



SHIRE COUNCIL
Blayney

Vegetation Policy

Policy	25P
Officer Responsible	Director Infrastructure Services
Last Review Date	16/09/2025

Strategic Policy

INTRODUCTION

Trees, shrubs and gardens perform many functions that support a healthy community. Apart from being a natural air purifier, absorbing carbon dioxide and providing oxygen, they provide natural air conditioning, shade, habitat for native wildlife, soil restoration and shelter against noise and wind. Aesthetically, they add natural beauty and provide a necessary softening of the built environment. Culturally, they contribute to the character of an area and add a sense of life and place.

Blayney Shire Council recognises the importance of vegetation and its role as a key contributor to a high quality environment. We are committed to maintaining the formal and informal vegetation that we have, improving their maintenance and protection and increasing the level of tree canopy cover by:

- acknowledging trees as vital urban infrastructure in our policy and strategic planning documents
- increasing the number of Council Trees in our shire
- protecting trees potentially affected by development through regulated conditions and controls
- educating the community in the benefits of trees and gardens
- encouraging more planting through community awareness and special projects
- Managing trees and vegetation sustainably and systematically in line with Council policies and strategies

POLICY STATEMENT

Blayney Shire Council:

- recognises the significance of trees in terms of creating functional and aesthetic streetscapes and reserves
- will plan for urban enhancement through the retention of suitable trees and the creation of gardens within proposed road reservations and public reserves
- has the responsibility for the planning, establishment, care, control, and maintenance of all Council trees and gardens

SCOPE

The Policy applies to:

- All trees and bushes that are owned or managed by Council (that is a tree with 50% or more of its trunk growing from Council managed land) Such trees shall be referred to as the Council Trees
- Gardens located on Council owned or managed land.
- The removal of trees on private property (that is a tree with less than 50% of its trunk growing from Council managed land)
- Weeds management is specifically excluded from this policy

Council officers, residents/owners, builders, developers, contractors, representatives, and event organisers are all required to comply with this Policy.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a context for the development of high quality streetscapes and public spaces that require efficient resource input, thereby maximising outcomes. The Policy will assist the Council in moving toward greener, more liveable communities.

Objectives

To establish a policy that drives the development of a tree management program that enhances the aesthetics, the public amenity and enjoyment of public open spaces.

Strategic Direction

The Council Vegetation Policy is presented in the following key areas:

- Consultation
- General Objectives
 - Plantings
 - Tree Management
 - Powerlines
 - Tree Protection
 - Tree Removal
 - Garden Beds
 - Verge Areas
 - Private Trees
- Resourcing and Implementation
- Performance
- Legislative Context

Consultation with Stakeholders

Council values its stakeholder's opinion and encourages consultation and communication in the improvement of its streetscape. In accordance with the Council's Community Engagement Policy's Key Values and Principles; namely:

- Encouraging participation of people who live, work, visit or support Council and
- Ensuring relevant information is readily available and that is accurate, comprehensive, and easy to understand.

Council will apply the following practices:

- Internal consultation with the Council's relevant service units
- Increase resident interest in the ongoing care of its streets and reserves
- Encourage community consultation in programmed plantings and removals by providing opportunities to comment
- Raise community knowledge about the benefits of trees and the place they have in our streetscapes

General Objectives

Plantings

Blayney Shire Council's objective is to plant a Council Tree outside each residential property zoned R1, RU5, E1 or E3 within the Blayney Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA). Council may consider planting Street Trees outside residential properties in R5 zoning. When considering plantings, Council shall assess all site considerations. Preference will be given to planting native trees where possible.

The planting of any tree or other plant by any person on public open space is prohibited without the written approval of Council.

Tree Management

Council will maintain existing trees and garden beds in a sound and healthy condition. Council staff shall inspect all trees planted within road shoulders, nature strips and developed open space in residential and rural-residential areas on a regular basis. Actions required will then be programmed into an ongoing maintenance schedule.

Powerlines

Council recognises that statutory bodies (and their agents) have legislated authority to prune, lop, or remove trees encroaching on utilities without Council approval. This can typically include power lines and roads. Council shall endeavour to engage with these organisations to collaboratively manage pruning works and achieve outcomes consistent with the objectives of this policy.

Tree Protection

Council Trees and gardens will be protected from construction works and other activities that threaten their health and stability. Council will ensure all construction, works, events and development activities do not adversely impact Council Trees or gardens.

Tree Removal

The removal of Council Trees is contrary to the intent of this policy, however in some circumstances tree removal is required. Causes for removal may include ill health of the tree, hazard to the public or other infrastructure, or as part of construction or development works. Removal of a Council Tree will generally not be accepted due to personal preferences, nuisance due to leaf litter or other dropped material, or allergies. Council will assess the justification according to operational procedures. Removal of a Council Tree may not occur without Council approval. Heritage and conservation requirements supersede council policy.

Garden Beds

Council may plant garden beds in public spaces, and in limited circumstances, verge areas. Where installed, this will be done according to village masterplans and in a coordinated fashion. Garden beds will be inspected by Council on a schedule and maintained, modified or removed as required. Council may, through negotiation and agreement, transfer specific responsibilities to community groups.

Garden beds created in verge areas are discouraged, as they can negatively impact access, utilities, sight lines and other services. Council cannot ensure their longevity as other authorities may use verge areas for their services at any time. Legacy verge-located garden beds will be inspected periodically to ensure they continue to meet their approval criteria. For clarity, this section includes garden beds / individual plants either planted in the ground, or in street furniture such as pots or planter boxes.

Verge Areas

Council is responsible to maintain verge areas throughout the shire. Due to the prohibitive cost of maintaining all verge areas, Council actively mows verges in only selected town entry / high profile areas within the Shire. Council seeks assistance from residents to periodically mow the grass verges in front of their properties.

Private Trees

The removal of trees in private urban areas is regulated by NSW Planning Legislation, Heritage and Conservation Legislation, and Council's Development Control Plan. In conservation areas, approval is required from council before removing trees on private property in R1, R5, RU5, E1, E2 and E3 zoning, unless there is immediate threat to life or property. Tree removal applications as part of a Development Application will be considered in the entirety of the application. Heritage and conservation requirements supersede Council policy.

Trees not covered by the above criteria require council approval to remove if they are located in R1, R5, RU5, E1, E2, and E3 zoning, and;

- are over 5m high, or
- are mature natives being over 10 years old, or
- there are 3 or more trees are proposed for removal on a single lot.

An Arborist's report may be required to justify the tree removal(s).

Resourcing and Implementation

Funding and physical resources shall be considered each year as part of Council's Operational Plan.

Identification of resources and implementation of this policy will be the responsibility of Director Infrastructure Services.

Performance

Performance will be measured against criteria detailed in Council's Asset Management Plan – Parks and Gardens.

Legislative Context

Acts, Regulations, Standards and Environmental Planning Instruments relevant to this policy:

- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2017*
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021*
- *Blayney Development Control Plan (2018)*
- *Blayney Local Environmental Plan (2012)*
- *Roads Act (1993)*
- *Heritage Act (1997)*
- *Electricity Supply Act (1995)*

End of Policy

	Date	Minute
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