



Tree Management Policy



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

Tree Management Policy

Yarriambiack Shire Council encourages a working environment which promotes gender equality and models non-violent and respectful relationships.

1 Objective

This policy has been developed to ensure the future management of tree assets of the Yarriambiack Shire Council.

This policy applies to the following land within the Yarriambiack Shire Council:

- a) Land owned by the Yarriambiack Shire Council.
- b) Land managed by the Yarriambiack Shire Council on behalf of other government agencies including:
 - i. Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), (The functions of Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) have been integrated into the Department of Transport).
 - ii. Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
 - iii. Parks Victoria
 - iv. GWMWater
- c) Local road reserves
- d) Road reserves managed by the Yarriambiack Shire on behalf of the DTP.

The policy provides a practical and balanced approach to tree management which seeks to maximise the abundance and health of trees on Council land while ensuring public safety and allowing controlled development. It acknowledges that trees sometimes come into conflict with other elements of the streetscape, particularly hard structures and services, but recognises that all are essential components of a pleasant and functional landscape.

The policy attempts to maximise community support for a well treed environment through prudent management of all trees for which Council is responsible.

2 Responsibility

- a) Chief Executive Officer
- b) Chief Operating Officer
- c) Chief Engineering Officer
- d) Manager Development and Environmental Services
- e) Site Engineer
- f) Waste and Sustainability Coordinator

This document is intended for use by Council staff, primarily tree management practitioners, dealing with issues relating to trees within the Shire. Other Council staff may benefit from clear explanations about arboriculture practices. It is to be used in conjunction with the Master Environment Strategy as well as other legislative and Council policy documentation. The Yarriambiack Street and Reserve Tree Strategy, Species List, Procedure and Manual have been developed to support and assist in defining the management of trees within the Shire.

3 Policy Statement and Scope

The major areas of concern to residents as they relate to tree management are:

- a) Tree planting
- b) Tree pruning
- c) Tree removal
- d) Damage caused by trees.

This policy seeks to address the issues underlying these concerns and provide clear guidelines for Council officers as they respond to tree related enquiries from residents.

The Policy provides a framework to guide the routine aspects of public tree planning, tree selection and planting, tree maintenance and removal in the Shire with the aim to increase the benefits provided by public trees in the urban landscape.

Protecting and enhancing Council's publicly managed trees through proper management is vital to sustaining a healthy, vibrant community. Council's trees provide a multitude of benefits from an ecological, climatic, architectural, psychological and economic point of view. Public trees provide habitat and food sources for wildlife, provide more efficient use of storm water runoff, mitigate noise and dust levels, improve air and water quality, absorb pollutants, sequester carbon and help conserve energy. Understanding the functions, values and services that trees provide is integral to their successful management.

The goal of tree management is based on an understanding of the dynamic nature of the resource, its aesthetic and safety requirements, public attitude and perception, and Council's commitment to engaging and working with the community. All trees have a finite lifespan and eventually trees need to be removed and replaced. Council commits to the following:

- a) Council will manage public trees through the application of appropriate and timely scheduled works in response to changes in the environment, the community's expectations and legislative requirements.
- b) Council will undertake tree management programs to increase canopy coverage, protect existing trees, promote public safety and tree health, implement cost effective enhancement and maintenance of the public trees, increase public awareness of the value of our trees, and maximize the social, economic, and environmental benefits of public trees for current residents and future generations.
- c) In an urban environment, some changes to the tree's environment cannot be avoided. To ensure the continued health of our tree population and particularly mature trees, all efforts are made to minimise the extent of change and associated impacts on existing trees.
- d) Council will ensure that arboricultural best practice is used to deliver tree management programs or services.

The Tree Management Policy is an active document that will evolve over time based on the dynamic nature of the environment, as new tree taxa are adopted, community expectations shift, and industry standards and practices evolve.

Key principles – tree removal

- a) Where practicable, Council will investigate all tree management options prior to the recommendation for tree removal. Tree removal will only be authorised when no other viable options are available.
- b) Council will consider the removal of trees where necessary in order that the Towns landscapes are reinvigorated and maintained in relation to safety.
- c) In all cases, tree removals requests will be investigated by Council officers and, if required, an a Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 5 arborist will be

commissioned to undertake tree inspections, assessments and reports in relation to tree removals.

- d) Council will consult and inform the community about all major works involving tree removal (where Council is the responsible authority).
- e) In some cases, other than typical tree maintenance activities, the costs of tree removal and replacement planting may be borne by the person or company requesting the tree's removal.
- f) For every tree that is removed on Council managed land, at least one will be replanted in the same location or another suitable location.

Key principles – tree selection and planting

- a) Improve the resilience of the urban areas in our Townships to current and anticipated stressors, including climate change, by implementing policies and management practices that optimise tree species diversity, structure and age classes.
- b) To select and plant appropriate species in the right locations that meet aesthetic and ecological requirements without onerous management implications.
- c) Select tree species for planting based on their suitability to the site, predicted climatic conditions, biological diversity, and potential to contribute to the landscape. Tree selection, placement and planting of trees will be undertaken to mitigate potential conflicts with infrastructure and to reduce long-term risk.
- d) Undertake planting programs to achieve a net increase of trees. Where opportunities present, Council will increase the number of trees within the Township's streets, open space and other Council managed land.
- e) Tree planting will endeavour to preserve and enhance the character of our streets and neighbourhoods.
- f) Council will consult and inform the community about all major projects involving tree planting.

Council adopts the mantra of 'Right tree, right place, right way'

Right tree	Use a tree species that is suited to the climatic and soil conditions of the site:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the function that the tree will perform, such as deciduous or evergreen, shade implications, screening and ornamental characteristics • consider exposure to sunlight/shade, drainage, soil conditions, particularly compaction, tolerances to extreme and future climatic conditions, and pest and disease susceptibility.
Right place.	The selected tree should meet the physical constraints of the site without onerous management inputs:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is there sufficient space for the tree to grow without impacting on adjacent infrastructure' • consider the mature size and form of a tree.
Right way	Far too often trees are doomed from the start due to poor stock and/or planting practices and are not given appropriate after-care maintenance to see them establish successfully:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planting too deeply, along with too much or too little watering, are the most common causes of newly planted trees failing in the landscape.

- selecting quality nursery stock also has a large part to play in creating successful landscapes.
- Autumn after leaf drop and early spring before bud break, are ideal times to plant new trees.

Key principles – tree pruning

- a) Council will set and maintain high tree pruning maintenance standards.
- b) Undertake tree pruning in line with relevant legislative requirements, strategic policies and accepted tree care practices.
- c) All pruning undertaken on trees within the Yarriambiack will comply with AS 4373-2007: Pruning of amenity trees.

4 Risk management

Council currently manages street and park trees that are growing within varied landscapes and site conditions across a large municipality. These trees are important community assets and provide essential environmental services along with extensive social and economic benefits. There is, however, an inherent risk associated with all trees as they are living things that grow in a dynamic environment and coexist with people and property.

Council owes a duty of care to the community and persons entering and using the land under their control. Therefore, Council will make good decisions and implement reasonable measures to mitigate the risks associated with the land, ensuring the risk is as low as reasonably practicable.

Council will ensure that appropriate controls are in place to manage and mitigate such risks, these include:

- a) Compliance with relevant legislation
- b) Alignment with relevant Australian standards and codes of practice
- c) Organisational policies, procedures and guidelines
- d) Tree management programs with regular monitoring and review processes
- e) Reasonable and comprehensive awareness of the risks that trees may pose to people and property

The purpose of risk management is the creation and protection of value. It improves performance, encourages innovation and supports the achievement of objectives (AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines).

The basic premise of tree risk management is that it is possible to establish a rational and cost-effective framework of activity in which risks are anticipated and actions taken to mitigate their effects so that risk is reduced to a tolerable or an acceptable level. We cannot eliminate all the risk posed by trees; there will always be residual risk after implementation of risk treatments. Some risk must be accepted to enjoy the many benefits that trees provide.

5 References

- a) Occupational Health and Safety policy
- b) *Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)*
- c) *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (2013)*
- d) *Crimes Act (1958)*
- e) Yarriambiack Street and Reserve Tree Strategy
- f) Yarriambiack Tree Management Guidelines Species List Community Version
- g) Yarriambiack Tree Management Guidelines Species List Council Version

- h) Tree Management Procedure
- i) Tree Management Manual

6 Definitions

Term	Description
Arboricultural	The cultivation of trees and shrubs especially for ornamental purposes – in Yarriambiack Shire for tree canopy and beautifying streets and townships.
Townships	Townships are defined within the Yarriambiack Shire Council General Local Law Guideline.

7 Consistency with Governance Principles Local Government Act 2020

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;	Section 3 Policy Statement and Scope and Section 4 Risk Management.
b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;	Section 3 Policy Statement and Scope.
c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;	Section 3 Policy Statement and Scope and Section 4 Risk Management.
d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;	Section 5 References; Yarriambiack Street and Reserve Tree Strategy, Yarriambiack Tree Management Guidelines Species List Community Version, Yarriambiack Tree Management Guidelines Species List Council Version, Tree Management Procedure, Tree Management Manual
e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;	Section 3 Policy Statement and Scope.
f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;	Section 1 Objective
g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;	Section 3 Policy Statement and Scope and Section 5 Reference document.
h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;	Section 1 Objective, Section 3 Policy Statement and Scope and Section 5 Reference document.

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.	Section 1 Objective, Section 3 Policy Statement and Scope and Section 5 Reference document.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles—

Community Engagement Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope. • Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation. • Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement. • Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement. • Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.
Comment:	The Tree Policy, Yarriambiack Street and Reserve Tree Strategy, Yarriambiack Tree Management Guidelines Species List Community Version, Yarriambiack Tree Management Guidelines Species List Council Version, Tree Management Procedure, Tree Management Manual have undertaken a community engagement process in accordance with the Council's Community Engagement Policy and Procedure.
Public Transparency Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act. • Council information must be publicly available unless— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest. • Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community. • Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.
Comment:	This Policy and associated supporting documents is available on Councils Website, being publicly available.

Strategic Planning Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted. • Strategic planning must address the Community Vision. • Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation. • Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation. • Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.
Comment:	The Tree Policy and associated documents have been developed to align with the Council Plan 2025-2029.
Financial Management Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans. • Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances. • Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community. • Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.
Comment:	The Tree Policy and associated documents strategic vision and actions are carefully considered and budgeted for in Council annual budget process and long term financial plan.
Service Performance Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community. • Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended. • Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community. • A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring. • Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision.
Comment:	The Tree Policy and associated documents aim to improve how council fulfills its obligations in regard to tree management across the municipality, including pruning, removal, replanting and mitigating climate change risks, improving tree canopy cover.

8 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with its associated procedures every three years.

From time to time, circumstances may require minor administrative changes to be made to this Policy. Where an update does not materially alter this Policy, such a change may be made administratively and need not be considered and adopted by Council.

Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, or the legal responsibilities of any member of the community, it must be considered and adopted by Council, or by the Chief Executive Officer in reliance on delegated authority.

9 Legislative Context

The *Local Government Act 2020* is the legislative context in which this policy is enacted.

Council Approved Policy

Policy Adopted:	Ordinary Meeting 14 December 2011	Item 11.5 Minute Page 36
	Policy Reviewed:	Ordinary Meeting 24 August 2022
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