



Policy

71. TREE MANAGEMENT

Version 02

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Responsible Officer: Enterprise and Risk Manager

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Berrigan Shire 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 applies 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.



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4. OBJECTIVE

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

1.2 Retain the diversity and preserve the health of our natural landscapes and wildlife;

2.2 Ensure effective governance by Council of Council operations and reporting.

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 authorize resident 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, other services and the safety of pedestrians and traffic.
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 cause problems in the future.

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.



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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.

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 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 Tree Risk Assessments

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 Register with follow up inspections scheduled in accordance with the results of the risk assessment. Priority will be given to those trees 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.



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When assessing trees, factors used in the analysis include:

- The likelihood of limb or whole tree failure;
- The location and the activity occurring at that location where the tree/limb may fail;
- The maximum size of the tree or limb identified as having the potential to fail.

This information is then used to determine the risk rating and actions required, in accordance with Council's Risk Management Policy and Framework.

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 doubt exists, 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.

6.2.2 Pest and Disease Management

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.

Where affected trees are privately owned, and Council has been made aware, they will advise the owner so that the owner may take the appropriate action.

6.2.3 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.

Due to the nomadic nature of termites, the place of origin of termites cannot be attributed to any particular tree and therefore Council will not be held responsible for any third party property damage.



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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 reasonably practicable; ensure that trees and vegetation in the road reserve does 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 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.

7. RELATED LEGISLATION POLICIES OR STRATEGIES

7.1 Legislation

- *Roads Act 1993*

7.2 Policies and strategies

- 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