

POLICY NAME: (REVIEW)
URBAN VEGETATION ON PUBLIC LAND

POLICY REF: U04

MEETING ADOPTED: Resolution No. 260810/32

POLICY HISTORY:



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OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to:

- Prioritise the maintenance and protection of existing vegetation on public land
- Broaden the emphasis on urban tree management to include urban forestry principles, with trees managed as a collective asset, to maximise the benefits canopy cover provides
- Improve the quality and increase the quantity of Ballina Shire's tree canopy cover
- Increase species diversity and improve the age spread of the urban forest
- Recognise and protect trees considered significant due to their heritage, cultural, social and/or ecological values
- Balance the protection of trees and bushland with management of public risk
- Increase awareness and to educate the community, developers and Council staff on the value of trees in the urban landscape
- Enhance Ballina Shire's reputation within the community as a good steward and manager of trees and significant vegetation.

BACKGROUND

Ballina Shire has urban zones covering an area of 2,975 Hectares. Land use is diverse and ranges from the central business districts to ocean and river foreshore edges. It includes coastal and plateau topographies, varying residential densities, industrial and commercial developments.

Council's urban forest is made up of a diverse range of species and age groups planted over a number of historic periods, creating a mosaic of plantings interwoven with remnant locally indigenous trees.

These 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 towns. Trees are critical in the maintenance of a healthy urban environment as they release oxygen, trap airborne pollutants and absorb carbon dioxide.

While trees play an important role in the urban landscape, it is also recognised that trees of the wrong type, or growing in the wrong place, can create problems and risks that are not reasonable in the urban environment.

Public authorities and property owners have certain obligations with respect to the protection of trees, and responsibility for any damage or injury associated with the presence, failure or growth of trees.

Tree management in the urban environment is about balancing the various risks against the benefits that trees provide, to ensure the best community outcome.

DEFINITIONS

AQF:	Acronym: Australian Qualifications Framework-a policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised nationally in post-compulsory education and training within Australia.
Arboriculture:	Practice and study of the care of trees and other woody plants in the landscape.
Arborist:	An industry professional with a minimum qualification of AQF III or equivalent in Arboriculture.
Hazard:	Anything with the potential to harm health, life or property
Pruning:	Is the removal of tree branches to predetermined points in accordance with Australian Standards 4373: 2007- <i>Pruning of amenity trees</i> .
Remediate:	For the purpose of this policy, this is to fully return a tree or ground to a state that is as close as reasonably possible to its original and previous condition.
Risk:	The likelihood of harm occurring as a result of exposure to a hazard
Tree:	A perennial plant having a height of more than 3m and which has a woody, self-supporting main stem/s or trunk/s.
Tree Damage:	Injury to a tree including lopping, topping, mechanical wounding, poisoning by way of herbicide or other construction material leachate and or residues, and includes compaction and or disturbance to the roots.
Vegetation:	All the plants or plant life of a place taken as a whole. This includes trees, shrubs, groundcovers and vines.
Urban:	Town areas with residential, commercial or industrial uses. These areas generally have speed limits of 60km/h or less.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to:

- Council employees, contracted staff and volunteers;
- Residents, property owners and developers;
- Commercial businesses and properties;
- Council owned businesses and or enterprises;
- Consultants and contractors;

RELATED DOCUMENTATION

Related documents, policies and legislation:

- Local Government Act 1993
- Crown Lands Act 1989
- Civil Liabilities Act 2002
- Dividing Fences Act 1991
- Trees (disputes between neighbours) Act 2006
- Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974
- NATSPEC guide "*Specifying Trees – a guide to assessment of tree quality*"
- Relevant State controls such as State Environment Planning Policies (SEPP's)
- Rural Fires Act 1997
- Rural Fires Amendment (Vegetation Clearing) Act 2014.
- AS 4373-2007: Pruning of amenity trees
- AS 4970-2009: Protection of trees on development sites
- Statewide Mutual: Trees & Tree Roots Best Practice Manual Ver. 7, April 2013.
- Footpaths & Cycleways- Inspection, Evaluation & Maintenance Policy : No F01
- Ballina Local Environment Plan 2012
- Ballina Development Control Plan 2012
- Record Management Plan May 2013
- Work Near Overhead Powerlines – Code of Practice 2006

POLICY

1. Tree Planting and Species Selection

Ballina Shire Council will proactively identify opportunities to increase canopy cover across the local government area. Street trees play a critical role in establishing local landscape character because they are highly visible and help to offset the bulk of buildings. Through providing shading to roads and hard surfaces, street trees make a valuable contribution to controlling heat radiated from urban surfaces known as the "heat island effect". Trees also provide valuable habitat links amongst urban development.

The following policy principles apply to tree planting and species selection:

a. Tree Planting Program

Council will implement an annual street tree and reserve planting program across streets and reserves. This will include seeking new tree planting opportunities in appropriate locations to maximise canopy cover, age diversity and deliver ongoing environmental, economic and social benefit.

b. Tree Selection Criteria

Council will plant the most appropriate tree species based on site suitability, aesthetic, functional and biological attributes, performance and the potential to contribute to the landscape character. Tree species are preferably to be selected from the Ballina Shire Urban Garden Guide.

c. Nursery Tree Stock Specification

Council will only use quality nursery stock according to the latest best practice and standards. Developers will ensure the installation of advanced tree stock conforms to the NATSPEC guide "Specifying Trees – a guide to assessment of tree quality".

d. Nature Strip Landscaping

Nature strips are located within road reserves and consent from Council to undertake any nature strip landscaping is required. Council proactively supports the landscaping of nature strips to improve the streetscape however the services and access within the nature strips need to be protected.

Whilst there is an expectation residents will mow and maintain the nature strips a Nature Strip Landscaping Plan must be submitted for approval by Council prior to any landscaping. The resident must maintain the landscaped nature strip.

A Nature Strip Landscaping Plan Fact Sheet is provided on Council's website.

e. Community Involvement

Council will encourage community involvement in tree planting activities and regularly promote the benefits of trees to the community. Council will continue to support and supply trees and vegetation to the community through the following community programs:

- Landcare / Coastcare on Council managed lands
- Street Tree Planting Program
- National Tree Day and Schools National Tree Day
- World Environment Day
- Council's restoration projects

f. Tree Provision to Residents

Council can provide free trees to residents of Ballina Shire under the following programs. The trees will be propagated by Council and must be listed in the Ballina Shire Urban Garden Guide. Program and residency proof will be required. No plaques or other items/attachments can be placed with these trees on public land. Residents will need to maintain the trees until established and Council cannot accept any liability for maintenance, loss, damage or removal of the tree.

New Home Native Garden Gift

Council can provide fifteen trees and/or shrubs to Ballina Shire residents for landscaping private land. This is limited to within 12 months of when a new house is constructed or renovations are complete.

New Baby Tree of Life Gift

Council can provide one commemorative tree to Ballina Shire residents who have a new baby. The tree will be provided along with a certificate and may be planted on private property or could be planted in an appropriate Council approved location on a public reserve.

Memorial Tree

Council can provide one memorial tree to Ballina Shire residents who wish to plant a tree in memory of a deceased loved one. The tree may be planted on private property or could be planted in an appropriate Council approved location on a public reserve.

2. Tree Asset Management

Trees are a major asset, and play an important role in making Ballina Shire a livable, attractive and healthy location. They require specialised care and management.

Council is committed to a high quality maintenance regime that provides adequate resources for the long term health of its urban forest. The following policy principles will apply to tree asset management:

a. Tree Maintenance

Council will ensure that suitable tree management is applied across all street and reserve trees. Council will be proactive and reactive with tree audits and inspections as resources allow. All tree works will be prioritised and ensure high quality delivery standards are maintained. Arborist's reports must be written by individuals possessing the AQF Level V Diploma of Arboriculture.

b. Risk Management

Council will proactively and reactively manage tree risk issues on a prioritised basis. Suitable tree risk management will be limited by resources as shown in Council's annual budget. All tree management information will be stored as per Council's Record Management Plan May 2013

c. Tree Pruning

Council will undertake tree and vegetation pruning to improve tree health, and structure and to provide nominal clearances for pathways, roads, buildings and other essential infrastructure. The public are not permitted to prune or remove trees or vegetation on Council managed lands including footpaths and reserves, unless prior consent is issued. All tree pruning works are to comply with AS4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees and will be implemented as resources allow.

The following permissible and non-permissible reasons for tree and vegetation pruning and removal apply:

Permissible Reasons	Non-Permissible Reasons
Hazardous branches or tree	Improve or allow a view
Branches in contact with adjoining buildings/structures	Aesthetic, amenity, ecological or cultural heritage values
Issued a Hazard Reduction Notice by the Rural Fire Service	Allow solar access or for solar panel installation clearance
Maintain pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle access (lower branches)	For construction hoardings and scaffolding
Maintain sight lines as per RMS requirements and signage	Reduce leaf, bark or fruit fall, release of pollen and sap droppings
For installation or maintenance of a dividing fence – maximum 0.5 metre clearance	Reduce wildlife waste and noise and to deter wildlife
Root prune to prevent further damage to built structures that have been appropriately engineered in the first place, where practicable.	Whether the Council tree or vegetation is within an adjacent private properties 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Entitlement Area as identified by the NSW Rural Fire Service
Managing views for public benefit at Council approved locations	To allow secondary access to properties
To comply with other planning legislation and Council endorsed vegetation management plans	
Formative pruning	

d. Tree Removal and Replacement

Tree removal is a last resort option with public safety always taking priority. Selective tree removal and replacement, over many years, is however vital in managing urban canopy cover for future generations.

Council will use its tree assessment procedures to ensure consistency in the approach to determining tree pruning, root pruning and removal. The retention of significant trees is a priority. Tree removal and replacement programs will be undertaken as required and as resources allow.

e. Resident Funded Tree Pruning and Removal

In certain cases, Council may provide consent for residents to have tree works undertaken on Council owned trees. Council's Arborist will need to first assess and determine the permissible reason before consent may be provided. The circumstances will be low priority and include:

- Low risk trees encroaching onto properties
- Weed tree species removal
- Council priorities and resources unable to undertake the works in the short term.

These resident funded tree work requirements will apply:

- The resident engaging an individual with minimum AQF level 3 qualification
- The individual/business having current \$20 million public liability insurance

- Works must comply with AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees
- All reserve access conditions as provided by Council must be complied with.

f. Tree Root Management

As part of Council's risk management strategy where root encroachment hazards are identified, a number of root management practices may be employed as resources allow. These include:

- Installation of root barriers where practicable.
- Root pruning where practicable and not likely to have an adverse impact on tree health
- Tree removal (where no remediation of root encroachment issues is possible).

g. Termite Management

Termites are classified as wildlife and Council will not act upon or be liable for their activities.

h. Weed Species

Council will undertake the prioritised and staged removal and replacement of trees and vegetation classified as noxious or environmental weed species as resources allow. The impacts to canopy cover will be a key consideration in this process.

i. Tree Management Around Utilities

All tree and vegetation clearance works around non-council utility services will be referred to and conducted by the service provider.

j. Tree Clearance Around Roadways, Bike Paths and Footpaths

Trees in the urban environment often grow in close proximity to bike paths and footpaths, as well as overhang our roadways. The management of these trees is addressed in Council's Footpaths & Cycleways – Inspection, Evaluation & Maintenance Policy.

k. Tree Information Systems

Council will keep abreast of new technology in the field of Arboriculture and urban forestry and incorporate technical tools into management and maintenance techniques where appropriate.

l. Emergency Situations

Risk to public safety and property will take priority in tree pruning and removal decisions in emergency situations.

3. Bushland Reserves

Many bushlands exist within the urban environment and have forest edges adjacent to other land uses. All urban bushlands on Council land are protected and most are of significant ecological value. The provisions in this policy also apply to urban bushlands. All tree and vegetation works within urban bushlands must comply to Council approved Vegetation Management Plans and/or all legislative requirements.

4. Tree Protection

Council recognises the social, economic and environmental benefits that the urban forest provides. The protection of trees and vegetation will therefore be given high priority in all aspects of the Shire's activities. Council technical staff will use tree assessment procedures to ensure a consistent approach to tree and vegetation protection.

The following policy principles apply to tree and vegetation protection:

a. Management of Trees during Development Activities

Trees will be protected from construction works and other activities/events that threaten tree health and stability. All management of trees on development sites must adhere to Australian Standard 4970-2009: *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* to achieve consistency in tree protection requirements. Appropriate tree protection measures must be implemented.

Construction hoardings and scaffolding are to be built in such a way to protect trees and trees are not to be pruned or removed.

b. Overhead Power Lines and Utilities

Council may pursue measures to relocate infrastructure away from trees in certain circumstances, to reduce the need for excessive canopy pruning, reduce root damage, and to increase new opportunities for tree planting.

c. Unauthorised Works / Vandalised Trees

Council will not tolerate unauthorised works or vandalism upon trees and will take site specific responses following notification of illegal works and tree vandalism. Council will investigate unauthorised tree works, poisoning and removal and pursue enforcement action where appropriate. Other measures Council will use include community notification and education, compensatory actions and deterrent (sign/view screen) installation at the vandalised area until restoration/replacement occurs.

d. Development Replacement Measures

Council will require compensatory plantings be provided to replace the damaged tree or vegetation. The compensatory plantings will be of similar height, size and species with a 2 year minimum maintenance period to ensure establishment.

e. Bonds

Council will impose bonds where trees are at risk during development to ensure protection of existing trees. The bond will be used for damages and refunded upon completion of the construction and/or maintenance period should no damage occur. This is to include all foreseeable costs including rehabilitation, removal, clean up, replacement, establishment and traffic control.

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed every four years.

POLICY NAME: URBAN VEGETATION & TREE MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC LAND
POLICY REF: U04
MEETING ADOPTED: 26 August 2010
Resolution No. 260810/32
POLICY HISTORY:



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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Clearly define Council's commitment to the management of the urban forest to provide an aesthetic amenity to the community.
- Increase awareness and to educate the community, developers and Council staff on the value of trees in the urban landscape.
- Detail Council's Tree Inspection Program
- Detail Tree Maintenance Program
- Detail Council's management of trees during public works
- Detail Council's Street Tree Planting Program

BACKGROUND

In recent years Ballina Shire has experienced a population and development boom both in the Ballina township and its outlying villages. This has increased pressure on the urban forest, with pressures from urban development pushing closer to existing bushland and impacting on existing street and park trees as properties are redeveloped.

Ballina Shire Council is committed to reducing this impact through the planting of trees on public land and the improvement of the local environment. Council annually plants thousands of native trees in the Shire's Bushland reserves as well as supplying thousands of locally endemic native plants to landcare groups along the Coastal strip and on the Alstonville Plateau.

Council has, through the National Tree Day and National Tree Day for Schools supplied native trees to be planted in public reserves such as Kingsford Smith Park and Angels Beach- East Ballina. Many more trees have been planted in the grounds of the local schools as part of this annual planting day.

Council also annually sponsors World Environment Day by supplying local endemic tree species and preparing suitable planting sites. All these trees have been propagated and produced at Council's Alstonville Nursery Facility

The interaction between the urban forest and residents has long been a contentious issue with a wide variety of thoughts and opinions on how best to manage this asset. These have ranged from blanket removal, severe pruning (including lopping and topping practices) to ignoring trees in the urban environment altogether.

While trees play an important role in the urban landscape, it is recognised that trees of the wrong type/species or growing in the wrong place, can create problems and risks that are not reasonable in the urban environment.

Property owners and public authorities have obligations and responsibilities with respect to the protection of trees and responsibilities to manage risks associated with trees and for any damage or injury associated with the presence, failure or growth of trees.

Tree management involves managing and balancing the various risks and benefits of trees in the urban environment to ensure best community outcome.

The implementation of this Urban Vegetation and Tree Management on Public Land Policy will assist in maintaining a quality urban forest while minimizing the risk to the community, utilities, private property and public infrastructure so meeting Council's risk management requirements.

Section 42 of the Civil Liabilities Act states:

The following principles apply in determining whether a public or other authority has a duty of care or has breached a duty of care in proceedings for civil liability to which this Part applies:

- (a) the functions required to be exercised by the authority are limited by the financial and other resources that are reasonably available to the authority for the purpose of exercising those functions,
- (b) the general allocation of those resources by the authority is not open to challenge,
- (c) the functions required to be exercised by the authority are to be determined by reference to the broad range of its activities (and not merely by reference to the matter to which the proceedings relate),
- (d) the authority may rely on evidence of its compliance with the general procedures and applicable standards for the exercise of its functions as evidence of the proper exercise of its functions in the matter to which the proceedings relate.

To minimise and manage Council's liability in relation to trees in public places the following actions need to be in place

- (a) an inspection program, and
- (b) a maintenance program.

The regularity of the programs will be determined by:

- (a) the available resources, and
- (b) the degree of usage of each area.

Under current court precedent (*Dungog Shire Council V Erin Babbage* [2004] NSWCA 160) Council has no obligation to inspect or maintain trees on rural road reserves (unless dangerous trees have been brought to its attention) nor can it be expected that Council will have the resources to inspect all trees in its road reserves.

Council will provide resources for dealing with urgent or emergency inspections or tree pruning/removals on rural roads when Council is made aware of these instances.

Trees on Private Land

This policy does not address issues relating to tree disputes between neighbours, trees located on private lands where consent for works is not required or the operation of the Ballina Shire Vegetation Management Order. However Council encourages the planting of trees and shrubs within the boundaries of private property. Residents are encouraged to consider the species to be planted with respect to the mature size of the plants and the weed potential of the species that are selected.

Council also encourages residents to consider the size of the tree and the proximity of the tree to neighboring properties, services and their own house prior to planting trees. To assist in this selection Council has developed a comprehensive Garden Guide that is available free of charge from Council or by download from Council's web site.

The Garden Guide has an extensive list of native plants including trees, shrubs and groundcovers suitable for planting in urban environments within the Ballina Shire.

The planting of appropriate native plants is encouraged as native plants are more suited to our environment, encourage birds, are not weedy and have less impact on resources such as water

Free Trees from Council

New House Tree Allocation program

In order to further support the planting of appropriate trees and shrubs on private land Council will provide free of charge, to Ballina Shire residents 15(in total) trees and /or shrubs when a new house is constructed or when new alterations to houses are carried out. The plants will be propagated at Council's nursery and will be species recommended in Ballina Council's Garden Guide- Preferred Species List

Newborn Commemorative Tree Giveaway Program

Council will provide a commemorative tree to residents of Ballina Shire who have become new parents. The tree will be provided along with a certificate and may be planted on private property or if preferred the tree could be planted in an appropriately approved location in a public park or reserve.

No plaques will be placed with these trees on public land or reserves. The plants will be propagated at Council's nursery and will be selected from species recommended in Ballina Council's Garden Guide- Preferred Species List.

Memorial Tree Planting Program

Council will provide a memorial tree to residents of Ballina Shire Council who wish to plant a tree in memory of a deceased loved one. The tree may be planted on private property or if preferred the tree could be planted in an appropriately approved location in a public park or reserve.

No plaques or other memorial items will be permitted to be placed with these trees on public land and reserves. The plants will be propagated at Council's nursery and will be selected from species recommended in Ballina Council's Garden Guide- Preferred Species List.

DEFINITIONS

AQF:	Acronym: Australian Qualifications Framework-a policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised nationally in post-compulsory education and training within Australia. Qualifications range from senior secondary certificates of education, to VET Certificates, Diplomas, university degrees and post-graduate qualifications.
Arboriculture:	Practice and study of the care of trees and other woody plants in the landscape.
Arborist:	An industry professional with a minimum qualification of AQF III or equivalent in Arboriculture.
Barricading:	A physical barrier to prevent pedestrian, vehicle, construction machinery, tools and materials from coming in contact with a tree it can be but is not limited to Para webbing, temporary fencing etc.
Consulting Arborist:	See definition Project Arborist
DBH:	Acronym: Diameter at Breast height usually considered to be 1.4 m from ground level.
Hazard:	Anything with the potential to harm health, life or property
Industry Best Practice:	Best-available, industry-recognised courses of action, in consideration of the benefits and limitations, based on scientific research and current knowledge and incorporating relevant Australian standards and Codes of Practice.
Lopping:	The practice of cutting branches or stems between branch unions or nodes, with no consideration for pruning to active growth points or branch collars
Project Arborist:	The person responsible for carrying out the tree assessment, tree report preparation, consultation with designers, specifying tree protection measures, as well as the monitoring and certification of tree protection measures. The project arborist will have acquired AQF Level V, Diploma of Horticulture (Arboriculture) and relevant experience in regards to project arboriculture.
Pruning:	Is the removal of tree branches to predetermined points in accordance with Australian Standards 4373: 2007- <i>Pruning of amenity trees</i> .
Remediate:	For the purpose of this policy, this is to fully return a tree or ground to a state that is as close as reasonably possible to its original and previous condition.

11.4 Policy (Review) - Urban Vegetation and Tree Management on Public Land.DOC

Risk:	The likelihood of harm occurring as a result of exposure to a hazard
Structural Root Zone (SRZ):	<p>The area around the base of a tree required for the tree's stability in the ground. The woody root growth and soil cohesion in this area are necessary to hold the tree upright. The SRZ is nominally circular with the trunk at its centre and is expressed by its radius in metres.</p> <p>This zone considers a tree's structural stability only, not the root zone required for a tree's vigour and long term viability, which will usually be a larger area.</p>
Supervising Arborist:	An industry Professional with a minimum qualification of AQF IV in Arboriculture usually is the site supervisor for an arboriculture crew.
Topping:	The indiscriminate removal of foliage and branches to a specified height. With no consideration for pruning to active growth points or branch collars or the health and long term viability of the tree
Tree:	A perennial plant having a height of more than 3m and which has a woody, self supporting main stem/s or trunk/s.
Tree Damage:	Injury to a tree including lopping, topping, mechanical wounding, poisoning by way of herbicide or other construction material leachate and or residues, and includes compaction and or disturbance of the Tree Protection Zone and or the Structural Root Zone.
Tree Protection Zone:	A specified area above and below ground and a given distance from the trunk (as set in AS 4970:2009 <i>Protection of trees on development sites</i>) set aside for the protection of a tree's roots and crown to provide for the viability and stability of a tree to be retained where it is potentially subject to damage by development.
TPZ:	Acronym for Tree Protection Zone
Tree Worker:	An industry worker with a qualification of AQF II, in arboriculture.
Visual Tree Assessment:	Method of tree assessment using visual means and incorporating industry recognized principles, tree physiology, anatomy and biological tree processes.
VTA:	Acronym for Visual Tree Assessment.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to:

- Council employees, contracted staff and volunteers;
- Residents, property owners and developers;
- Commercial businesses and properties;
- Council owned businesses and or enterprises;
- Consultants and contractors;

RELATED DOCUMENTATION

Related documents, policies and legislation:

- Local Government Act 1993
- Crown Lands Act 1989
- Civil Liabilities Act 2002
- Trees (disputes between neighbours) Act 2006
- Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995
- Relevant State controls such as State Environment Planning Policies (SEPP's)
- AS 4373-2007: Pruning of amenity trees
- AS 4970-2009: Protection of trees on development sites
- Statewide Mutual: Trees & Tree Root Management Best Practice Manual Ver. 2, 2003.
- Footpaths & Cycleways- Inspection, Evaluation & Maintenance Policy : No F01
- B.L.E.P – Ballina Local Environment Plan
- Development Control Plans (DCPs)

POLICY

Ballina Shire Council's Urban Vegetation and Tree Management on Public Land Policy is divided into 6 sections:

1. Qualifications required to carry out arboricultural works
2. Council requirements for Landscaping of Naturestrips/Road Reserves and the planting of Street Trees
3. Street Tree Inspection Program
4. Tree Maintenance Program
5. Guidelines for the management of trees during public works
6. Street Tree Planting Program

1. Qualifications of Staff and Contractors

Council staff involved in the pruning or removal of trees will be trained in horticulture and/or arboriculture or be supervised by a suitably qualified staff member. All pruning works will comply with the requirements for pruning set out in AS 4373:2007 *Pruning of Amenity Trees*

Contractors employed by council for arboricultural works must have a minimum AQF III in Arboriculture to carry out tree pruning and/or removal works and shall be supervised by a suitably qualified arborist with a minimum AQF IV in Arboriculture. All work must comply with AS 4373:2007 *Pruning of Amenity Trees*, and workers will comply with all relevant industry codes of practice

2. Street Tree Planting and Landscaping of Naturestrips / Road Reserves

The term road reserve applies to the area between property boundaries and includes the road way, footpath and naturestrips. The naturestrip is the section of public land that is located between the edge of the road surface and the property boundaries of adjacent properties and may otherwise be referred to as the road reserve.

This land provides space for pedestrian access along the street and the placement of services such as power, stormwater, water and sewer services.

Under Section 138 of the *Roads Act 1993* consent is required from Council before any works are carried out on this public land.

There is an expectation that property owners mow and maintain this land, but before any further work is undertaken consent must be received from Council.

Consent is required prior to undertaking any works to ensure that pedestrian access is maintained and any services located in or above the naturestrip are not damaged. There can also be safety issues with inappropriately placed vegetation blocking the view of motorists.

Should a property owner in Ballina Shire wish to carry out any works that potentially give rise to these issues on the naturestrip adjacent to their property they must first contact Council to discuss the matter. They will be required to provide the following information before the matter can be considered:

A landscaping plan identifying:

- the location of existing trees and their species if known;
- the dimensions of proposed garden beds, if any, and whether they will be raised and how high, and the materials to be used (if any) for bordering;
- the location of proposed street plantings including approximate dimensions between the plantings and the property boundary, edge of trafficable road surface, kerbing and guttering, table drains, powerlines, underground services, paved footpaths, driveways, intersections and the like;
- information on proposed plantings including species name, planting location (to be identified on the landscaping plan), distance between trees (existing and proposed), dimensions of garden beds (if any), mature height (full species details required if proposed planting not included on current approved species list); and
- whether the proposal is consistent with an established street planting theme for the locality, or a Council adopted Street Planting Strategy (any departure should be supported by a statement as to why the application should be approved).

In assessing an application Council will require the following standards to be met:

- A minimum 1.5 metres wide corridor must be maintained for pedestrian traffic along the footpath and the surface of this must allow for access by prams and people with limited mobility;
- The height of plants used in garden beds must not exceed a height of one metre and trees must be clean trunked, this is to ensure a clear line of sight for motorists exiting the property and motorists using the road;
- Naturestrip garden beds must be located so that they do not affect the line of sight for motorists entering or exiting properties or using the road;
- No street planting will be permitted within 9 metres of an intersection;
- The species of any proposed street trees must be approved by Council and will be required to fit in with the existing street tree species selection (if there is a selected species) and must be a species that is not known to cause damage to services or be a risk to pedestrians and adjacent property owners;
- Council has a list of suitable plants for this area and encourages the use of local native plants. To assist in this selection Council has developed a comprehensive garden guide that is available free of charge from Council or by download from Council's web site.

An example of a landscape sketch that would be acceptable is provided in Appendix 1. This is a simple diagram that does not require the services of a professional landscape designer/ architect nor does it require any special expertise from the applicant.

2.1 Ongoing Maintenance of Naturestrip Plantings

Residents intending to landscape naturestrips must accept full responsibility for ensuring that trees and shrubs become fully established, and for the ongoing maintenance of any garden beds. Once any planting has been carried out on the naturestrip that street planting becomes the property of Council. Council reserves the right to remove any street plant that interferes with or has the potential to interfere with other users of the naturestrip and/or road and to substitute different street plants where this may be considered necessary or desirable.

Residents intending to landscape naturestrips do so with the knowledge that should works be required on the services located in the naturestrip the garden bed and plants may be damaged or removed in the process of this work. Council will not be liable to replace plants or reinstate garden beds.

3. Street Tree Inspection Program

Council will prepare a database of street trees based on the program detailed in **Appendix 2** of this report.

4. Tree Maintenance Program

4.1 Tree Risk Management

Council's tree risk management strategy is both reactive and proactive. On a reactive basis suitably qualified staff assess resident's complaints in regards to tree issues

and make decisions in regards to these based on the circumstances of individual cases. Works are then prioritized according to the assessed degree of risk and remediated within an appropriate timeframe as resources allow.

In regard to Council's proactive approach to tree risk management, as resources permit, Council is compiling the Street Tree Inspection Program and associated database which actively identifies tree hazards through the inspection process. This data including identified hazards and risk ratings are interpreted and works scheduled based on identified risk and priority. Any hazards at the time of inspection that present an urgent or immediate threat to persons or property is reported to the appropriate Supervisor/ Manager and remediated as a matter of urgency.

For further details on these processes see **Appendix 2 - Figure 1: Street Tree Inspection Program (Database) Process** and **Appendix 3 - Figure 1: Risk Management Strategy - Existing Trees on Public Land**.

4.2 Tree Removal Considerations on Public Land

In assessing whether or not to remove or prune a tree, Council will consider the following:

- Whether the tree has significant amenity or aesthetic value or is ecologically significant in the local or regional context;
- The condition, maturity and safe useful life expectancy (SULE) of the tree or native vegetation with respect to the practicality of remedial actions. In the case of trees considered dangerous, Council will consider a report on the condition of a tree prepared by a suitably qualified Project arborist, (see Definitions)
- Whether the tree(s) is culturally significant;
- Whether the tree(s) or remnant vegetation are affected by the provisions of any other Act, Regulation or State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) applicable to the subject land;
- The potential hazards to people or property
- The demonstrated need for reasonable solar access;
- Whether a tree(s) should be replaced by a more suitable species;
- Whether an amenity tree(s) no longer fulfils its original purpose in the landscape;
- Whether the species' natural propagation method is likely to create a nuisance in the landscape i.e. Suckering, seed production and weediness;
- Whether appropriate additional or replacement planting has been, or should be, carried out;
- The need for, and suitability of, erosion and siltation controls;
- Whether permanent and/or temporary barrier fencing is required prior to works commencing;
- Whether a monetary bond is required to ensure the protection of trees on-site and adjoining lands;

- Whether the tree(s) provides habitat or is a significant component of the habitat of a species listed in Schedule 1 and 2 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995;
- Whether prior to felling of a tree(s), special measures are set in place to reduce the potential for injury or death of animals likely to inhabit the tree(s).
- Whether a Vegetation Management Plan should accompany the application for tree/vegetation works.

Provided that no significant hazard to people or property applies, then the following shall **not** generally be considered as valid reasons to remove a tree on public land:

- Leaf drop into gutters, downpipes, pools and so on;
- To increase natural light to a building or garden area;
- To improve street lighting of private property;
- To enhance views;
- To minimise fruit, resin or bird droppings on cars or buildings;
- Minor lifting of driveways or garden paths by tree roots;
- To erect a fence;
- Bushfire hazard control that has not been verified by the Rural Fire Service NSW (RFS);
- Potential damage to sewer mains unless supported by written expert advice and only where reasonable alternatives are not feasible (e.g. relocation or encasement of main pipe).

4.3 Tree Root Management - Trees on Public Land

Council receives complaints in regards to root encroachment from trees on public land onto private property. As part of Council's risk management strategy a number of root management practices are employed in order to remediate these issues. These include the:

- installation of root barriers where possible or required.
- root Pruning where possible and not likely to have an adverse impact on tree health
- tree removal (where no remediation of root encroachment issues are possible)
- correct selection of tree species prior to planting
- installation of specially designed tree pits, root barriers, root directors and or the use of structural soils where appropriate.

Council has a limited budget in regards to street tree management and so the above options are utilised in accordance with the resources that are available.

4.4 Management of Termites in Trees Located on Public Land

Termites are classified as 'wild' creatures and as a general rule Council is not liable for their activities.

However, if they are nesting in a tree on public land and Council becomes aware of the existence of the nest, then:

- an assessment will be made of the risk that the nest poses to neighbouring properties or to the health of the tree and, depending on the result of that assessment, risk abatement measures may be undertaken as appropriate (this may include removal of the termite nest if Council receives reports of evidence of termite activity in neighbouring properties),
- if the tree is in a high usage area, then it will be monitored on a regular basis to determine the impact the termites are having on the stability of the tree or any of its limbs,
- if they are having an impact to the extent that the tree or its limbs pose a threat to persons or property then the tree or the limbs shall be removed.

If the tree is in an urban environment, Council may give consideration to treating the nest in the interests of being a good neighbour.

Where the termite nests are located in trees that form part of a bushland area then Council may determine that it is unrealistic to carry out chemical control of termite nests or tree removals as the termites are part of the natural environment. In such situations it will be the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that adequate inspections and preventative actions are put in place to protect their property.

4.5 Damage Caused by Trees on Public Land During Storms

Council will not be responsible for damage to people or private property caused by the failure of trees located on public land during storms. The only exception to this is where Council had prior knowledge of a problem with a tree and failed to act to address the issue and the tree then failed during a storm.

4.6 Tree Clearance above Roadways, Bike Paths and Footpaths

Trees in the urban environment often grow in close proximity to bike paths and footpaths, as well as overhang our roadways. The aesthetics and environmental benefits of trees are of high interest to the community, however there is often an associated hazard with these trees hanging, obstructing and impeding pedestrian, cycle and vehicle flow. These obstructions have the potential to cause harm to persons and/or vehicles using the paths or roads.

4.6.1. Bike Paths and Footpaths

Council's risk management strategy in relation to overhanging vegetation on bike paths and footpaths is addressed in Council's *Footpaths & Cycleways – Inspection, Evaluation & Maintenance Policy*.

The *Footpaths & Cycleways – Inspection, Evaluation & Maintenance Policy* provides an inspection program for all concrete, asphaltic concrete, bitumen seal or paved footpaths and bike paths which includes the management of overhanging vegetation.

As a result of the inspection of the footpaths and bike paths maintenance is programmed to clear trees and vegetation that is encroaching on the paths. The frequency of these inspections is set out in the policy.

Council also manages trees and vegetation on the remaining public areas on a reactive basis.

The following standard is applied to clearances above footpaths and bike paths in order to ensure a safe clearance between the vegetation and the person using the path whilst maintaining the tree amenity where possible.

Bike paths and formed footpaths - 2.4m with clearances of 500mm where possible on sides

4.6.2 Roads

Council's risk management strategy in relation to trees overhanging roads is an annual inspection of all urban roads in the Shire and the implementation of a maintenance program to remove all identified hazards. Council also carries out maintenance on a reactive basis in response to notification of problems by the community.

The following standards are applied to clearances above roadways in order to ensure a safe clearance between the vegetation and the vehicles using the road whilst maintaining the tree amenity where possible.

The specification below has been established to ensure adequate clearances:

- RTA Roads such as state Highways and Main roads - 5.0m from road surface to the lowest overhanging branch.
- CBD, village centres, dedicated bus routes and main thoroughfares - 4.3m from road surface to the lowest overhanging branch.
- Residential streets and low traffic volume urban roads - 4.3m from road surface to the lowest overhanging branch.

5. Guidelines for the Management of Trees on Council Work Sites

There have been significant changes to the attitude towards the management and protection of trees located on new and existing developments in recent years. The most significant change has been the publishing of the **Australian Standard 4970-2009: Protection of Trees on Development Sites**.

This standard identifies the necessary steps required for tree protection and retention on work sites and has become the underpinning basis for Ballina Shire Council's Urban Vegetation and Tree Management on Public Land policies and guidelines in relation to trees on work/ construction sites.

Consideration of and the protection of trees must start at the very beginning of the construction/ works planning process. To ensure this occurs all trees located within the proposed works project boundaries/ site must be included in the site survey.

A preliminary Tree Assessment as set out in Australian Standard 4970-2009: *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* should take place at the beginning of the planning stage of any project where trees are existing and will potentially be impacted upon. This assessment and will be carried out by a suitably qualified Project Arborist with a minimum of AQF V in arboriculture. This assessment should gather quantitative information in relation to tree health and condition; trees should be numbered and assessed by the Project/ Consulting Arborist as a basis for retention. Trees should be categorised for retention using The TREE AZ system .

The Preliminary Tree Report should contain the following information for each tree:

- Correct botanical identification and common name
- Vigour
- Structure
- Dimensions- height, crown width and DBH
- Age class
- Estimated life expectancy
- Heritage and or cultural matters
- Ecological or habitat matters
- The location relative to existing site features
- Other matters relevant to the site e.g. Surface roots, and
- Retention value utilizing the Tree A-Z assessment method (for more detailed information regarding Tree A-Z see **the Tree A-Z web site**).

Once trees to be retained have been identified, the project design and costing can then be carried out based on the requirements to protect trees through project design and or construction methods i.e. relocating pipelines outside of Tree Protection Zone TPZ's, under boring of pipes, use of structural soils etc.'

Where it is not physically possible to design a proposed project around tree(s) to be retained and there is an encroachment into the TPZ then the TPZ should be increased away from the construction area by the same percentage loss as part of the TPZ. The encroachment should not be greater than 10%. If the encroachment into the TPZ is greater than 10%, then the then the Project Arborist must be consulted and must ascertain if the tree(s) would remain viable. If the tree is deemed to remain viable a remediation plan should be developed. This can include but is not limited to remedial pruning, fertilising, mulching etc.

Where it is not physically possible to design a proposed project around trees to be retained and there is an encroachment into the Structural Root Zone (SRZ), the Project Arborist must be consulted to determine if the tree(s) is to remain viable. If it is determined that the structural integrity of the tree's anchorage system is considered to be compromised, then the tree(s) will be required to be removed as part of the project. And weight should be given to replanting either as part of site restoration or compensatory plantings elsewhere in the Shire in conjunction with Councils Street Tree Planting Program (refer Appendix 5 – Street Tree Planting Program).

Where a tree(s) have been deemed to be suitable for retaining during construction then adequate TPZ's in accordance with AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on*

Development Sites shall be established prior to any construction works including but not limited to demolition of existing buildings, earthworks, site clearing etc.

No materials, chemicals, fuels, vehicles, waste or soils will be stored within the TPZ's. A list of restricted activities within TPZ's is found in Section 4 of AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* and forms part of this policy.

Several other tree protection measures are outlined in AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* and where applicable will form part of this policy in regards to tree management on Council construction sites. Site workers are to be familiar with this standard and its requirements.

6. Street Tree Planting Program

Trees are a dominant component in streetscapes and the urban environment. Trees in the urban environment are fast becoming a highly recognized asset for their ability for carbon sequestration, environmental cooling effects and facilitating a reduction in greenhouse gases, as well as the aesthetic benefits that a well managed urban treescape can offer. Council's tree planting program aims to actively increase these benefits through the planting of new trees and the infilling of existing treescapes in the Ballina Shire. The objective of this program is to create avenues of trees that are both appropriate for their location, and climate as well increasing the aesthetics of the urban environment.

6.1 Tree Planting Limitations

There are many factors that inhibit the planting of trees on public land including parks and reserves as well as roadsides and nature strips. The greatest of these is the location of utility services both above ground and below such as power, fibre optic, telephone, water and sewerage and stormwater. In many cases the planting of trees in areas such as nature strips where several services are located will make planting of new trees impossible due to future interactions and potential damage to these services. In areas where the above number of services exist Council will not permit new tree plantings, and may require the removal of new trees that have been planted without prior consent of Council.

6.2 Infill Street Tree Planting

Where streets are identified as having significant existing tree plantings, Council will identify the predominant species and coordinate an infill planting program to reinvigorate the existing treescape.

6.3 Street Tree plantings

Council's tree planting program will identify streets, parklands and reserves within its towns and villages suitable for planting of new trees. Individual tree species or where appropriate a group of tree species will be selected as being suitable for the location and will be planted as resources allow. The tree species will be selected from council's preferred species list where possible with priority given to the planting of native species where appropriate. In some instances where native plants are not considered suitable or appropriate then non native species may be planted.

A flow chart of the process of selecting and planting street trees is provided in **Appendix 5 - Figure 1: Tree Selection and Planting on Public Land.**

11.4 Policy (Review) - Urban Vegetation and Tree Management on Public Land.DOC

Ballina Shire Council

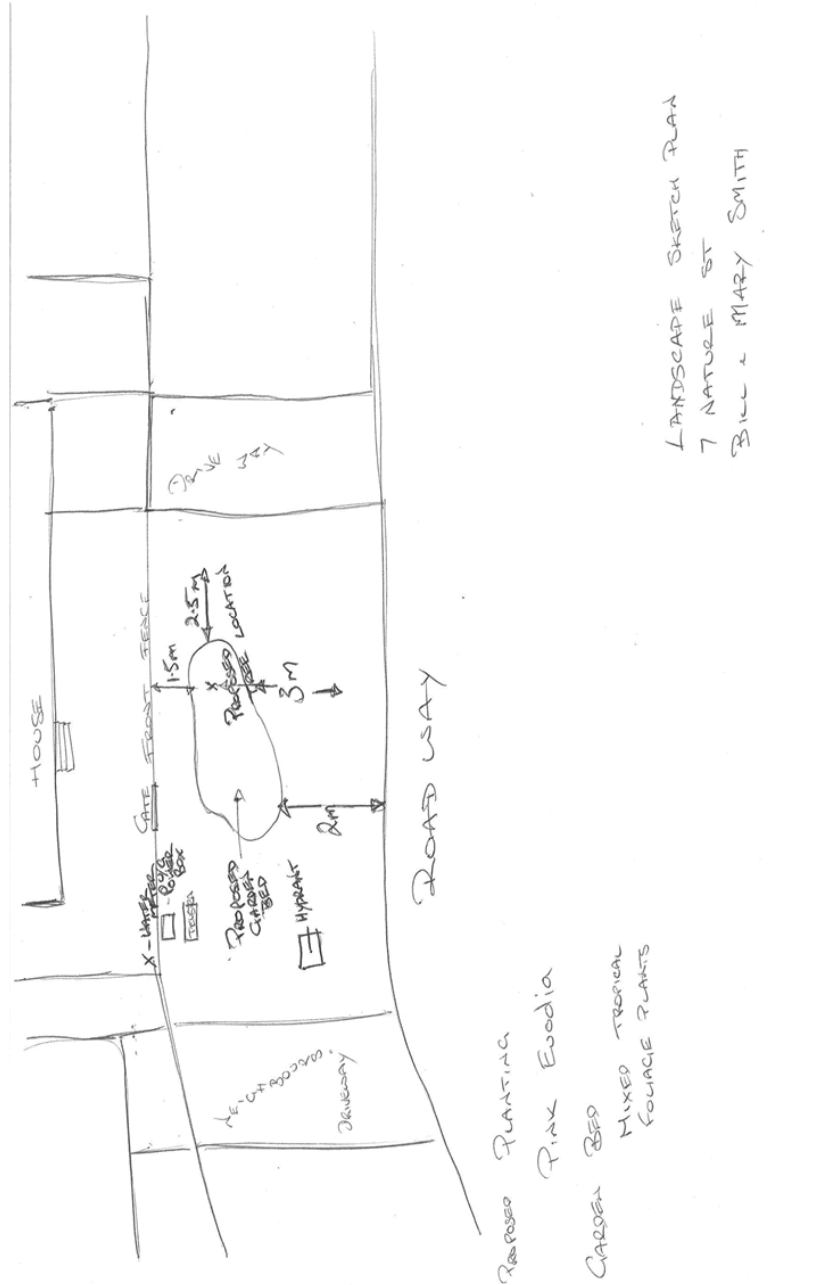
Urban Vegetation and Tree Management Policy

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed every four years.

11.4 Policy (Review) - Urban Vegetation and Tree Management on Public Land.DOC

Appendix 1 – Example of Landscape Sketch required for works on naturestrips



Appendix 2 - Street Tree Inspection Program

This program applies to trees located on urban roadways and does not include trees on rural roads or in rural communities.

This policy outlines the prioritised inspection zones and inspection intervals that will be used to monitor the condition of trees in streets in Ballina Shire. In addition to this policy Council also carries out annual inspections of roads for overhanging vegetation as part of the management of roads.

Based on traffic flow, bus routes and high pedestrian areas within Ballina Shire a list of priority zones has been created. An inspection regime has been established for each zone based on the level of risk assessed in that zone. This regime is provided in Table 1.

Inspections are to be carried out by a suitably qualified Arborist using the Visual Tree Assessment method of assessment. Council has developed a tree asset data sheet to record abiotic and biotic conditions of the tree as well as information on each tree’s location and surrounding infrastructure and services.

Red Zone

This zone consists of high usage areas such as main roads, state highways under maintenance contract by council and heavily trafficked urban roads such as connecting roads that in turn lead to areas such as high usage parks and sports grounds.

Orange Zone

This zone consists of medium pedestrian and vehicle use areas and will take into account roads connecting to main roads as well as bus routes

Yellow Zone

This zone is made up of all other roads that carry local traffic only and are not considered through roads or connecting roads, and are primarily of a residential nature

Table 1 - Tree inspection zones and inspection intervals

Inspection Zone Priority rating	Inspection Zone colour code	Timing of Inspections	Inspection Methods
High	RED	2-3 years	Individual VTA
Medium	ORANGE	3-5 years	Individual VTA or Drive by inspection
Low	YELLOW	Re-active as reported to Council	VTA

Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)

The Visual Tree Assessment method (VTA) will be used for the inspection of trees. This method is recognised as the most cost effective method for assessing trees. It requires a thorough knowledge and understanding of tree physiology and anatomy, as well as a high level of knowledge in regards to pests and diseases commonly found in a wide range of urban trees. Only a qualified arborist should assess trees in regards to safety, and hazard identification.

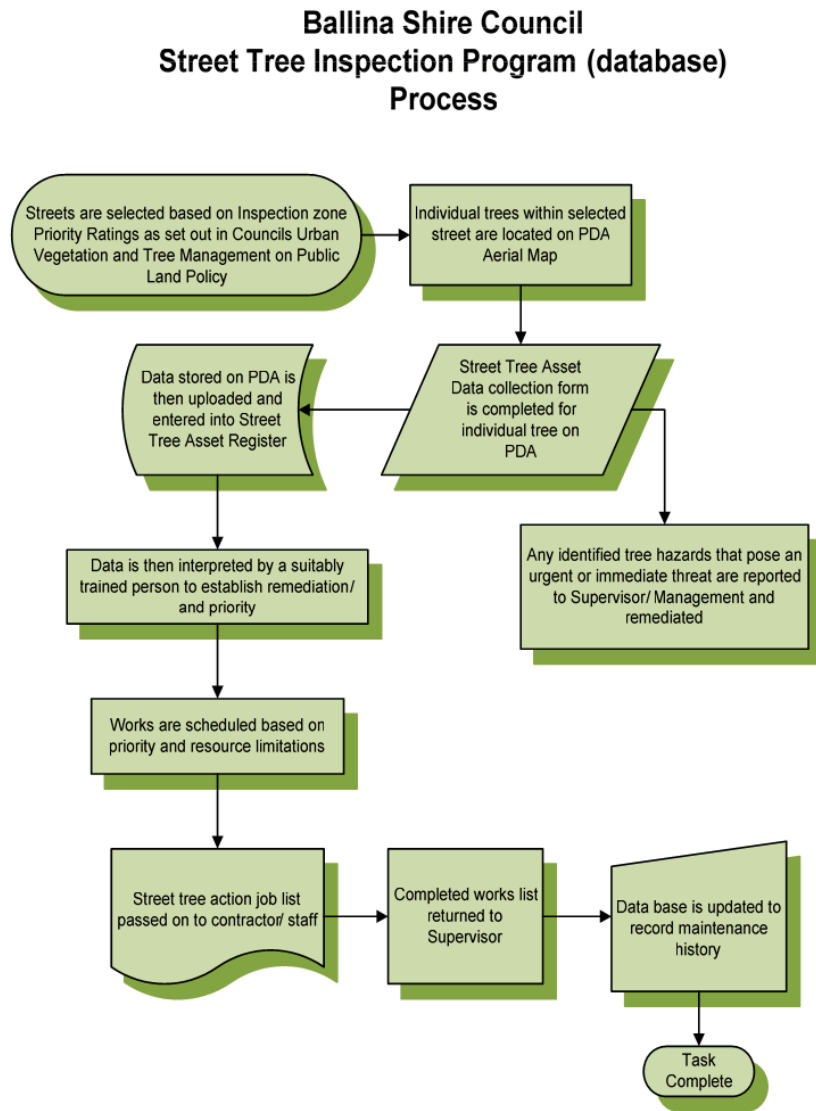
VTA is based on knowledge of tree physiology and its reaction to stress or damage and is therefore from time to time open to dispute in regards to actual assessment outcomes. VTA does not and cannot accurately determine the extent of internal decay and is based purely on known indicators of weakened structural integrity through the assessment of visible signs and symptoms of both abiotic and biotic factors influencing tree health. This in turns means that without costly and invasive examination of the trees internal structure VTA cannot always detect decay in trees.

Tree Maintenance Work

The results of the inspections will be recorded and form a database that will record the history of each tree. Works will be carried out on the trees as required and on the basis of the priority given to the works and the budget allocated for management of street trees.

The following flow chart details the inspection process that will be followed to prepare the database and to implement the inspection process.

Figure 1: Street Tree Inspection Program (Database) Process



Appendix 3 - Tree Maintenance Program

Tree Maintenance

Ballina Shire Council recognises that street trees are an asset to the community and the environment and hence where possible has a pro active approach to street tree management.

All requests for pruning and or removal of trees due to reported hazards, safety concerns and a variety of other issues involving this asset are thoroughly investigated and actioned in accordance with the outcome of the investigation and within the allocated resources available. In addition tree related hazards are identified through Councils Street Inspection Program and scheduled for remediation according to assessed risk and target exposure.

Community Consultation

Where possible, Council will inform the community of any programs that will cause significant impact to trees within the urban environment. This includes but is not limited to, streetscape planning, tree removal where it is deemed to be of public interest and tree planting.

Risk Management

Although the urban forest has significant benefits to the community and the environment, these benefits are negated when trees in the urban environment present a hazard to the community.

Council will undertake all necessary means within its budgetary and staff resources to manage these risks figure 2: Risk Management Strategy- Existing Trees on Public land outlines councils method of dealing with identified and reported tree hazards and associated risks.

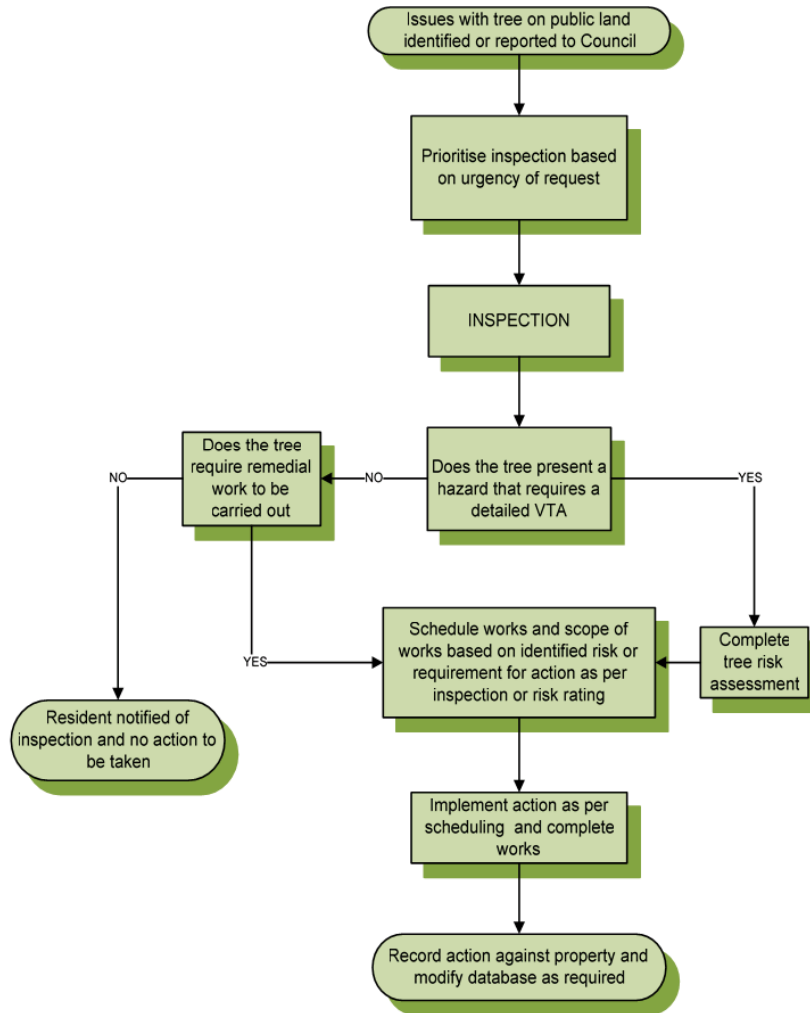
Council's commitment to risk management in regards to the urban forest is also demonstrated through its adopted Street Tree Inspection Program. This program identifies the urban roads and streets into priorities that have been determined through traffic surveys and local knowledge. The policy then outlines an inspection regime in order to routinely inspect council's street tree asset. The Street Tree Inspection Program actively seeks to record asset data in relation to street trees and assess if any existing or potential hazards that each tree may present. Work schedules are then determined based on risk severity and target usage. These work schedules are then passed onto the contractors and actioned accordingly.

The street tree inspection program (further detailed in Appendix 1) also forms a proactive tree risk management protocol.

Qualified Council staff use a variety of different methods when assessing trees. These methods are industry recognized methods using the principles of D. Lonsdale (Principles of Tree Hazard Assessment and Management) and tree bio mechanics (Matheny and Clarke) along with a range of industry related principles and techniques to determine the severity of the hazard. Council has developed a Tree Risk Assessment Form to record document and analyse this information where necessary.

Figure 1: Risk Management Strategy- Existing Trees on Public Land

**Ballina Shire Council
Risk Management Strategy- Existing Trees on
Public Land**



Appendix 4 - Guidelines and Requirements for Arborist Reports

In accordance with the requirements of AS 4373:2007 *Pruning of Amenity Trees*, AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* and competencies outlined in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), Council will only accept arborist reports from AQF Level V – Diploma of Arboriculture.

All reports associated with Development Applications such as Preliminary Tree Assessments, Preliminary Arboricultural Reports, Arboricultural Impact Assessment Reports and all matters concerning arboricultural issues on development sites, as well as general tree removal and pruning reports and plans must be prepared by an arborist with AQF Level V – Diploma of Arboriculture.

Council has adopted AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* as the underpinning principles for this policy. The above mentioned arboricultural reports are detailed in this standard along with required information. Council will only accept arborist reports from the above mentioned suitably qualified arborists that comply with the requirements set out in AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites*.

Council will at times require arborist reports in relation to tree and vegetation matters not required by AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites*. Reports such as Visual Tree Assessments, Tree Hazard Reports, Tree Removal Plans and Tree Pruning Plans may be required as part of the assessment of Council's Vegetation Management Order or other consents as required.

These arborist reports must be clear and legible and contain the following information:

- The name, business address, telephone number of company/ proprietor;
- Evidence of Industry Body Membership, technical qualifications and experience of the arborist, who undertakes the tree inspection, diagnoses and prepares the report.
- The address of the site containing the trees;
- The name of the person or company for whom the report is prepared;
- The methods or techniques used in the inspection;
- A suitably scaled plan of the site showing: -
 - the location of all trees on the site and any trees on adjoining land with overhang or undergrowth, including street / park trees
 - the subject land
 - the location of above and below ground services/ utilities in proximity to the trees shown
- A table showing for each tree surveyed:
 - the common and full scientific name
 - the age class
 - the estimated height

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- the trunk diameter at breast Height (DBH) app. 1.4m from ground
- the canopy spread to the four cardinal points
- a summary of the trees' health and structural condition
- an estimation of the trees useful life expectancy using appropriate industry methods i.e. Safe Useful Life Expectancy (S.U.L.E.) or Tree AZ
- A summary and/ or discussion of other relevant tree and site information such as soil and drainage characteristics, pests and diseases, and tree hazard assessment details.
- The tree assessment should be conducted and recorded in accordance with industry best practice.
- Supporting evidence such as annotated photographs and laboratory results if relevant.
- A discussion of all options available, including why they are recommended or not recommended, e.g. can a built structure be relocated, repaired and tree(s) retained?
- A list of recommendations and the reasons for their adoption;
- The sources of technical information referred to in the report. References not used in the report should not be included;
- Present information as objectively as possible without attempting to support a specific development or client based outcome;
- Provide the scientific and common names of all tree species proposed for planting, including recommendations on the size and quality characteristics of trees to be planted.

Council will not accept substandard arborist reports with inadequate information or reports prepared by persons who do not hold the qualifications detailed in this policy.

Appendix 5 - Guidelines for the Management of Trees on Works Sites

AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* is the underpinning document for Council's Urban Vegetation and Tree Management on Public Land Policy and in this standard the criteria for TPZ's are clearly set out. Council requires all TPZ designs and their implementation to be in accordance with this standard. For further information in regards to TPZ's and their implementation refer to AS 4970:2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites*.

In some circumstances it will not be possible to implement the TPZ to its full calculated area due to site restrictions and/or existing infrastructure.

Where the correct area of the TPZ cannot be implemented alterations should be shown clearly on plans and be assessed and approved by Council's arborist or other suitably qualified staff/ or contracted Project Arborist.

Appendix 6 - Street Tree Planting Program

Tree Planting on Public Land

Consent is required from Council prior to any new tree being planted on public land within Ballina Shire.

Street Tree Planting and Selection

Infill Street Tree Planting

Where streets are identified as having significant existing tree plantings Council will identify the predominant species and coordinate an infill planting program to reinvigorate the existing treescape.

Street Tree Plantings

Council's tree planting program will identify streets, parklands and reserves within its towns and villages suitable for planting of new trees. Individual tree species, or where appropriate a group of tree species, will be selected as being suitable for the location and will be planted as resources permit.

Species Selection

The tree species will be selected from Council's preferred species list with priority given to the planting of native species where appropriate. In some instances where native plants are not considered suitable or appropriate then non native species may be planted.

See the flowchart below - Tree Selection and Planting on Public Land

When assessing the new planting proposal Council will take into account the following:

- Proposed species selection;
- Services – Underground/ overhead;
- Pedestrian traffic levels;
- Future plans;
- Width, depth, soil type within proposed planting area;

Council will not grant approval for new tree(s) plantings if the mature height, canopy spread, or estimated root mass of the subject species is expected to impede on existing or planned future infrastructure.

Council may also remove any unapproved plantings on public land that may impede on existing or planned future infrastructure.

At certain times it may be necessary or deemed appropriate for Council to consider planting trees in close proximity to a building, road way, foot path or services. Alternatively Council may determine the retention of trees of significant value or trees that compliment an existing streetscape.

Where these situation arise and it is determined that the trees are to be planted or retained then the potential for damage to the surrounding infrastructure/ services by

tree roots must be understood. Council will implement risk control strategies such as, but not limited to, the placement of root barriers, root director devices, and or the use of structured soils as part of the project and inherent costs will be budgeted for as part of overall works where required.

Free Trees From Council

New House Tree Allocation

In order to further support the planting of appropriate trees and shrubs on private land Council will provide free of charge, to Ballina Shire residents 15 (total) trees and /or shrubs when a new house is constructed or when new alterations to houses are carried out. The plants will be propagated at Councils nursery and will be species recommended in Ballina Council's Garden Guide- Preferred Species List.

Newborn Commemorative Tree Giveaway Program

Council will provide a commemorative tree to residents of Ballina Shire who have become new parents. The tree will be provided along with a certificate and may be planted on private property or if preferred the tree could be planted in an appropriately approved location in a public park or reserve.

Residents will need to lodge an application with Council including a copy of the Newborns Birth Certificate and a proposed location of planting site (if tree is to be planted on Public Land – Parks and or Reserves). Residents will receive a commemorative certificate, however no plaques will be placed with these trees where planted on public land or reserves. The plants will be propagated at Councils nursery and will be species recommended in Ballina Council's Garden Guide- Preferred Species List.

Memorial Tree Giveaway Program

Council will provide a memorial tree to residents of Ballina Shire Council who wish to plant a tree in memory of a deceased loved one. The tree may be planted on private property or if preferred the tree could be planted in an appropriately approved location in a public park or reserve.

Residents will need to lodge an application with Council including a proposed location of the planting site (if tree is to be planted on Public Land – Parks and or Reserves), and may be required to produce a copy of the Death Certificate. No plaques or other memorial items will be permitted to be placed with these trees on public land and reserves. The plants will be propagated at Councils nursery and will be species recommended in Ballina Council's Garden Guide- Preferred Species List

Figure 1: Tree Selection and Planting on Public Land

**Ballina Shire Council
Tree Selection and Planting on Public Land**

