



## **GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FOR LANDSCAPING ON COUNCIL ROAD VERGES**

### GENERAL

Road verges in residential areas are part of the road reserve and therefore Council land. Council does not have the resources available to maintain residential verges. Property owners may wish to landscape and maintain the verge in front of their residences to enhance their property and the streetscape.

Verge landscaping must comply with the Council guidelines set out in this document, and any proposal at variance to the PERMITTED treatments described in these guidelines must be applied for on the attached application form. Treatments that fully comply with the listed PERMITTED treatments and conditions stated below will not require a written application. Please also note the NOT PERMITTED treatments listed - these will not be approved and would be considered to be unauthorised development.

All treatments and applications will be assessed against these guidelines to ensure public safety. This includes safe pedestrian access for all members of the community and the maintenance of safe sight lines for traffic movement which enable property access.

Council will not subsidise or assist with the development or ongoing maintenance of verges.

Service Authorities have access and rights over this portion of the road reserve, in line with agreements with Council. The verge area may be occupied (above or below the ground) by the following;

- Electricity underground/overhead wiring, pits and poles
- Telecommunications wiring, pits and poles
- Gas mains
- Water mains and connections
- Sewer mains and connections
- Council infrastructure, including stormwater drainage systems (including the concrete kerbing) ,footpaths, street furniture, signage, bus shelters and street trees

### DEVELOPMENT

The Local Government Act 1999 requires that all private development of the verge has Council approval. Council has determined that property owners may landscape their verge areas without specific written approval if the verge treatment strictly complies with the PERMITTED treatments shown below, and the following requirements of Council are achieved:

- Pedestrian access along the verge area in preference to walking on the roadway if no footpath is provided on either side of the road.
- Traffic sight line distances including clear vision of children in the verge area or driveways
- Access to existing services is maintained
- Provision is made for Council Street Tree/s consistent with Council street tree policy

- The responsibility for ongoing maintenance rests with the property owner. The landscaping may be removed by Council at any time where adequate maintenance is not carried out or other issues arise

## VERGE TREATMENTS

The following verge treatments are **PERMITTED**, providing they are permeable to water and are suitable for safe pedestrian access;

- Mulch
- Lightly compacted rubble or ornamental gravels
- Low plants (maximum 500mm height).
- Permeable paving (to be constructed to Council's standards and manufacturers specifications)
- Turf (irrigated and unirrigated)

The following verge treatments are **NOT PERMITTED**

- Raised edging or items which may obstruct pedestrian movement.
- Plants that are recognised environmental weeds, or considered inappropriate to the theme of the streetscape.
- Plants which could be expected to grow taller than 500mm or spread beyond the verge (always consider the visibility of pedestrians, particularly children, to traffic)
- Artificial turf (plastic grass), which is largely impermeable and requires a compacted rubble base
- Fully impervious membrane under mulch (such as black plastic). Weed matting that allows exchange of air and water is a permitted treatment

## PLANTING

All planting must consider the needs and conditions of Council and various Service Authorities as well as the requirement to ensure clear pedestrian access along the verge area where no footpath is constructed on either side of the road.

*For more information on plant species selection, please contact the Open Space and Environment Unit at Council for advice.*

### **Council's first preference is to use local native plant species where possible.**

Where this is not a preferred option of the resident, plants should be 'water-wise' (and frost resistant) and preferably Australian native. They should fit in well with the surrounding streetscape and gardens and should not be vigorous-growing or weedy. Annual plants should not generally be used unless the resident is committed to maintaining these on a regular basis.

The use of sharp or otherwise hazardous plants will not be supported.

The streetscape is an important part of the public realm, and the co-ordination of plantings is an important aspect of Council works. If no street trees are present, provision must be made for the future planting of trees on all property frontages at a rate of 1 tree per frontage or 1 tree per 20 metres, whichever is the closest spacing.

Existing street trees must not be removed for verge development works, and all verge development must accommodate existing street trees.

## SYNTHETIC TURF

Council does not consider synthetic turf (plastic grass) an appropriate treatment for Council verges. These materials absorb heat and are generally impermeable so increase stormwater run-off and prevent air and water entering verge soil, leading to the decline of street trees.

## SOLID CONSTRUCTION

Council does not permit structures such as fences, walls, including retaining walls, and letterboxes within the verge area.

## IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

Property owners may install below-ground irrigation systems including pop-up sprinklers, or below ground drippers provided the property owner accepts all responsibility for all on going repairs and maintenance, and accepts liability for any issues arising from the installation or operation of the system.

The location of sprinklers should be near the back of the concrete kerb with at least 100mm of clearance to allow for mechanical edging of the concrete kerb without damage to the irrigation system. Sprinklers should, as much as possible, not overspray on paths, driveways or the roadway and must be operated in line with water use regulations. The supply of water and compliance with any water restrictions is the responsibility of the landowner.

## FOOTPATH CONSTRUCTION

Any development of a verge without an existing concrete or block paver footpath must allow for the possible future construction of a footpath by Council.

## REMOVAL OR MODIFICATION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Where any verge has been landscaped and Council considers that the verge development could cause or is causing a hazard or obstruction to the public or Service Authority, then Council may require the development to be modified or removed.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information regarding verge landscaping please contact the Open Space and Environment Unit on telephone 8391 7200.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL OF VERGE LANDSCAPING**

Verge landscaping treatments listed as PERMITTED (see page 2) do not require written Council approval, however the landowner is fully liable for any issues arising from the landscaping installation, including construction and maintenance operations.

This includes compliance with services location and clearances requirements, insurances and all statutory Work Health and Safety requirements.

Approval for verge landscaping treatments not specifically listed as PERMITTED must be applied for in writing on the attached application form, and must not be proceeded with until written approval is received from Council. Treatments listed as NOT PERMITTED will not generally be approved.

### **PROCEDURE FOR WRITTEN APPROVAL IF REQUIRED**

- Read through the Verge Landscaping Guidelines and if further information is required please contact the Open Space and Environment Unit at Council.
- Consider modifying your proposal if any of the proposed treatments are not listed as PERMITTED or are listed as NOT PERMITTED.
- Complete the attached Verge Landscaping Application Form, ensuring that a sketch plan of the proposed development is attached.
- Applications may only be submitted by Property Owners. Tenants wishing to develop the verge area are to consult with the property owner.
- The application will be assessed taking into account its suitability for the site and the safety of the community.
- Council will then approve complying applications in writing, notifying the applicant of any alterations that may be required. This documentation will be recorded for future reference.
- Once the works are undertaken, the maintenance of the verge will be the sole responsibility of the property owner.
- If the condition of the verge is altered in any way, other than the approved development, Council must be notified immediately.



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### APPLICATION

*Mail to: PO Box 54 Mt Barker South Australia 5251*

*Scan (pdf) and Email to: council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au*

Name of Property Owner/s:

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I hereby apply for permission to landscape the verge area of the property I own:

Property Address:

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Postal Address:

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Telephone - Home ..... Other..... Mobile .....

### VERGE LANDSCAPING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Applicant agrees to the following:

1. To provide a plan illustrating the proposed verge landscaping
2. To ensure that works within the verge will not create a public risk
3. To ensure that the landscaping works do not cause sight-line issues for vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians
4. To indemnify Council against all actions/claims whatsoever for bodily injury and/or damage to property arising out of the development and/or maintenance of the verge (excluding works undertaken by Council)
5. If the condition of the verge is altered in any other way than the approved development, Council must be notified immediately
6. To accept full responsibility for the maintenance of the verge. If the verge landscaping is not maintained to the satisfaction of the Council it may be removed at any time

