Policy Title: (DRAFT)Tree Management Policy

Date of Adoption:

Adoption Method: ❑ Council ❑ CEO ❑ Other *(please specify)*

CEO Signature: 
Date: 

Responsible Officer and Unit: Manager Operations

Nominated Review Period: ❑ Annually ❑ Other *(please specify)* 2 years

Last Review Date: November 2018

Next Review Date: November 2020

Purpose / Objective: To provide cost-effective, comprehensive best-practice guidelines for managing trees within Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Urban Boundary.

Background / Reasons for Policy: The Policy was developed to enable consistent and effective management of the Shire’s important tree assets.

Definitions:
1. Immediate Risk - a qualified Arborist has determined that the structural integrity of the tree is in such poor condition that it creates a risk of failure in the near future and may cause injury to the public or damage to property.

2. Community Event - an activity or function that is open to the public and run once or at infrequent occurrences of limited duration that provides the general public with leisure and social opportunities.

3. Legal point of discharge – the legal point of discharge is a point specified by Council where stormwater from a property must be discharged. This point is usually Council’s stormwater drain, where available, or street kerb and channel.

4. TPZ - Tree Protection Zone

5. SRZ - Structural Root Zone

6. ULE - Useful life expectancy

7. DBH - Diameter at Breast Height
8. Significant trees - trees worthy of protection due to unique, historical, rare or environmental importance
9. Urban Boundary - is a concentrated population settlement within the surrounding rural district and in planning terms, is area zoned for urban land use. These zones include the residential, commercial and industrial zones.
10. WSUD – Water Sensitive Urban Design

**References:**
- Tree valuation fact sheet. City of Melbourne
- Protection of trees on development sites. AS 4970–2009.
- Tree stock for landscape use. AS 2303:2015.
- Preferred Tree Species List

**Related Policies:**
- Biodiversity Strategy Draft – 2018
- Electric Line Clearance Management Plan 2018–2019
- Road Management Plan 2017
- Roadside Management Plan – (in development)

**Related Legislation:**
- Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme
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1 INTRODUCTION

The Macedon Ranges environment is enhanced by its tree-lined streets and avenues that form an integral part of the Shire’s appeal. Microclimates, with varying rainfall and temperature, across the Shire not only allow for a diverse range of trees to be grown, but also offer the opportunity to establish areas with selected species that provide a sense of identity.

The aim of the Tree Management Policy is to generate community interest in maintaining a healthy tree population across the Shire.

There are over 15,000 street trees within the townships of Macedon Ranges Shire, having an estimated amenity value of over $100 million and therefore an effective tree management system is required. This Tree Management Policy has been developed to enable consistent and effective management of the Shire’s street trees.

Within the Shire, many trees have heritage and conservation values. It is imperative that the Tree Management Policy recognises these values and manages them accordingly.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Tree Management Policy is to provide a cost-effective management program and maintenance guide that is balanced with environmental sensitivity. In order to achieve this, Council considers both the number of trees planted (in streets, parks and reserves) and its ability to maintain the asset.

3 SCOPE

The Policy applies to all planted trees within townships of the Macedon Ranges. This includes all trees on nature strips and in all parks and recreation reserves of the Macedon Ranges Shire. Council therefore has a duty of care for maintenance and standards of these assets.

The Policy also encompasses Council’s open space tree assets but shall not be confined or limited to the recommended tree species lists provided by Council.

This Policy does not apply to conservation or bushland reserves which are managed in accordance with adopted environmental management plans. This Policy also does not apply to remnant native vegetation on roadsides which is managed in accordance with Council’s Roadside Management Plan (in development as of October 2018).
4 POLICY OBJECTIVE

- To strengthen the streetscapes within the Shire by preserving and enhancing streetscape amenity;
- Maintain best-practice tree management and maintenance standards;
- Ensure the protection of existing trees that may be impacted by a community event or proposed development works;
- To define the circumstances under which existing trees may be removed.

5 TREE MANAGEMENT

5.1 General

The management and maintenance standards of Council’s tree assets shall balance the need to maintain and enhance tree canopy cover with public safety. Council will continue to nominate tree assets for protection with the appropriate authorities as needed.

Council acknowledges that street trees can, in some circumstances, conflict with other landscape and infrastructure elements, whilst recognising that the streetscape is an essential part of a pleasant functional environment. Where tree asset removal may be required, Council’s estimation of a tree’s amenity value will be in accordance with the valuation method (Appendix A).

All new planting undertaken will be in accordance with Council’s street tree planting program and tree planting policy, including planting in response to customer requests or from Council’s Arboriculture representative’s recommendations. New plantings must involve consultation with affected residents.

Council will not permit residents to plant trees within Council controlled land. Such tree plantations may be regarded as unauthorised and removed by Council at any time.

Documented cultural and heritage significance will be considered when managing the Shire’s tree assets.

Council managed trees adjacent to roads will be managed in accordance with Council’s Road Management Plan - Schedule 1 Table 1.1 - Intervention Criteria for Sealed Roads and Parking Bays; and Schedule 2 Table 2.1 - Intervention Criteria for Unsealed roads (Appendix B) and Council’s Roadside Management Plan (which is under development).
5.2 Tree Inspections

Inspections of township trees will be undertaken routinely, and all condition data will be recorded in Council’s GIS system.

Proactive inspections of trees at Council owned and managed sites will be carried out routinely, with the frequency based on the risk level of each site. The data collected from these inspections will be recorded in Council’s GIS system.

Reactive inspections of Council tree assets resulting from customer requests, whether internal or external, will be actioned within 7 days of receiving the request. Customer requests that identify any trees posing an immediate risk to public safety will be actioned as soon as reasonably possible. The data collected from these inspections will be recorded in Council’s GIS System.

Inspections associated with Electric Line Clearance (ELC) will be undertaken routinely under contract according to statutory requirements (Section 6.5).

5.3 Type and Species Selection

Where inspections indicate that replacement trees are required, replacement species selection must systematically consider: the suitability and appropriateness to the given area; landscape character; local environmental conditions; and trends in climatic conditions.

The following street characteristics must be considered prior to the selection of the tree species:

- The nature strip, its width and type in relation to growth and ultimate size
- Specific soil conditions or microclimates
- Housing styles and relation of buildings to tree sites
- The existing streetscape and any shade requirements
- Service locations within the street
- Private plantings and their impact upon the street
- Street maintenance and the overall scale of the streetscape in relation to the length and width of the pavement
5.3.1 **Selection of street trees will aim to:**

- Disguise power lines or service cables
- Characterise a particular precinct or town
- Enhance local biodiversity and provide habitat for native fauna
- Provide scale to the streetscape
- Add to the natural component of the streetscape
- Soften the impact of the hard landscape
- Give contrasts of shape, colour, and form etc.
- Relate buildings to each other or to the landscape site
- Give protection from the natural elements
- Provide a visual barrier against the hard landscape
- Filter environmental pollutants
- Aid in guiding the flow of traffic or pedestrians
- Be climatically suitable for the location, now and in the future

5.3.2 **Street Trees should not:**

- Obstruct sight clearances at intersections or crossings
- Have frequent abscission characteristics
- Be susceptible to substantial pests and diseases
- Have inappropriate fruits, berries, and poisonous qualities or have major asthma-causing characteristics

Appropriateness is measured by size, scale and form. “Right tree, right place” is the guiding principle for tree selection; that is, select the species most suited to the location rather than an individual’s preference.

Where appropriate, local species will be prioritised for new plantings; however, the multitude of climatic zones and resident expectations in the Shire will require flexibility with chosen species. Exotic, native and indigenous species can be used to complement a given landscape.

If a significant or dominant stand of trees is present and the trees are suitable, then the theme will be continued. Otherwise, a new selection will be made.
An onsite assessment will be made by Council’s Arborist to ensure the species selected is consistent with the Policy.

5.4 Streetscape Design and Continuity

Differences in requirements between residential and industrial streetscapes must be considered. In some areas, trees may not be warranted. When selecting streetscape species for both replacement and new planting, Council will consider the area’s visual, physical and functional components and its interrelationship with surrounding areas.

The following streetscape design objectives will be considered:

- **Formality** – to unify a given area
- **Character** – to enhance the features of the streetscape that contribute to its existing character. The selected species should also enhance the history of the built environment
- **Scale** – to avoid variation in size and achieve a balanced scale between the trees and streetscape

As the role of street trees can be subjective, selection will consider whether the candidate street tree species will enhance its surrounding area, as well as establish and grow successfully.

To achieve the aim of Council in enhancing the streetscape to strengthen both the individual and community amenity, the streetscape will be developed and designed in consultation with residents and include an assessment of the street and all its features.

5.5 Tree Replacement Strategy

When planning tree maintenance or removal, the following factors require consideration:

- The tree’s natural life span and its useful life expectancy (ULE)
- The cost-effectiveness of replacement of selected trees with advanced specimens

Prior to undertaking maintenance or removal, an arboriculture report will be prepared for Council outlining what work is required and reasons for this work.
When Council trees with low or no retention value are identified during proactive and reactive inspections, they will be removed and replaced.

The diversity of the tree planting program will be improved by analysing the tree database. Diversity for a resilient tree population may include: a mix of exotic and native species; a diversity of family groups with upper limits set for any one family, genus or species; and, a diversity of age classes across the municipality. Where appropriate, local species will be prioritised for new plantings.

Future changes include both the foreseeable and the unforeseeable, and include:

- An increase in population density
- Climate change and the resulting changes in rainfall patterns and temperatures that can significantly alter the trees’ growing conditions
- New pest and disease populations

### 5.6 Tree Stock and Planting

Performance of newly planted trees is highly dependent on the quality of the tree stock at the time of planting. Tree stock sourced for Council will meet the criteria specified in the Australian Standard AS2303:2015 *Tree stock for landscape use.*

All tree stock must be in a sound and healthy condition and be self-supporting.

Council will develop, and implement where appropriate, a greater range of planting designs and engineering solutions, for instance; greater use of engineered planting pits; using in-road cut-outs or pits for planting where nature strip conditions limit planting; and, explore alternatives to standard power lines in key streets, such as Aerial Bundled Cabling or undergrounding of power.

Street tree and park or reserve tree planting will be in accordance with the following setbacks/clearances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Minimum setback distance*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fence, bollard, lawn-area furniture</td>
<td>3.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian pathway in reserves</td>
<td>3.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewer pit, gas/water valve, service asset or fire hydrant</td>
<td>3.0 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Minimum setback distance*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light or electricity pole</td>
<td>3.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle crossover or driveway</td>
<td>3.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(placement should avoid blocking sight lines from driveways)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gate</td>
<td>2.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater outlet or service pits</td>
<td>2.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service lead in</td>
<td>1.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead power wires (clearance height)</td>
<td>3.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From kerb line and T-intersection</td>
<td>8.0 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Distances provided may be subject to change dependent upon the site and species selected.

#### 5.7 Tree Planting

Trees will be selected from Council’s Preferred Tree Species List for tree planting programs.

The following criteria will be applied for replacement tree planting:

- All trees removed from the streetscape are to be replaced as quickly as possible depending on the season. Planting shall occur between May to September, not during summer or a period of prolonged drought.
- Individual tree requests by residents must be fully assessed for suitability. If deemed appropriate, the request will be placed on the street tree planting list for action when appropriate. If a request is received before and deemed appropriate, planting will take place between May and September of that year. After September, any new planting will take place the following season May to September.

Whole street plantings or landscaping will be made in conjunction with Council’s Capital Works Budget and Tree Planting Budget.
Elm Trees

Major new plantings with susceptible species will be avoided. Alternative genera and species with the same aesthetic characteristics will be used.

Only individual Elm trees in avenues will be replaced with the same or similar species to maintain integrity.

5.8 Tree Planting Guidelines

All tree planting is to be carried out between May and September.

Appropriate site selection is crucial to the long-term success of each street tree and the amenity of the streetscape. A poorly positioned tree can cause property and infrastructure damage and diminish the streetscape’s visual appeal.

Planting sites should be selected to allow for functional limitations imposed by the street environment while complying with the existing streetscape.

Trees approved by Council shall be planted in accordance with the setback distances provided in Section 5.6 and as follows:

- Where practical, one tree in front of every property, spaced at 12 metres apart and as near as possible to the centre of the property
- In a position that will allow clear vision at intersections even at mature size
- Away from trees already planted on private property that may interfere with the streetscape
- Away from service lead-ins
- In a position that will not cause sight problems from driveways

Standardising of street tree spacing shall be undertaken when practical to bring the general street tree planting into line with the current spacing guideline.

Council will utilise various sized trees in its planting program. Advanced and semi-advanced stock will be used for street tree planting and tube stock will be used for revegetation plantings. Early maintenance of any tree is paramount for its cost-effective future maintenance.
Council will require the following early maintenance procedures for new plantings:

- Formative pruning (AS4373–2007)
- Irrigation (with more frequent application during summer)
- Staking with wooden stakes only
- Mulch but not directly adjacent to the stem

Appendix C provides information for contractors responsible for new planting maintenance.

5.9 Protection of Existing Trees

During all construction and development works, existing Council tree assets to be retained must be protected in accordance with the Australian Standard AS4970–2009 Protection of trees on development sites.

Any works that would encroach by more than 10% into a tree’s Tree Protection Zone (TPZ), or into its Structural Root Zone (SRZ), will require a consulting arborist to demonstrate, via a non-destructive root investigation, that the affected tree would remain viable.

An endorsed Planning Permit or Asset Protection Permit may require the preparation and submission of a Tree Protection Plan for Council approval. A bond, based on the tree’s, or trees’, amenity as calculated using the methodology in Appendix A, may be required and held for the duration of the works, which will be held against the Council approved Tree Protection Plan. Should any damage occur to any Council tree as a direct result of development works, Council may withhold part, or all, of the bond.

Further information on tree protection will be available on Protection of Existing Trees fact sheet (in development by Environment Unit) – (Appendix C).

5.10 Community events – tree protection plan and bonds

Trees that may be impacted by a community event will require a Tree Protection Plan for Council approval. Event organisers should contact Council’s Parks Unit for further information. A bond maybe imposed on event organisers to ensure trees
are protected during an event. The bond shall be retained based on the tree’s, or trees’, amenity as calculated using the methodology in Appendix A and may be required to be held for the duration of the event, as per Council’s approved Tree Protection Plan. Should any damages occur to any trees as a direct result of any activities associated with the event, Council may withhold part, or all, of the bond depending on the extent of the damage.

6 TREE MAINTENANCE

6.1 General Care

Every endeavour shall be made to maintain all trees in a healthy and safe condition.

All tree pruning will be in accordance with Australian Standard AS4373–2007 Pruning of amenity trees.

Clearances between the tree’s foliage and the power lines will be maintained according to the Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2015, Schedule 1–Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance.

The following clearances need to be maintained for the Safety of vehicles and pedestrians:

- 4 metres over driveways
- 3 metres over footpaths and walkways

For road carriageway clearances, refer to Council’s Road Management Plan.

The clearances above will apply to established trees only. Young trees could be damaged by pruning to the above guidelines.

Property owners are not allowed to prune any branches of Council owned trees outside of their boundary without permission from an authorised Council Officer.

While upholding the rights of property owners to remove vegetation overhanging their property, Council prefers to remove the vegetation as it has the expertise to carry out this work.
Every attempt must be made to protect all established trees against damage through any works associated with underground or construction services.

Where road or infrastructure works are required, all affected tree assets must be inspected by a Council Parks Officer before the works commence. If tree works are required, at least two (2) weeks notification must be given to: residents for removal; or Council’s representative for pruning or general maintenance. The costs of all tree-related works will be factored into the real cost of the infrastructure works to ensure tree value is considered appropriately.

6.2 Pruning

Once a street tree is established, pruning is its major ongoing maintenance requirement.

Pruning of all trees should be as minor as possible.

Trees will be pruned to achieve specific goals and requirements:

- Manage risk to the public
- Maintain tree health

All pruning works shall comply with AS4373–2007 *Pruning of amenity trees* and only qualified persons shall do this work.

6.3 Tree Surgery

The term “Tree Surgery” covers only “corrective and repair treatments” to trees. The cost of any such work must be balanced with the cost of the amenity value of the tree. In the case of badly damaged trees, a decision will be required on whether to remove or retain the tree.

“Cabling and Bracing” should be carried out only if the tree needs to be artificially supported for safety reasons. Annual inspections of this work are needed to ensure its ongoing viability. This work must be incorporated into the Maintenance Management system for trees.
6.4 **Crown Lifting – Visibility – clearance**

All council managed trees will be maintained in accordance with Council’s Road Management Plan (*Appendix B*).

Trees shall be maintained to the following clearances:

- Street names to be visible from 50 metres in either direction
- Sight visibility from driveways or intersections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed Limit</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 km</td>
<td>40 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 km</td>
<td>60 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 km</td>
<td>80 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 km</td>
<td>120 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 km</td>
<td>180 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Road signs must be visible from the distances above

The above works will be carried out only where clearance from the trees is necessary or where growth is likely to impede clearance requirements.

6.5 **Overhead Service and Structure Clearance**

This procedure shall consist of reducing height or spread or both of a street tree by not more than 25%; and, shall be applied to trees only when such work is necessary to ensure safety of overhead wires/lights etc.

Alternatives to tree pruning under powerlines in the short term should be sought, where possible, by pursuing a variation to the Code.

Council will work with supply companies to pursue aerial bundling or undergrounding of lines, where possible.

Council will have input with planning bodies to minimise impact on trees.

In the event of any close development, all trees will be protected using stringent guidelines.

Refer also to Trees Powerline Clearance Code and Council’s Electric Line Clearance Management Plan.

All the above works are to be carried out by qualified staff and comply with AS4373–2007 *Pruning of amenity trees*. 
6.6 Pests and Disease

All visible/known major pests and diseases are to be reported to Council’s Parks unit for appropriate action. Council’s Arborist will carry out an inspection within 48 hours of the request being reported. All reports will be assessed and treated confidentially.

All tree pests or diseases that pose a threat to the tree health will be reported by Council’s Arborist immediately to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881. Where more details are required a report with photos of the suspected pest and damage and the pest's location shall be sent to plant.protection@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Chemical treatments may be considered where no other alternative exists. Where a chemical treatment is required, Council must notify the affected property occupants at least two (2) days prior to the commencement of works.

Any works carried out must be done with consideration of public and user safety.

A pest control inventory is to be kept and all pest and disease control recorded.

Endemic pests or diseases such as Elm Leaf Beetle will continue to be controlled in co-operation with other surrounding municipalities and authorities.

Dutch Elm Disease could decimate the Shire’s Elm population as it has done in the Northern Hemisphere and New Zealand. Any suspected outbreak of Dutch Elm Disease must be reported immediately to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

If a severe pest or disease outbreak occurs, e.g. Dutch Elm Disease, which results in tree removal or chemical application to be performed, affected residents will be advised as soon as possible.
7 TREE ROOT SYSTEM

7.1 General

Council does not undertake proactive maintenance of tree root systems. When a potential impact on public or private property is identified, Council will undertake an inspection of the suspect tree to determine the likelihood of tree root invasion and potential interventions to prevent ongoing damage.

7.2 Installation of a Root Barrier

If determined necessary and appropriate to avoid potential damage from public-owned trees, root barriers between 600–1200 mm deep may be installed. The depth would be determined by site inspections with the appropriate officers; and, would depend on actual site conditions and the tree species involved.

Checking for all underground services is a pre-requisite prior to commencement of any works.

The TPZ of the tree must be taken into consideration.

Root inhibitor may be considered where it is deemed appropriate. If so, the root inhibitor Casoron is to be incorporated into the trenches upon backfilling.

7.3 Tree Root Pruning

Tree root pruning should be done only by a qualified arborist and in accordance with AS4373–2007. If roots are severed or removed, the following steps must be taken:

- Prune the root with as little damage as possible
- Remove only the amount of root that is necessary

Any root pruning or root barrier procedure must be recorded.
8 TREE REMOVAL

8.1 General

Trees are living organisms with a finite lifespan that are susceptible to pests, disease and other environmental stressors. Council therefore follows a clear and fair process to accurately assess tree removals. Any trees that are removed shall be replaced where possible in order to maintain the appearance and consistency of the street or reserve. The replacement species will follow the selection criteria outlined in Section 5.3 of this Policy.

When Council has agreed to the removal of a tree on grounds other than safety, all residents within the immediate vicinity of the tree will be notified. All objections will be assessed by Council’s Arborist.

If trees are removed due to infrastructure works by any other authority, the tree will be valued (Appendix A) and provision will be made to ensure this is done without cost to Council and in line with The Policy.

If a Council-owned tree is removed by any person without authorisation from Council, that person or persons will be required to meet the full cost of its amenity value, its replacement and its maintenance during establishment (Appendix A).

If Council is considering the removal of multiple street plantings for any reason the following factors must be considered:

- The contribution of the plantings to the overall streetscape
- The maintenance requirements of the trees in question
- Whether removal would comply with the tree removal criteria of Section 8.2
- Potential damage from roots to services above and below ground
- The overall condition of the trees
- The replacement species
- The significance of the existing trees
- Residents in the vicinity of the removals require consultation and notification
- Residents will be given 10 days to seek clarification and to make objection or comment
• The number of residents for or against the removals
• If an objection is received, the matter will be re-evaluated, and objectors consulted before any action is taken

8.2 Tree Removal Criteria

Tree removal will occur only if one or more of the criteria listed below are met in an assessment by a qualified arborist:

• The tree is dead, dying, damaged or diseased and remedial action would be ineffective in saving it
• The tree is infested with a pest (e.g. insect) for which the appropriate control would be ineffective
• The tree is a public nuisance or hazard due to its weediness, condition, location or size and cannot be remedied by appropriate techniques
• The tree is interfering with the growth and development of new plantings or a more desirable species
• The aesthetic value of the tree within the given streetscape is very poor or distracting
• Unauthorised works close to the tree have irreparably damaged it
• Preservation of the tree in view of development is not cost effective. The amenity value of the tree shall be compared to the requirements necessary to preserve the tree (Appendix A)
• Removal may be necessary to allow the construction of access to a property where no other alternative exists
• It can be demonstrated that the tree has caused, is causing, or is likely to cause, substantial damage to private property or public infrastructure and the estimated cost of ongoing repairs outweighs the value of the tree, and there is no reasonable alternative, e.g. root barrier or pruning, to solve the problem
• Trees that don’t provide a habitat for wildlife including breeding, foraging or roosting habitat.
Trees cannot be removed on the basis that they cause the following nuisance:

- Drop leaves, fruit or twigs
- Provide habitat for insects or small mammals
- Might harbour termites
- Induce allergies – unless a doctor's certificate is provided demonstrating cause and effect between the tree and the allergy
- Do not comply with an individual’s species preference – Council's tree planting plan will be adhered to (Section 5.3)
- Block solar access and views
- Hinder the growth of nearby plants
- “Might” cause damage in future – as outlined above, damage to infrastructure by a tree must be demonstrated to the Responsible Authority

8.3 Tree Removal Process

Residents may submit a request for a tree to be considered for removal due to safety or other concerns. A written request must be submitted to Council for a tree within Council owned land or outside the resident’s property to be considered for removal.

Once the request is received an investigation will be carried out by Council's Arborist and action decided in the context of Tree Removal criteria (Section 8.2).

A tree report will be prepared by Council’s Arborist and submitted to the Coordinator Parks who will approve or reject the recommendation contained in the report.

- If the recommendation is approved, affected residents are to be notified outlining the reason for removal
- Where a request is not approved, the applicant may wish to object to the decision
- Objections must be submitted in writing within ten (10) business days of the decision made
- Council’s Arborist will assess the objections and respond to the objector/s with the final outcome. If the objector/s is still not satisfied the matter will be referred to the Manager Operations
- If no objections are received, the removal of tree will commence
8.4 Method of Removal

Trees being removed are to be cut to ground level. The removal process must be undertaken by qualified arborists (minimum AQF level 3) with appropriate insurance in a safe and competent manner in compliance with all relevant standards and codes.

In all cases where the public may access the area, the stump must be removed to below ground level and the area made safe. This may require a stump grinder.

All stumps awaiting removal must be fenced off with appropriate safety fencing to alert the public of the tripping danger.

8.5 Dead Trees

Dead trees that become brittle and hazardous are to be removed as soon as possible. The cause of death should be ascertained where disease or human intervention is suspected. All dead trees require assessment by a qualified arborist prior to removal.

8.6 Hazardous Trees

Trees can develop hazards through poor form, borer damage, root problems, storm damage, etc. Where an inspection and risk assessment reveals that a tree poses an unacceptable level of risk that cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level using arboriculture practices, its removal must be prompt. Details and records of the removal should be kept.

Tree removal will occur as a priority where there is an immediate risk to the public or property to ensure public safety. Additionally, trees assessed by Council’s qualified Arborists as being an immediate risk to public safety are exempt from the requirement for a planning permit.

Removal of trees that are of an immediate risk will be undertaken as soon as practicable and therefore any nearby affected residents may not be notified.
8.7 Trees Allegedly Causing Structural Damage

Tree roots may on occasion invade private property, causing damage to structures, pipes and paths. Removal of trees will only be considered where all other arboriculture interventions have been deemed inappropriate.

8.8 Removal for Infrastructure Development

When an application is made for a tree’s removal for infrastructure development, the guidelines for removal shall be the same as in Section 8.3. However, when no other site is available for the infrastructure development and the tree is in good condition and suited to its location, it may be removed provided that:

- Affected residents have been notified and have had the appropriate opportunity to lodge an objection
- A suitable replacement tree is to be provided and maintained at cost by the property owner
- The cost of the tree’s amenity, its removal, replacement and any other works which may be associated with are to be borne by the owner/developer

8.8.1 Procedures for tree removal (vehicle crossover)

Vehicle crossover applications are to be lodged with Council’s Operations department.

- If the tree(s) is affected by the crossover and requires removal and all other avenues have been explored Council will organise removal
- The tree must be assessed by a designated Council Officer. The proposed removal is to be documented in a report and held by Council
- All costings and conditions for the removal are sent to the developer before removal
- The proposed removal is recorded and held by Council’s designated representatives
- A replacement tree will be scheduled for planting at appropriate time in accordance with The Policy
8.9 Disputes

When an objection is received, the removal will be suspended until an appropriate Officer examines the objections and a final decision is made. If no resolution can be found, the matter will be referred to Council’s Manager Operations. The designated Council Officer will advise the objector in writing of the final decision.

9 CLAIMS

Council endeavours to limit potential damage to property from Council owned trees through regular tree audits and prompt response to notification of potential hazards. Council is unable to reimburse costs associated with damage from falling tree branches unless there is a clear case of negligence on behalf of council through failure to adhere to the requirements of this policy.

9.1 Tree Root Damage Claims

Council is not responsible for the remediation of damages caused to properties by tree roots prior to notification of the potential nuisance except to the extent that negligence is proven at law.

All claims for alleged damage to private property from tree roots must be made in writing to the Risk Management Unit of Council for consideration by Council and/or Council’s insurer.

Claims must be accompanied by professionally documented evidence of the extent of the alleged damage and the cause of damage. For example, a report from a structural engineer and/or a consulting arborist, with photographs of any damage, clearly identifying the link between the alleged damage and Council’s trees.

Any claim received by Council alleging tree root damage must follow this procedure:

- Preliminary inspection of the tree will be undertaken by Parks Unit staff to determine the potential impact of the tree on the property and possible damage mitigation strategies and a report provided to the Risk Management Unit.
• Reports should, where possible, contain full details of the site, photographs and recommendations for remedial works.

• If the claim involves the potential for significant damage to private property, a consulting arborist may be appointed by the Risk Management Unit to provide an independent report as to the cause of damage and most appropriate mitigation strategies.

Remedial work on trees allegedly causing root damage may include:

• The installation of a tree root barrier. The type and depth will depend on the severity of the problem and the species of tree. Lineal root barriers should be used only in appropriate cases. The roots will be pruned, if practical, to property lines; and, will only be done where the tree’s health and stability are not compromised. Trees of historical value will be considered for this type of work

• Tree root pruning

• Removal of a tree asset will be considered only if: a practical arboriculture solution cannot be implemented effectively; the tree is an inappropriate species; or, it is in an inappropriate location (Section 5.7).

10  COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

All community engagement activities will be governed by Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Community Consultation Framework.

The community will be informed and consulted about all major projects involving tree removal and planting and any other specialised projects that involve urban trees.

The type and extent of community engagement will vary depending on the impact of the works on the local community and will be determined in accordance with a number of factors including; the prominence of the location, the significance of the tree, the size of the tree, the number of trees being impacted and the visual impact of proposed works.

Community engagement may include direct contact with the customer, letters to immediately affected residents, signage on site and via information on the Council’s website.
Macedon Ranges Shire Council will assess customer requests regarding urban trees in line within the parameters of the Customer Service Charter.

All customer service requests will be responded to in a timely manner in accordance with Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Customer Service Charter and the following requirements.

10.1 Tree Planting

Council’s annual planting program is made up of individual tree requests, capital projects and tree replacements.

- Individual customer tree planting requests will be followed up with the customer directly as per Council’s Customer Service Charter.
- Council will inform and/or consult affected residents of entire streetscape upgrades.
- Council’s annual tree planting program will be available on the Council’s website.
- All public trees that are removed will be replaced as close as practically possible, subject to compliance with policy requirements, in the following planting season. Planting of replacement trees may not necessitate customer engagement.

10.2 Tree Maintenance Activities

- Council’s routine maintenance program will be displayed on Council’s website.
- For customer service requests, Council’s Arborist will, at the time of assessment, allocate a timeframe for any required works based on the urgency, risk and severity of the defect. This information is generally passed on to the customer in the form of a letter unless specified otherwise. Depending on the volume of tree works at any one given time, it may not possible to give an exact date and time for specific works.
10.3 Tree Removal

- Council will notify adjoining property owners of the removal of large trees from residential streets.

- Signage will be placed on large park trees notifying users of any upcoming removal works.

- Council will notify the community of unauthorised works and undertake site specific responses following tree poisoning, vandalism or prohibited tree removal.

- Removal of trees that are hazardous will be undertaken as soon as reasonably practicable and therefore it may not be possible to provide a period of notification.
Appendix A: Tree Valuation in Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Where a public tree removal is approved or required by Council for development, construction or works, the associated cost of the tree, its removal and replacement shall be paid by the developer or their representative prior to its removal. The same method applies to trees that have been damaged or vandalised and their retention is no longer viable. The parties responsible for the damage will be required to pay all costs.

The costs associated with removal of a public tree in the Macedon Ranges Shire include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A – Amenity Value</th>
<th>Calculated in accordance with the Council’s adopted Amenity Value Formula</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B - Removal Costs</td>
<td>The sum of the fees incurred by the Council for physically removing the tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>C – Re-instatement Costs</td>
<td>The cost of all works required to replace the loss of vegetation from the landscape</td>
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A – Amenity Value

The following formula has been prepared to assist with calculating the monetary amenity value of a tree in the Macedon Ranges Shire Council. This formula is based on the City of Melbourne’s Amenity Value Formula and has been modified for application in the Macedon Ranges.

\[
\text{Amenity Value} = \text{Basic Value} (\$) \times \text{Species} (S) \times \text{Aesthetics} (A) \times \text{Locality} (L) \times \text{Condition} (C)
\]

Base Value ($)

The basic monetary value of a tree was taken from the internationally accepted table of values devised by the American Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers and the International Society of Arboriculture, which in the base year of 2018 is $AUD 14.07 per square centimetre of trunk basal area. Young trees with a trunk diameter of less than 6 centimetres do not attract an amenity value charge. Base value will increase annually in line with CPI.
### 2018 Base Values

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Species Factor (S)
A tree is assessed according to its known natural life span and its rate of growth in a particular environment. For example, a long-lived tree will be scored higher than a short-lived tree. Significant features of the tree will also modify how the tree is scored. Judgement regarding species factors must consider how that species performs in the Macedon Ranges and must be made by a qualified arborist.

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<th>Score</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>• trees of long life span (more than 150 years)</td>
<td>Cupressus, Platanus, Ficus, Pinus, Celtis, Eucalyptus camaldulensis</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• fast growth rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>• trees of long life span (more than 150 years)</td>
<td>Ulmus, Quercus, Sequoia, Ginkgo, Araucaria, Agathis</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• slow growth rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Modifiers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• noxious or environmental weeds in the Macedon region</td>
<td>Olea, Prunus, Malus, Pittosporum undulatum, Robinia pseudoacacia, Acacia baileyana, Fraxinus angustifolia, Populus, Pinus radiata, Acacia longifolia, Acer pseudoplatanus, Salix spp.</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• listed as a ‘significant tree’ on the National Trust register</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• listed under a schedule of the Macedon Ranges planning scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td>+0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a large hollow bearing tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a rare species in the locality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a special cultivated variety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• has special historical, cultural or other significance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Trees named are supplied only as examples in Macedon Ranges conditions*
Aesthetics (A)
The aesthetic value of a tree is determined by the impact on the landscape if the tree were removed. This category is closely tied to the locality factor (L).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetic Factor</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributes little to the landscape</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of a group of close plantings</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide plantings</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular spacing between trees; regular spacing one side</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street or pathway plantings, regular spacing both sides</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary feature specimen tree</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Locality (L)
The locality factor is determined by the tree’s geographical situation. Trees within an urbanised environment score highest because of the stressful growing environment in which it must survive. As the location becomes more rural, the significance of the tree diminishes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality Factor</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In rural areas (outside of townships)</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a bushland reserve or public open space within a township</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential or commercial street in a township</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a neighbourhood park or garden</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of an avenue planting in a township</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a key boulevard or town entrance planting; Park or garden in a town centre</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary location within a town centre, main street, or civic space</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tree Condition (C)
The tree condition value is determined by the corresponding total score of the assessment criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Criteria Condition</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trunk</td>
<td>- solid and sound</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- sections of bark damaged/ missing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- extensive decay, hollow trunk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>- &gt;15 cm twig elongation this season</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 5–15 cm twig elongation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- &lt;5 cm twig elongation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>- healthy, stable and sound</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- some deadwood and dead limbs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- extensive dieback and deadwood</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pests and Diseases</td>
<td>- no pest/ -disease infestation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- minor symptoms of infestation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- advanced symptoms of infestation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canopy Development</td>
<td>- full and balanced canopy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- full but unbalanced canopy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- unbalanced and lacking full canopy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy</td>
<td>- &gt;50 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-10–50 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- &lt;10 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Condition Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Tree Condition</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6–9</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–13</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14–18</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–22</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23–26</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Condition Factor (C)**

Amenity Value = Basic Value ($) x Species (S) x Aesthetics (A) x Locality (L) x Condition (C)

**B – Removal Costs**
Costs will be based on the current costs of tree removal. It includes the physical removal of the tree and the stump.
C – Re-instatement Costs
The level of re-instatement required will be determined by Council and will consider the location, significance, biodiversity provision and the amenity of the removed tree. Re-instatement costs will also include a 24-month tree establishment fee and any treatment or Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) measure deemed necessary to establish suitable replacement trees or vegetation.

Total Costs

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Amenity Value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Removal Costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Re-instatement Costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Costs (A+B+C) =
Appendix B: Requirements under Council’s Road Management Plan 2017

Extract from Intervention Criteria for Sealed Roads and Parking Bays – Schedule 1 – Table 1.1 of the Road Management Plan

Activity: Removal and/or trimming back of vegetation to allow clear access by vehicles along the carriageway.

Defect Repair time
Reactive inspection: As soon as possible and within 48 hours of being notified.
Category 1 defect repair time: 14 days
Category 2 defect repair time: 28 days
Category 3 defect repair time: 42 days

Activity: Mowing / slashing of grass on roadsides, verges and parklands – where trees that have grown to restrict design sight distance to intersections or restrict viewing of regulatory or warning signs.

Defect Repair time
Reactive inspection: As soon as possible and within 48 hours of being notified.
Category 1 defect repair time: 14 days
Category 2 defect repair time: 30 days
Category 3 defect repair time: 48 days
Extract from Intervention Criteria for Unsealed Roads – Schedule 2 – Table 2.1 of the Road Management Plan

**Activity:** Removal and/or trimming back of vegetation to allow clear access by vehicles.

**Defect Repair time**
Reactive inspection: As soon as possible and within 48 hours of being notified.
Category 4 defect repair time: 28 days
Category 5 defect repair time: 36 days
Category 6 defect repair time: 42 days

**Activity:** Mowing / slashing of grass on roadsides, verges and parklands
– *where trees that have grown to restrict design sight distance to intersections or restrict viewing of regulatory or warning signs.*

**Defect Repair time**
Reactive inspection: As soon as possible and within 48 hours of being notified.
Category 1 defect repair time: 28 days
Category 2 defect repair time: 36 days
Category 3 defect repair time: 42 days
Appendix C: Plain-English Fact sheets

- Planting detail and specification fact sheet (in development)
- Tree selection - refer draft preferred tree species list (in development)
- Protection of existing trees (in development)