

Streets and Parks Tree Planting Maintenance Policy

Classification:	Infrastructure
Last Reviewed:	June 2026 (421/2026)
Next Review Date:	June 2030
Responsible Officer:	Director Infrastructure & Operations
Approved by:	Council Resolution
Applicable Legislation:	Section 221, 232, 244 & 245 of the Local Government Act 1999 Electricity Act 1996
Related Policies, Procedures and Standards:	

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to formalise Council's position regarding the planting, management, maintenance and removal of trees and vegetation under the care and control of the District Council of Robe.

Council recognises that trees are valuable community assets that enhance amenity, provide environmental benefits, contribute to streetscape character and improve liveability. This Policy provides a consistent framework for decision-making that:

- Ensures public safety;
- Protects Council and the community from unreasonable risk;
- Supports long-term sustainability of the tree canopy; and
- Guides future strategic direction for tree planting, protection and maintenance.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all trees and vegetation located on land under the care, control and management of the District Council of Robe, including:

- Road reserves and verges;
- Parks and gardens;
- Reserves and community land; and
- Other Council-managed public open space.

This Policy does not apply to trees located on private property except where they impact public safety or statutory clearance requirements.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

3.1. Local Government Act 1999

In accordance with Section 221 (1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), a person must not make an alteration to a public road unless authorised by Council. Section 221 (2) (e) states that a person makes an alteration to a public road if the person "*plants a tree or other vegetation on the road, interferes with vegetation on the road, or removes vegetation from the road.*"

No planting, pruning or removal of trees on Council land is permitted without prior written authorisation from Council.

In accordance with Section 232 of the Act, Council must first consider the following factors before planting (or authorising planting) vegetation on a road:

- Environmental and aesthetic matters;
- The use and construction of the road;
- Potential interference with infrastructure and services;
- Road safety matters; and
- Other relevant considerations.

Where planting may significantly impact residents or nearby businesses, Council will undertake public consultation in accordance with legislative requirements.

It is important to note that Section 244 and 245 of the Act specifies that Council has statutory protection from liability where it has acted reasonably. The adoption and implementation of this Policy supports Council in demonstrating reasonable action.

Council gives effect to these considerations through the application of this Policy and the recommended species identified in Appendix 1.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Council will manage trees and vegetation under its care and control in a manner that:

- Enhances amenity and landscape character;
- Prioritises public safety;
- Applies sound arboricultural and risk management principles;
- Considers whole-of-lifecycle impacts; and
- Recognises the balance between amenity, sustainability and available resources.

Council acknowledges that optimal outcomes may be influenced by:

- Conflicting needs between amenity and public safety;
- Financial and operational resources;
- Long-term sustainability considerations; and
- Broader service delivery priorities.

5. STREET TREES

Council maintains a regular inspection and maintenance program for street trees.

Systems are in place to:

- Inspect trees on a programmed cycle;
- Respond to public reports or concerns;
- Undertake necessary intervention where appropriate.

Clearance and maintenance works will be carried out having regard to road type, traffic environment and surrounding conditions.

5.1. Clearance Standards

Council will seek to achieve and maintain appropriate vegetation clearances to ensure the safe and efficient use of roads and pedestrian infrastructure. Clearance requirements apply to both vertical and horizontal clearances, forming an overall clearance envelope.

Vegetation clearances will generally be maintained as follows:

- Road carriageways – a minimum vertical clearance of 5.0 metres across the carriageway width, subject to site conditions. Greater clearances may be required on designated heavy vehicle routes or where specified by relevant State Government requirements.
- Pedestrian paths (footpaths) – a minimum vertical clearance of 2.4 metres above footpaths, consistent with accessibility guidance under AS 1428.1 Design for Access and Mobility.
- Horizontal clearance (pedestrian paths) – vegetation must not encroach into the usable width of footpaths. Where vegetation extends from private land into the public realm, it is to be trimmed back to the property boundary.

Clearance levels may vary depending on site conditions, species characteristics, and arboricultural considerations.

Council will have regard to relevant industry guidance, including Austroads Guide to Road Design, and will align with applicable State Government standards, operational instructions, and agency requirements (including those of Department for Infrastructure and Transport) where relevant.

6. TREE PLANTING

Council will ensure the controlled development of street and park tree planting, resulting in streetscapes that are attractive, coordinated and sustainable.

6.1. Species Selection

Tree species selection will consider:

- Likely mature size;
- Suitability for the site;
- Compatibility with desired landscape character;
- Potential impacts on neighbouring properties;
- Tolerance to pests, disease, drought and climate conditions;

- Underground and overhead services and structures;
- Existing crossovers;
- Traffic and pedestrian sightlines.

Recommended species are identified in Appendix 1. While this list provides guidance on suitable species for the Robe environment, final species selection will be determined having regard to site-specific conditions, infrastructure constraints and relevant service authority requirements.

Tree planting and maintenance will have regard to overhead and underground infrastructure, with Council liaising with relevant service authorities where required. Where planting is proposed near powerlines, species selection and planting practices must comply with the South Australian Power Networks (SAPN) *Powerline Friendly Trees Guide*.

6.2. Minimum Planting Distances (Guidelines)

The following distances will generally be considered prior to planting:

- 2.5 metres from driveways;
- 3 metres from power poles;
- 10 metres from property corners (15 metres on State-controlled roads);
- 2 metres from fire hydrants;
- 3 metres from junction boxes;
- Trees should not be planted directly over underground services where reasonably avoidable.

These distances are guidelines and may be varied at the discretion of a suitably qualified Council officer.

6.3. Planting by Residents

No planting of trees by residents or community groups on Council land will be permitted without prior written consent.

Applications must be made in accordance with Section 221 of the Local Government Act 1999.

6.4. Establishment Practices

During tree planting, watering systems or methods will be used where appropriate to encourage deep root growth and long-term tree health.

6.5. Consultation with Adjoining Property Owners

Prior to planting a new street tree within a road reserve adjoining a residential property, Council will make reasonable efforts to consult with the adjoining property owner or occupier.

Council may invite feedback regarding preferred tree species, location and other site-specific considerations.

While Council will consider any feedback received, the final decision regarding whether a tree is planted, the species selected and its location remains at the discretion of Council.

In making its decision, Council will have regard to:

- The recommended species identified in Appendix 1;
- Site-specific environmental conditions;

- Streetscape character and consistency;
- Biodiversity outcomes;
- Existing and future infrastructure constraints;
- Public safety considerations; and
- Long-term maintenance requirements.

7. TREE MAINTENANCE AND TRIMMING

Tree trimming will be undertaken to:

- Maintain public safety;
- Maintain appropriate statutory clearances;
- Improve sightlines;
- Support pedestrian and vehicle movement;
- Maintain the health and structural integrity of the tree.

Only suitably qualified personnel will determine pruning requirements.

Where private trees encroach into required clearance zones for established footpaths and roads, adjoining property owners will be notified and requested to undertake remedial action. If the resident fails to comply with a reasonable request under the Local Government Act 1999, Council may issue an order requiring the work to be undertaken.

8. TREE REMOVAL

Authority to approve the removal of trees is delegated to the Director Infrastructure & Operations.

Council will remove a tree where it is:

- Dead;
- In irreversible decline;
- Diseased beyond recovery;
- Structurally compromised and poses a risk to persons or property that cannot be reasonably mitigated; or
- Required for essential infrastructure works where no feasible alternative exists.

Removal decisions will consider public safety, arboriculture assessment, environmental and amenity impacts, and whole-of-lifecycle value.

Trees will not generally be removed solely due to:

- Leaf, bark or fruit fall;
- Shading of private property;
- Minor infrastructure impacts that can be reasonably mitigated;
- Aesthetic preference.

Replacement Planting

Where a street tree is removed, Council will, where reasonably practicable and subject to site suitability, seek to undertake replacement planting within the same street or locality.

Replacement planting will be undertaken having regard to species suitability, infrastructure

constraints, available resources and broader streetscape objectives.

9. DEBRIS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Council will respond to any tree (public or private) that, due to a natural cause or event, requires removal from a public area where it creates a safety hazard to pedestrians or traffic.

The extent of Council's work will be limited to making the area safe and clearing debris from public land.

Where a Council-controlled tree falls onto private land, Council will remove the tree subject to access authorisation by the property owner or occupier.

All other matters relating to trees on private property remain the responsibility of the landowner.

10. DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

In accordance with Section 245 of the Local Government Act 1999, Council will not be liable for damage caused by a tree unless:

- The property owner has previously provided written notice of a specific risk; and
- Council has failed to take reasonable action within a reasonable timeframe.

Reasonable action may include inspection, assessment, monitoring, pruning or other mitigation measures.

Removal of a healthy tree will not automatically occur where reasonable alternatives exist.

11. ROOT MANAGEMENT

Council recognises that tree roots may interact with surrounding infrastructure.

Where appropriate, Council may implement measures such as:

- Root barriers;
- Appropriate planting practices;
- Work methods designed to minimise pavement, kerb or property damage.

Root management will be undertaken in a manner that seeks to minimise damage while maintaining tree health and structural integrity.

12. ENFORCEMENT

It is an offence to remove, poison, prune or otherwise interfere with a tree on Council land without authorisation.

Council may pursue enforcement action and cost recovery where unauthorised works occur.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

This policy will be available for inspection at the Council offices listed below during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's internet site: www.robe.sa.gov.au

Royal Circus, Robe SA 5276

Copies will be provided to interested parties upon request. Email council@robe.sa.gov.au

Any grievances in relation to this policy or its application should be forwarded in writing addressed to the Chief Executive Officer of Council.

14. POLICY REVIEW

This policy may be amended at any time and must be reviewed at least every four years since its adoption (or latest amendment).

APPENDIX 1: RECOMMENDED TREE SPECIES

The following species are recommended for planting within the District Council of Robe, having regard to the region's coastal climate, environmental conditions and urban infrastructure constraints.

The species listed represent Council's current recommended tree species, based on local conditions and available information at the time of preparing this policy. Additional suitable species, including native varieties, may be considered and incorporated over time where appropriate.

Council recognises the environmental, biodiversity, native bees and tourism benefits associated with native vegetation and will, where appropriate, give preference to locally indigenous and native species that are suited to the Robe environment. Non-native species may also be considered where they contribute to streetscape character, heritage values, climate resilience, shade outcomes or other community benefits.

Coastal & High Exposure Areas

Suitable for foreshore, open reserves and areas subject to strong winds and salt spray.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Typical Height	Key Characteristics
<i>Melaleuca lanceolata</i>	Dryland Tea Tree	4–8m	Highly salt and wind tolerant, suitable for screening, suitable away from powerlines
<i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>	Coastal Tea Tree	5–8m	Hardy coastal species, suitable for stabilisation
<i>Banksia integrifolia</i>	Coastal Banksia	10–15m	Salt tolerant, provides habitat value
<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>	Drooping Sheoak	6–10m	Excellent windbreak, drought tolerant

General Street Trees (Urban Areas)

Suitable for residential streets, town centres and areas with moderate exposure.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Typical Height	Key Characteristics
<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	Kurrajong	8–12m	Drought tolerant, adaptable, suitable away from powerlines

<i>Agonis flexuosa</i>	WA Peppermint	8–12m	Suited to sheltered locations, suitable away from powerlines
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	Weeping Bottlebrush	4–8m	Attractive, bird-attracting, moderate size
<i>Magnolia Grandiflora</i> 'Little Gem'	Little Gem Magnolia	4-8m	Compact form, salt tolerant, suitable for urban streets, suitable away from powerlines
<i>Eucalyptus tritaniopsis</i>	White Stringybark	8-15m	Attractive flowering, suited to coastal conditions, suitable away from powerlines
<i>Fraxinus Griffithii</i>	Evergreen Ash	6-10m	Reliable urban street tree, dense canopy
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i> cultivars	Ornamental Pear	8-12m	Seasonal colour, structured growth habit, suitable for selected streets

Large Trees (Parks, Reserves & Wide Streets)

Suitable for open space, parks and areas with sufficient clearance.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Typical Height	Key Characteristics
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River Red Gum	20m+	Large canopy, habitat value (site-specific use) , suitable away from powerlines
<i>Corymbia maculata</i>	Spotted Gum	15–25m	Strong structure, suitable for avenues, suitable away from powerlines
<i>Brachychiton acerifolius</i>	Illawarra Flame Tree	10–20m	Feature tree with seasonal colour, suitable away from powerlines
<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i>	Norfolk Island Pine	20–50m	Landmark coastal species, suitable away from powerlines
<i>Eucalyptus fasciculosa</i>	Pink Gum	8–15m	Hardy native, suitable for larger streets, suitable away from powerlines
<i>Platanus acerifolia</i> x	London Plane Tree	15-25m	Heritage character, excellent avenue tree, suitable away from powerlines

Secondary / Feature Species (Sheltered Locations Only)

Suitable for protected streets, gardens or low-exposure environments.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Typical Height	Key Characteristics
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle	6–8m	Seasonal flowering, iconic native
<i>Chamaelucium uncinatum</i>	Geraldton Wax	3–5m	Ornamental, requires shelter
<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>	Hop Bush	3–5m	Hardy shrub/small tree
<i>Cercis spp.</i>	Redbud	5–6m	Ornamental, suitable for sheltered areas

Planting Near Powerlines

Where planting is proposed under or in proximity to overhead powerlines, Council must ensure species selection and planting practices comply with the requirements of the South Australian Power Networks (SAPN) *Powerline Friendly Trees Guide* (Sheets 1 and 2).

Only species identified as suitable within the relevant SAPN planting zones are to be selected, having regard to:

- Mature height and canopy spread
- Required clearance distances from power infrastructure
- Ongoing maintenance and pruning requirements