



Changes from Draft Tree Management Policy (Oct 2025) to Final Tree Management Policy (Draft) (June 2026) following round one community engagement.

*Inclusions highlighted in yellow, modifications highlighted in green with additional commentary

7. RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION

This policy has been developed with consideration to the following:

- Planning and Environment Act 1989
- Local Government Act 2020
- Electricity Safety Act 1998 and Electricity Safety (Electrical Line Clearance) Regulations 2020
- Whitehorse City Council Electric Line Clearance Management Plan (ELCMP)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Whitehorse Community Vision 2040
- Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029
- Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2031
- Whitehorse Integrated Water Management Strategy 2022-2042
- Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2025
- Whitehorse Cycling Strategy 2016
- Whitehorse Integrated Transport Strategy 2011
- Australian Standard Pruning Amenity Trees AS4373
- Australian Standard Protection of Trees on Development Sites AS4970
- Australian Standard AS2303 - Tree Stock for Landscape Use

11. TREE NOTIFICATIONS

Trees declared by Council's Arborists to be an immediate hazard with significant risk may be removed without community notification to ensure public safety.

Residents will be notified a minimum of one week prior to all other works being undertaken on Council managed trees via the following methods.

Category	Notification Method	Notification Period
Tree pruning	Notification card delivered to the letter box of the adjacent property	Min 1 week

Tree Removal – Small tree less than 5m tall with limited streetscape character	Notification card delivered to the letter box of the adjacent property	Min 1 week
Tree Removal – Large tree greater than 5m tall with some streetscape character	Notification card delivered to the letter box of the adjacent property, and to the letter box of all visually impacted properties	Min 2 weeks
Tree Removal – Large tree greater than 10m tall with significant streetscape character	Notification card delivered to the letter box of the adjacent property, and to the letter box of visually impacted properties, and signage installed on the specific tree to be removed.	Min 2 weeks
Street Tree Planting	Notification card delivered to the letter box of the adjacent property	Min 2 weeks
Park Tree Planting	Site signage installed in the park	Min 1 week

*Notification period increased from 1 week to 2 weeks

12.2 National Trust Streetscape

A National Trust Streetscape within the City of Whitehorse is defined as a street that is registered under the National Trust for environmental purposes. Trees within these registered streets may have different management requirements including modified pruning programs, clearances and planting regimes **to preserve the streetscape character.**

13.6 Street Tree Species Selection

Council's Arborists will undertake the selection of tree species for each site with consideration to the following:

- Tree size at maturity.
- Powerline clearance requirements.
- Historical and neighbourhood character of the street, including historical avenue plantings as stated in the Avenue Streetscapes component of this policy.
- Tree species resistance to pests and diseases.
- Neighbourhood and Municipal tree population resilience.
- Adaptability to drought and climate change.

- Continuity of existing streetscape plantings where appropriate.
- Growing conditions and constraints relating to all surrounding infrastructure and soils.
- New species trials.
- Contribution to urban biodiversity.
- Linkages to natural corridors and opportunities to strengthen indigenous species and habitat.
- Commercial availability of species.

14.2 Street Tree Clearances

Street trees will be pruned a minimum of every two years to achieve the following clearances in line with relevant standards and legislation:

- 2.5 metres high over footpaths
- 2.5 metres high over nature strips
- 2.5 metres high over residential gardens
- 3.0 metres high over driveways
- 4.3 metres high over Council managed roadways
- 4.5 metres high over arterial roadways
- 3.5 meters high over National Trust Streetscape roadways
- 3.8 meters high over Nature Reserve Streetscape roadways
- Clear visibility for traffic lights and traffic signage

*changes to clearances

15.1 Tree Removal Criteria

Council Arborists will assess tree removal requests from residents, a government body, authority, or primary service utility on a case-by-case basis. Council reserves the right to refuse a tree removal request if the tree can be retained and where an alternative method of infrastructure or construction can be accommodated.

The Director Infrastructure and Sustainability may approve the removal of a tree that does not comply with the Tree Removal Criteria under exceptional circumstances only. Residents may make an application in writing to the Director Infrastructure and Sustainability to have a decision by an Arborist not to remove a tree reviewed.

The decision review process includes:

- Is the decision consistent with Council policy?
- Is the decision in the best interest of the community?
- Has public safety been accurately assessed and steps to mitigate risk been undertaken?

- Does the impact of the removal of the tree on nearby properties outweigh the environmental and community benefits, and amenity value of the tree?
- Does the removal of the tree require a planning permit?

In very exceptional circumstances, and where a tree is not protected under the Whitehorse Planning Scheme, the Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability can consider for approval additional pruning outside this Policy's specifications, or removal of a healthy tree where it continues to cause a significant problem that has not been remedied or mitigated through other actions. In these circumstances a resident will be asked to contribute to the cost of the additional pruning/removal, and in the event of removal, the cost of Amenity value of the tree and planting and establishing new trees over a two-year period at the location. Assessment will only be made after all other avenues of remedy or mitigation have been exhausted, and where more than 75% canopy replacement of any removed tree can be achieved through replacement trees.

Applicants requesting this action are expected to consider the long-term tree canopy, biodiversity, and environmental loss, and the loss to neighbourhood character and amenity enjoyed by the community for their single benefit as a result of this pruning or removal. This option is not available to new developments or newly planted trees, and it is expected that residents/developers work with and around existing trees and other assets.

Council's Complaints Policy and process is available if further review is sought.

15.3 Tree Amenity Valuations

When the removal of a Council tree is deemed necessary for private construction, development or works, all associated costs will be paid by the property owner, developer or applicant prior to removal, including the tree amenity value. Tree replacement will be required on a two for one basis where Council officers determine there is suitable space within the property nature strip.

Total cost for street tree removal includes amenity value of the tree plus tree and stump removal costs plus planting and maintaining the new tree or trees for two years. Council officers calculate the amenity value utilising the City of Melbourne method of tree amenity valuation.

*The following sentence has been removed due to numerous comments in the engagement that it created confusion and total amenity value should be paid: *Trees valued above \$25,000 will be reviewed by Council's Arborists on a case-by-case basis.*

17.2 Private Property Damage Claims

Residents who claim private property damage from a street or park tree must follow the claims process outlined on Council's website. Tree removal will not automatically be undertaken due to claims of private property damage.

Tree removal will be considered where the tree is causing significant damage to private property and the cost of ongoing remedial work is more than the amenity and environmental value of the tree, all other practical measures to mitigate damage have been exhausted, and the cost to maintain the tree and mitigate further damage outweighs the value of the tree, and there is no reasonable alternative to resolve ongoing private property damage.

19.2 Possums

Where appropriate and if required, possum guards will be installed on Council managed trees to protect trees from significant possum damage. Trees will be assessed and monitored by Council Arborists to determine ongoing management options.

20 APPENDICES

National Trust and Nature Reserve Streetscape locations include:

- Linum Street, Blackburn
- Laurel Grove North, Blackburn
- Boongarry Avenue, Blackburn
- Waratah Crescent, Blackburn
- Myrtle Grove South, Blackburn
- Hill Street, Blackburn
- Acacia Avenue, Blackburn
- Furness Street, Blackburn
- Jeffery Street, Blackburn
- Sanders Road, Box Hill
- Hovea Street, Mitcham
- Irvine Street, Mitcham
- The Glade, Mitcham
- Grove Street, Vermont
- Moore Road, Vermont
- Canowindra Close, Vermont South

Other minor changes to formatting undertaken as raised in community engagement.