

# Urban Forest Management

Classification:	Council Policy
First Issued / Approved:	19 June 2007
Last Reviewed:	C260923/13529
Next Review:	September 2027
ECM Tracking No.:	2711271
Responsible Officer:	Director Environment and Place
Relevant Legislation:	<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988</i> <i>Electricity Act 1996</i> <i>Environmental Protection Act 1993</i> <i>Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> <i>Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005</i> <i>Heritage Places Act 1993</i> <i>Landscape South Australia Act 2019</i> <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> <i>Native Vegetation Act 1991</i> <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i> <i>Telecommunications Act 1997</i> <i>Road Traffic Act 1961</i> <i>Water Industry Act 2012</i>
Related Policies:	<i>Asset Management Policy</i> <i>Biodiversity Policy</i> <i>Burnside City Master Plan</i> <i>Burnside 2030 Strategic Community Plan</i> <i>Bushfire Hazard Management Policy</i> <i>Climate Change Policy</i> <i>Community Engagement (Public Consultation) Policy</i> <i>Community Land Management Plans</i> <i>Environmental Sustainability Strategy</i> <i>Memorials and Heritage Plaques Policy</i> <i>Open Space Policy</i> <i>Recreation and Sport Strategy</i> <i>Regulated and Significant Tree Assistance Policy</i> <i>Risk Management Policy</i> <i>Streetscape Policy</i> <i>Verge Development Policy</i> <i>Water Sensitive Urban Design Policy</i> <i>Watercourse Management Policy</i>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The City of Burnside recognises the important contribution the Urban Forest makes to its community including amenity, biodiversity, climate change, character, environment, habitat, liveability and public health.

- 1.2 Council and community recognise that climate change, population growth and development present unique challenges and threats to maintaining canopy cover.
- 1.3 This policy sits alongside and integrates with other key Council policies, strategies and plans in order to deliver a holistic approach.
- 1.4 The policy provides a framework to protect, conserve, promote, maintain and enhance the city's Urban Forest, whether on public or private land.

## 2. Strategic Plan Desired Outcomes

- Principles: Spans all Strategic Plan Principles*
- Themes: Spans all Strategic Plan Themes*
- Goals: Spans all Strategic Plan Goals*
- Priorities:*
- 1.1 Flexible, fit-for-purpose facilities and places
  - 1.2 Resilience, wellbeing and recreation
  - 1.3 A sense of community
  - 1.4 Facilities, services and programs that meet our community's needs
- 2.1 Adapt and mitigate for climate change
  - 2.2 Canopy cover, greening and open space
  - 2.3 Use natural resources efficiently and minimise waste
  - 2.4 Healthy habitats and biodiversity
- 3.1 Master planning our City
  - 3.3 Attractive streets and neighbourhoods with easy access and movement and encouragement of greener transport
  - 3.4 Character and heritage protected, cherished and celebrated

## 3. Our Approach

- 3.1 Develop and maintain open space areas that conserve the City's built and natural heritage, including waterways, remnant vegetation and trees of significance.
- 3.2 Plan, maintain and deliver Council infrastructure and assets to the required level of service and condition that meet the needs of the community now and into the future.
- 3.3 Respond to a changing climate to foster resilient and sustainable environments, communities and Council organisation (climate change adaptation).
- 3.4 Support the protection of the City's local, natural and built heritage and culture.
- 3.5 Maintain and enhance streetscapes for improved amenity, character and environmental outcomes.

- 3.6 Restore and improve local native vegetation and habitat ensuring biodiversity is protected.
- 3.7 Promote and educate the community on the value of trees and their biodiversity in order to encourage the community to play an important part in the protection and preservation of trees.
- 3.8 Undertake responsible bushfire management to protect and enhance the natural environment and property.
- 3.9 Regularly review, update and adopt leading governance, risk management and administrative practices.
- 3.10 Consider the strategic acquisition of land for “Urban Forest” expansion and diversity.
- 3.11 Work with other agencies, such as SA Power Networks that have a direct influence over the Urban Forest to advocate for better management and maintenance outcomes.

#### **4. Legislative Requirements and Corporate Policy Context**

- 4.1 This policy is necessary as a document that links Council’s legislative requirements with its aims and vision for the management of the City’s Urban Forest. The policy links directly to relevant sections of the Local Government Act 1999, in particular Sections 221, 232, 234, 244 and 245 has specific relevance to the appropriate management of trees on public land as well as the management of trees as they relate to planning matters through the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 and the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017.
- 4.2 The interpretation and interaction of this policy with a number of Council and State Government policies and strategies includes significant outcomes such as Target 5 of the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, which states “For council areas with more than 30% tree canopy cover currently, this should be maintained to ensure no net loss by 2045” and Green Adelaide’s (Landscape Board) priorities around biodiversity, green streets, nature education and fauna, flora and ecosystem health.
- 4.3 The Burnside City Master Plan envisages amendments to the State Planning and Design Code to minimise the current Code’s impact on tree canopy in certain areas.

#### **5. Interpretation**

- 5.1 For the purpose of this policy:
  - 5.1.1 “Regulated Tree” and “Significant Tree” means a regulated and/or significant tree as defined by the Planning Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 and the Planning, Development, and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017.
  - 5.1.2 “Qualified Arborist” is defined as a professional practising in the field of Arboriculture with a minimum Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 4 (Certificate) Horticulture (Arboriculture) or similar or higher. For work undertaken within the Planning

Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 a minimum Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 5 or higher (Diploma) Horticulture (Arboriculture) or similar is required. A tree expert at this level should have experience in planning, consultation, determining the required level of tree assessment, written reports and giving legal testimony.

- 5.1.3 “Arboriculture” is defined as the study, cultivation, care and management of trees, particularly in the urban environment.
- 5.1.4 “Urban Forest” refers to all trees, shrubs and ground layer plants whether planted or naturally occurring, growing in public reserves, streets, parks, car parks and private gardens and collectively constitutes an urban forest.
- 5.1.5 “Risk management” is the term applied to a logical and systematic method of establishing the context, identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and communicating risks associated with any activity, function or process in a way that will enable organisations to minimise losses and maximise opportunities.
- 5.1.6 “Canopy Cover” is a measure of the amount of tree canopy over land and is used to measure and set urban forest targets.
- 5.1.7 “Biodiversity” refers to the variety of living things on Earth. This term is used by Council to describe sites where indigenous plants are the focus (i.e. ‘biodiversity sites’). While these sites are managed to create healthy habitat, biodiversity is not limited to these sites. Biodiversity exists in public parks and streetscapes, as well as in private gardens everywhere.
- 5.1.8 “Habitat” refers to the place where a plant, animal or other organism may naturally be found and which meets the environmental needs of the organism.
- 5.1.9 “Weed” refers to a plant that is either not locally indigenous or is not intentionally planted to contribute function to a landscape, including environmental weeds (plants which invade and threaten indigenous habitats) and declared weeds (Landscape South Australia Act), and Weeds of National Significance (Australian Weeds Strategy).

## 6. Policy

### 6.1 Objectives

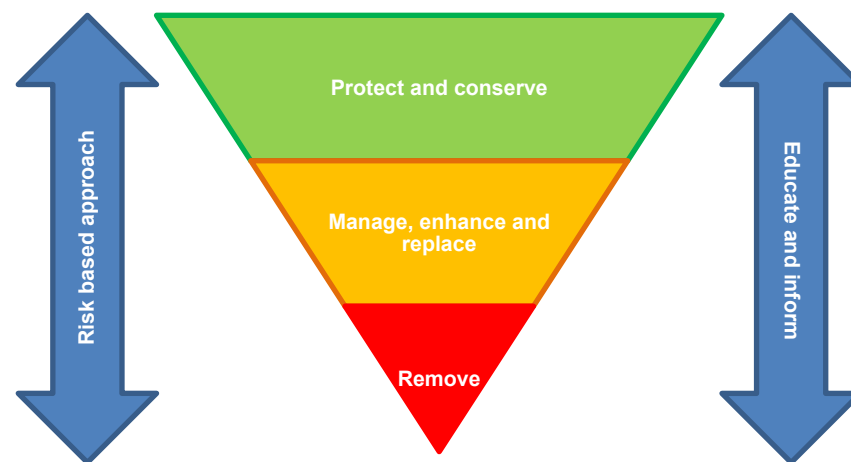
The primary objective of the policy is to sustainably manage the Urban Forest through the:

- 6.1.1 Deployment of an Urban Forest Management Framework. See attachment A.
- 6.1.2 Use of industry best practice approaches to protect and maintain, the Urban Forest. Principally based on risk management and using suitably qualified Arborists.

- 6.1.3 Recognition that trees are assets and should be properly maintained, renewed and enhanced through an asset management approach (AMP). To ensure continuation in providing Urban Forest services and benefits for current and future generations.
- 6.1.4 Setting of Canopy Cover and other targets to monitor progress toward achieving measurable outcomes such as increase species diversity and improve the age and health spread of the urban forest.
- 6.1.5 Use of accurate and timely information which is recorded and managed through the use of an effective Tree Management System.
- 6.1.6 Demonstrated commitment to raise awareness and provide education on the value trees make to the community and environment.
- 6.1.7 Advocacy for increased protections on all trees on public and private land.

## 6.2 Principles

Council will seek to:



- 6.2.1 Protect & Conserve –
  - 6.2.1.1 By starting from a position of tree retention unless otherwise legislated and taking into consideration individual circumstances.
  - 6.2.1.2 The Urban Forest from construction activity, as reasonably practical, through the application of the Australian standard AS4970-2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites.
  - 6.2.1.3 Through the investigation of unauthorised tree pruning/poisoning or removal and pursue enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1999.
  - 6.2.1.4 Through ongoing commitments detailed in other legislation, policies and strategies around regulated and significant trees on private land.

### 6.2.2 Manage, Enhance and Replace -

- 6.2.2.1 Through a proactive risk-based management approach. Deployed by qualified Arborists.
- 6.2.2.2 By removing and replacing poorly performing trees and those at the end of their useful life in the public domain.
- 6.2.2.3 Through tree replacement programs that work towards achieving canopy cover targets, preserving habitat, increasing species diversification and age distribution.
- 6.2.2.4 Utilising suitable space within the public domain, including verges, islands, parks and reserves.
- 6.2.2.5 By selecting appropriate species for planting based on their suitability for the site, performance and potential to contribute to the streetscape/open space.
- 6.2.2.6 Without regard for facilitating views, advertising signage, off street parking, solar panels, satellite or telecommunication receivers, overhang, debris drop or fauna waste / noise. Acknowledging however that individual circumstances will always be considered.

### 6.2.3 Remove –

- 6.2.3.1 Trees on public land as a last resort as part of a risk-based approach, consideration of individual circumstances and after all other reasonable retention alternatives have been considered. Notwithstanding any statutory or legislative requirements.
- 6.2.3.2 Weeds as determined necessary for the protection of the environment.
- 6.2.3.3 Vegetation to accommodate development, where Council approval is granted or prescribed by State Government. In these cases, Council may place a monetary value on the subject tree(s) using the Urban Tree Amenity Valuation Formula. All costs associated with tree loss will be at the applicant's expense and all payment must be made prior to work being commenced. The applicant will pay the following:
  - Amenity Value
  - Arborist report cost
  - Removal cost
  - Replacement cost (inclusive of stock, labour and after care)

### 6.2.4 Educate & Inform -

- 6.2.4.1 In accordance with the Community Engagement (Public Consultation) Policy. Based on an “Inform” approach.
- 6.2.4.2 The community on the value of the Urban Forest through technology, media and events to improve the understanding of the

benefits trees provide and challenges facing the Urban Forest. Including the use of targeted notifications for tree vandalism.

6.2.5 Delegated Authority -

6.2.5.1 Subject to any statutory or legislative requirements, removals of living and dead public trees will be determined by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their delegate. Noting that outside of the AMP the removal of living and low risk significant and/or regulated trees on public land will only be determined by the CEO.

**7. Review and Authority**

7.1 This Policy will be reviewed every four years at maximum in line with Council's Policies and Protocols Framework.

**8. Availability**

8.1 The Policy is available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website [www.burnside.sa.gov.au](http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au)

8.2 The Policy will be available for inspection without charge at the Civic Centre during ordinary business hours and a copy may be purchased at a fee as set annually by Council.

8.2.1 City of Burnside Civic Centre; 401 Greenhill Road, Tasmore SA 5065 Telephone; 8366 4200; Email; [burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au](mailto:burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au) Office hours: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm (except public holidays)

**9. Further Information**

9.1 For further information about this policy please contact:

City of Burnside Civic Centre, 401 Greenhill Road, Tasmore SA 5065  
Telephone; 8366 4200; Email; [burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au](mailto:burnside@burnside.sa.gov.au)

## Attachment A – Urban Forest Management Framework

