

POLICY		Responsible Department	Essential Services & Assets
		Original Adoption	26.10.2016
		Current Adoption	20.12.2023
		Date of Next Review	20.12.2026

TREE POLICY	
Latest Review Changes	Minor formatting and editorial changes Update to new template
Previous Council Reviews	26.10.2016, 27.02.2019

Applicable Legislation

<p><i>Local Government Act 1999</i></p> <p><i>Local Government Land By-law 2016</i></p> <p><i>Native Vegetation Regulations 2017</i></p>
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Related Policies

<p>Development and Maintenance of Road Verges Policy</p> <p>Development Plan Roxby Downs Municipality</p>

Related Procedures

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Reference Documents

<p>Roxby Downs Horticultural Project and Arid Garden Masterplan</p>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Roxby Downs is located in an arid environment, with sandy soils and an average annual rainfall of 150mm. Initial Street scaping of the first stage of the Roxby Downs Township occurred in 1987, with plants endemic to areas with similar low rainfall selected for use in Roxby Downs.

Roxby Downs is an aesthetically pleasing town, with many established tall trees and flowering shrubs beautifying the streets, parks and reserves. Trees contribute various environmental and economic values to the community, providing natural cooling shade, reducing wind speeds, enhancing biodiversity and promoting a more liveable and healthier lifestyle for residents of Roxby Downs.

The trees of Roxby Downs are an asset to the community, and it is Roxby Council's objective that trees be maintained in a manner that enhances the amenity of the vegetation throughout Roxby Downs, while considering the public safety and development interests of the community.

Council adopted the Roxby Downs Horticultural Project and Arid Garden Masterplan in July 2022. This plan was proposed by Tanya Court of Tanya Court Projects to create a pathway for future planning in Roxby Downs

2. PURPOSE

To provide direction in relation to how Roxby Council will manage existing and new tree assets on Council owned land within the municipality of Roxby Downs.

To ensure:

- That trees are recognised as a dynamic, living feature of Roxby Downs and require ongoing maintenance and management.
- Planting of trees in streets and on public land which enhances the landscape of Roxby Downs
- Appropriate site and species selection for new tree assets
- Removal of trees on public land only occurs when necessary due to risk to infrastructure or to the public.

3. INFORMED SPECIES SELECTION

Species selected for planting in Roxby Downs Street scaping must be informed and consider the below requirements, unless approved by Roxby Council.

- Plant species should be selected for their low water requirements.
- Use native species best suited for use in arid environments.
- Plants selected should have the desired characteristics of size, strength, shape and colour for the planting purpose.
- Provide relief from weather conditions such as extreme heat, low humidity, dust and wind speeds.

4. UNDESIRABLE SPECIES

Roxby Council has a responsibility to use plant species appropriate for the Roxby Downs environment. When planting on council owned land within the municipality, approval from Roxby Council is required to be sought for:

- Plants that are not endemic to Australia
- Plants that are not suitable for use in arid environments or low rainfall areas

Roxby Council will not utilise any plants that will threaten our arid ecosystem, and action will be taken to remove such plants on council owned land within the municipality.

- Declared Pest Plants, as outlined in the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*.
- Priority weeds for the region, as identified by the Landscape Board.

5. PLANTING

A Tree and Plant Management Plan has been developed that details the following:

- An active planting program
- Preferred species selection
- Minimum distances from infrastructure assets

6. PLANTING SPECIFICATIONS

Roxby Council has many years of experience in developing, maintaining, and beautifying the streets of Roxby Downs. Experience has seen Council learn from many mistakes in street scaping and developments, and specifications have been determined to ensure plants are provided with the best chance of survival from the moment they are placed in the soil.

When placing new plants in soil it is important to ensure that the hole is deep and any road base, gravel or bark is completely removed to enable sufficient spread of roots. Ensure that quality sand or soil is used when backfilling to provide the plant with nutrients essential for growth.

Plants are then to be provided with adequate mulch to reduce water loss through evaporation and suppress weeds. Mulch is to be kept at least 15cm from the trunk of the tree to allow for air circulation and prevent potential diseases.

The use of water crystals or planting gel in order to maximise survival rates of new plantings should also be included.

Use tree guards where possible to protect seedlings and provide the best growing environment to ensure plant success.

The location of trees should be deemed suitable prior to planting and the likelihood of interference with pipes, wires, cables, fixtures, fittings or other objects must be considered.

7. WATERING SPECIFICATIONS

Watering of trees is conducted in accordance with climatic conditions, and sustainable watering methods are practiced. Deep watering is encouraged to promote deep root growth and provide the plant with the best opportunity for survival. New plants are watered regularly using automated drip irrigation.

Frequent watering should occur for an initial establishment period of 12-24 months only. From then watering should decrease, with established plants that have been in the ground for four or more years having up to four deep soakings per year.

Mature trees (particularly Eucalypts) will be monitored for signs of water related stress, which occurs when insufficient soil water is available to replace the water lost through the leaves. Supplementary watering during dry periods can assist in maintaining tree health and ensure integrity of these trees, which are assets to Council.

8. MAINTENANCE

Council will maintain trees on Council owned land within the municipality to a healthy and safe condition. Tree maintenance activities may include watering, pruning, fertilising, topping up mulch, pest control or removal of unsuitable trees.

9. INSPECTIONS

Council trees shall be inspected on a regular basis. The frequency of inspections is determined by the location of the trees in accordance with the table below:

Type	Inspection Frequency	Type of Inspection
High Risk Areas ^[1]	Annually Every 5 years	Visual Inspection Arborist Inspection
Street Trees	Every 2 years Every 5 years	Visual Inspection Arborist Inspection
All Trees	Upon Request	Inspection within 3 working days

^[1] High Risk Area: Where tree limbs are adjacent to playgrounds or parks, pedestrian crossings, parking bays and school entrances.

Tree assets shall be given a unique identification number in order to build a tree asset inventory.

10. TREE REMOVAL

Trees in parks, reserves and streets will generally not be removed unless the tree is dead, badly diseased or dying (and cannot be revived to a sustainable condition), the tree species or location is inappropriate, significant damage has occurred to the tree (storm or otherwise) and/ or the tree is a risk to the public or infrastructure.

Approval by resolution of Roxby Council is to be sought prior to Council Horticultural Contractors removing trees from Council owned land within the municipality of Roxby Downs.

In the event that it is inconvenient to obtain Council approval due to safety concerns including risk to public or infrastructure, the Chief Executive may give approval for the tree removal. Removal of any dead trees may be carried out without Chief Executive or Council approval, but details of the removed tree shall be recorded in the tree register.

Leaf, branch, bark, twig, fruit, flower drop, and bird droppings are natural seasonal occurrences and do not constitute a reason for tree removal.

Whenever a tree removal is required for any reason, Council shall ensure that two replacement trees are planted within Roxby Downs for every one tree removed.

Plant species identified as woody weeds can be removed at the authority of the Chief Executive.

11. SPECIES OF SIGNIFICANCE

There are several species of significance in the Roxby Downs region. These include long-lived trees such as the Western Myall Acacia papyrocarpa, Mulga Acacia aneura and White Cypress Pine Callitris glaucophylla. These species are significant because of their prolonged lifetime (sometimes greater than 200 years old) and slow growth rate (approximately 10 years to grow one metre). Attempts should be made to conserve these species at all times, unless the species is identified to be unsafe and Roxby Council approval has been granted for removal.

Established Eucalypts are also significant and considered a Council asset. Considerable council time, effort and resources have been put in to get these trees established and all options need to be considered to maintain or salvage a tree prior to considering its removal.

12. REPORTING

Council horticultural contractors are required to provide a record of tree removals. These are to be submitted within one month of tree removal to the nominated Council Officer.

13. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated no less than once every three years. The effectiveness of this Policy will be reviewed and evaluated from time to time within Council's strategic management planning framework.

14. AVAILABILITY OF THE POLICY

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council's Offices during ordinary business hours and via the Council's website www.roxbydowns.sa.gov.au. Copies will also be provided to the public upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with the Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.