

TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY



1 Scope

This policy applies to the management of trees located within local government controlled area as part of Council's green infrastructure network. This policy excludes trees within an community garden, trees on private property and other road verge plantings.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- (a) Provide a consistent, transparent and best-practice framework for tree management;
- (b) Operationalise Council's Urban Greening Policy and align with relevant legislation, Australian Standards, sustainability objectives and community expectations; and
- (c) Outline Council's Commitment to maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure across the Region through the protection of existing trees wherever practicable and through structured and strategic planting programs.

3 Related documents

3.1 Primary

Nil

3.2 Secondary

Biosecurity Act 2014

Civil Liability Act 2003

Environmental Protection Act 1994

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)

Environmental Protection Regulation 2019

Land Act 1994

Local Government Act 2009

Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011

Local Law No. 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities and Roads) 2011

Nature Conservation Act 1992

Neighbourhood Disputes (Dividing Fences and Trees) Act 2011

Planning Act 2016

Subordinate Local Law No. 1.1 (Alteration or Improvement to Local Government Controlled Areas and Roads) 2011

Subordinate Local Law No. 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilities and Roads) 2019

Transport Infrastructure Act 1994

Vegetation Management Act 1999

Asset Management Responsibilities Policy

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Capricorn Municipal Development Guidelines
 Closed-Circuit Television Systems (AS 4806 Series) – Australian Standard
 Community Gardens Policy
 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Guidelines for Queensland – Queensland Police Service
 Model Code for Neighbourhood Design (A Code for Reconfiguration of Lot)
 Protection of Trees on Development Sites (AS 4970-2025) - Australian Standard
 Pruning of Amenity Trees (AS 4373-2007) – Australian Standard
 Register of Significant Trees
 Rockhampton Regional Council Biosecurity Plan
 Rockhampton Region Planning Scheme 2015
 State Planning Policy - Queensland Government
 Tree Management Procedure
 Tree Register
 Tree Risk Management Guide 2021 Local Government Mutual Services
 Tree Stock for Landscape Use (AS 2303:2018) – Australian Standard
 Tree Valuation Method - Arboriculture Australia and New Zealand Arboriculture Association (AANZAA)
 Urban Greening Policy
 Street Lighting Technical Standard (AS/NZS 1158 Series) – Australian/New Zealand Standard
 Work Instruction for Tree Management

4 Definitions

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

Arboriculture	The care, cultivation, management, and study of individual woody plants/trees. It is both a practice and science.
Canopy cover	The above-ground portion of a vegetation type, formed by plant crowns.
Community garden	Community gardens established and approved by Council under the Community Gardens Policy.
Contractor	A person, organisation or entity that performs a specific act or acts including the provision of services and/or materials to another person, organisation or entity under an agreement enforceable by law.
Council	Rockhampton Regional Council
DBH	Trunk diameter at breast height
Employee	Local government employee: (a) The CEO; or (b) A person holding an appointment under section 196 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .

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Genuine nuisance	<p>An ongoing, substantiated interference caused by a tree on local government controlled area that affects the reasonable use or enjoyment of adjacent private or public land, and which cannot be practically managed through standard maintenance. For a tree to be considered a genuine nuisance it must cause:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Physical damage to private property or non-critical infrastructure; (b) Obstruction of access or visibility amounting to a safety hazard; (c) Persistent and excessive debris causing property damage or unreasonable maintenance burden; or (d) Allergenic or toxic effects from known irritant species, where a multi-factor assessment process is followed including evidence of allergy or toxic effects. Seasonal pollen exposure common to the broader urban environment will generally not meet the threshold of a genuine nuisance unless exceptional and substantiated circumstances are demonstrated. <p>A tree may only be classified as a genuine nuisance following assessment by a suitably qualified person within Council, and only after alternative mitigation measures (for example, pruning, root barriers, engineering controls) are shown to be ineffective or not feasible.</p> <p>Relevant factors in determining genuine nuisance include the history of complaints, documented defects or failures, recurrence of impacts and the effectiveness of previous mitigation measures.</p>
Green infrastructure	A network of naturally occurring or built living assets that, through natural processes, deliver important benefits to people and places in both urban and rural environments.
Habitat tree	A living or dead tree that actively supports wildlife breeding, shelter or feeding (through hollows, nests or features such as a large canopy, loose bark, cracks and food sources).
Local government controlled area	As defined in <i>Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011</i> , land, facilities and other infrastructure owned, held or otherwise controlled by the local government.
Park	An area primarily for recreational use and managed by Council.
Region	Rockhampton Regional Area defined by the Local Government Areas of Queensland.
Reserve	<p>As defined in <i>Subordinate Local Law No. 4 (Local Government Controlled Areas, Facilitates and Roads) 2019</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Land dedicated as a reserve, or granted in trust, under the <i>Land Act 1994</i> and for which the local government is a trustee under that Act; and (ii) Other land held in trust by the local government which the local government has set apart for recreational or environmental purposes; and (b) Includes land designated as a reserve in the planning scheme of the local government.
Road	<p>As defined in <i>Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A road as defined in the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>; and (b) A State-controlled road: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Prescribed under a subordinate local law for this subparagraph as a road to which this local law applies unless otherwise provided; and (ii) In respect of which the chief executive has given written agreement under the <i>Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995</i>, section 66(5)(b).

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Road verge	Part of the Council controlled road reserve between the kerb and front property boundary, or where no kerb exists, between the table-drain and the property boundary.
Significant tree	Trees or stand of trees with aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present and future generations.
Site custodian	Manager with responsibility of a site as assigned in the Asset Management Responsibilities Policy.
SRZ	Structural root zone, the minimum area around a tree required for the tree to remain stable and upright.
Suitably qualified person	For inspection and routine risk assessment: Australian Qualifications Framework Level 3 or above Arborist with demonstrated competency in tree risk inspection. For complex/advanced assessment, reports and high-risk decisions: Australian Qualifications Framework Level 5 Arborist (or equivalent) to undertake or review. For pruning/works: to AS4373 by competent employees; contractors must meet Council prequalification and competency requirements.
TPZ	Tree protection zone, a specified area around a tree that is protected during development or construction activities to ensure a tree's health, stability and long-term viability.
Tree maintenance contractor	Suitably qualified person externally engaged by Council to deliver tree maintenance work to AS 4737-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees under an agreement enforceable by law.
Tree management	The coordinated planning, establishment, protection, maintenance, assessment and removal of trees to ensure their health, longevity, safety and contribution to the Region's green infrastructure.
Tree risk	The potential for a tree or part of a tree to fail and cause harm to people, damage to property or disruption to essential services. Tree risk is determined by considering failure potential, target exposure and consequences of failure.
Tree valuation	A structured administrative assessment used by Council to determine the monetary value of a tree for decision-making purposes. Tree valuation may consider physical attributes, functional contribution, maturity, location, condition and amenity value of the tree, informed by relevant valuation inputs such as canopy area, trunk size (DBH), and the reasonable costs of removal and replacement. The assessment may also have regard to the broader environmental, cultural and community values of a tree, particularly where the tree is identified as significant.
Urban forest	The sum of all trees and associated vegetation (in combined public/private ownership) in and around dense human settlements which are managed for the purpose of improving the urban environment.
Vegetation management	As defined in Subordinate Local Law No. 1.1 (Alteration or Improvement to Local Government Controlled Areas and Roads) 2011, mowing, slashing or edging grass and weeding or watering grass.
Weed	Any plant species, including trees, listed as 'prohibited invasive plants' or 'restricted invasive plants' by Biosecurity Queensland.

5 Policy statement

Our Region's green infrastructure is an essential asset that provides a range of social, economic and environmental benefits. Effective tree management and establishment of new green infrastructure is critical to sustaining canopy cover, mitigating urban heat, protecting biodiversity and enhancing public spaces. Tree management ensures Council meets the duty of care to take all reasonable steps to avoid foreseeable harm from trees on local government controlled areas, having regard to likelihood and consequence, the cost and practicality of controls and competing

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operational responsibilities.

This policy seeks to maximise these benefits for our community by ensuring industry best practice tree management. Priorities for the Region include:

- (a) Establishment of healthy green infrastructure (including suitable species characterised by long-lived single stemmed trees), ensuring long-term resilience and maintainability.
- (b) Continued preservation and protection of existing green infrastructure to the greatest practicable extent.
- (c) Identify risks and act within a reasonable timeframe, proportionate to risk, resourcing and operational priorities and document the assessment and actions taken.

Tree management decisions are consistent with the *Civil Liability Act 2003* and contemporary risk management principles.

5.1 Objectives

This policy is one of the tools Council uses to implement the Urban Greening Policy and its guiding principles to:

- (a) Ensure consistent and transparent decision-making by an approved employee for tree management within local government controlled areas;
- (b) Protect and enhance green infrastructure, including significant and habitat trees;
- (c) Align tree management practices with relevant legislation, Australian Standards and Council’s strategic documents;
- (d) Promote climate resilient and diverse urban forest development by selecting appropriate species and using planting techniques suited to local conditions for long-term sustainability;
- (e) Prioritise public safety and infrastructure protection through structured maintenance programs, risk-based management strategies, inspections and documentation;
- (f) Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecological values by preserving habitat trees, increasing canopy cover and integrating trees into streetscape and landscape design;
- (g) Apply a structured approach to tree removal, with clear assessment criteria and offset requirements through replacement planting;
- (h) Protect significant trees and inform decision-making using a formal Significant Tree Register and criteria-based assessment to retain cultural, historical and ecological values; and
- (i) Engage and educate the community in tree stewardship through consultation and opportunities for participation in planting and minor maintenance.

5.2 Monitoring, identification and tracking of trees

Council maintains a consistent and data-driven approach to tree management by monitoring, identifying and tracking trees across the Region in alignment with the Urban Greening Policy’s “monitor” principle, which includes:

- (a) Maintaining an up-to-date Tree Register that records locations, species, size, condition, maintenance actions, hazard rating and removals and replacement plantings.
- (b) Logging tree requests and complaints into Pathway, Council’s customer request/enquiry and complaints system. Data collected informs future decisions.
- (c) Periodically assess canopy cover and spatial distribution to identify low-canopy areas, urban heat exposures, declining tree cohorts and biodiversity gaps.
- (d) Use monitoring data to proactively identify planting opportunities associated with canopy deficits, succession needs, capital works and neighbourhood-level planting priorities.

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- (e) Update asset records following inspections, plantings, removals or significant maintenance to ensure accurate information informs decision-making.
- (f) Summarise monitoring outcomes periodically to guide annual planting programs, prioritisation frameworks and long-term urban forest planning.
- (g) Consistent, defensible and documented approach to assessing and treating tree risk.
- (h) Conduct scheduled tree inspections of high-use areas such as the CBD, major roads and pathways and near schools.
- (i) Conduct reactive inspections when tree requests are submitted to Council or after significant weather events.

These monitoring processes ensure that tree management is transparent, evidence-based and aligned with Council’s objective to sustainably enhance the Region’s green infrastructure.

5.2.1 Tree risk management

Tree risk management applies to all inspections and assessments of trees on local government controlled areas, including scheduled inspections, service requests and post-incident events. Tree risk is assessed by a suitably qualified person using a systematic method that considers:

- (a) Failure potential (structural defects/condition);
- (b) Target exposure (people, property, traffic); and
- (c) Consequences of failure.

Council adopts a hazard rating approach consistent with industry to prioritise actions. Where uncertainty is high, advanced investigations (for example, elevated or internal inspection, root plate assessment) may be required. The assessor assigns a hazard rating that guides treatment priority and method or remove and replace decisions that are discussed further in this policy. Decisions must balance safety, tree value, environmental and heritage significance, service delivery and cost-effectiveness.

Any tree with severe defects and high target exposure is escalated for prompt treatment, interim controls (for example, barrier, exclusion) may be employed. Every risk assessment must be documented on Council’s standard form and recorded against the Tree Register.

5.3 Planting

Council is responsible for all tree planting in local government controlled areas. Tree planting programs involving members of the community may be supported and/or organised by Council. Residents or community groups seeking to plant trees on local government controlled areas, should submit a request to Council’s Customer Service.

Planted trees must conform to Australian Standard AS 2303-2018 Tree Stock for Landscape Use. Council supports a six-month establishment maintenance period before transitioning to normal tree maintenance measures for any Council approved planting.

5.3.1 Planting prioritisation

Council planting locations are guided by spatial, environmental and asset-based assessments. Priority planting areas are informed by both proactive and reactive triggers.

Proactive planting triggers:

- (a) Canopy cover analysis to identify areas lacking shade and amenity in high pedestrian areas and active transport corridors;
- (b) Succession planning indicates that mature tree populations are nearing end of life;
- (c) High urban heat areas;

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- (d) Biodiversity and habitat connectivity;
- (e) Streetscapes and open spaces audits where whole street or block planting opportunities exist for efficiency, uniformity and maintenance consistency; and
- (f) Capital works create new planting opportunities.

Reactive planting triggers:

- (a) Replacing removed trees or conducting offset planting;
- (b) Storm events, vandalism or asset damage;
- (c) Community group or resident requests for street, park or reserve tree plantings, managed in accordance with paragraphs 5.3.2 and 5.3.3;
- (d) Development approval or offset conditions; and
- (e) Operational requests from within Council.

5.3.2 Planting selection

The success of tree planting in achieving canopy expansion and resilience is dependent on the selection of appropriate tree species and locations. To reduce future conflicts and risks, species and planting locations are selected that are appropriate to site constraints and service interfaces. Council has detailed internal procedures for tree planting which ensure the following site-specific factors are considered when selecting the appropriate tree species:

- (a) Planting location (street, park, reserve or other public space) and purpose;
- (b) Appropriate planting distances from infrastructure such as roads, buildings, transmission lines, street lighting, public CCTV and fixed cameras, and underground services;
- (c) Available root and crown growing space;
- (d) Site geomorphology and soil structure;
- (e) Height, form and texture of existing site vegetation;
- (f) Character and style of surrounding environment, both built and landscape character;
- (g) Required amenity, landscape theme and palette; and
- (h) Suitability of proposed species (including resilience to climate extremes, minimal maintenance liabilities; and low weed, pest and nuisance potential).

5.3.3 Street tree planting

Planting of trees in Council controlled roads will:

- (a) 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;
- (b) Contribute to local streetscape quality, stormwater management and footpath shade cover;
- (c) Favour whole-street plantings or blocks within streets in preference to individual plantings;
- (d) Result in clear trunked, small to medium shade tree species in residential streets to minimise nuisance; and
- (e) Ensure safe road and kerb access is maintained for all vehicle types, including waste collection vehicles and emergency services vehicles.

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5.3.4 Park and reserve tree planting

Planting of trees in parks or reserves will:

- (a) Align with existing historical theme plantings and designs for timely tree succession;
- (b) Promote shade and amenity at picnic nodes, pathways, spectator areas, playgrounds and carparks;
- (c) Offer opportunities for education and to showcase colourful tree species;
- (d) Use the placement and grouping of trees to minimise maintenance and risk exposure; and
- (e) Enhance and protect habitats and waterways.

5.4 Maintenance

Tree asset maintenance work is prioritised in the following order, to facilitate decision-making and direct prioritisation of resources:

- (a) Risks to public safety;
- (b) Risks to property or infrastructure;
- (c) Risks to safe delivery of essential services such as waste collection or emergency vehicles;
- (d) Interference with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles including non-compliance of CCTV and fixed cameras line of sight and street-lighting illumination requirements;
- (e) Hazard reduction, fire safety and/or storm clean-up;
- (f) Genuine nuisance issues are prioritised based on risk and evidence, having regard to the severity, frequency and documented history of the issue;
- (g) Establishing and maintaining healthy and structurally sound trees; and
- (h) Maintaining natural habitat for wildlife.

Maintenance of trees includes proactive inspection and pruning to ensure long term health, performance and aesthetics. Tree maintenance is conducted by a suitably qualified person or tree maintenance contractor. Maintenance of trees is undertaken to:

- (i) Maintain appropriate form and function of trees;
- (j) Remove overhanging branches and under-prune low growing branches considered hazardous to pedestrian or vehicular traffic and infrastructure;
- (k) Rejuvenate vigour, reduce crown density or to redistribute growth to lateral branches;
- (l) Remove dead, dying or pest infected limbs and branches; and
- (m) Where a tree experiences limb failure, structural damage or other significant defect, Council undertakes a timely post-failure arboriculture assessment and implements appropriate remedial actions to support tree health and reduce the likelihood of repeat failure.

The local energy provider (currently Ergon Energy) is responsible for the maintenance of trees that may interfere with power transmission infrastructure, including those within specific easements and corridors.

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5.4.1 Maintenance by residents

In addition to vegetation management permitted under Subordinate Local Law 1.1 Schedule 1, Council permits residents to undertake minor maintenance of trees and other shrubs, excluding significant trees, on local government controlled areas adjacent to and within five metres of the resident's private property. Minor maintenance is limited to low-risk, ground-based works only, and includes:

- a) Trimming or cutting of small branches with a maximum diameter of up to five centimetres; and
- b) Works undertaken from ground level only, where the point of cut is generally no higher than two metres above natural ground level, or within safe reach using handheld or long-handled non-powered tools while both feet remain on the ground.

Minor maintenance must not include:

- a) Use of ladders, climbing devices, elevated work platforms or climbing of the tree;
- b) Use of chainsaws or powered cutting equipment;
- c) Works that affect the structural integrity, health or long-term form of the tree; or
- d) Any pruning of significant trees.

Where vegetation exceeds these parameters, or where safety or tree health may be compromised, maintenance must be undertaken by Council or a suitably qualified person.

All minor maintenance must be undertaken for a reasonable purpose, must not interfere with the proper maintenance of the road or footpath and must not create any hazard or obstruction for pedestrians or vehicular traffic. The person undertaking the maintenance is responsible for ensuring adequate safety measures are in place and that the safe use of the road verge by pedestrian or vehicular traffic is not compromised. The outcome of the work must contribute positively to the aesthetic presentation of the area for the community.

5.5 Removal and replacement

There may be instances where Council decides that tree retention is not desirable, feasible or reasonable based on criteria listed in this paragraph. Council is responsible for the removal of trees in local government controlled area, and only removes trees in the following circumstances where the tree:

- (a) Is dead, in irreversible decline or structurally unsound.
- (b) Is deemed a traffic hazard which cannot be corrected by pruning.
- (c) Poses a hazard to public safety which cannot be mitigated without adverse effects to the tree.
- (d) Has been damaged resulting in compromised structural integrity and/or long-term viability.
- (e) Has interfered with above or below ground essential services infrastructure, where the infrastructure or tree cannot be modified without detrimental effects on the tree.
- (f) Has interfered with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles for maintaining clear sightlines for Council CCTV and fixed cameras and compliant street lighting, and engineering change options are not feasible or cost-effective and selective pruning is not effective.
- (g) Has a documented history of limb failure, structural defects or recurring genuine nuisance impacts and further mitigation measures are not reasonably effective, proportionate or viable.
- (h) Is to be removed to allow for the inclusion of infrastructure which provides community benefit, where all other options have been exhausted. Such removals require offset planting within the immediate or local area as appropriate.
- (i) Has damaged infrastructure and the cost of ongoing repair is greater than the assessed value of the tree determined in accordance with paragraph 5.5.1 Tree valuation. Is an invasive plant in accordance with the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, Council's Biosecurity Plan and Local Laws.

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- (j) Is a juvenile tree that has self-seeded within an existing view-shed.

Trees that are removed are replaced on a ratio of two trees replaced for each tree removed. Offset plantings are considered if there is not enough adequate room at the original location of the tree being removed. Offset planting occurs at the closest viable location and the planting criteria listed in paragraph 5.3 informs the location and species selection.

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

Tree removal requests submitted through development applications are assessed once a road reserve work permit is submitted and approved by Council. If the tree must be removed it is up to the property owner to engage a qualified arborist/tree maintenance contractor to remove the tree at no cost to Council.

Council is unlikely to remove trees in the following circumstances:

- (a) The tree obscures or potentially obscures views;
- (b) The tree species is disliked;
- (c) The tree variety causes nuisance by way of leaf, fruit, bark shedding or other natural processes that is not deemed a risk to infrastructure or public safety;
- (d) The tree shades private dwellings, gardens, solar panels, solar hot water installations or similar;
- (e) The tree is determined to have biodiversity values, such as a hollow, breeding place or 'habitat' tree;
- (f) Tree impacts TV, radio or satellite reception – where reasonable access can be provided by better positioning of the device(s) or the subject tree pre-dates the TV, radio, satellite antenna; and
- (g) Where tree parts (leaf, seed etc.) are affecting the swimming pool area or filtration system where reasonable covering and/or devices can be employed.

5.5.1 Tree valuation

Council applies tree valuation to inform the tree decision-making process, including trade-off considerations between infrastructure requirements and tree value.

Tree valuation is undertaken using a consistent administrative approach that reflects the physical attributes of the tree, its contribution to amenity, and the cost to remove and replace it. Valuation is informed by recognised arboriculture industry guidance, including the AANZAA tree valuation methodology, with the selection of specific valuation inputs adapted to suit the characteristics of the tree and the context in which it is located.

The tree valuation methodology applied may vary having regard to factors including, but not limited to the species type, expected longevity, age, location, condition and structural integrity of the tree.

Tree valuation may comprise of the following components:

- (a) The size, functional contribution and age of the tree, as measured by the tree's canopy area, the trunk diameter at breast-height (DBH), or other recognised arboricultural measures considered appropriate by Council.
- (b) Reasonable cost to remove the tree, including labour, plant and equipment, traffic control, disposal, and access considerations, where applicable.
- (c) Reasonable cost to supply and establish a replacement tree, including stock, planting materials, labour and establishment inputs.
- (d) Additional reasonable costs or adjustments may be applied where required to account for site-specific constraints, access limitations, asset protection requirements or construction interface.

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Council does not currently apply a formal valuation framework to determine any additional monetary value associated with historically, culturally or environmentally significant trees. However, these trees may still be assigned a value under this policy, and where the assessment of broader community, environmental or cultural value is required, Council may seek independent third-party arboriculture or specialist advice to inform decision-making in exceptional circumstances.

Council maintains and periodically reviews the valuation methodology, inputs, rates and administrative settings adopted under this section to ensure they remain current, appropriate and fit for purpose. Tree valuation is a decision-support tool and does not of itself create any entitlement to tree removal, compensation or offset payment.

5.6 Tree protection (root management)

Tree roots are opportunistic rather than destructive, but their health is critical for tree stability and longevity. Any structural damage to roots or changes to surrounding soil conditions such as grade alterations or machine compaction, can cause instability, reduce tree health and shorten life expectancy.

Protection of tree root systems and canopy is essential during any civil or infrastructure works. Interventions with tree roots should only occur as a last resort and must be undertaken by a Level 5 qualified Arborist in accordance with AS4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites. Minimum requirements for works near trees:

- (a) Pre-works Arborist assessment to establish TPZ and SRZ;
- (b) Install protective fencing before site works commence;
- (c) No excavation, soil storage, compaction or vehicle access in the TPZ;
- (d) Root pruning only by a qualified arborist;
- (e) Use mulch, ground mats or geotextile to prevent compaction; and
- (f) Arborist supervision required for any approved incursions into TPZ.

5.7 Significant trees

Trees may be classified as significant due to their historical, social, environmental, cultural or botanical attributes. Council applies a set of defined criteria to assess the significance of individual trees or groups of trees.

A tree that meets one or more of these criteria is recognised as a significant tree, regardless of whether it is currently listed in Council's Register of Significant Trees. The register is updated periodically to reflect newly identified significant trees. The following table outlines the criteria used to determine significance and guide appropriate protection and management.

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

Criteria	Description
Unique location or context	The tree or trees occur in a unique location or context, providing a unique contribution to the landscape.
Rare or localised distribution	Any tree of a species or variety that is rare or is of very localised distribution. This could include a threatened indigenous or endemic species within its locality, end of natural range, disjunct community or a rare exotic specimen.
Outstanding size	The outstanding size of a tree relates specifically to the tree species and may vary considerably depending on height, canopy spread or diameter at breast height.
Aesthetic value	The tree is a particularly well-formed example of the species that is in a location that makes it striking in the landscape. This includes local landmark or feature trees that are significant in size, form and spread in a regional context and contributes to the scenic character of the location or setting. The loss of a tree in this category would

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Criteria	Description
	result in a substantial change to the local landscape.
Curious growth habit	Any tree which exhibits a curious growth form or physical feature such as abnormal outgrowths, natural fusion of branches, severe lightning damage or unusually pruned forms.
Historical significance	The tree is of importance in the culture and natural history of the Region such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Any tree commemorating a particular occasion, individual or associated with an important historical event may be considered in this category; (b) Remnant tree that is likely to predate European development of the area (likely over 100 years old); and (c) Any tree that is particularly old or venerable (older than other typical species in the area).
Connection to Aboriginal culture	A tree associated with aboriginal activities or culture. For example sacred or corroboree trees.
Outstanding example of species	Any tree that is an outstanding example of the species at an international/national/state/regional/local level or of aesthetic value.
Environmental significance	Trees that provide essential habitat or ecological functions and contribute to biodiversity conservation under relevant environmental legislation frameworks. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Habitat for native wildlife (hollows, nesting sites, food sources); (b) Connectivity within wildlife corridors supporting species movement or within mapped corridors; (c) Association with remnant vegetation or areas of high ecological value and contribution to the survival of threatened species or ecological communities; and (d) Any tree which is of horticultural or genetic value and could be an important source of propagating stock, including specimens that are particularly resistant to disease or exposure. This could include Australian native, locally indigenous or exotic tree species.

5.7.1 Management of significant trees

Council ensures appropriate management of significant trees through:

- (a) Maintaining a register of trees in the Region recognised under this paragraph, known as Council's Register of Significant Trees.
- (b) Only Council is permitted to manage significant trees, the community cannot perform minor maintenance on significant trees, regardless of their proximity to private land.
- (c) Significance does not remove the need for hazard assessment. Where a significant tree presents unacceptable risk that cannot be reasonably mitigated, Council may implement interim controls, targeted pruning, engineering controls, or staged removal with like-for-like replacement and heritage interpretation, as appropriate.

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- (d) Ensuring the same species is considered as the preferred replacement option for existing significant ageing trees, achieved where possible through propagation from the parent plant.

Where the original species is no longer desirable, suitable or fit for purpose due to site constraints, environmental conditions, safety considerations or long-term maintenance outcomes, alternative species may be selected, provided they achieve a similar landscape character, including consideration of:

- (i) Mature height and canopy form;
- (ii) Foliage texture and density;
- (iii) Colour and seasonal interest; and
- (iv) Flowering or visual character.

- (e) Including a staged remedial and removal program over a suitable time to minimise the impacts of replacement on the local planting character.

5.8 Responsibilities

A whole of Council approach is required for planning, maintaining, protecting and enhancing green infrastructure. This shared framework ensures trees are managed consistently across the organisation:

Section/Unit	Responsibilities
Open Spaces and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Primary custodian and decision-makers responsible for green infrastructure management; (b) Lead strategic tree planning and canopy enhancement programs; (c) Manage species palette and planting standards; (d) Deliver planting programs; (e) Coordinate community planting with Environmental and Sustainability; (f) Conduct all types of tree maintenance; (g) Conduct scheduled tree inspections; (h) Support Arborists by responding to service requests in their respective zones for general tree maintenance activities such as removal of fallen branches and basic pruning from ground-level using a pole saw; (i) Monitor tree health, canopy trends and planting success; and (j) Document inspections, hazard ratings, nuisance assessments, mitigation actions and follow-up outcomes to support consistent decision-making, asset risk management and defensible outcomes. (k) Ensure Council is informed of decisions to remove significant trees, or any trees from the Botanic Gardens.
Infrastructure Planning and Civil Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Integrate trees into civil designs to contribute to long-term canopy coverage; (b) Consider protection of trees in project design; and (c) Request Arborist review during project planning.
Civil Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Support verge/streetscape planting (where requested and resourced); (b) Ad-hoc operational support for tree works (usually in response to significant weather events);

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Section/Unit	Responsibilities
	(c) Implement tree protection measures during civil works; and (d) Identify and report trees requiring assessment.
Fitzroy River Water	(a) Where site custodian, maintain and protect trees; and (b) Request Arborist assessment and support as required.
Rockhampton Regional Waste and Recycling	(a) Where site custodian, maintain and protect trees; and (b) Request Arborist assessment and support as required.
Fleet and Facilities	(a) Where site custodian or asset custodian, consider landscaping/tree integration at community facilities; (b) Where site custodian, maintain trees on facility grounds; (c) Request Arborist assessment and support as required; and (d) Protect trees during facility works.
Project Delivery	(a) Incorporate tree retention or planting into project design and staging; (b) Ensure capital projects protect existing trees; and (c) Ensure contractors comply with this policy and related standards.
Development Assessment	(a) Ensure private development protects significant trees; (b) Regulate tree removal and protection on development sites; and (c) Enforce Rockhampton Region Planning Scheme and conditions relating to tree protection.
Environmental Sustainability	(a) Support Open Spaces and Recreation by facilitating community natural resource management partnerships and community planting activities; and (b) Support environment and sustainability business improvement projects as required.
Community Engagement/Customer Service	(a) Interface for residents and logging of service requests; and (b) Provide consistent messaging and manage community expectations.
Local Laws	(a) Enforce Local Laws regarding damage, interference or illegal removal or maintenance of public trees; and (b) Support action against vandalism.

5.9 Human rights

In creating this policy Council has considered all human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019* in order to identify which human rights are relevant to this policy. As a result of this consideration, Council identified that the human right to privacy and property rights are relevant to this policy. Any limitation of human rights are reasonable and justified in the circumstances in accordance with section 13 of the *Human Rights Act 2019*. When applying this policy, Council acts and makes decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and gives proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

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6 Review timelines

This policy is reviewed when any of the following occur:

- (a) The related information is amended or replaced; or
- (b) Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the Council.

7 Document management

Sponsor	Chief Executive Officer
Business Owner	General Manager Communities and Lifestyle
Policy Owner	Manager Open Spaces and Recreation
Policy Quality Control	Legal and Governance

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