

## TITLE: Tree Management Policy

### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy is to provide guidance for Mount Barker District Council to meet its urban greening and ecological sustainability goals through the integrated management of trees within the Council area to achieve balanced risk and quality urban and rural forest areas.

### 2. SCOPE

This Policy is applicable to public land and Mount Barker District Council in exercising powers and functions under the various Acts, Regulations and agreements to which it is a party in the State of South Australia. The scope of Council's tree management activities is outlined in Section 5.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Amenity value** - is a financial assessment that quantifies a tree's worth based on its physical scale, placement, and ecological contributions. By translating nature into a currency, it ensures trees are treated as essential public assets rather than disposable obstacles in commercial and civic planning.

**Biodiversity** - the variety of life forms, the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems they form.

**Challenging space** - an urban location where there is limited or no space for root development, often with surrounding compaction and street assets such as kerbs and pavements.

**Culturally modified tree** - A tree that holds spiritual, historical, or social significance to Aboriginal people.

**Habitat** - the place where a plant or animal lives and grows.

**High-cost tree** - a tree which attracts more frequent operational support costs such as above average pruning schedules and regular attending of structural failures. Or a tree in a challenging space which attracts regular civil maintenance.

**High-value urban tree** - a high-performing biological asset that yields commensurate financial dividends by providing critical urban ecosystem services. Value is quantified across five key pillars:

- **Environmental** (regulating services). Direct pollution mitigation through the capture of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), active carbon sequestration, and significant energy reduction via microclimate cooling and shading.
- **Hydrological** (provisioning services). Mitigation of urban flood risk through stormwater peak flow attenuation, canopy interception, and groundwater recharge.
- **Ecological** (supporting services). Provision of "stepping stone" habitats that support urban biodiversity, facilitate pollinator movement, and maintain soil nutrient cycling within the built environment.
- **Socio-economic** (cultural services). Measurable "amenity value" reflected in enhanced real estate value, increased retail foot traffic (commercial vitality), and documented crime reduction through improved social cohesion.
- **Psychological** (resilience & well-being). Substantial cost avoidance in healthcare by reducing respiratory and thermal stress, alongside broad mental health benefits; these trees foster psychological restoration, reduce cognitive fatigue, and enhance overall human productivity through daily exposure to nature.

**Local heritage tree** – is a tree of special historical or social significance to a specific local area, recognised by Council for its importance to local history, landscape and includes culturally modified trees.

**Low value urban tree** - a tree that provides minimal visual or practical benefit in an urban area, such as limited shade, amenity, or habitat, and therefore has a low assessed value.

**Natural area** - an area of public land dominated by natural processes, supporting native flora and fauna, where maintenance service intervention is minimal.

**Open space** - includes all local government land as defined in the Local Government Act 1999.

**Regulated tree** as defined in the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.

**Remnant tree** as defined by the Native Vegetation Act 1993.

**Resource recovery** - is the collecting and re-use of timber and mulch from tree management works.

**Risk** - is the effect of uncertainty on objectives.

**Significant tree** as defined in the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016.

**SEB** – Significant Environmental Benefit as defined by the Native Vegetation Act 1993.

**Tree** - To distinguish trees from shrubs for Policy application, a tree is a woody perennial plant (including palms) with a minimum height of 2.5 metres, characterised by one or more erect stems and a defined elevated crown, contributing functional value through shade, habitat, and broader ecosystem services.

**Urban forest** - is a multi-functional ecosystem comprising a diverse allocation of worldwide and local, trees, shrubs, and understory vegetation within and around human settlements. It encompasses all green infrastructure across public and private land including streetscapes, parks, private gardens, green walls and roofs, and includes the soil and water systems that sustain them.

**Veteran tree** - a tree that is most likely remnant but can be exotic, has long served the environment, and has often endured centuries of physical threats and climate fluctuation. Often offering multiple habitats for hollow dependant fauna.

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Council:**

- Endorse the Tree Management Policy.
- Ensure due consideration is given to this Policy as part of decision making by Council.
- Allocation of budget.

### **Chief Executive Officer:**

- Monitor and review the effectiveness of Council's policies and procedures.
- Ensure appropriate delegations and resources are in place for employees to carry out tree management activities.
- Promote a culture of tree management awareness in Council.

### **General Managers:**

- Promote awareness of this Policy and related procedures in planning and operational activities of teams within Council.
- Ensure Council teams are trained and resourced adequately to implement this Policy.

### **Manager Infrastructure Maintenance and Operations**

- Ensure this Policy is reviewed and updated regularly.

### **Staff**

- Ensure all aspects of this Policy are considered and applied in all planning, operations, and maintenance activities.

## **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

By virtue of the ecological and environmental amenity services they provide, Council will consider and manage trees as essential infrastructure and commits to the following tree management protocols within the Mount Barker District Council area.

## **5. COMMITMENTS**

### **5.1 Compliance**

- 5.1.1 Ensure appropriate resourcing is made available to meet its obligations under relevant legislation on tree management, including regular audits of the districts tree assets.

- 5.1.2 Ensure Council meets obligations under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*, *Native Vegetation Act 1991*, *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* and *PDI Act 2016*.
- 5.1.3 Continue to advocate toward better tree protection laws with State Government agencies.
- 5.1.4 Maintain a Tree Management Procedure which is the companion document to this Policy.

## **5.2 Cultural Heritage**

- 5.2.1 Identify culturally significant trees, protecting them in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*.
- 5.2.1 Seek knowledge from relevant Cultural Authorities or individuals to help inform maintenance activities on culturally significant trees.
- 5.2.2 Prioritise the use of locally endemic tree species in natural areas.

## **5.3 Communication**

- 5.3.1 Communicate early and often and ensure transparency about Council projects and works, which impact trees and open space within the district.
- 5.3.2 Where there is deemed to be an activity that has a significant impact on trees, Council will follow the relevant steps set out in its public consultation Policy to inform or consult the community on the changes.

## **5.4 Removal and Replacement**

- 5.4.1 Ensure there is a clear procedure for the removal of trees and that all staff and contractors of Council abide by it.
- 5.4.2 On occasions where trees in challenging spaces don't succeed or where they contribute to asset damage, Council recognises the benefit in removing low value, high-cost trees in some of these circumstances and replace them in better growing spaces.
- 5.4.3 Ensure a ten (10) for one (1) replacement procedure of removed public trees is followed, with a species that is where possible native in fitting with the local area and planted as close as possible to where the loss has occurred with further details explained in the Tree Management Procedure.
- 5.4.4 All Council projects involving tree removal or significant alterations will ensure that Development Approval and/or Native Vegetation Council approval is sought.
- 5.4.5 Preclearance fauna assessments to be undertaken to hollow bearing trees prior to removal being scheduled.
- 5.4.6 Mandatory fauna management requirement preferably prior and during removal and substantial pruning as per *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*.

## **5.5 Species selection for diversity in urban open space and urban streetscapes**

- 5.5.1 To ensure urban forest resilience to pest, disease and climate challenges, Council will determine a very wide range of diverse and balanced species for urban open space and urban streetscapes with no limit to appropriate species options.
- 5.5.2 Due to the above imperative, Council will inform or in appropriate instances, consult the local community where urban streetscapes, open space and parks are being renewed.

## **5.6 Biodiversity in all areas**

- 5.6.1 Develop and maintain programs that increase tree related habitat and adequate food sources for native fauna in urban, urban fringe and rural areas, this includes installing understorey plantings.
- 5.6.2 Council will use local endemic tree species when planting in natural areas and bush sites.
- 5.6.3 Manage veteran trees across the district to ensure longevity and promote greater biodiversity in association with veteran trees which includes understory plantings.

## **5.7 Protect and enhance with infrastructure improvement**

- 5.7.1 Work with projects and stakeholders to:
  - a) Prioritise the retention of high value trees in maintenance projects and new developments.
  - b) Where applicable, identify and implement engineering solutions to protect root plates of high value trees in maintenance projects and new developments.
  - c) Establish diverse reserve and streetscapes with appropriate species selection.
  - d) Encourage the development of programs and incentives that increase tree canopy cover in urban areas.
  - e) Use web-based tree asset program Forestree to record trees as essential infrastructure assets and track management actions.
- 5.7.2 Support programs that:
  - a) Protect significant, veteran and regulated trees in the district.
  - b) Promote quality younger age class trees.
  - c) Protect areas of remnant vegetation with little disturbance.
  - d) Retain dead trees for aesthetics and habitat where low risk exists and context allows.
  - e) Remove woody weeds from rural roadsides and urban waterways while protecting remnant vegetation.
  - f) Help new plantings establish to full maturity.

## **5.8 Risk Management and Record Keeping**

- 5.8.1 Develop systems to map and monitor shade and canopy cover within urban environments to help mitigate the effects of a changing climate on townships and urban centres.

- 5.8.2 Keep a record of community requests relating to trees and respond according to Council's customer charter.
- 5.8.3 Implement proactive tree inspection and maintenance programs to lower tree related risks to the community.
- 5.8.4 Develop and maintain a comprehensive database of trees on public land with Forestree program keeping records of asset growth and management actions.

## **5.9 Resource Recovery**

- 5.9.1 Ensure the highest value resource recovery from tree removals to minimise wastage and provide, where possible, re-purposing that supports ongoing social, environmental and recreational benefit to our community.

## **6. TRAINING / EDUCATION**

Council will provide training on an as required basis to employees and volunteers to fulfil their requirements under this Policy.

## **7. TREE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE**

The actions associated with this Policy are detailed within the Tree Management Procedure.

## **8. REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed:

- every three years; or
- earlier in the event of changes to legislation or related Policies and Procedures; or
- if deemed necessary by the Manager Maintenance and Operations or their delegate.

## **9. ACCESS TO THE POLICY**

The Policy is available for public inspection at the Customer Service Centre, Local Government Centre, 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker, South Australia and on the Council's website [www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au](http://www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au)

## **10. FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information on this Policy, please contact:

Title: Manager Maintenance and Operations  
Address: PO Box 54, Mount Barker  
South Australia, SA, 5251  
Telephone: 8393 6450  
Email: [council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au](mailto:council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au)

|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| REFERENCE NUMBER                                       | DOC/25/93061                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                |             |
| PREVIOUS DOCUMENT NUMBER:                              | DOC/16/123297                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                |             |
| INTERNAL GOVERNANCE:                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                |             |
| Author                                                 | Chris Lawry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Urban Forest Officer           | 1/3/2026    |
| Responsible General Manager:                           | Phil Burton                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | General Manager Infrastructure | 1/3/2026    |
| Reviewed by CEO                                        | Andrew Stuart                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                |             |
| Reviewed by CGG                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                |             |
| APPROVED BY (DOCUMENT OWNER):                          | Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                |             |
|                                                        | OM20267.15 Item 12.5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                | 6 July 2026 |
| APPLICABLE LEGISLATION AND RELATED DOCUMENTS:          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aboriginal heritage Act 1988</li><li>• National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972.</li><li>• Local Government Act 1999,</li><li>• Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</li><li>• Native Vegetation Act 1991</li><li>• Highways Act 1926</li><li>• Road Traffic Act 1961</li><li>• Heritage Places Act 1997</li><li>• Electricity Act 1996</li><li>• Landscape SA Act 2019</li><li>• Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (and associated regulations)</li><li>• Risk Management Policy</li><li>• Biodiversity Strategy</li><li>• Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2035</li><li>• Tree Management Procedure</li><li>• Tree Management in Emergencies Procedure</li><li>• Landscape Standards and Guideline for New Developments</li><li>• Guidelines for Landscaping Associated with Construction of Heysen Boulevard</li><li>• SEB Guideline</li></ul> |                                |             |
| MOUNT BARKER 2035 – DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN REFERENCE: | NE 4.0, 4.2, 4.3<br>CW 1.1, 2.5, 3.3, 4.3, 4.5<br>ES 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1,4.2,4.3,4.4<br>EP 1.2, 1.3, 2.5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                |             |
| REVIEW CYCLE                                           | <p>As this is a new Policy, a review will be undertaken within 12 months but no later than November 2027</p> <p>Review within 12 months of new Council term</p> <p>It is recognised that from time to time circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name for a State or Federal Department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by</p>                                                                                                                                                  |                                |             |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                              |                                        |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
|                           | resolution of Council (if statutory) or the Chief Executive Officer (if administrative).                                                                             |                                                              |                                        |
| <b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b>   | 1/11/2027                                                                                                                                                            |                                                              |                                        |
| <b>DOCUMENT HISTORY:</b>  | This Policy Supersedes the Urban Forest Policy DOC/16/123297                                                                                                         |                                                              |                                        |
| <b>DOCUMENT VERSION</b>   | <b>DATE</b>                                                                                                                                                          | <b>AUTHOR (PERSON TO WHOM CHANGES ARE TO BE RECOMMENDED)</b> | <b>NATURE OF CHANGE</b>                |
| VERSION 1.0               | 2016                                                                                                                                                                 | Chris Lawry                                                  | Initial Policy development             |
| VERSION 2.0               | 2/8/2021                                                                                                                                                             | Chris Lawry                                                  | Title change and minor content changes |
| VERSION 3.0               | 18/2/2026                                                                                                                                                            | Chris Lawry                                                  | Changes and new material               |
| <b>DOCUMENT LOCATION:</b> | Council website<br>Available for inspection, downloading or printing from Council's website <a href="http://www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au">www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au</a> |                                                              |                                        |
|                           | This Policy is available for inspection, during business hours at:<br>Mount Barker District Council, Level 1, 6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker                            |                                                              |                                        |