

Manningham City Council

Tree Management Plan

December 2017



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1 Introduction

The Manningham municipality is renowned for its mix of urban and rural environments. Protecting and enhancing the urban and rural tree population is vital to sustaining a vibrant and healthy community. This plan outlines Manningham City Council's approach to the management of street and park trees in order to maintain and enhance an attractive and safe environment that meets the needs of the community.

Within in the municipality there are approximately 70,000 urban street trees with a balance of both native and exotic species. Manningham is responsible for the management of the trees located on all council managed land including areas such as nature strips, roadside tree reserves, parks and open space.

Trees play a significant role in defining communities and a well treed landscape can greatly increase residential pride in a neighbourhood. Trees are highly valued by Council and play a large role in defining the character of Manningham. In addition to the amenity and aesthetic value, they also play an important role in providing habitat, capturing carbon, offering shade and have been proven to raise property values.



2 Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance in relation to the management of trees throughout the municipality. This plan takes into account the need to maintain and enhance the tree population, whilst responding to the requests of the community, and to ongoing operational requirements, with a consistent and transparent approach. This plan should also be read in conjunction with other relevant Council documents including the Manningham Streetscape Character Study, Electric Line Clearance Management Plan and Bushland Management Strategy.

3 Tree Retention and Removal

3.1 Tree Removal

Council is committed to preserving trees and aims to protect significant vegetation, including that which has historical, botanical, ecological or environmental importance. Under normal circumstances Council will only consider the removal of a street or reserve tree if it is dead, dying or immediately dangerous as determined by a council authorised arborist (minimum Australian Qualification Framework Level 5 and/or equivalent experience). As a result of the assessment, removal may be justified when:

- A tree is dead or dying
- A tree poses a risk to life or property and cannot be maintained by pruning or other appropriate tree maintenance options.
- A tree is causing significant damage to Council or private property, and no other viable means are available to rectify the situation.
- A tree is an environmental weed
- A tree is contributing to lack of vision or sight lines along roads and no other viable means are available to rectify the situation
- The tree or trees are infected by an untreatable pest or disease and removal is required to prevent it spreading.

Tree Removal will not be considered due to:

- Dropping of leaves, bark, twigs, flowers, fruit or sap as this is a natural process for trees.
- Solar access.
- Obstruction of views, advertising or signage.
- Unsubstantiated property damage claims.
- Minor allergenic or irritant responses.

3.2 Resident Notification

Under normal circumstances if removal of a Council tree is required, and it is located in front of a private residence, the resident or occupier will be notified by either a calling card, phone call or in person prior to the trees removal. In such events as a wind or storm event or a tree is assessed by a Council arborist as an immediate risk, notification may not always be possible.

3.3 Stump Removal

Where required stumps will be removed (stump grinder) within a reasonable timeframe after a tree is removed.

3.4 Tree Replacement

Where required, a replacement tree will be planted in the following planting season between May and October. A minimum of one tree will be planted per residential property frontage where service and road safety requirements permit. Species selection will be in accordance with Council's Streetscape Character Study.

3.5 Tree Removal Property Development

Removal of trees on Council managed land relating to property development or crossover applications will only be considered after it has been demonstrated to Council's arborist that all alternative design methods (e.g. crossover relocation, basement car parking etc.) have been investigated and no other options are available. This must be outlined in a Construction or Development Impact Report prepared by an applicant engaged arborist (minimum Australian Qualification Framework Level 5 and/or equivalent experience) for the protection of trees that may be adversely impacted.

Removal requests will then be assessed by Council's arborist, and if approved, the applicant shall pay the removal and reinstatement costs prior to removal commencement including:

- All costs incurred by Council for tree and stump removal.
- Tree amenity monetary value – calculated in accordance with Council's Amenity Value Formula (derived from the City of Melbourne's Amenity Value Formula developed by Dr. Peter Yau 1990 based upon the Maurer-Hoffman Formula).
- Ecological services values – calculated in accordance with the i-Tree valuation tool.
- Replacement planting and reinstatement greening costs required to replace the loss to the landscape incurred by the removal (e.g. advanced tree/s installation, 24 month maintenance fee and any treatment works or Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)).

4 Tree Maintenance Services

4.1 Customer Service Requests

Requests relating to tree maintenance are to be made to Council by contacting the customer service area. This can be done via telephone, email or in person at the Civic Centre. Trees will be inspected by a qualified arborist and, if required, feedback will be provided in relation to the determined action.

4.2 Programmed Tree Services

Council has implemented cyclic street tree maintenance programs. These include:

- Block Street Tree Pruning Cycle. This includes road and footpath clearance, electric line clearance (refer to Electric Line Clearance Management Plan), amenity pruning and formative pruning.
- 5 yearly street tree inventory condition assessments.
- 5 yearly roadside hazard tree inspections in high bushfire risk areas.
- 5 yearly inspections of kindergarten and preschool trees.

Council has considered these requirements in determining the resources necessary to manage tree maintenance activities within the municipality.

4.3 Property Boundary Pruning

Where possible, Council will provide boundary clearance pruning of managed trees, however, this will not compromise the integrity of the canopy (e.g. lopping) and will be in accordance with AS 4373-2007. Repeat pruning will only be considered for excessive regrowth and excessive pruning will not be considered.

4.4 Emergency Events

During severe weather events such as windstorms, trees can sometimes become unstable, lose limbs or completely fail. In the event that an emergency response is required as a result of a severe weather event, a combination of internal and external resources may be required.

During an emergency tree related event, calls will come through the council contact centre and are directed to the appropriate department for response. Depending on the size of the event the Parks Unit (normal business hours) will determine the amount of resources to engage in order to effectively manage the situation. Council works in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders including the State Emergency Services, Country Fire Authority, Metropolitan Fire Brigade and Victorian Police in order to respond in the appropriate manner.

Council also operates an after hour service that is referred to the Engineering Operations Unit. Council has internal and contract Arborists available to make assessments if required.

5 Management of Tree Roots

5.1 Root Damage

As tree roots have been known to cause damage to property, Council has adopted the following reactive and proactive risk strategies based upon available resources.

Reactive risk strategies:

Once notified of an issue relating to tree roots, a Council approved arborist will assess the tree in question and consider the suitability of the following remedial options:

- Selective Root Pruning (SRP) – The practice of removing part of a trees root system in order to mitigate possible root damage.
- Root Barrier/Deflector Installation – Root barriers are used to prevent conflicts between tree roots and infrastructure. The placement of a physical membrane is designed to deflect roots. Some SRP may be required to install the barrier.
- Tree removal (in accordance with Council's tree removal policy).

Proactive risk strategies:

When planting new trees, the following will be considered in relation to the location:

- Appropriate tree selection
- Engineering solutions.
- Appropriate tree placement.

All tree root management practices will be carried out in accordance with the Australian Standard for Pruning of Amenity Trees (AS 4373).

5.2 Tree Roots in Pipes

Leaking pipes are caused by poor construction, ground movement, damaged joints or general degradation. Water leakage from a pipe can encourage roots to grow in the direction of the pipe, towards the source of water.

Property owners are responsible for the repair, maintenance and replacement of pipes from their property to the road curb. If roots from a street tree are suspected to have entered Council drainage pipes, Council should be contacted and an inspection will be arranged.

Tree root issues relating to damage to private property are referred to Council's Risk Management Team.

6 Trees on Private Land

Council is not responsible for the maintenance of trees on privately owned land.

At times Council is contacted by residents that are concerned about trees on a neighbouring property. Residents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their neighbour in the first instance, or in the case of a dispute can also contact the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria. This State Government agency offers strategies, mediation and other services in respect to neighbourhood disputes.

Town planning permits may be required for tree or vegetation removal on private properties. Property owners should contact Council's Statutory Planning Unit to find out if a planning permit is required, prior to undertaking any vegetation and or tree removal works.

7 Electric Line Clearance

Council is responsible for the undertaking clearance of vegetation around electric lines throughout the declared areas of the Manningham municipality. Declared areas are specified in section 84 of the Electrical Safety Act 1998. Section 84C specifies that "a council responsible for the management of public land in an area declared under section 81 is responsible for the keeping of the whole or any part of a tree situated on the land clear of an electric line that is not a private electric line".

In order to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance as detailed in the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015, Council will meet the following objectives:

- Comply with the duties and responsibilities as prescribed in the Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance.
- Ensure that management procedures minimise the effect of vegetation on electric lines and maximise the amenity of vegetation within the municipality.
- Protect significant vegetation including that which has historical, botanical, ecological or environmental importance.
- Ensure public safety.
- Provide a healthy, safe work place for Council's employees and contractors.
- Liaise with the community and provide a service that responds to their needs and expectations.

A copy of Manningham's Electric Line Clearance Management Plan can be viewed during normal business hours at the Civic Centre, located at 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster and is also located on the Council website.

8 Tree Planting

Council has an extensive street and park tree planting program that is progressively being implemented throughout the municipality. The planting program is undertaken between May and October each year, although the period can vary to take advantage of optimum planting conditions. Planting is carried out in accordance with the Manningham Streetscape Character Study which provides a template for species selection in specified precincts throughout Manningham. Further detail can be found on the Manningham website.



9 Damaged Trees

Trees that have been poisoned, killed, removed, vandalised or otherwise damaged will be rigorously investigated by Manningham City Council.

Advertising signage will be installed and the tree will be made safe whilst the investigation occurs.

Appropriate infringements and costs for loss of amenity, works and replacement planting will be sought from the offending party.

A new tree will be planted in close proximity to promote canopy density of the area.

10 Pest and Disease Management

Pests and disease in trees commonly occur in the landscape. Council will adopt the appropriate plant health principles in the identification and treatment of pests and disease in its trees. Council currently has a cyclic program for treatment of Elm Leaf Beetle (ELB) for Council managed Elm trees. The ELB treatment program uses a combination of trunk and soil injection and canopy spraying depending on the size and location of the trees.