



TREE POLICY

Policy Type:	Council Policy
Responsible Department:	Assets and Environment
Responsible Officer:	General Manager City Development
Related Policies and Procedures	Environmental Policy Tree Management Procedure
Date Adopted:	11 December 2017 (Item 1044)
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Unley recognises the important contribution trees make to its community.

Such assets provide environmental benefits by way of supporting flora and fauna, addressing the negative impacts of climate change while creating a living environment that adds character to the streetscape and economic value to property.

The City of Unley commits significant resources to ensuring it has the best possible streetscape and park environments through the effective management of its trees and understorey planting whilst encouraging its community to play an important part.

This policy aims to guide those resources to ensure the tree assets are protected and enhanced for current and future generations.

2. COMMUNITY GOAL

Environmental Stewardship

Goal 2 : We will maintain and enhance our urban environment, and strengthen our City's resilience to climate change by providing leadership to our community.

2.1 Unley's urban forest is maintained and improved.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Recognise the important role trees and vegetation make in the City's character and amenity.

- Ensure trees are managed in line with sustainable asset management principles and practices.
- Acknowledge the Council's responsibilities in managing the City's trees as a significant asset for future and present stakeholders.

4. PRINCIPLES

The development of this Policy is underpinned by principles which are reflected through the vision, pathways, objectives, strategies, targets and indicators outlined in Council's Tree Strategy. The following principles underpin this Policy and will form the basis of how trees will be managed across the City:

4.1 Equity across the community

A balanced approach is taken ensuring that residents across the community have equal opportunities for required services.

- Trees are an integral part of the environment and add aesthetic quality to life across the City.
- Street tree plantings or removal will be based on a holistic City wide themed approach promoting the orderly planning of each area.
- Design landscapes to reflect the cultural integrity, identify and character of Unley and its neighbourhoods.

4.2 Sustainable Assets

Tree Assets are maintained in a manner cognizant of a triple bottom line outcome (financial; environmental; social) & utilising a life cycle approach.

- Council has a responsibility for the planning, establishment, maintenance and removal of all trees located within the City's streetscapes and open space (parks, reserves, streets, medians and nature strips).
- Trees are considered to be community assets that contribute to the well-being of the community and to the natural environment.
- Council recognises and values the significance of trees within the urban setting in that they create functional and aesthetic streetscapes, provide natural habitat and natural shade.
- Ensure a diversity of tree species and ages to maximise resilience against pest and diseases and weather extremes.

4.3 Risk Sensitive

Decisions on tree assets are based in a manner where risks are identified, understood and managed (WHS; Environ; Public Safety; Community).

- Tree assessments are undertaken within a risk framework consistent with the industry standards and demonstrates reasonable care.
- Council is committed to protecting and maintaining trees within the municipality whilst meeting its obligation to provide a safe environment.

4.4 Strategic consistency

Tree management related services are programmed & maintained within an integrated programming framework.

- The Tree Strategy will compliment other relevant strategies eg Environmental Sustainability Strategy, to ensure an integrated approach across Council.
- The on-ground delivery of the Tree Strategy through programs and projects will be programmed and maintained through annual business programming.

4.5 Functional and service level

Trees are maintained to ensure they are fit for purpose, meeting the agreed level of service.

- Trees will be selected and maintained in a manner consistent with the desired/targeted service level for each specific site.
- Council commits to enhancing existing biodiversity sites and establishing new biodiversity sites through tree management and additional local provenance tree plantings.

4.6 Compliant

Trees are managed to meet compliance requirements at a minimum.

- All new street tree plantings are required to be compliant with relevant legislative requirements.
- Accessibility and walkability are key functions of the streetscape and it is incumbent on Council to ensure that wherever possible, street, park and other public land is accessible to all.

4.7 Innovation & improvement focussed

Alternative methods of managing and improving Unley's Urban Forest are regularly examined & improvements considered, to ensure "best value" options are applied.

- Trees will be managed in a manner that recognises and finds a careful balance between the historical character of Unley's inner-city urban environment and new expressions of social, environmental and aesthetic values in streetscape renewal programs.
- Promote the use of innovative techniques for water sensitive urban design to support tree growing solutions in streets and Council owned open space.
- Continue to support an urban forest that can tolerate and continue to thrive in changing climatic conditions.
- Continue to identify opportunities to plant trees within our City/streets to enhance streetscapes and improve canopy cover.

5. POLICY

The Council has a range of strategic and operational documents and procedures which are intrinsically linked to the Tree Policy and will be guided by this policy. These documents provide guidance and direction to staff and the community for the 'day to day' management of the tree asset.

These include:

Tree Strategy:

The purpose of the Tree Strategy is to provide a framework that will facilitate the regeneration of the Urban Forest in the City of Unley and to provide sustainability for the City moving forward. Furthermore, the purpose is to align a strategy with the overall objectives of the Unley Strategic Plan as described in a series of tiered strategies, in particular the Environmental Sustainable Strategy.

This Tree Strategy provides leadership by setting the foundation of how Council will continue to enrich and enliven Unley's character and amenity through the ongoing management of Unley's tree asset, now and for future generations. The document sets out an ambitious vision for improving sustainability in Unley through a range of Indicators and Targets.

Tree Management Procedure:

The purpose of the Tree Management Procedure is to provide guidance, direction and clarity to staff and the community in dealing with 'day to day' management of tree related issues. Issues addressed within the Procedure include:

- Biodiversity in Relation to Vegetation
- Indigenous Species
- Habitat Retention and Corridors
- Character and Heritage
- Consultation
- Planting and Replanting by the Council
- Planting and Replanting by Residents
- Narrow Footways
- Species Selection
- Pruning
- Significant Trees, Valuable Trees and Remnant Vegetation
- Tree Removal
- Tree Health
- Damage
- Recycling of Green Waste
- Valuation of Trees

Tree Operational Guidelines:

These guidelines provide 'practitioner in-field' direction and instruction in managing Council owned trees and issues specific to the planting of trees on Council owned land.

6. DEFINITIONS

Tree means a perennial woody plant that has many secondary branches supported clear of the ground by a single multiple dominant stems or trunks which is, or which has the potential to grow to, 4.0 metres or more in height. Palms are included as trees in this definition. Dead trees are included in this definition.

Street means any highway, street, road, grove, place, avenue, drive, terrace, parade, crescent, court, lane, walk or walkway which has been declared or is a public road.

Regulated Trees and Significant Trees are as defined in *The Development Act 1993* and associated Regulations.

Biological Diversity or Biodiversity means the vast variety of all life forms. It means the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part.

Urban forest refers to all trees and vegetation located throughout the local government area; irrespective of the tree species origin (native, exotic), location (street, park, garden, school) or ownership (public, private, institutional). Urban forestry, as distinct from arboriculture and horticulture, considers the cumulative benefits of an entire tree population across a town or city. Looking holistically at the urban forest and its associated ecosystem services allows for consideration of the broader issues of climate change, urban heat island effects and population growth that can be influenced by, and that can affect, an urban forest.

7. LEGISLATION/REFERENCES

In adopting this policy it is recognised that there are specific legislative requirements to be met as well as other Corporate goals.

Relevant major legislative requirements are the:

- *Local Government Act 1999*
- *The Development Act 1993* – for Regulated and Significant trees
- *Water Resources Act*
- *Electricity Act*

8. POLICY DELEGATIONS

Full information about the sub-delegated powers and duties is contained in the Council Delegations Register.

9. ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

- General Manager Assets and Environment - oversee and ensure Policy compliance
- Manager Strategic Assets – oversee and ensure Policy compliance
- Natural Asset Lead - ensure Policy compliance
- Manager Operational Services - ensure Policy compliance
- Coordinator Open Space and Trades - ensure Policy compliance

10. AVAILABILITY

The policy is available for public inspection during normal office hours from;

Civic Centre
181 Unley Road
Unley SA 5061

A copy may be purchased for a fee as determined annually by Council.

It is also available for viewing, download and printing free of charge from the Council's website, www.unley.sa.gov.au

11. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date:	Council/Committee/Internal	Comment:
11 December 2017	Council Item 1044	