



Tree Planting and Removal Policy

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Endorsement	Executive 27 August 2014 Policy Review Panel 29 October 2014
Authorisation	Council 18 November 2014
Expiry date	21 August 2018
Responsible officer	Operations Manager
Policy owner	Parks Coordinator

1. Purpose

To provide direction for planting and removal of trees on land owned or managed by Council.

To ensure that Councils tree asset base is not depleted over time.

To promote 'net loss zero' of tree assets across all functions of Council.

2. Scope

This policy applies to staff, volunteers and contractors working with or in the vicinity of Councils' tree assets.

In the event that a tree is protected under an existing legislative framework this policy is to be applied in order of precedence.

This policy does not remove any responsibility that is vested with developers during maintenance periods.

This policy does not apply to development areas where a Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP) or similar survey is relevant.

3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
allotment	Residential, commercial or industrial zoned parcel of land with a clear title.
amenity	The scenic quality of the precinct based on the tree, garden, lawn and other soft landscape features.
canopy cover	The area which the elevated crown of a tree occupies measured by its drip line.
direct damage	Cause and effect are immediately linked ie root lifted and cracked footpath.
indirect damage	ie termites are found to be living in council tree, nearby house becomes infected by termites.

Word/Term	Definition
legislative framework	Any relevant State or Federal legislation.
necessary	An item that is essential for daily function as opposed to desirable.
net loss zero	On project completion the tree population has not declined.
passive open space	Any community use outdoor space that is not solely dedicated to a specific use or function.
poor form	Tree has not met desired outcomes as a result of poor growth, tree selection or physical damage.
seek to	Make every effort within their power of control.
tree asset	A tall perennial woody plant having a main trunk and branches forming a distinct elevated crown and sub surface root system.

4. Policy

Melton City Council recognises the significant environmental, health and amenity benefits trees provide to the municipality. Council also acknowledges the connection our people have with trees and Council's role as custodian of these living assets. This policy demonstrates our commitment to the preservation and growth of trees by working towards a 'net loss zero' of our tree asset base across all functions of Council.

Authorisation.

All tree planting and removal activities on Council owned/managed land must be undertaken with written permission from Melton City Council. Penalties may apply to persons who perform (or engage) these works without appropriate consent.

4.1 Tree Planting.

- Tree planting will seek to achieve no less than 30% canopy cover in **passive open space**.
- Tree planting in **streetscapes** will seek to achieve a minimum of one tree at the front and two at the side of each allotment.
- Tree planting will seek to provide the correct species for the correct location in accordance with Councils landscape guidelines.
- Council will seek to accommodate all reasonable requests to undertake tree planting works or refer to future planting programs.
- All Council approved tree planting programs will seek to have a minimum 24 month establishment period.
- Any tree planted on Council land is deemed to be the property of Melton City Council and is recognised as a tree asset regardless of condition, location or origin.
- Tree planting programs will seek to equal or exceed the numbers of trees removed to work towards achieving 'net loss zero' of tree assets across the municipality.

4.2 Tree Removal.

- Tree removal will be considered where one or more of the below criteria are met.

A	Tree is dead and ceases to provide any value to the community.
B	Tree is infected with a significant disease where control is not considered practical.
C	An unreasonable level of risk is exposed to the community by retaining the tree.
D	The tree has poor form / structure and ceases to provide any value to the community.
E	Substantial property damage has occurred directly from the tree and removal is the only option to remedy the situation.
F	A necessary vehicle access point can't be provided to a titled allotment without removal of a tree. ¹ See Appendix 1 .
G	Re-engineering of paths, roads or other infrastructure with the view to retain the tree/s cannot be achieved. See Appendix 2 .

4.3 'net loss zero'

Trees removed to allow for construction purposes must be offset appropriately.

Where one or more of the above criteria have been met, tree removal will be considered by Council provided that no net loss in overall tree assets can be reasonably achieved.

Compensation for tree removal to achieve this can involve:

- i) Tree planting undertaken as part of the development or project in accordance with approved landscape plans.
- ii) Landscape treatments and other improvements to the visual amenity of the precinct.
- iii) Financial contribution to Council in accordance with the Maurer-Hoffman formula, with the contribution to be used by Council for additional tree planting activities.

Whilst the 'net loss zero' initiative encourages planting to exceed tree removal any perceived credit is not transferable to other projects. Operations will maintain data relating to the organisations capacity to meet or exceed this initiative.

5. Responsibility /Accountability

5.1	Parks Coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible to administer the policy and provide guidance and direction in its application.
5.2	Managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for ensuring the policy is adhered to.
5.3	General Managers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for authorising tree removals where the amenity value exceeds \$50,000

¹ Approval is granted pending payment of appropriate fees to offset removal, replacement and lost amenity value of tree. See **Appendix 3**.

6. References and links to legislation and other documents

Landscape Guidelines	<i>Currently under review.</i>
<i>Road Management Act 2004</i>	http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/
General Local Law 2005	<i>Policy Intranet</i>

Tree Removal Cross Over Applications

Step 1

- Cross over **can not** be relocated to allow retention of tree.
 - The cross over is deemed '**necessary**' in accordance with policy definition.
- *If both cases apply proceed to step 2.*

Step 2

- Removal cost of tree is estimated according to size. (A)
 - Amenity value of tree is estimated using valuation formula. (B)
 - Replacement tree cost is added. (C)
 - Costs A, B and C are outlined as a permit condition to applicant.
- *Permit is issued by engineering to proceed.*

Step 3

- Resident makes applicable payment to customer service.
 - Customer service log CAR's for tree removal and replacement.
 - Operations undertake planting to offset loss of tree asset.
- *Tree is removed within 28 days and new tree added to next planting program.*

Tree Removal

Council / Developer Works

Step 1

- Project plan **can not** be modified to allow retention of tree(s).
 - Project manager has explored all reasonable options to retain the tree(s).
- If both cases apply proceed to step 2.*

Step 2

- Project manager must estimate the number of trees to be removed and the amenity value using valuation formula. (B)
- The number of trees replaced must seek to equal or exceed the number of trees removed.
- The landscape component of the project must seek to equal or exceed the amenity value of the trees removed.

Step 3

- Tree removal is performed by an appropriately skilled contractor with an accredited health and safety system.
- Where an appropriate contractor can not be sourced the project manager may elect to have the work performed by 'Operations' at cost.
- The project manager must ensure that tree and other landscape works are performed in accordance with Councils' approved landscape guidelines.

• 'Operations' use the services of Citywide Pty Ltd for tree works.

Tree Valuations in the City of Melton

The following process is intended as a guide to quantify a monetary value for a tree asset.

The costs associated with removal of a public tree include the below 3 items:

<p>1 – Removal Costs</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><3m</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3-6m</p> <p style="text-align: right;">>6m</p>	<p>Amounting to the fees incurred by Council for physically removing the tree.</p> <p>Small Tree.....\$100</p> <p>Medium Tree.....\$200</p> <p>Large Tree.....\$300</p> <p><i>These costs are a guide only. Council reserves the right to seek quotations to determine specific costs.</i></p>
<p>2 – Amenity Value</p> <p><i>For trees in excess of 2m and 24 months.</i></p>	<p>Calculated in accordance with Maurer-Hoffman Formula.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Value (V) = Basic Value (\$) x Species (S) x Aesthetics (A) x Locality (L) x Condition (C)</i></p>
<p>3 – Reinstatement Costs</p>	<p>Calculated in accordance with Council's costs for supply plant and maintenance of a new tree.</p> <p>Approx \$ 250.00</p>

1 - Removal Costs

Costs will be based on the current costs of tree removal. It includes the physical removal of the tree and the stump.

2 - Amenity Costs

The following formula has been prepared to assist in estimating the monetary value of an established tree. This is derived from the Maurer-Hoffman Formula and is extensively used within local government for this purpose.

Basic Value (\$)

The basic monetary value of a tree is determined by matching the trunk diameter at breast height (DBH) with its corresponding base value. This information is generally available within the asset layer of intramaps.

DBH cm	Base Value		DBH cm	Base Value
6-10	\$309.92		60-65	\$30,992.16
10-15	\$860.89		65-75	\$42,183.77
15-25	\$3,443.57		75-85	\$55,097.17
25-35	\$7,748.04		85-95	\$62,199.54
35-45	\$13,774.29		95-105	\$69,732.35
45-55	\$21,522.33		105-115	\$86,089.33
			Base Value	

Species Factor (S)

A tree is assessed according to its known natural life span and its rate of growth in a particular environment. For example, a long-lived tree species will be scored higher than a short-lived tree. Identification of tree species is generally available within the asset layer of intramaps.

Group	Characteristics	Example Species	Score
1	Trees of short life span (less than 50 years)	<i>Prunus, Acacia, Virgillia, Laburnum, Malus, Crataegus, Eugenia, Waterhousia, Pyrus</i>	0.5
2	Trees of medium life span (50-150 years)	<i>Populus, Liquidamber, Eucalyptus, Corymbia, Angophora, Grevillea, Melaleuca, Michelia, Salix, Casaurina, Hakea, Celtis, Acmena Brachychiton, Fraxinus, Gleditsia, Jacaranda, Shinus, Phoenix, Melia, Robinia, Lophostemon, Liriodendron, Agonis, Meterosideros, Syzygium</i>	0.7
3	Trees of long life span (more than 150 years)	<i>Cupressus, Platanus, Ficus, Pinus, Ulmus, Quercus, Sequoia, Ginko, Araucaria</i>	0.9
Species Factor (S)			

Aesthetics (A)

The aesthetic value of a tree is determined by the impact on the landscape if the tree were removed. This category is closely tied to the locality factor (L).

Aesthetic Factor	Score
Contributes little to the landscape	0.5
One of a group of close plantings	0.6
Street or pathway plantings, regular spacing both sides	0.9
Solitary feature specimen tree	1.0
Aesthetics (A)	

Locality (L)

The locality factor is determined by the tree's geographical situation. Trees in a main street or boulevard score highest because of the stressful growing environment in which the tree has to survive. As the location becomes more rural, the significance of the tree diminishes.

Locality Factor	Score
In undeveloped bushland or open forest	0.5
In rural areas	1.0
In outer suburban areas and residential streets	1.5
In inner suburban areas and residential streets	1.75
In Park or Reserve; significant street near City Centre	2.0
In Park or Reserve; outer suburban or rural.	2.25
City Centre Main Street, Principal Boulevard	2.5
Locality (L)	

Tree Condition (C)

The tree condition value is determined by the latest inspection by Councils arborist. This information is generally available on the asset layer of intramaps.

Locality Factor	Score
Very poor	0.2
Poor	0.4
Fair	0.6
Good	0.8
Excellent	1.0
Tree Condition Rating(C)	

3 – Reinstatement Costs

The level of reinstatement required will be determined by Council and include an establishment fee to enable viable replacement of the tree asset.

**For further information please contact the City of Melton on:
03 9747 7200 or email csu@melton.vic.gov.au**