest practicable extent.

Council's maintenance, planting, removal, replacement and renewal activities on trees will be guided by the Australian Standard AS4373-2007 (as amended) Pruning of Amenity Trees.

### 5.1 Objectives

- Protect significant tree plantings across the Region, consistent with their historical, botanical, landscape, habitat, ecological, cultural or traditional values;
- Improve biodiversity and 'greening' of streets by increasing the number of trees planted, including native and sub-tropical species;
- Improve landscape, streetscape and pedestrian amenity through inclusion of trees as integral to streetscape and landscape design;
- Sustainably manage trees through appropriate species selection, planting location and maintenance; and
- Increase the range of tree species across the Region and retain continuity of species in avenue planting.

### 5.2 Planting

Council is responsible for all tree planting in the public realm. Written permission of Council can be provided to others. Tree planting programs, involving members of the community may be supported and/or organised by Council.

The success of tree planting will be dependent on the selection of the appropriate tree species. The following site specific factors will be considered when selecting the appropriate tree species:

- Planting location (street, park, reserve or other public space), purpose and proximity to infrastructure;
- Available root and crown growing space;
- Site geomorphology and soil structure;
- Height, form and texture of existing site vegetation;
- Character and style of surrounding built environment;
- Required amenity, landscape theme and palette; and

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- Suitability of proposed species (including resilience to drought, flood and fire; minimal maintenance liabilities; and low weed, pest and nuisance potential).

### 5.2.1 Street Tree Planting

Planting of trees in streets and roads will:

- Encourage high quality vistas and promote subtropical boulevards along arterial roads and major entry roads, including feature tree species iconic to the Region's landscape;
- Contribute to local streetscape quality, stormwater management and footpath shade cover;
- Be guided by existing canopy cover density, missing links, and resident requests;
- Favour whole-street plantings or blocks within streets in preference to individual plantings (this is more efficient for establishment and ongoing maintenance); and
- Result in clear trunked, small to medium shade tree species in residential streets in order to minimise nuisance.

### 5.2.2 Park and Reserve Tree Planting

Planting of trees in parks or reserves will:

- Align with any existing historical theme plantings and designs so that timely tree succession is implemented;
- Promote shade and amenity at picnic nodes, pathways, spectator areas, playgrounds and in carparks;
- Offer opportunities for education and to showcase colourful tree species;
- Use the placement and grouping of trees to minimise maintenance and risk exposure; and
- Enhance and protect habitats and waterways.

## 5.3 Maintenance

Maintenance of trees (which includes inspection and pruning) will be conducted to ensure long term health, performance and aesthetics. Tree maintenance will be conducted by Council, following a requested inspection or through the scheduled program, and will be undertaken to:

- Maintain appropriate form and function of trees;
- Remove overhanging branches and under-prune low growing branches considered hazardous to pedestrian or vehicular traffic, buildings or structures;
- Rejuvenate vigour, reduce crown density or to redistribute growth to lateral branches; or
- Remove dead, dying or pest infected limbs and branches.

Ergon will be responsible for tree maintenance, being those associated with power transmission lines and specific easements.

Residents are able to undertake minor maintenance to trees in the public realm immediately adjacent to their property. Minor maintenance is defined as maintenance that can be achieved with a pair of hand-held secateurs.

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## 5.4 Removal and Replacement

There will be instances when tree retention may not be desirable, feasible or reasonable, owing to the condition, location or species of the tree/s, its implications for development on an abutting site and/or the achievement of other Council objectives.

Council will be responsible for the removal of trees in streets and parks.

Requests for the removal of street trees will be assessed in an objective and professional manner. Council will explore all feasible options for resolving issues associated with trees in order to maximise the possibility of their retention.

Trees that are removed will be replaced on a ratio of two trees replaced for every one removed.

Council will remove trees in the following circumstances:

- The tree has been determined as diseased beyond remedial treatment or structurally weak and cannot be managed through recognised Arboricultural methods;
- The tree presents a public safety risk; or
- The tree is an inappropriate specimen (amenity, species, size) for the location.

Council is unlikely to remove trees in the following circumstances:

- The tree obscures or potentially obscures views;
- The tree species planted is disliked;
- The tree variety causes nuisance by way of leaf, fruit, bark shedding or other natural processes;
- The tree shades private gardens, solar panels, solar hot water installations or similar; or
- The tree is determined to have biodiversity values, such as a hollow, breeding place or 'habitat' tree.

## 5.5 Significant Trees

Trees can be classed as significant for many reasons including their historical, social, environmental or cultural attributes. Once a tree satisfies one or more of the criteria, it will be included on Council's Register of Significant Trees.

### 5.5.1 Criteria

Significant trees may include individual trees or groups of trees and must satisfy one of the following:

- **Historical Value** – memorial trees for lives lost in defence service, documented ceremonial trees, trees planted by global leaders, or trees that can be linked to the Region's early botanical planters, settlement or documented local history;
- **Botanical Value** – rare, endangered species or vulnerable species with educational value;
- **Landscape Value** - a local landmark or feature tree, significant in size, form and spread in a regional context and contributes to the scenic character of the location or setting;

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- **Natural/ Habitat/ Ecological Value** – the tree contributes to soil stability, shade and water table management; provides habitat to rare and endangered native fauna as well as the provision of food for wildlife or provides a desirable genetic seed source; or
- **Cultural or Traditional Value** – the tree has a specific link with cultural traditions or stories.

### 5.5.2 Management

Council will ensure appropriate management of significant trees through:

- Minimising the removal of established trees and only undertake removal where remedial action is no longer viable;
- Ensuring same species is used as the replacement for existing significant senescent trees over time and as a minimum use a species with similar character including, mature height, foliage texture, colour and flowering character. This will be achieved, where possible, through propagation from the parent plant; and
- Including a staged remedial and removal program over a suitable time period to minimise the impacts of replacement on the local planting character.

## 6 Review Timelines:

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

- 6.1. The related information is amended or replaced; or
- 6.2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by CEO.

## 7 Responsibilities:

Sponsor	Chief Executive Officer
Business Owner	General Manager Community Services
Policy Implementation	Manager Parks
Policy Compliance	Corporate Improvement and Strategy

**EVAN PARDON**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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