

**HOBSONS**  
**BAY CITY**  
COUNCIL



# Tree Policy

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December 2021

## **Acknowledgment of Country**

Council acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of these municipal lands and waterways, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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# 1. Purpose

This policy outlines how Hobsons Bay City Council will manage its urban forest in order to sustain and expand a healthy tree population that benefits the community and the environment.

This policy will provide direction on: -

- a) The management of individual trees, from planting to whole of life tree management.
- b) Managing and planning for growth and health of the municipality's urban forest; and
- c) The protection of the tree population, as an interconnected urban forest.

## 2. Background

Trees and urban forests provide multiple benefits to people and the environment. This includes (but is not limited to) mitigating the Urban Heat Island Effect, enhancing health and wellbeing, supporting biodiversity, stormwater filtration and creating neighbourhood character.

Council acknowledges its responsibility to effectively manage its tree population, to ensure that Hobsons Bay can grow and maintain a healthy urban forest that will provide benefits to its community for generations to come.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all trees on land owned or managed by Hobsons Bay City Council, including streets, parks, reserves and other open space.

This policy further applies to the retention of canopy trees that exist on private land.

Council staff, councillors, contractors, volunteers and internal or external third parties must follow the direction of this policy.

## 4. Policy and principles

### 4.1. Provide support to Council's Urban Forest Strategy, 2020

Within Council's Urban Forest Strategy, 2020, Hobsons Bay City Council has set a canopy cover target of 30% by 2040

To meet this target, Hobsons Bay City Council will:

- Implement tree planting on Council's streets, boulevards and avenues;
- Incorporate tree planting in parks, open spaces and other public areas;
- Protect and retain mature trees; and
- Encourage tree planting in the private realm.

### 4.2. Trees are valuable assets

- All Hobsons Bay City Council owned or managed trees are Council assets and will be managed as such; and

- Hobsons Bay City Council owned or managed trees have a monetary value; this value is derived using Hobsons Bay's Tree Amenity Calculator.

#### 4.3. Trees will be managed for multiple benefits,

Including their contribution to:

- The overall tree canopy cover;
- Reducing the Urban Heat Island Effect;
- The biodiversity and habitat of Hobsons Bay;
- Stormwater interception and filtration;
- Neighbourhood character and foundation of placemaking;
- Removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and tackling climate change;
- Providing canopy covered connections across the municipality; and
- Encouraging activity in open space, enhancing liveability and social interaction.

#### 4.4. Tree management and maintenance

- Risk management is a primary consideration in tree management;
- Council's street tree population will be managed through the Hobsons Bay City Council's Street Tree Maintenance Contract.
- Council owned trees that exist within reserves and parks will be managed through the Hobsons Bay City Council's Park Tree Management Plan.
- Mitigation of risk does not necessarily result in action to a tree;
- Pruning will be undertaken in accordance with AS4373 - 2007 *Pruning of amenity trees*;
- Formative pruning will be undertaken to develop appropriate tree structure and reduce future maintenance costs;
- Tree stock planted on current or future public land will meet AS2303 - 2015 *Tree stock for landscape use*;
- Trees will be maintained to provide clearances as per the Roads Act (2005) and Hobsons Bay's Road Management Plan; and
- Trees will be maintained to provide clearances as per Hobsons Bay's Electrical Line Clearance Management Plan.

#### 4.5. Urban forest planning

- Trees and urban forests require technical planning to ensure the best whole of life outcome;
- All trees planted on current or future public land in Hobsons Bay must be selected to ensure their ability to thrive in Hobsons Bay's soil, environment and climate conditions;
- The performance of tree species will be monitored for their resilience to current and future environment and climatic conditions;
- Hobsons Bay City Council will reduce the risk of disease, pests or other factors affecting a genus or species through maintaining a diverse tree population;
- Planting the right tree in the right location is critical;
- Tree species will be selected for each site based on available space, constraints and the functionality of the tree;
- Tree species selected for planting near or adjacent to designated conservation reserves will be sensitive to the vegetation class and ecological function of the conservation reserve;

- Nature strips within new subdivisions must include a minimum of one tree per lot, or per no greater than 10 metre spacing where a minimum of one tree per lot is not feasible;
- Nature strips are a Hobsons Bay City Council asset, priority will be given to public tree planting within nature strip areas. Where space allows, a minimum of one tree will be planted on each nature strip within the municipality. Additional trees will be planted on nature strips that can accommodate more than one tree;
- Priority will be given to planting avenues of trees along the Hobsons Bay City Council pathways and trails. This will provide valuable shade to users of the pathway network during the warmer summer months; and;
- Hobsons Bay City Council has the final decision on tree plantings on Hobsons Bay City Council's property.

#### 4.6. Tree removal to facilitate development

- Existing trees on public and private land must be included in all plans and drawings submitted with planning applications; this includes developments proposed by Hobsons Bay City Council.
- All proposed development must abide by the tree removal controls that are set out in the Community Local Law (currently 2015) and within the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme.
- Consideration must be given to the retention of trees at the design phase; the priorities are:
  - the avoidance of tree removals,
  - minimisation of tree removals.
- A request to remove a Hobsons Bay City Council owned tree must be submitted to and approved by Hobsons Bay City Council prior to any removal taking place.
- Any Hobsons Bay City Council tree approved for removal will require payment of a tree amenity fee and associate administrative costs.
- The arrangements and cost of the tree removal will be borne by the proponent of the tree removal, ensuring works are undertaken by an appropriately qualified arborist.
- Unauthorised removal and/or damage of Hobsons Bay City Council trees are subject to penalties.
- Hobsons Bay City Council has the right to refuse removal of its trees.

#### 4.7. Tree protection on development sites

- Hobsons Bay City Council trees to be retained on or near development and other construction sites must be adequately protected both above and below ground;
- Protection of Hobsons Bay City Council's trees within construction sites will meet, at a minimum, Hobsons Bay City Council Tree Protection Guidelines and AS4970 - 2009 *Protection of trees on development sites*;
- Failure to protect trees throughout the development process may incur penalties.

#### 4.8. Council managed tree removals - maintenance

- Hobsons Bay City Council will remove a tree if it presents an immediate risk to people or property, and there are no other viable options to mitigate the risk.
- Hobsons Bay City Council may remove a tree if it is diseased, unhealthy, dead or terminally damaged, although these factors will not always result in the removal of a tree.

- Trees may also be removed and replaced as part of a scheduled street tree renewal.
- All Hobsons Bay City Council owned trees requiring removal will be considered for repurposing as a habitat structure.
- Community requests for a Hobsons Bay City Council tree to be removed for risk or maintenance purposes will be assessed by a senior Hobsons Bay City Council arborist; this may not always result in the removal of the tree.
- Trees will not be removed because of reasons including (but not limited to) –
  - Personal preference;
  - Perceived nuisance (e.g. leaf litter);
  - Limbs extending over private property;
  - Improve or maintain views;
  - A desire for parking space;
  - Allergies, unless medical advice from a medical specialist in the field of allergies is provided, demonstrating the tree significantly diminishes the quality of life and there is no other way of managing the problem; or
  - Fauna living in trees.

#### 4.9. Tree controls

- Many trees in Hobsons Bay are subject to controls within the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme. Tree removal or lopping may require a planning permit.
- All trees with a trunk diameter greater than 450mm at 1.5m above ground level are protected under the Hobsons Bay Community Local Law 2015.
  - Proponents must complete a Private Tree Removal Application Form to request permission to remove a tree that is protected under the Local Law.
  - The Private Tree Removal Application Form must be completed by the owner of the land that the tree exists on.
  - Council officers will assess the tree removal application based on the information provided in the form, and any associated documents.
  - The decision regarding the permit is final. Any challenges to the decision will require a review by the Manager of City Services.
- Trees will not be approved for removal because of reasons including (but not limited to) –
  - The tree posing a constraint on the sale of a property.
  - Claims that the tree is posing a risk, where the risk has not been identified by a suitably trained arborist, using a recognised risk assessment framework.
  - Claims that the tree is causing an unacceptable level of property damage, where insufficient evidence has been supplied to support the claim.
- If the tree is indigenous, proponents must comply with relevant Victorian and Federal native vegetation requirements.
- The above requirements apply to all potential tree removals, including those proposed by Hobsons Bay City Council.

## 5. Related documents

Australian Standard AS2303:2015 - Tree Stock for Landscape Use

Australian Standard AS4373:2007 - Pruning of Amenity Trees

Australian Standard AS4970:2009 - Protection of Trees on Development Sites

Greening the West Strategic Plan (2014)

Document Name: Hobsons Bay City Council Tree Policy

Document Type: ELT endorsed policy

Document Owner: Manager City Services

Hobsons Bay City Council Urban Forest Strategy (2020)  
Hobsons Bay City Council Park Tree Management Plan (2021)  
Hobsons Bay City Council Private Tree Removal Guidelines (2021)  
Hobsons Bay City Council Tree Protection Guidelines  
Living Melbourne: Our metropolitan urban forest (2019)

## 6. Related legislation

Hobsons Bay Community Local Law (2015)  
Planning and Environment Act (1987)  
Road Management Act (2004)  
Victorian Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations (2015)

## 7. Review date

This policy will be reviewed three years from the date of endorsement by ELT, unless it is required to be updated sooner.

## 8. Further information

For further information concerning this policy please contact Andrew Fox, Coordinator Arboriculture on 0499 501 384 and/or afox@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au.

## 9. Document control

<b>Policy Name</b>	Tree Policy
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## 10. Version history

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Authorised by</b>
1	13/12/2021	