



informed



## Guidelines for Protecting Trees During Development

This guide provides information for the protection of trees during development. Any [tree damaging activity](#) associated with Council or privately owned trees which are deemed regulated require Council approval. You may need to provide information to Council that demonstrates how you will protect trees and how your development will not impact Council or regulated trees. It is recommended that a qualified arborist be engaged at the design stage to assess potential impacts and provide advice regarding your development.



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## Which trees require protection?

Trees on or adjacent to your property may be protected by various laws, and may require appropriate approvals and protection during your development project. The following trees will require approvals and protection during development:

- The City of Burnside has a number of trees listed as Significant within its Development Plan
- Those trees recognised as Regulated or Significant under the Development Regulations 2008, clause 6A
- Native trees and other Native Vegetation as prescribed under the Native Vegetation Act 1991
- Council owned street trees and reserve trees
- The *Development Act 1993* does not require the protection of non-regulated trees. However it is possible that damage to neighbouring trees may lead to civil action.

## Your responsibilities

Any tree requiring protection that may be impacted by your development must be shown on your site plan. This applies to development applications to subdivide land, carry out alterations and additions to buildings, demolish buildings and structures, build new dwellings and structures or any other development activity such as excavation or filling of land.

You should seek advice from a qualified arborist to determine the legal status of the tree/s, and to assess the possible impacts of your proposed development activities on such tree/s.

This may include potential impacts on tree/s not growing on your land.

## How do I protect trees from development?

The best way to protect trees on development sites is to follow those protection guidelines as defined in the [Australian Standard AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development sites](#).

Failure to protect trees from development may result in [tree damaging activity](#). This may lead to prosecution.



## What is a Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)?

A Tree Protection Zone is an area precluded or regulated from Development activity. It simply means that activities within this area can lead to Tree Damage.

## How to calculate the Size of the TPZ

A Tree Protection Zone must be calculated in accordance with the [Australian Standard AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development sites](#) and shown on your building plans. Any encroachment within this area that may lead to [tree damaging activity](#) must be approved by Council.

The [Australian Standard AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development sites](#) lists a range of activities not permitted within the TPZ.

## What activities are not permitted within a TPZ?

Certain activities are not permitted within the TPZ including, but not limited to:

- Alteration of soil levels including excavation and fill
- Mechanical trenching for building footings or the installation of underground services
- Stockpiling of building materials, equipment and tools
- Vehicle movements except on paved surfaces
- Sealing of surfaces with impermeable materials.

In some instances it may be possible to adopt 'tree sensitive' construction methods within the TPZ; these options should be discussed with an Architect or suitably experienced and qualified Project Arborist.

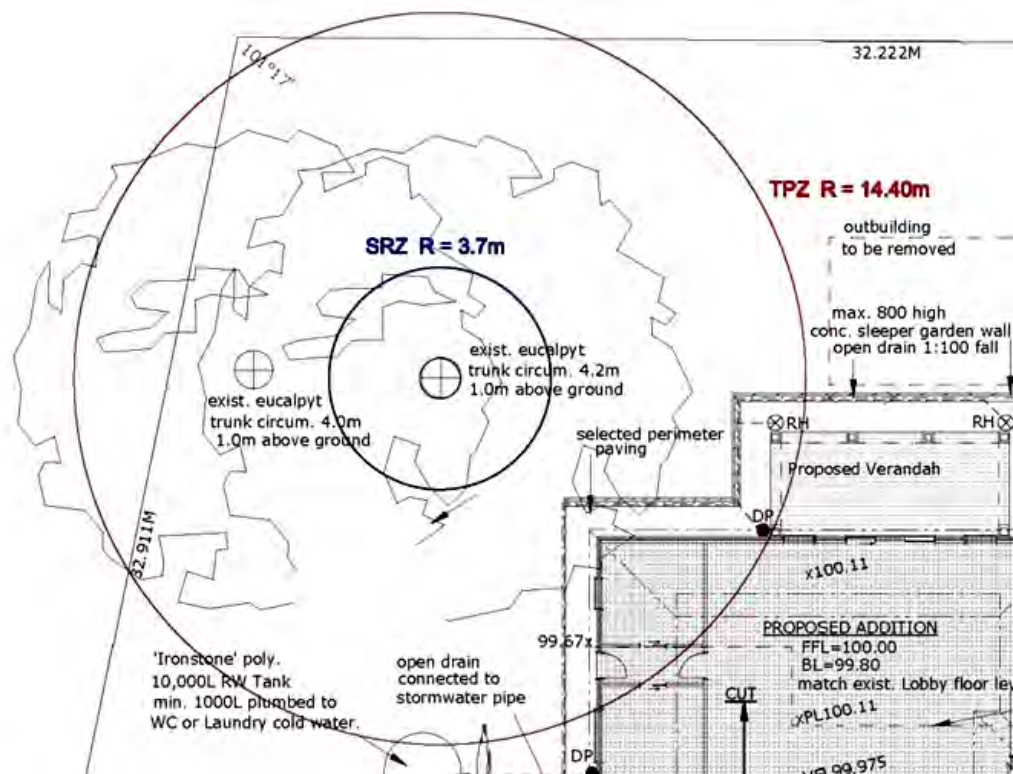


Image: TPZ shown on architectural drawings (example only).



## Tree Damaging Activity

The *Development Act 1993* describes tree damaging activity as:

- Tree removal
- Killing or destruction
- Lopping
- Ringbarking or topping
- Severing of branches, limbs, stems

or any other substantial damage to a tree including its root system.

## How can my development damage trees?

The root system of trees is typically shallow and widespread as shown below.



Image source: Harris, R. et.al. (2004)  
*Arboriculture: Integrated Management of Landscape Trees, Shrubs and Vines*  
Prentice Hall.

Disturbance to a tree's root system and surrounding soil from development activities can **impact** tree health, structural integrity and aesthetics. This may lead to an increase in branch failure and may even cause whole tree failure. Impacts of construction works can be difficult to repair, and it may take several years for a tree to display the impacts of development.

All parts of the tree, including its root system, surrounding soils, the trunk and branches may be damaged by development and construction activities, including:

- Excavation including cut and fill
- Soil compaction from vehicle movements or material storage
- Mechanical trenching for footings or services
- Sealing of surfaces with impermeable materials.

If any of these activities occur near a tree on a development site, this could result in Tree Damaging Activity. To avoid this ensure that trees are protected during development.



Photo: showing tree root damage from service trenching.



## What should be included in an arborists report?

Protecting trees starts at the design stage of your project. It is recommended that a qualified and experienced arborist be engaged early in the project. The Arborist should consult with your architect regarding tree protection measures. It is recommended that an Arboricultural Impact Assessment be provided so as to identify and document any potential tree damaging activity.

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment should meet those requirements as prescribed within the [Australian Standard AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development sites](#).

To find a qualified arborist in your local area contact the [Arboriculture Australia website](#).

Copies of the [Australian Standard AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development sites](#) can be purchased through Standards Australia.



*Photo: showing uncontrolled storage of building materials around a tree leading to soil compaction and trunk damage.*