

Tree Removal and Replacement Procedure



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Tree Removal and Replacement Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a step by step process for Council's assessment of requests from residents and others, for tree removal on Council controlled land, including the consultation process that must be followed prior to a tree being removed, and the review/escalation process.

2. Objective

The objective of these procedures is to align operational decision making and practices with Council's Tree Management Guidelines, Open Space Policy and the draft Vegetation Management Procedure EP006.

3. Decision making criteria for Tree Removal

The removal of a tree on Council controlled land is guided by the points outlined in the Tree Management Guidelines. At least one of the following criteria must be met to justify the removal of a tree.

TREE STRUCTURE/ HAZARD /PUBLIC SAFETY

- The structural condition of the tree poses a current or imminent high risk to person or property, as determined by Council's tree risk assessment standards, that cannot be managed by moving the target or accepted/sound arboricultural practices (except in a park where a tree provides nesting habitat refer to Draft Nest Box and Hollow Tree Procedure).

TREE SIGNIFICANCE/VALUE

- The costs of maintaining or remediating the tree to a low risk level, or reasonable life expectancy are greater than the value (determined using Council's Standard for Amenity Tree Valuation) **and** significance of the tree.

TREE HEALTH/ LONGEVITY

- The tree is in irreversible decline, (except in a park where a declining or dead trees may provide nesting habitat refer to Draft Nest Box and Hollow Tree Procedure).

TREE BEHAVIOUR/ NUISANCE/ PROPERTY DAMAGE

- The roots or other parts of the tree are causing nuisance*, measurable damage or safety risk, to a person or property, and cannot be abated or remedied, nor further nuisance or damage be prevented in future through accepted arboricultural treatment, or reasonable redesign.

* An unreasonable interference with another person's right to the use and enjoyment of their property.



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

TREE SPECIES

- The tree is a species inconsistent with Council approved design intent or
- Is a species which qualifies for removal under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BCC and Energex in relation to managing trees under powerlines, or
- Is recognised as a Declared Pest Plant species and or approved action under Council's Invasive Species Management Plan, (except for those highly significant street or park trees subject to a site specific Pest Tree Management Plan), or
- A tree or shrub that is not a Council recommended species or not planted in accordance to Council's planting/location standards, and satisfying at least one other criteria for removal (*Note: planting on footpaths, other than by Council or in accordance with an approved Council plan, is an offence under NALL 2003*).

TRAFFIC/PEDESTRIAN HAZARD

- The tree is blocking sightlines to traffic signage or signals, needed to meet the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices AS1743 Road Signage that cannot be remedied by moving the sign or ongoing maintenance in a cost effective manner.

Where a proposed tree removal doesn't meet any of the above criteria, or the tree is highly significant (by satisfying the definition in Section 6, and/or being listed on Council's register of Highly Significant Council trees), the tree shall be retained, and a monitoring or maintenance plan is to be documented and implemented.

Other Criteria that do **not** justify tree removal.

Improvement of views from private property or

Solar access – where reasonable solar access can be provided by minimal pruning, or better positioning of a solar capture device

Leaf litter in swimming pools where tree pre-existed the pool, or where minimal pruning would avoid genuine nuisance or liability

Views to Advertising billboards where the tree(s) pre-existed the billboard.



4. Tree Replacement requirements

4.1 Replacement of trees that satisfy the above criteria will be one for one using Council standard stock size for that planting function and site, and approved species for that location, and will be planted, at Council's expense, as close as possible to the location of the original tree or at least in the local area.

4.2 Replacement where a tree doesn't meet any of the above removal criteria, but is required to be removed to allow for approved works (such as new driveways, major roads and drainage projects or other exceptional situations) and all other design, construction and relocation alternatives have been exhausted, and all arboricultural management solutions have been exhausted, replacement must achieve no net canopy area loss* within 3 years of the tree removal,

AND

The replacement of tree/trees are to be minimum 45L nursery pot size

AND

All costs associated the original tree/trees removal, new tree/trees replacement and establishment are to be met by the person/company who requested the tree removal

AND be planted as close as possible to the location of the original tree or at least in the local area

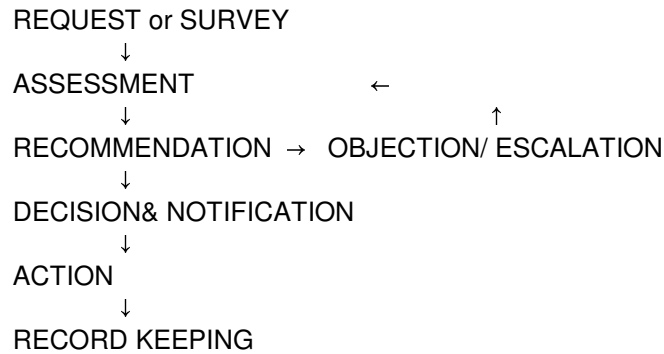
Canopy area of the original tree is measured from canopy diameter, halved to become canopy radius, then used in the equation $\pi \times \text{radius squared}$. An original tree of 6 m canopy diameter has a canopy area of 27 square metres, and would require 9 X 45 litre replacement trees (which would be expected to grow to 3 metres canopy area in 3 years) to achieve the no net canopy area loss requirement

Note: where the tree(s) are in an area of regionally significant ecological value, replacement planting must cover three (3) times the area covered by the removed trees and other vegetation, and shall be species endemic to that area, usually of tubestock size.



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

5. Tree Removal Process



- All trees greater than 500mm trunk diameter measured at 1.4m above ground level (DBH) must be assessed by the Council's Regional Arboricultural Co-ordinator (qualified arborists)
- A tree greater than 500mm DBH that is proposed for removal and not an immediate risk of failure, requires an accompanying tree assessment report from the Regional Arboricultural Co-ordinator is before it can be approved for removal
- Objections to recommended actions will be reassessed by the Senior Technical Arborist, together with all other information. Further objection will be assessed by an independent arborist, and final decision made by the Senior Arboricultural Co-ordinator. A final tier of escalation, if further objection, will be assessment of all relevant information by a Community Vegetation Advisory Panel (established under the Natural Asset Local Law, NALL)
- A tree that has been approved for removal must be marked with a small blue "R"
- Replacement tree (s) stock sizes, number and locations must be determined prior to tree removal
- Community notification must precede approved tree removals. For Highly Significant trees - Signage will be erected 14 days prior to the tree removal informing the general community
- Tree removal actions/works on Council owned or controlled land, in accordance with NALL section 7, can only be undertaken by Council officers, who in the normal course of their work, undertake work on trees. Council can approve its own contractors or others to undertake work on Council's trees.



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

6. Highly significant tree definition

Highly significant trees are those listed on Council's register of Highly Significant Council trees or satisfying the criteria listed below. They include individual and groups of trees which link to important city cultural and ecological values such as:-

- Heritage value – (trees listed in state Heritage Act and or City Plan- Heritage Place Planning Scheme Policy)
- NALL- VPO, SLT, Waterway vegetation and SNV category trees
- Historical Value – (Memorial trees for lives lost in defence service, documented Ceremonial tree, Trees planted by global leaders, or can be linked to the city's earlier botanical planters or documented local history)
- Botanical Value – (Rare or endangered species)
- Landscape Value- (a local landmark or feature, significance in size/colour or shade)
- Cultural value - (Linked to indigenous culture current or earlier non English speaking lifestyle)
- Habitat value – (Trees that provide habitat to rare and endangered native fauna)

