



Policy

23 TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

File Reference No: 11.151.1

Strategic Outcome: Good government

Date of Adoption: 19/02/2014

Date for Review: 20/02/2018

Responsible Officer: Enterprise and Risk Manager

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Council is committed to the maintenance and improvement of its surrounding flora by effectively managing trees and vegetation within urban areas, road reserves and other lands over which Council has control.

This policy seeks to provide a practical and balanced approach to tree management. Whilst the health, safety and welfare of Council staff and the community, and the protection of public property, and private property where Council trees may encroach, is paramount, Council is also committed to preserving trees, improving the aesthetic urban landscape, and effectively managing the environment. Whilst these objectives can be conflicting, responsible risk management shall take precedence in any determination regarding existing or future plantings.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to formalise the Berrigan Shire Council's management of trees including:

- Tree selection and planting
- Risk Assessment
- Maintenance and tree removal
- Preservation

3. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all trees and shrubs that are growing on any property under Council's control including operational land, community land, nature strips, road reserves and public reserves.

4. OBJECTIVE



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This policy is designed to assist Council meet the following Delivery Plan objectives:

1.2.1 *Partner with community groups and agencies on projects that retain and preserve the health of our natural landscapes and wildlife;*

2.2.2 *Council operations support ethical, transparent and accountable corporate governance.*

5. DEFINITIONS

Preferred Species are the trees that Council would select for planting after considering various factors including environmental, proximity to infrastructure, and ongoing maintenance.

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 New Tree Selection and Placement

6.1.1 Tree Planting – Residents

1. Council will provide suitable trees to plant on nature strips, but will also authorise residents to plant trees, provided that:-

a. A written application is made for such planting containing an undertaking from the applicant that the trees, once planted, will be watered and otherwise maintained by the applicant;

b. The trees will be of a type that is listed in Council's Preferred Species List;

c. The total number of trees on any section of nature strip (including existing trees) does not exceed two (2) for each property frontage, except where the General Manager may determine that additional trees are warranted, where the property frontage is significantly longer than normal or other unusual circumstances exist.

2. Residents or land owners may provide and plant additional trees on nature strips at their own cost provided that such trees are of a type listed on Council's Preferred Species List and provided that such plantings are located so as to minimise future problems in regard to Council infrastructure (such as kerb and gutter, water mains, etc), other services (such as powerlines, gas or cabling) and the safety of pedestrians or traffic.



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3. A resident or land owner may be required to remove or relocate any nature strip tree planted without prior approval if the location or type of tree may, in the future:-

- a. Cause damage to water mains, sewer mains, drainage lines, footpaths, kerb and gutter or other Council facilities or utilities, or
- b. Encroach on powerlines, or
- c. Cause a safety hazard to pedestrians or vehicular traffic.

6.1.2 Tree Planting and Maintenance in New Subdivision Developments

Where a developer is required to plant trees as part of the planning permit process for new developments, Council will oversee the planting and establishment.

Approved landscape plans must conform to site assessments and Council's Preferred Species List.

6.1.3 Tree Planting – Council

To ensure the long term success of tree planting, a detailed analysis of site conditions and design constraints is required. The objective is to minimise risk associated with trees by selecting trees that will have minimal impact on and have minimal impact by their new environment.

When assessing the site and determining the type of tree to plant, consideration must be given to the following risk zones:

	Zone A Most constraints (High to Very High Risk)	Zone B Moderate constraints (Medium Risk)	Zone C Fewest constraints (Low Risk)
Electrical & telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uninsulated low and high voltage wires • Bushfire area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bundled cables • Insulated cables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No powerlines
Below ground services – typical layouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fibre optic cables • High voltage power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bundled cables • Insulated cables • Water conduits • Sewer conduits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No powerlines • No conduits
Slope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steep slope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate slope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally flat land
Paved areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paved area • Sealed surface • Brick pavers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially paved areas • Non reinforced concrete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass up to 6m
Verge width	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 3.0m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 3m to 4m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4m or wider
Building set back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 6m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6m or greater

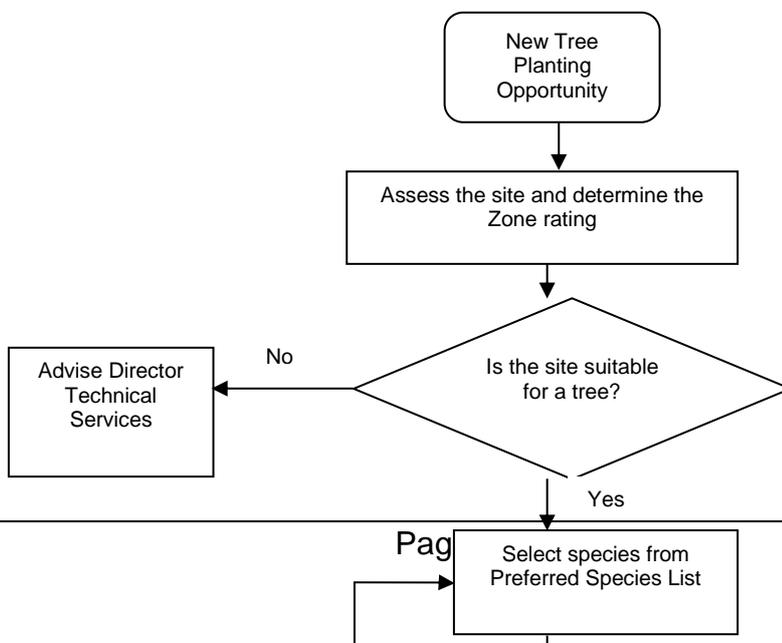
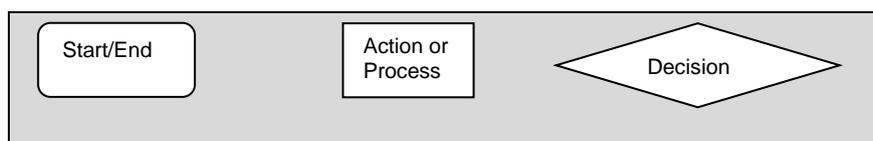


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	Zone A Most constraints (High to Very High Risk)	Zone B Moderate constraints (Medium Risk)	Zone C Fewest constraints (Low Risk)
Street lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over pedestrian crossings • Traffic intersections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street lighting other than crossings and intersections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No street lighting
Signage (i.e. traffic signs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arterial roads • High density residential streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium density residential streets • Arterial roads in rural zones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low density rural/residential streets
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large volumes of heavy vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy vehicles in moderate volumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential traffic in low volumes • Cul-de-sacs
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severely compacted • Shallow • Reactive clay • Acid sulphate • Poor drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderately compacted • Urban fill • Moderate drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undisturbed soil • Deep profile • Medium texture • Good natural drainage
Water table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep water table

Trees must then be selected from the Preferred Species list that are suitable to the selected Zone, climatic conditions, wildlife habitat and landscaping principles and aesthetic value.

6.1.4 Flow Chart – Proposed Trees





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6.2 Existing Trees

A map of tree types within Council's urban areas will be progressively developed. This will provide a general overview of trees that currently exist on Council's nature strips, within parks and reserves and surrounding Council controlled areas.

Council will also progressively build a register of trees under Council control and within urban areas. The Tree Register will identify:

- Tree species and common name
- Location
- Approximate height of the tree
- Approximate width of the tree
- Approximate age of the tree
- Assessed vitality of the tree
- Other information including surrounding infrastructure, risk assessment and recommendations.

As trees are replaced, or new plantings occur, the new tree is added to the Tree Register and the existing tree is noted as removed or other relevant comment.

6.2.1 Existing Tree Risk Assessment



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All trees under Council control located in urban areas will gradually, and as resources permit, undergo a risk assessment and will be included on the Tree Risk Register with follow up inspections scheduled in accordance with the results of the risk assessment. However, priority will be given to those trees, on all areas of Council controlled land, where:

- Complaints have been received;
- There are obvious declines in tree health;
- The tree has been damaged;
- The tree or its roots are affecting Council services or infrastructure;
- Planned Council works are in the vicinity.

There are two types of assessments that can be used when assessing tree risks, these are:

Walkover Tree Survey

This assessment involves a general risk analysis of a group of trees, and provides a holistic assessment. Where an individual tree is identified as a potential high risk, an individual tree assessment will be required before works can be recommended.

Individual Tree Assessment

This assessment involves analysing the characteristics specific to one tree.

Both assessments involve considering the general or individual characteristics of the trees, and then applying the risk parameters.

Risk Analysis

Once a tree has been identified as requiring a risk assessment, it is analysed by a competent person to produce a level of risk that assists Council in determining treatment priorities and options.

The following factors are used in the analysis:

Probability of Failure (Likelihood)		
<i>Definition – the likelihood that the tree or limb will fail</i>		
Level/Descriptor	Description	Indicative Frequency
A – Almost Certain	The tree or more likely a limb will fail on an annual basis.	Expected to occur.
B – Likely	The tree/limb has failed several times.	Will probably occur.
C – Possible	The tree/limb might fail as trees of this type are known to fail.	Might occur at some time.
D – Unlikely	Heard of a tree/limb of this type failing in the past.	Not likely to occur.
E – Rare	Have never heard of a tree/limb of this type failing.	Conceivable, but highly unlikely.



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Consequences	
Target Range	
<i>Definition – The location and the activity occurring at that location where the tree/limb may fail</i>	
Level	Description
1	Constant activity, either pedestrian or vehicular/Expensive buildings.
2	Busy streets with either pedestrian and/or vehicular activity/High cost buildings.
3	Periodic activity, either pedestrian or vehicular/Smaller buildings.
4	Minimal daily pedestrian and/or vehicular activity/Minor, minimal cost buildings.
5	No activity/No buildings.
Size Range	
<i>Definition – The maximum size of the tree or limb identified as having the potential to fail.</i>	
Level	Description
1	>500mm in diameter
2	Between 250 and 500mm in diameter
3	Between 100 and 250mm in diameter
4	Between 25 and 100mm in diameter
5	Less than 25mm in diameter
<i>Consequences are calculated by adding the Target Range Level and the Size Range Level, .e.g C = T + S</i>	

This information is then used to determine the risk rating.

Probability of Failure	Consequence Range				
	1 – 2	3 – 4	5 – 6	6 – 7	8 - 10
A	Very High	Very High	High	Medium	Medium
B	Very High	High	High	Medium	Low
C	High	High	Medium	Low	Low
D	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
E	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low

Risk Rating	Action Required
Very High	Immediate mitigation works required. Recommendations to be forwarded to appropriate Council personnel.
High	Mitigation works required. Recommendations to be forwarded to appropriate Council personnel.
Medium	Recommendations to be noted below and forwarded to appropriate Council personnel.
Low	No Action required.

6.2.2 Tree Risk Assessment Recommendations

Recommendations will be made following the risk assessment.

Recommendations for mitigation works or tree removal are usually made where the risks are very high or high, and there is minimal environmental or historical value in retaining the tree. Where doubts exist, or where further assessment is required, Council will enlist the services of a qualified arborist.

Further assessment and development consent will be required where the tree or vegetation is or forms part of a heritage conservation area.

6.2.3 Pest and Disease Management



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When pest and disease outbreaks compromise the health or increase the risks associated with trees, Council will only intervene where the trees in question have been planted by Council.

In these circumstances the efficacy and cost effectiveness of available treatments will be assessed and, if justified, the appropriate integrated pest management techniques will be undertaken. Council will undertake to notify owners of privately owned trees of these problems, if it has a state of knowledge of problems, so that the owner may take action as required.

6.2.3.1 Termite Activity

The presence of pests in trees is not always apparent, and this is the case with termite activity. Council will treat Council planted trees where it has knowledge or has been advised of termite activity within those trees. However, due to the nomadic nature of termites, Council will not be responsible for any third party property damage.

6.2.4 **Road Reserve Trees and Vegetation**

Council, as the Road Authority under the Roads Act 1993, has a duty of care to the travelling public to, as far as possible ensure that trees and vegetation in the road reserve do not present a risk to life or property. In order to fulfil its duty of care it will be necessary for staff involved in road construction, maintenance and road inspections to be aware of trees and other vegetation that may present a risk to road users. This will be especially important following high wind or storm events.

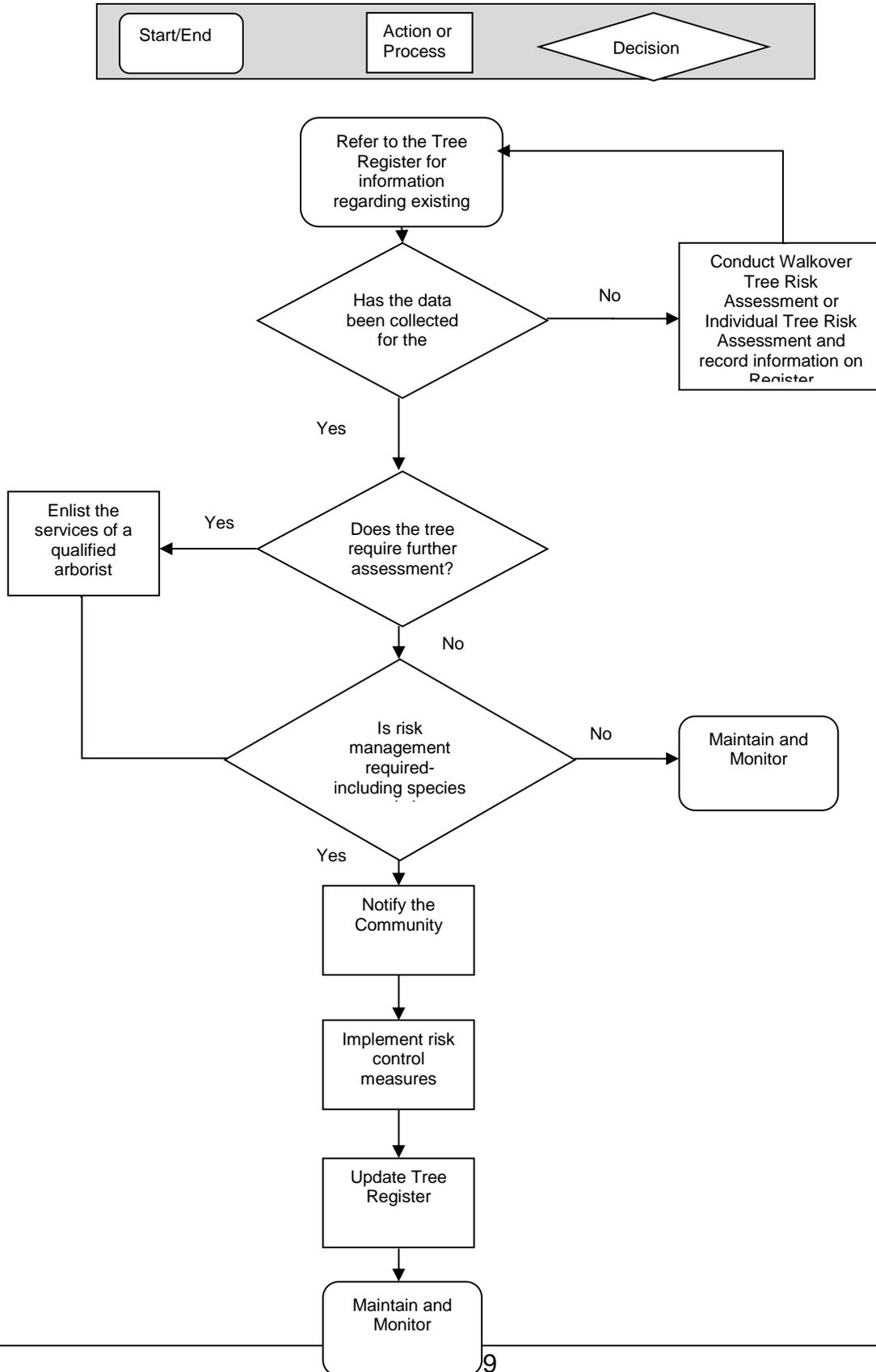
Council has also established guidelines under the Roadside Vegetation Management Plan to:

- Maintain, and where necessary, enhance roadside conservation value roadsides.
- Increase public awareness of the importance of roadside vegetation
- Encourage community involvement in roadside conservation projects
- Provide management guidelines for roadside vegetation.



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6.2.5 Flowchart – Existing Trees





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7. RELATED POLICIES OR STRATEGIES

Additional publications to be read in conjunction with this policy include:

- *Roads Act 1993*
- Berrigan Shire Council Preferred Species List
- Berrigan Shire Council Roadside Vegetation Management Plan
- Berrigan Shire Council LEP
- Berrigan Shire Council Risk Management Policy and Framework