

# Urban Tree Removal and Replacement Policy

## **OBJECTIVE:**

To preserve, enhance and develop attractive, uniform streetscapes and public open space areas within the environments of Tamworth Regional Council, while minimising the risk to public safety and property.

## **POLICY:**

Tamworth Regional Council is committed to managing the trees within its urban streetscapes and public open spaces to ensure the history and amenity of the region is preserved and enhanced for future generations.

In formulating this Policy Council recognises the significant contribution trees make to our scenic amenity and the important role trees play in providing:

- shade and cooling;
- habitat for local wildlife and corridors for wildlife movement;
- consumption of carbon dioxide and production of oxygen;
- wind reduction and noise abatement;
- filter rainwater and reduce stormwater runoff;
- improved property value;
- a contribution to cultural history and local identity.

Council also recognises the risk trees pose to people and property, particularly during storms. It is Council's intention to minimise these risks and the possible consequences.

This Policy provides clear guidelines for how and when trees located on Council controlled property will be removed and/or replaced. The following principles will apply:

1. Citizens will not be permitted to damage, remove or cause the removal of trees from Council controlled property and in such cases, Council may initiate legal action;
2. Council will receive requests from citizens for the removal of trees;
3. Requests for the removal of living trees must be received in writing, stating the reason for the request;
4. Phone requests (for removal of dead trees) will be registered as a Customer Request in Council's electronic Customer Request Management System (CRMS), as a point of reference and statistical data;
5. All requests for tree removal will be assessed by arboriculture qualified staff or arboriculture qualified contractors, using Council's Tree Hazard Assessment Form;
6. All requests for tree removal will be assessed against Council's Significant Tree Register;
7. Trees will only be removed if one or more of the following criteria is met:
  - 7.1. The structural condition of the tree poses a high risk to person or property and the cost of maintaining or remediating the risk to a low level is considered excessive;
  - 7.2. The tree is dead or the health of the tree is in irreversible decline (except in a reserve where the tree is providing a nesting habitat);
  - 7.3. The tree impinges on an approved development of Council land;

- 7.4. The roots or other parts of the tree are causing damage to property and the damage caused by the tree cannot be reasonably abated or remedied through accepted arboricultural treatment or reasonable re-design;
- 7.5. The tree is hazardous to motorists or pedestrians due to obstruction of sightlines causing an unsafe traffic or pedestrian environment;
- 7.6. The tree is affected by road works (eg. new road, road widening, service location and/or re-location, etc.) and all other options to retain the tree have been deemed inappropriate;
- 7.7. The tree is contributing to a widespread environmental issue (eg. fruit fly infestation)
- 7.8. The tree is in danger of contact with overhead powerlines and selective pruning is not practical;
8. The following are not considered sufficient reasons for the removal of trees from Council controlled property:
  - 8.1. Improve views from private property;
  - 8.2. The tree variety is disliked;
  - 8.3. The tree is blocking the sun or solar access to a property;
  - 8.4. The tree causes allergy or other health problems;
  - 8.5. The tree is causing leaf litter problems for private swimming pools or gutters;
  - 8.6. The tree is obscuring advertising billboards;
  - 8.7. The tree is in the way of a non-essential property access and/or verge paving option.
9. Where a tree, having met the above criteria, is removed from Council controlled property it will be replaced with a suitable species, if possible, in a location as close as possible to the original site.

**NOTIFICATION:**

Where a tree, having met the above criteria, is proposed to be removed from a highly visible public place (eg street trees) the surrounding property owners will be notified prior to the tree being removed, unless it has been determined that the tree poses an immediate and high risk to person or property;

Where a tree, having met the above criteria, is proposed to be removed from within or immediately adjacent to one of Council's major parks or sporting fields the community must also be notified through appropriate media outlets.

**DELEGATION:**

The Manager Parks and Horticulture, through the Director Regional Services and the General Manager, has delegated authority to authorise the removal and replacement of trees under this Policy