

DRAFT PRESERVING OUR URBAN FOREST

COUNCIL POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Demonstrate Council's commitment to the Community Plan and the City of Palmerston Sustainability Strategy to be an environmentally friendly, liveable city.
- Provide City of Palmerston's strategic direction for the protection, management and maintenance of its urban forest.
- Maintain the long-term viability of public trees by ensuring that appropriate protection measures and maintenance requirements are implemented during and after construction or other events that may adversely impact public trees.

PRINCIPLES

City of Palmerston strongly supports the retention of the urban forest wherever possible. Trees provide many social, economic and environmental benefits. They beautify and soften streetscapes, provide wildlife habitat and play a significant role in determining the urban character of our city. Trees are critical in the maintenance of a healthy urban environment as they reduce the City's heat sink, produce oxygen, trap airborne pollutants, provide shade and absorb carbon dioxide.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all trees in the municipality that are owned or managed by the City of Palmerston. Privately owned trees are not covered by this Policy.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

TERM	DEFINITION
Urban Forest	Trees situated in parks, streets and anywhere in the developed urban area of Palmerston under the care, control and management of the Council
Public Tree	All trees in the municipality that are owned or managed by the City of Palmerston
Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)	Area surrounding a tree that is designated for protection during construction or development.

POLICY STATEMENT

1.1. Preserving our Urban Forest Policy

1.1.1. City of Palmerston recognises that trees are a major asset and play an important role in making Palmerston a liveable, attractive, and healthy city. Our trees are growing in a harsh urban environment, which requires specialised care and management.

City of Palmerston is committed to a high-quality maintenance regime that provides adequate resources for the long-term health of its urban forest.

This policy addresses the following key areas.

1.2. Tree Removal

1.2.1. To maximise the retention of trees the following factors where a tree may be considered for removal include:

- It is severely damaged, distressed, diseased or dying and there are no remedies to save the tree.
- It is a safety hazard to the public.
- Ongoing remedial works are required due to damage by a tree are too costly.
- Council approved its removal as part of a streetscape plan or works program.
- The tree is indicated in a property development plan – to Council’s required format and standard – and is approved by Council, provided the developer meets the cost of tree valuation, removal and replacement.
- It is causing damage to property or public utilities, and the cost of ongoing remedial works becomes uneconomical, i.e. that cost of the perceived ongoing repairs outweighs the value of the tree and there is no reasonable alternative to save the tree.
- It is interfering with service provision such as power, water, transport, and emergency services.

1.2.2. A tree will not be considered for removal based solely on the following:

- Falling leaves, bark, gum nut or flower debris.
- To provide vistas.
- It is growing over a property, blocking light, shading lawn or a pool.
- It is considered too big or too old.

- Perceived danger that a tree may fall in a storm or has dropped a limb.
- Would like an alternative species of tree.
- Property alterations require a driveway to be relocated.
- Droppings by a bird, bat, possum or other wildlife.
- Insect issue, such as spiders, ants or bees.
- Solar access for solar panels.
- The tree shades the verge or resident's garden, or
- Surface root growth that restricts mowing heights.

1.3. Tree Maintenance Requirements

- 1.3.1. City of Palmerston undertake general tree maintenance activities such as tree pruning where deemed necessary.
- 1.3.2. A tree pruning request will be considered if:
- It is a safety hazard to the public.
 - It is causing damage to property or public utilities.
 - It is interfering with service provision such as power, water, transport, and emergency services.
- 1.3.3. Council tree pruning requests will not be undertaken solely based on the following:
- Falling leaves, bark, gum nut or flower debris.
 - To provide vistas.
 - It is growing over a property, blocking light, shading lawn or a pool.
 - It is considered too big or too old.
 - Droppings by a bird, bat, possum or other wildlife.
 - Insect issue, such as spiders, ants or bees.
 - Solar access for solar panels.
 - The tree shades the verge or resident's garden.

1.4. Tree Assessment

- 1.4.1. A request for tree removal and maintenance works will be assessed by Council based on the listed criteria by appropriately qualified and experienced contractors or staff. Where considered necessary, an independent arborist may be engaged to assist in finalising a recommendation to remove or remediate a tree.

1.5. Tree Planting Requirements

- 1.5.1. Council undertakes regular tree planting to meet urban greening objectives. Council will also undertake tree planting on request from residents, using a suitable tree species, subject to site specific limitations and tree planting requirements being met.
- 1.5.2. Where large scale tree removal is triggered as a result of a significant weather event a program of tree replacement will be prepared and implemented based on budgets and tree availability.

1.6. Tree Protection

1.6.1. For all works that have the potential to impact on public trees, including as part of a property development plan, the following protection measures apply.

(a) Tree Protection Zones

A Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) is to be established, as per Australian Standards AS 4970-2009 for each tree for the duration of any works.

(b) Tree Valuations

City of Palmerston has the ability to require a a greening reinstatement fee for projects, developments and construction works that have the potential to impact on public trees.

1.7. Operational implementation

1.7.1. This policy sets the principles and criteria for the preservation of the urban forest; the installation and management of tree assets is an operational function of the Council in accordance with the delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- City of Palmerston Sustainability Strategy

REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- Palmerston (Public Places) By-Laws 2001

OWNER	CEO	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	General Manager Infrastructure
APPROVAL DATE	[Approval Date]	NEXT REVIEW DUE	[Next Review Due]
RECORDS NUMBER	[Records Number]	COUNCIL DECISION	[Council Decision]

