



# Street and Reserve Tree Management Guidelines

Town of Claremont

2022

## Objective

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The Town of Claremont recognises the importance of trees as a valuable community asset for environmental and aesthetic contributions such as habitat for native fauna, shade, heat reduction, air purification and visual amenity.

The objectives of this document is to:

- Provide guidelines in relation to the management of the Town's trees;
- Preserve and enhance the Town's 'Urban Forest';
- Select, plant, maintain and protect street trees which provide valuable habitat for the fauna associated with the Perth metropolitan area; and which enhance both existing and future streetscapes and parks;
- Protect and increase the long term viability of Town trees on verges adjacent to development sites by ensuring that developers consider and accommodate trees wherever practical;
- Recognise the heritage value of old and significant trees and;
- Define the circumstances under which the Town's trees may be pruned or removed.

## Scope

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The guidelines apply to all trees that are owned or managed by the Town of Claremont—such trees shall be referred to as Town trees.

Elected Members, Town employees, residents, property owners, consultants, contractors, developers and event organisers are all expected to comply with the management guidelines.

## Overall

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The Town of Claremont manages approximately 7000 street, park and reserve trees and recognises the importance of trees in creating functional and attractive streets within the urban environment. The Town acknowledges the importance of planning, planting, establishing and maintaining all Town trees.

Street trees are an asset unto themselves, and not only contribute to the aesthetic value of a street, but also assist in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in the urban environment. While they improve land values, they also purify air, their foliage filters noise and reduces it's intrusion into domestic areas and they also play an invaluable role in modifying the effects of climate change.

The aim of the management guidelines is to:

- Provide clear policy and direction to ensure a consistent approach towards the provision of trees in the Town;
- Preserve, protect and increase the long term viability of Town trees on verges and in parks through tree protection and maintenance programs;
- Increase the Town's tree canopy cover on both verges and within parks through proactive planning and planting;
- Reinforce, preserve and enhance the character of the Town;
- Improve street tree establishment and survival rates;
- Guide the maintenance and management of existing and new trees to ensure that they survive and thrive in the harsh urban conditions; and
- Provide safe, cool and green access ways for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

To effectively promote the Town's goals, all trees, will be:

- Protected from any activity, including development, that threatens their health and/or longevity;
- Protected from infrastructure conflict, where practicable, with priority given to the relocation of infrastructure away from trees to reduce the potential for immediate or future damage;
- Prioritised when considering applications for new developments so that potential conflicts with Town trees will be addressed before an application is approved for planning, construction/ building and verge related permits; and
- Prioritised for retention and will only consider removal for development when no other reasonable design alternative exists.

## **Street Tree Selection**

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Street tree selection and management will be undertaken for the long term interest of the community as a whole, not in response to the short term preferences of individuals. The species selection will integrate with the existing streetscape and support the Town's strategic and environmental objectives. The Town is responsible for the planting of all Town trees.

The Town has devised a Street Tree Masterplan that nominates the species to be planted in each street. The Street Tree Masterplan will be the guiding document for the planning of the Town's street trees.

The streets of the Town have often been planted with each street having a consistent theme, resulting in many mature avenues of trees within the municipality. Where a street or a section of street displays a uniform theme, it is proposed to retain the theme and identify that species as preferential for that street.

A systematic process that identifies aesthetic and environmental objectives, considering site limitations, climate factors, physical characteristics and availability of street trees; both native and exotic; has been used to derive a Street Tree Masterplan which identifies suitable species for new and replacement planting. Based on this Masterplan the Town will determine the appropriate street tree/s for each location.

The Town recognises that while preferred species have been identified, in consideration of relevant factors there are occasions where previously unknown factors need to be considered when identifying the appropriate species for an area. Where it is identified that the adjacent property owner has a justifiable reason why the tree species identified for that location is not suitable, an alternative will be selected consistent with this policy. Personal dislike of a tree species, tree litter or perceived problems associated with a particular species are not considered justifiable reasons to deviate from the masterplan. Although there are some disadvantages associated with street trees, a proper design and selection process maximises the advantages.

## **Tree Planting and Maintenance**

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The Town is responsible for the planting of all Town trees. The selection of tree species is determined by the Town. Tree planting is generally carried out in the winter months to aid in the establishment of trees.

### **Street Tree Planting**

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Street tree planting/replacement is undertaken to:

- Ensure a minimum of one tree is planted in the verge adjacent to each residential property, including new developments;
- Address missing trees or gaps within the streetscape;
- Replace dead street trees that have been removed;
- Meet resident requests for new street trees.

Where new street trees are proposed to be planted, the Town will write to the adjacent residential property to advise them that a street tree will be planted within the verge. The final determination of the species that will be planted will be made by the Town.

### **Unauthorised Street Tree Planting**

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Street trees planted without the Town's approval are considered unauthorised plantings. An unauthorised street planting shall constitute any one of the following:

- A tree planted without an application to the Town;
- A tree planted of an inappropriate species for verge planting; and
- A tree planted out of alignment in relation to the Town's verge planting specifications.

## Street Tree Watering

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The Town is responsible for the post planting watering of all newly planted street trees until they are established. Each tree will be maintained, watered and formative pruned for a duration of the two-year establishment. Residents/owners are encouraged to water street trees to assist in the establishment of the tree, especially during the heat of summer.

## Tree Pruning

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The Town is responsible for the pruning of all Town trees. Unauthorised tree pruning of any Town tree is prohibited under the *Local Government (Uniform Local Provisions) Regulations 1996*. Trees will be pruned according to the Australian Standards for Pruning of Amenity Trees AS/4970.

The Town undertakes required pruning on street trees based on regular visual tree assessments and on an as required basis. Street tree pruning may fulfil any of the following requirements, as determined by the Town:

- To remove vegetation causing a potential hazard to pedestrians, cyclists, road traffic, or damage to buildings or structures;
- Ensure sightlines near road intersections, driveways, crossovers and footpaths are maintained;
- To remove dead, dying, diseased or pest infested limbs and branches or abnormal growth; and
- To prune low growing branches that impede traffic, parking control signage or street signs.

Following requests from residents for tree pruning, the Town will conduct a site inspection to determine if pruning is required.

## Tree Removal

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The Town is responsible for the removal of Town trees. Unauthorised tree removal of any Town tree is not permitted. It is recognised that each tree exists in its own right and has a different and individual place on the street. Of equal importance is its role in relation to the rest of the streetscape, the precinct and the Town. The preservation of existing street trees is of prime importance and practical techniques are to be used to maintain the health of trees.

The Town is authorised to remove a street tree under the following circumstances:

- The tree has been assessed by the Town as damaged, diseased or in decline and no further remedial techniques are appropriate;
- Causing an immediate safety hazard to the public or poses a serious health risk;
- The tree is dead;
- The tree has been assessed by the Town as structurally unsound;

- The tree has been affected by infrastructure works and cannot be retained; or
- Where trees to be removed have been identified in a property development plan that has been approved by the Town. The replacement trees must be of an appropriate size and species determined by the Town.

Where a tree is removed by the Town, the Town will replace the tree in the same location during the following planting season.

If a tree is removed without authorisation by another party, the Town will seek to recover all related costs for unauthorised tree removal, pruning or damage.

### **Tree Pruning and Removal Requests**

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The Town will investigate and respond to all tree pruning and removal requests. The following are not considered to be sufficient or justifiable reasons for the pruning or removal of Town trees:

- The tree species is disliked;
- The tree is perceived as dangerous;
- A perceived danger that a tree might fall in a storm, or drop branches.
- The tree is too large in size;
- The tree attracts birdlife or other fauna;
- The tree shape or structure is not liked;
- The tree is an inconvenience during development works;
- The tree is in the way of verge development;
- The tree shades private gardens, lawns, solar panels, solar hot water installations etc;
- Tree litter falls or blows into gutters, down pipes or drainage systems, footpaths or pools;
- The tree produces natural debris, which includes the dropping of leaves, flowers, fruit, nuts, pollen, bark etc;
- The tree is growing over private property or structures;

The Town employs suitably qualified personnel and contractors for all pruning and arboricultural works and assessments required on Town trees. Branches which overhang private property lines cannot be pruned by Town staff or contractors. Some inconvenience from street trees is considered a necessary consequence of living in a district where street trees provide significant benefit to the environment, residents and the broader community.

### **Development Sites**

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The protection of trees is vital to retaining the Town's character and environment. Trees grow in a delicate balance with their surroundings and any changes to that balance must be minimised if the tree is to remain in a healthy state and fulfil its potential. It is rarely possible to repair stressed and injured trees, so damage needs to be avoided during all stages of development and construction.

Street and reserve trees are to be protected at development sites in order to preserve the amenity of streetscapes. Where development or other activities have the potential to impact Town trees, a bond for the protection of the tree will be held for the duration of the works. The bond will be returned after all works are completed and the Town's trees have had their condition checked and approved.

The developer/contractor and property owner will protect the Town's street trees from any damage that may be caused by any scope of works covered by the development for the duration of the works.

A street tree is an asset forming part of the verge infrastructure. As such, the Town actively seeks to protect street trees adjacent to development sites using the following guidelines:

- No branches or tree roots from the Town trees are to be cut without the authorisation of the Town. Branches or roots approved for cutting are to be cut in accordance with the appropriate arboricultural standards only by Town staff/contractors;
- If any inaccurate information is presented to the Town as part of a development application and results in a tree being pruned or removed, the Town will recover full costs associated with the works from the applicant/developer;
- If a street tree is damaged, declines or dies as a result of the development then costs for pruning, removal and/or replacement of the tree will be recovered from the owner/developer;
- If a tree needs to be removed, or, is removed without authorisation, the applicant will be required to reimburse the Town the full costs associated with the tree removal, pruning and replacement value based on the Helliwell System of tree valuation.

### **Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) Requirements**

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A Tree Protection Zone "TPZ" is a specified area above and below ground level that is set aside for the protection of a tree's branches, trunk and structural root system. As a minimum, the fence shall consist of temporary chain wire panels of 1.8 metres in height, supported by steel stakes as required and fastened together and supported to prevent sideways movement using corner braces where required. The fence shall be erected prior to the commencement of any work on-site (including demolition) and shall be maintained in good condition for the duration of construction. The installation of a TPZ around all Town trees adjacent a development site will be installed during a development that may impact on the verge trees, to the following conditions:

- The size of the TPZ will be determined by the Town, dependent on the size of the tree and verge space available;
- At a minimum, the TPZ will cover two metres around the trunk and root zone;
- The TPZ must not obstruct roads or footpaths unless approved alternatives are in place;
- The developer/contractor or property owner shall be responsible for the cost of the TPZ; and
- If any work is proposed to be undertaken within the TPZ, the contractor/developer is to contact the Town to arrange a site meeting to discuss the requirements.

## **Ground protection**

If temporary access for machinery is required within the TPZ ground protection measures will be required. The purpose of ground protection is to prevent root damage and soil compaction within the TPZ. Measures may include a permeable membrane such as geotextile fabric beneath a layer of mulch or crushed rock below rumble boards. These measures may be applied to root zones beyond the TPZ as required.

## **Prohibited Activities within Tree Protection Zones**

The following activities will be avoided within specified Tree Protection Zones:

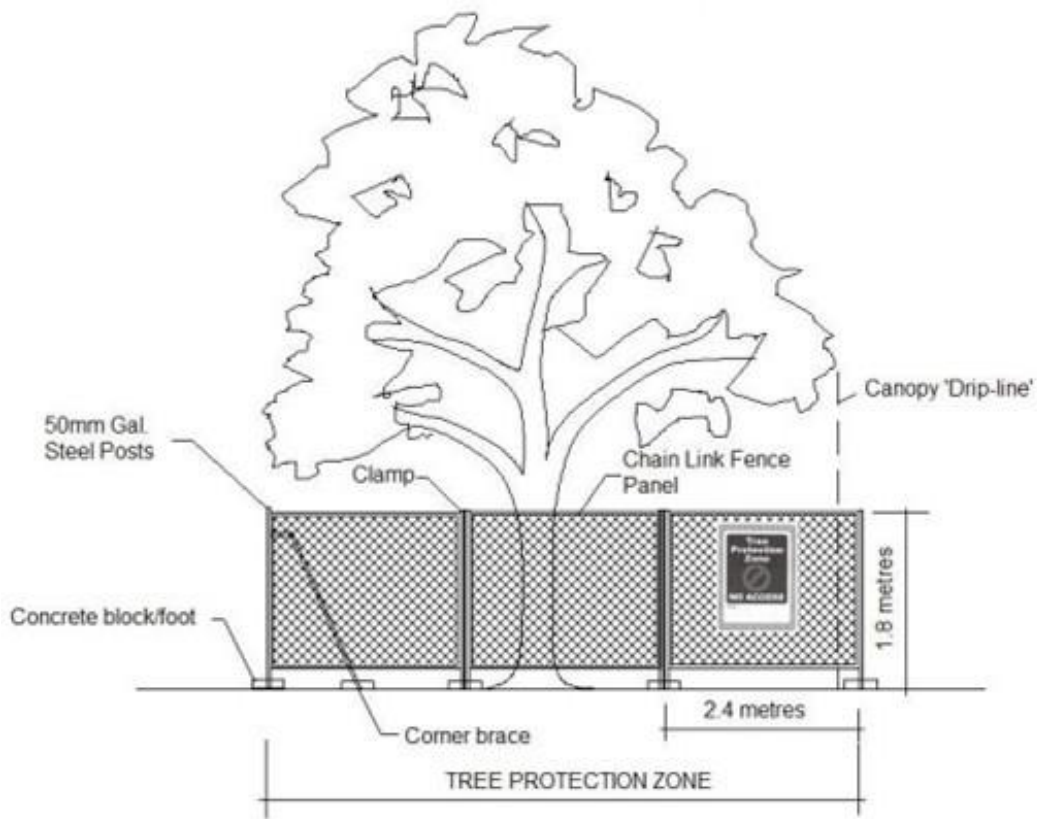
- Excavations and trenching;
- Soil disturbance, surface grading, compaction, ripping or cultivation of soil;
- Mechanical removal of vegetation, including extraction of tree stumps (stumps within the Tree Protection Zone of other trees to be retained shall not be pulled out using excavation equipment or similar);
- Soil level changes including the placement of fill material;
- Movement and storage of plant, equipment & vehicles (except where ground protection has been installed);
- Assembly of site sheds;
- Affixing of signage, barricades or hoardings to trees;
- Storage of building materials, waste and waste receptacles;
- Stockpiling of spoil or fill;
- Stockpiling of bulk materials, such as soil, sand, gravel, road base or the like;
- Stockpiling of demolition waste;
- Disposal of waste materials and chemicals including paint, solvents, cement slurry, fuel, oil and other toxic liquids;
- Other physical damage to the trunk or root system; and
- Any other activity likely to cause damage to the tree.

## **Tree Damage**

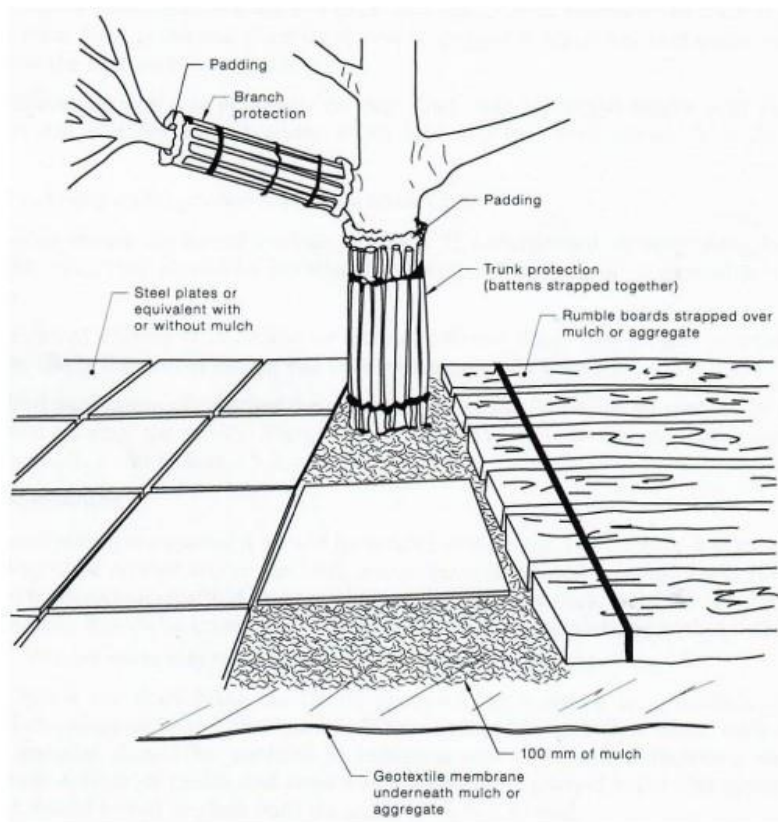
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Care shall be taken when operating cranes, drilling rigs and similar equipment near trees to avoid damage to tree canopies (foliage and branches). Under no circumstances shall branches be torn-off by construction equipment. Where there is potential conflict between tree canopy and construction activities, the advice of the Town must be sought. In the event of any tree becoming damaged for any reason during the construction period, a consulting arborist shall be engaged to inspect and provide advice on any remedial action to minimise any adverse impact. Such remedial action shall be implemented as soon as practicable and certified by the arborist.





**Figure 1 – Detail of Tree Protection Fence**



**Figure 2— Example of ground protection**

## Development Conditions for Crossovers and Driveways

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To minimise the risk of street tree damage/death a minimum construction clearance of two metres is required from the visible root collar of an existing street tree. Where excavation to a depth greater than 100mm is proposed, the clearance should be greater than three metres from the base of an existing street tree.

## Vandalism to Town Trees

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In the event of a person illegally removing, damaging, pruning or poisoning a street tree, the Town may prosecute the offender under the *Local Government Act 1995* Schedule 9.1 clause 2 Disturbing Local Government land or anything on it, and the *Uniform Local Provisions Regulations 1996*, Regulation 5 Clause 1 Interfering with, or taking from, Local Government land or other relevant provisions under the Act. Members of the community who witness vandalism to Town trees are encouraged to report this information to the Town. All reported incidents of vandalism will be investigated and responded to appropriately.

## Definitions

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**Bond:** A refundable monetary amount paid to the Town trust that is held for the duration of the development. To be returned after approved inspection from the Town.

**Helliwell System:** A system used worldwide for assessing the amenity value of a tree. This system assesses the contribution each tree makes to the urban forest by evaluating the size of the tree, the health and structural condition, the species and the significance in the landscape.

**Reserve Tree:** A tree that is located within a park, reserve or natural area.

**Street Tree:** A tree that is located within the road reserve, median or on a verge.

**Tree Protection Zone:** An area above and below ground that is set aside for the protection of tree roots, trunk and crown in order to provide viability and stability of a tree that is to be retained at a development site.

**Urban Forest:** A population of trees and vegetation 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 as a whole.