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URBAN TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Approval Level:	Council
Policy Type:	Council
Approval Date:	
Review cycle:	4 years
Review Date:	
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Arboriculture & Urban Forest
Owner:	Parks and Open Space
Responsible Director:	Presentation and Assets
Relevant Legislation/Authority:	Local Government Act 2020 Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 Catchment and Land Protection Act (1994) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988) Road Management Act 2004
DOCSETID:	

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides a rationale and framework for the City of Greater Bendigo (the City) to effectively manage its trees in urban areas and townships across Greater Bendigo in a transparent and consistent manner.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the ***Urban Tree Management Guidelines***.

2. BACKGROUND

The City is responsible for the maintenance and management of approximately 135,000 mapped tree assets throughout Greater Bendigo. Trees are essential infrastructure that make an important contribution to Greater Bendigo's character and provide many social, economic, environmental, and health and wellbeing benefits.

3. SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to all City staff, external stakeholders, developers, builders, service providers, contractors, event organisers, property owners, and residents undertaking works on or near City managed trees.

3.2 This policy outlines the standards to be adhered to in relation to the management of trees within the City of Greater Bendigo.

3.3 This policy applies to all City managed trees located within urban areas, townships, and open space parks within Greater Bendigo, including but not limited to:

a) City managed trees within the urban growth boundary or Greater Bendigo's urban areas, townships and open space parks throughout the municipality.
b) Trees surveyed as a City asset.
c) City managed trees located on City owned land or crown land where the City of Greater Bendigo is the Committee of Management.
d) Any tree with more than 50% of its trunk growing in the above and not listed in exclusions below.

Trees that may be excluded from this policy but may be covered by other policies and legislation include:

e) Trees on private property not managed by the City.
f) Trees on rural roadsides outside of the urban growth boundary or Greater Bendigo's areas, townships and open space.
g) Trees in bushland reserves or identified natural reserves as per the City's asset management system.
h) Trees in National, State or Regional parks or on land managed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), or Parks Victoria.

4. DEFINITIONS

Biodiversity	Biodiversity is short for biological diversity and is used to describe the variety of present life forms such as plants, animals, their genes and the ecosystems they exist within.
Bushland / Natural Reserves	Areas of indigenous vegetation managed for their conservation, environmental, habitat, recreational and heritage values.
City Managed Tree	Refers to all trees not excluded from this policy, including but not limited to those mapped as a City asset, are on land owned or managed by the City of Greater Bendigo within Bendigo's urban growth boundary or urban forest, townships and open space parks, and along roadsides in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004.
Risk	The combination of the likelihood of an event and the severity of the potential consequences. In the context of trees, risk cannot be eliminated. Best arboriculture practices aim to minimise and manage trees to an acceptable level of risk.
Roadsides	Roadside means any land that is within the boundaries of a road (other than the

	shoulders of the road) which is not a roadway or a pathway. For example, any nature strip, forest, bushland, grassland or landscaped area within the road reserve would be a roadside.
Urban Area	An area within a defined urban settlement, township or public open space boundary.
Urban Forest	The sum of all trees and other vegetation within urban areas, as well as the soil and water that supports it. An urban forest is made up of all vegetation in streets, parks, gardens, campuses, creek and river verges, wetlands, transport corridors, community gardens, balconies, and rooftops.
Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	Water Sensitive Urban Design is a land planning and engineering design approach which integrates the urban water cycle, including stormwater, groundwater and wastewater management and water supply, into urban design to minimise environmental degradation and to make use of this valuable resource.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 Equitable, transparent, and consistent approach to tree management.
5.2 Safety for the Greater Bendigo community.

6. POLICY

The City of Greater Bendigo's Urban Tree Management Policy and accompanying Urban Tree Management Guidelines aim to:

6.1 Protect, maintain, and enhance the City's tree assets by adopting and implementing *AS 4970-2025 Protection of trees on development sites*, *AS 4373-2007 Pruning of amenity trees* and *AS 2303-2018 Tree stock for landscape use.*

6.2 Seek compensation for the loss of City trees as a result of development or works by placing a monetary value (tree amenity value) and replacement cost on all City managed trees considered under the Policy. At the discretion of the City, compensation will be sought for trees that are removed for development or works purposes. The cost of removing the tree will be the responsibility of the applicant.

6.3 Where a City managed tree is also a naturally occurring native tree, a permit for removal and native vegetation offsetting will typically be required as per DEECA's *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (2025). The City may choose to deduct the monetary amount of native vegetation offsets of City managed trees from the amenity value.

6.4 Outline clear standard criteria for the removal of City managed trees. Removal of trees will only be considered where it complies with the criteria outlined within the City of Greater Bendigo's Urban Tree Management Guidelines.

6.5 To employ best arboriculture and urban forest practices by:

- **a)** Encouraging canopy cover development and supporting objectives and principles outlined in the City's urban forest strategy, *Greening Greater Bendigo 2020-2070*.
- **b)** Supporting the enhancement and amenity of Greater Bendigo streetscapes and open spaces.

c) Supporting and enhancing the natural landscape, habitat connectivity, and biodiversity benefits supplied by City trees.
d) Recognising and responding to the impact of development, population increase, climate change, and the urban heat island effect on the City's trees assets.
e) Utilising innovative horticultural and arboricultural technologies and methods where applicable, such as water sensitive urban design (WSUD).
f) Considering areas prone to bushfire, including rural areas interfacing reserves or state forest, and aiming to reduce risk through management of trees.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 The City of Greater Bendigo's Arboriculture & Urban Forest team is responsible for the implementation of this policy.
7.2 The City of Greater Bendigo's Arboriculture & Urban Forest team is responsible for the development and review of this policy.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Urban Tree Management Guidelines.

Readers are encouraged to access relevant documents and/or resources which are available as per the below:

External Documents
Australian Standard 4373-2007 Pruning of amenity trees
Australian Standard 2303-2018 Tree stock for landscape use
Australian Standard 4970-2025 Protection of trees on development sites

Internal City of Greater Bendigo Documents
Biodiversity Strategy 2023 - 2030
Greening Greater Bendigo 2020 - 2070
Nature Strip Policy
Nature Strip Guidelines
Protection and Retention of Trees on Development Sites
Road Management Plan Version 4.0 (November 2022)
Tree Inspections (Technical Procedure)
Tree Planting (Technical Procedure)
Urban Tree Management Guidelines

Further information or advice on this policy should be directed to Parks and Open Space**.**

9. HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY

The implications of this policy have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Business Unit, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be made with the approval of EMT or where required, resolution of Council.

11. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date Approved	Responsible Officer	Unit	Change Type	Version	Next Review Date
August 2017	*TM*	*Public Space Design*	*Development*	*Version 1*	*August 2021*
March 2023	*PS*	*Public Space Design*	*Review Significant*	*Version 2*	*March 2027*
XXXX	*MF*	*Parks & Open Space*	*Review*	*Version 3*	*XXXX*