

POLICY

Town and Village Tree Preservation and Management

Date adopted by Council	30 May 2022
Minute number	H.05.1
Endorsed by	Senior Management Group
CM Ref	CD-9/22
Due for review	June 2025
Related documents	N/A
Responsible officer	Director Environmental & Community Services
Department/Section	Environmental & Community Services
Category	Environmental Management



Community
Strategic Plan goal

Goal 3 Protect the natural environment

Goal 4 Plan for a sustainable future

Goal 6 Increase, enhance and maintain civil infrastructure, community assets and open spaces to meet the needs of current and future generations

Goal 8 Provide community leadership

Goal 9 Advocate for the community

CS10 Advocate for, facilitate and support programs that protect and sustain our diverse environment for our future generations.

CS11 Encourage and support active Community participation within our Community to care for our environment and provide for a sustainable future.

CS12 Ensure that all actions, decisions and policy response to natural hazards and climate change remain current and reflect capacity, Community expectations and changes in environmental and climate change information.

CS17 Implement policies to ensure the protection of strategic agricultural lands, equine critical industry clusters, natural resources and heritage.

CS25 Provide inviting public spaces that are clean, green, properly maintained, well designed, encourage active participation, family friendly and accessible to all.

CS30 Effectively and efficiently manage the business of Council, while encouraging an open and participatory Council with an emphasis on transparency, Community engagement, action and response.

CS42 Provide timely and effective advocacy and leadership on key community issues and priorities.



Policy Statement

Council recognises that trees are important elements of the landscape that enhance the amenity and aesthetics of the towns and villages of the Upper Hunter Shire. They provide important ecological, social and economic benefits to the community, including:

- Increased sense of wellbeing in the community
- Shade
- Protection from strong wind
- Improving air quality by absorbing air pollutants
- Reducing soil erosion and run-off
- Reduce or prevent soil salinisation
- Habitat for fauna
- Improving appearance of the streetscape and public open space
- Softening the built environment
- Reflecting natural, cultural, heritage and aesthetic values
- Providing carbon sinks
- Increased land values
- Increased mental health and physical health benefits
- Increased urban canopy
- Increased low heat vulnerability rating by preservation of existing trees and planting of new ones wherever possible

Objective

The objectives of this tree management policy are to:

- Recognise the ecological, social and economic benefit of trees in the landscape.
- Maintain and protect the existing trees in the towns and villages of Upper Hunter Shire.
- Promote the use of native endemic tree species for planting in the Upper Hunter Shire (refer to Appendix A for examples of suitable tree species).
- Improve the quality and quantity of tree canopy cover in towns and villages.
- Recognise and protect trees that are considered significant due to heritage, cultural, social and ecological values.
- Increase awareness of the community, developers and Council staff on the values of trees in the town and village landscape.
- Recognise the importance of trees in responding to climate change.

Scope

This policy applies to all trees located on Council controlled land and all trees in non-rural areas of the Upper Hunter Shire. Non-rural areas has the same definition as in State Environmental Planning Policy (Vegetation in Non-Rural Areas) 2017.



Definitions

tree	A woody perennial plant with one or relatively few main stems with the potential to grow to a height greater than 5 metres.
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Policy Details

The Tree Management Policy is divided into five key areas:

- Tree protection
- Tree planting and selection
- Tree replacement and removal
- Tree asset management
- Community consultation and engagement

Tree Protection

Policy intent:

The Upper Hunter Shire Council recognise the ecological, social and economic benefit of trees in the landscape. The protection of trees will be given a high priority in all aspects of the Council’s activities.

Actions:

- a) The tree management controls in the Upper Hunter Local Environmental Plan 2013 and Upper Hunter Development Control Plan provide the legislative protection of all trees and prescribed vegetation in non-rural areas within the Upper Hunter Shire.
- b) Register of significant trees – The Council will recognise certain trees that contribute to the ecological, cultural, historical and social of the Upper Hunter Shire through the establishment of a Register of Significant Trees. The Council will prioritise the retention and protection of trees that are on this register.
- c) Development applications – The Council will ensure development applications include all necessary information to allow full assessment of the potential impacts on trees to be retained and an appropriate standard for planting new trees.
- d) Development activities/events – Trees will be protected from construction works and other activities/events that threaten tree health and stability. The Australian Standard for the protection of trees on development sites (AS4970) will be used to achieve consistency in tree protection requirements.
- e) Works on Council land - The Council will ensure that construction and maintenance work on Council land is undertaken in such a way as to minimise impacts on tree health and stability. The Australian Standard for the protection of trees on development sites (AS4970) will be used to achieve consistency in tree protection requirements.
- f) Council will work with utility service providers, such as Ausgrid, to ensure that their construction and maintenance works on Council land are undertaken in accordance with industry best practice to minimise impacts on tree health.



Tree Planting and Species Selection

Policy Intent:

The Council will identify opportunities to increase canopy cover across the Upper Hunter Shire. Improving the quality of this canopy cover will be achieved by ensuring appropriate trees are planted in the right location. This includes stock quality, installation, selection criteria and species diversity.

Actions:

- a) Park/Reserve trees – The Council will plan for, and respond to park/reserve tree planting opportunities in accordance with the park specific tree management plans (where relevant) or through park upgrades.
- b) Development applications - Where relevant, Development Applications will be assessed to provide appropriate trees on private property in appropriate locations. Assessments will also ensure tree species selection is compatible with the desired landscape character for particular precincts or villages and tree planting achieves a consistent high standard throughout the Upper Hunter Shire.
- c) Tree locations - The Council will continue to seek new tree planting opportunities in appropriate locations to maximise canopy cover and deliver ongoing environmental, economic and social benefits.
- d) Tree selection criteria - The Council will plant the most appropriate tree species based on site suitability, soil types, salinity, aesthetic, functional and biological attributes, performance and the potential to contribute to landscape character.
- e) Species diversity - The Council will increase species diversity by ensuring the street and park tree population does not comprise more than 40% for any particular family, 30% for any particular genus and 10% for any species (Note: Avenue plantings of same species may be acceptable).

Tree Removal and Replacement

Policy Intent:

Council acknowledges that over time trees become old and may become a safety hazard or begin causing damage to infrastructure and property. A selective tree removal and replacement program, will be implemented to manage canopy cover to ensure that the numerous benefits trees provide are sustained for future generations.

Actions:

- a) Assessment - Council will use tree assessment procedures to ensure consistency in the approach to determining tree removal, root pruning, and pruning applications (as identified in the Upper Hunter Development Control Plan). The retention of significant trees is a priority. Tree removal will generally not be permitted to facilitate views (including advertising signs), off-street parking or to reduce the extent of leaf / flower / fruit drop, or to reduce the impact from any bird / bat / other animal waste or noise, unless otherwise permitted by the Upper Hunter Development Control Plan.
- b) Emergency situations – Risk to public safety and property will take priority in tree removal decisions in emergency situations.



- c) Hazardous trees - Council will remove and, where appropriate and safe to do so, replace trees on Council controlled land that are posing a risk to public safety and property.
- d) Weeds species - Council will undertake the staged removal and replacement of trees classified as 'Weeds of National Significance (WONS)', priority weeds (as listed under the Biosecurity Act 2015) and other environmental weed species on Council controlled land (subject to available funds). The impacts to canopy cover will be a key consideration in removing trees as part of this process. Council will support the removal of WONS and priority weeds on land not controlled by Council.
- e) Capital works improvements - Council will develop strategies for the installation of new plantings, where feasible, prior to tree removal required for capital work projects.
- f) Age diversity - Council will maintain a spread of tree age classes to minimise the impact of tree removals required in close timeframes and / or within specific areas.

Tree Asset Management

Policy Intent:

Council recognises that trees are a major asset, and play an important role in making liveable, attractive and healthy towns and villages in the Upper Hunter Shire. Some of our trees are growing in a harsh urban environment, which requires specialised care and management.

Council will provide a suitable maintenance regime that provides adequate resources for the long-term health of its urban forest.

Council will ensure professional management of trees on Council controlled land and in non-rural areas of the Upper Hunter Shire.

Actions:

- a) Tree Management Plans – Council may prepare Tree Management Plans for parks, reserves and streetscapes. The Plans will provide long term strategies that will guide short term activities to ensure the health and amenity of tree assets.
- b) Tree maintenance – Council will ensure that best practice tree management is applied across all street and park trees.
- c) Risk management - Council will proactively manage tree risk management issues.
- d) Tree Pruning - Council will undertake street and park tree pruning to improve tree health, structure and to provide nominal clearances for pathways, roads, buildings and other essential infrastructure and to maintain safe sight distances and sightlines to road signs. Council will not prune tree/s to facilitate views (including to advertising signs), to reduce the extent of leaf / flower / fruit drop, or to reduce the impact from bird / bat / other animal waste or noise (unless posing a serious risk to public health or safety). Tree pruning will be undertaken by Council in accordance with the Australian Standard for Pruning Amenity Trees - AS 4373 to ensure that pruning is done in a way that does not reduce a tree's life expectancy or amenity value.

Community Consultation and Engagement

Policy Intent:

Council values its community's opinion and will encourage consultation and communication about tree management in the towns and villages of the Upper Hunter Shire.



Actions:

- a) Community consultation – Council will inform and consult with the community about all street and park tree removal (except where emergency works are required or where the tree is dead), major tree planting projects and any other specialised projects impacting on its street and park trees. Council will provide information to residents regarding new street trees planted via various communication channels. Council will notify adjoining property owners of the removal of trees from private property that are listed on the Register of Significant Trees.
- b) Community involvement – Council will develop programs to encourage community involvement in the ongoing care of trees on community land.
- c) Community information – Council will increase community knowledge about the benefits of trees on the Council’s website, the local media and tree information leaflets.
- d) Neighbouring trees – Council will accept applications for the pruning of a tree located in a neighbouring property, under the tree management provisions within the Upper Hunter Local Environmental Plan 2013 and Upper Hunter Development Control Plan, however applications for the removal of a tree in a neighbouring property will not be accepted without the tree owners’ written consent. The Council does not resolve disputes between neighbours.
- e) Resident requests – Council will consider and assess resident requests for tree planting in residential streets.

Responsibilities

Councillors

Councillors will review and adopt this policy as required.

Senior Management Group

The Senior Management Group will review and endorse this policy as required.

Director Environmental & Community Services

The Director Environmental & Community Services will ensure this policy is reviewed and updated accordingly and will present the final policy to SMG for review and endorsement.

Manager Works Delivery

The Manager of Works Delivery is responsible for the implementation of this policy to the extent that it applies to the management and preservation of trees and other vegetation on Council land.

Manager Planning, Building & Regulatory Services

The Manager of Planning, Building and Regulatory Services is responsible for the implementation of this policy to the extent that it applies to the regulation of tree and vegetation protection on private non-rural land within the Upper Hunter Shire.



Manager Waste & Sustainability

The Manager of Waste and Sustainability is responsible for community education and facilitating tree planting programs on public land across the Upper Hunter Shire.

All Staff

All staff will abide by this policy and provide constructive feedback to their respective coordinator, supervisor or manager in relation to the policy and its implementation.

References and Related Legislation

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Vegetation in Non-Rural Areas) 2017
- Upper Hunter Local Environmental Plan 2013
- Upper Hunter Development Control Plan
- AS 4373-2007 Pruning of Amenity Trees
- AS 4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites
- Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979
- Local Government Act 1993

Version History

Version No.	Date	CM Ref	Reason for Review
1	28/10/2019	INT-27377/19	
2	30/05/2022	CD-9/22	



Appendix A: Tree Preservation & Management Policy – Species List

TREE PLANTING GUIDE

The trees you decide to plant now may be there for 50 to 150 years, therefore selecting the right tree for you is essential.

Planting local native trees in your area is preferred and has advantages as they are best suited to the area and are most likely to survive the local ecosystem. They are accustomed to the local climate, soil characteristics and organisms present in the Upper Hunter. The use of local natives promotes the natural biodiversity in the area, encourages native wildlife and reinforces the Australian landscape.

Natives from other regions of Australia can also be used especially if they are already common in the area.

There are cases which require alternatives to the planting of native species. Please be cautious when planting exotic species, some are classified as weeds of national significance (WONS) or regional priority weeds and can be extremely hazardous.

The list provides a list of approved species that should be prioritized when planting. You can also contact local nurseries for more information on plants native to your area.

List of preferred species

	Botanical name	Common name	Location
^*	<i>Acacia cheelii</i>	Motherumbah	Scone, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Acacia implexa</i>	Hickory Wattle	Aberdeen, Merriwa, Scone, Murrurundi
*	<i>Acacia pendula</i>	Weeping myall	Scone, Aberdeen
^*	<i>Acacia salicina</i>	Cooba	Aberdeen, Merriwa, Scone, Murrurundi
*	<i>Acmena smithii</i>	Lilly Pilly	Scone, Murrurundi
*	<i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i>	Forest Oak	Scone, Murrurundi
*	<i>Alphitonia excelsa</i>	Red Ash	Aberdeen
*	<i>Angophora floribunda</i>	Rough-Barked Apple	Scone, Merriwa, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	Kurrajong	Aberdeen, Merriwa, Scone, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Callistemon salignus</i>	Pink Tipped Bottlebrush	Scone, Murrurundi
*	<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>	River Bottle Brush	Murrurundi
*	<i>Callitris glaucophylla</i>	White Cypress	Aberdeen, Merriwa, Scone
*	<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i>	River Oak	Aberdeen, Merriwa, Murrurundi, Scone



*	<i>Eucalyptus albens</i>	White Box	Scone, Aberdeen, Merriwa, Murrurundi
*	<i>Eucalyptus blakelyi</i>	Blakely's Red Gum	Scone, Murrurundi
*	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	Scone, Aberdeen, Merriwa, Murrurundi
*	<i>Eucalyptus cladocalyx</i>	Sugar Gum	Scone, Aberdeen, Merriwa, Murrurundi
*	<i>Eucalyptus crebra</i>	Narrow-Leaved Ironbark	Scone, Aberdeen, Merriwa, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Eucalyptus dawsonii</i>	Slaty Gum	Scone, Aberdeen
*	<i>Eucalyptus dealbata</i>	Tumbledown Red Gum	Scone, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Eucalyptus dwyeri</i>	Dwyer's Red Gum	Merriwa
*	<i>Eucalyptus eugenioides</i>	Thin-Leaved Stringybark	Murrurundi
^*	<i>Eucalyptus laevopinea</i>	Silver Top Stringy/Bark	Scone, Aberdeen, Murrurundi
*	<i>Eucalyptus pauciflora</i>	Benambra Snow-Gum	Scone, Aberdeen
*	<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i>	Mugga Ironbox	Scone, Aberdeen, Murrurundi
*	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	Ribbon Gum	Scone, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Eucalyptus x conjuncta</i>		Murrurundi
*	<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	Yellow Box	Scone, Aberdeen, Merriwa, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i>	Forest Red Gum	Scone, Aberdeen, Merriwa, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Geijera parviflora</i>	Wilga	Murrurundi, Scone, Aberdeen
^*	<i>Leptospermum polyanthum</i>		Murrurundi
*	<i>Melaleuca bracteata</i>	Black Tea Tree or River Tea Tree	Scone
^*	<i>Melaleuca decora</i>	Whitefeather Honey Myrtle	Scone, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Melaleuca stypheloides</i>	Prickly Tea Tree	Aberdeen, Scone, Murrurundi
^*	<i>Notelaea microcarpa</i>	Mock Olive	Aberdeen, Merriwa, Scone

*Native (Natives from other parts of Australia)

^Endemic (locally indigenous natives)



<https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/getmedia/5ef2b4dd-c970-4947-8fa1-064502c7eb6f/Street-Tree-Selection-Manual.aspx>

https://biocache.ala.org.au/explore/your-area#-31.9193182|151.09372059999998|2|ALL_SPECIES