

## Tree management

<b>Policy, procedure, protocol</b>	Policy
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<b>Related documents</b>	Clarence Valley Biodiversity Strategy Urban Tree Management Strategy Yamba Street Tree Masterplan Enforcement Policy Rewards Policy Surveillance Device Use – Illegal Dumping
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<b>Section / Department</b>	Open Spaces & Facilities
<b>Linkage to Our Community Plan</b>	4 Our Environment
<b>Objective</b>	4.1 We will preserve the beautiful natural features of the Clarence Region
<b>Strategy</b>	4.1.3 Enhance our riverfronts, streetscapes and highlight our beautiful trees

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## 1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance on the management of the tree landscape and urban forest in the Clarence Valley and to provide a policy position for the inspection and maintenance of trees in the rural road network i.e. road corridors in rural areas

## 2. Definitions

**‘Urban Forest’** means the conglomerate of trees within urban areas and includes trees located on both private and public land. This includes those located on the rural road network.

## 3. Background/legislative requirements

Council’s urban forest is made up of a diverse range of species and age groups planted over a number of historic periods, creating a mosaic of plantings interwoven with remnant locally indigenous trees. Grafton City alone has more than 7,000 street and park trees.

Tree management over such a large area is a significant task. It takes considerable planning and effort to ensure that trees are properly maintained to provide a safe environment for the community.

Long term planning is required to ensure the preservation, enhancement and sustainability of the urban forest for future generations. This involves long term decisions about tree planting, maintenance protection and removal.

The Local Government Tree Resources Association has prepared an Urban Tree Management Policy endorsed by the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW. Council has considered the principles for management contained within this policy and has applied those in preparing this policy and its Urban Tree Management Strategy.

The management of ‘Urban Forest’ is extensive as it includes management of the rural road network and all aspects of road related infrastructure.

## 4. Policy, protocol or procedure statement

- Council acknowledges the important contribution that urban trees make to the quality of our built environment.
- The conglomerate of trees within the local government area includes those trees within private and public land and is often referred to as the urban forest. Council has direct control over trees in streets, parks, reserves, and public open spaces and indirect control (planning control) over trees on private land and those managed by other public authorities.
- The whole collection of trees is a shared community asset that contributes to the amenity, visual character, heritage and ecological values of the Clarence Valley.
- Careful management is needed to ensure the sustainability of urban tree assets as the resource is vulnerable to a variety of threats. Council is committed to managing these important assets.

- Given the extent of Council's rural road network Council is not able to plan for the active management of tree assets in these areas.

## 5. Planning and Management

Council will manage the all trees in accordance with the framework and direction outlined in Council's Urban Tree Management Strategy that includes Street Tree Masterplans, Asset Management Plans, Council's adopted Tree Assessment Procedures, Local Environmental Plan, Development Control Plans, Park Plans of Management and related plans.

Council is not able to manage and proactively inspect tree assets within its rural road network. Council will respond to reactive tree maintenance requests and obvious tree maintenance issues identified by staff about road related infrastructure – e.g. road surface condition, signage etc. However, the staff who are routinely undertaking inspections of rural road related infrastructure are not necessarily trained to undertake specialist tree inspections as part of their inspection duties.

## 6. Management of Views for Public and Private Benefit

Council acknowledges that views for public benefit are a consideration in the management of urban trees and vegetation while acknowledging the enjoyment of views from private property.

The management of vegetation height, density and location in consideration of nearby community expectations and in line with an overall policy of vegetation retention and management.

When undertaking new plantings, Council will endeavour to select species that do not substantially detract from private views.

Council has managed vegetation for views for public benefit at key vantage points and lookouts such as Maclean Lookout, Flinders Park Yamba, Pilot Hill Yamba and Angourie Point. These areas may be monitored through photo imagery and mapped for identification purposes.

Council shall give consideration to the following criteria when considering other areas for public view management –

1. Level of built and service infrastructure at the location.
2. Level of public and tourist use of these areas.
3. Type of view and land/seascape.
4. Environmental impact and sensitivity for any coastal dunal systems.
5. Requirements of any related Plans of Management for reserves in the locality.
6. Financial cost and benefit to maintain the areas.

It is acknowledged that there are many other areas, especially along the Clarence coastline, that are key vantage points for public views. Practically it is difficult to identify all these locations. In some cases management will involve active pruning and/or lopping while in

other scenarios it will simply require selection of appropriate species that do not impede views that provide a public benefit.

It is intended that as Street Tree Masterplans or Vegetation Management Plans for reserves are developed that the areas to be managed for public views while considering the impact on private property and their existing views will be identified through those Plans. For example the Yamba Street Tree Masterplan has identified certain locations for the provision and maintenance of public views.

## 7. Tree Vandalism

Vandalism to trees and vegetation has been an ongoing issue for coastal councils over many years and will not be tolerated. Council will respond to vandalism against trees and vegetation in accordance with its Enforcement Policy and Rewards Policy and collect evidence for prosecution.

Acts of vandalism to Council trees are often reported to Council for action. Council will consider a range of actions to mitigate tree vandalism that could include –

- managing views for public benefit only at approved locations,
- planting species that will enable views to be substantially retained in locations where those views may be enjoyed by the public and preserve views by planting and maintaining vegetation between the view corridors with species that do not exceed the view corridor heights.
- public awareness and education initiatives,
- rehabilitation of the vandalised area.
- the covert and/or overt camera-monitoring of locations of concern.
- the offer of reward of up to five thousand dollars for information that results in a conviction for, or Court finding of illegal activity of, vandalism or deliberate damage to vegetation or public property.
- the strategic placement of signs that are not larger than 600mm square to warn that camera-monitoring may be in use, offer of a reward and likely penalties for those of vegetation damage, vandalism or other illegal activity in public spaces.