

# Tree Management Strategy

## 2016-2021





## LATROBE CITY COUNCIL TREE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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## LATROBE CITY COUNCIL TREE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### PURPOSE

The Tree Management Strategy is an overarching document that is intended to provide strategic direction for the efficient and effective management of trees on Council owned or managed land including street and open space trees.

In addition to this Strategy, the management of Council's tree population must be carried out in accordance with the following related documents which provide more detailed information for use by staff and guides decision making when dealing with tree related issues.

- ***Latrobe City Tree Management Framework (Draft) 2015***
- ***Latrobe City Annual Electric Line Clearance Management Plan 2015***
- ***Latrobe City Tree Root Management Procedure (Draft) 2015***
- ***Latrobe City Road Management Plan 2013- 2017***
- ***Latrobe City Suitable Street Tree Species List***
- ***Latrobe City Significant Tree Register***
- ***Council Policy 11 POL-4, Tree Work Notification Policy***

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Recognise the value of trees as an important community asset within the urban environment.
- Bring together any existing tree related documents together under the one umbrella.
- Enable consistent decision making on tree related issues.
- Manage risks associated with trees.
- Demonstrate a commitment to community engagement in relation to tree management.
- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to the protection and retention of trees within Latrobe City

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The strategic is in line with the following Council policies and strategies:

- Latrobe 2026; Natural Environment – *In 2026, Latrobe Valley enjoys a beautiful natural environment that is managed and protected with respect to ensure a lasting legacy for future generations.*
- Latrobe City Council Plan 2013 – 2017; Theme 2 Objective – *To enhance the visual attractiveness and liveability of Latrobe City.*
- Latrobe City Open Space Policy.
- Latrobe City Natural Environment Sustainability Strategy 2014-2019.



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### TREE MANAGEMENT

Council is responsible for the care and management of all trees in public areas including streets, parklands, reserves and rural local roadsides. Street trees require intensive management due to their growing environment and community expectations for amenity, functionality and safety. According to Council's street tree inventory there are approximately 70,000 trees in public urban parks and streets. The inventory has not been updated since 1996 and therefore is of limited value today.

The following are some of the services provided in the management and maintenance of Council's trees:

- Annual risk inspections of trees at Council facilities.
- Periodic inspection of street and park trees.
- Powerline clearance.
- Canopy pruning to maintain height clearance over footpaths and roads.
- Formative and structural pruning
- Rural roadside pruning.
- Deadwood removal.
- Tree planting and watering.

Council's Supervisor Arborist, assisted by the Team Leader Tree Maintenance, deals with the day-to-day tree management activities. Annual tree maintenance programs are contracted out to experienced tree maintenance contractors, with the in-house maintenance team undertaking reactive works, other planned programs and rural roadside pruning.

Council acknowledges that trees require good planning and appropriate maintenance to provide aesthetic, environmental and ecological benefits to the community. This will be achieved through but not restricted to the following:

- Public areas including streets and roadsides to be planted with trees consistent with Council's Suitable Street Tree Species list.
- Providing adequate resources to ensure the tree population is maintained in a healthy and safe condition.
- Continue the inspection and maintenance of street trees under the annual Block Pruning Program.
- Continue performing the annual Tree Risk Inspection at Council facilities program.
- Continue the inspection and maintenance of rural roadside trees under the annual Rural Road Pruning Program.
- Submit the Latrobe City Annual Electric Line Clearance Management Plan to Energy Safe Victoria each year.



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- Continue the inspection and pruning of trees under the Annual Powerline Pruning Program.

### COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Most residents highly value street trees in their street, and also have an interest in street and parkland trees in their local area. This can present challenges for Council on issues relating to tree management when the focus is on an individual tree or a group of trees.

Council will place an emphasis toward informing, consulting and where appropriate involving the community in tree management. This will be achieved through but not restricted to the following:

- Ensure the community is informed about all major projects involving tree removal, tree planting and other major tree management programs. (except where emergency works are required).
- Provide advance information regarding tree maintenance works via letter box drops to affected local residents, interest groups and surrounding community.
- The Ward Councillors shall receive a copy of information distributed.
- Increase community knowledge about the benefits of street and parkland trees within the urban environment through the City's web page and the local media.
- Seek opportunities to encourage community involvement in tree management.

### TREE PROTECTION

Trees have the potential to live for many generations but are vulnerable to changes in their local environment. Trees need to be protected from the detrimental impact that new developments, construction works and other activities could have on their health.

Australian Standards 4970-2009, Protection of Trees on Development Sites provides land managers, arborists, builders, contractors and planners with tree management guidelines for the proper care and protection of trees retained and integrated into construction projects.

Council has a Significant Tree Register which identifies any trees of state or local importance growing within the municipality. Some of these trees are growing on private property. The purpose of Council's Significant Tree Register is to identify and recognise the importance of significant trees in the Latrobe City area, and ensure their protection for future generations.

Council acknowledges that trees are a valuable community asset requiring protection through a combination of planning controls, enforcement and education. This will be achieved through but not restricted to the following:

- Where Council trees could be affected by any works, Council's Supervisor Arborist is to be consulted during the planning or design stage.



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- Council will use the Australian Standards AS 4970-2009, Protection of Trees on Development Sites as guidance for the protection and preservation of trees during all stages of a development or construction project.
- Conditions related to Development Applications will be used to ensure that, where appropriate, established trees are protected through all stages of a proposed development.
- Regular monitoring of development and construction sites to ensure adherence with approved tree protection plans.
- Promote community awareness of the Significant Tree Register and ensure it is easily available to the public, both in hard copy and on Council's web site.
- Develop individual protection plans for those trees on the Latrobe City Significant Tree Register.

### TREE RISKS

The risk associated with trees is a combination of the condition of the tree and the use around and in the vicinity of the tree. Council has a duty of care to reduce the level of risk to the public and property.

The response by Council to damage caused by trees will vary according to the nature and extent of the damage. The most commonly reported damage is those caused by tree roots.

Council trees need to be inspected and assessed to determine their potential for public risk; with trees in high risk or high use areas requiring more frequent inspections. Council currently undertakes tree risk inspections in accordance with the schedules contained in Latrobe City Tree Management Framework (Draft) 2015.

Council acknowledges that all trees have an inherent risk which must be managed effectively. This will be achieved through but not restricted to the following:

- All Council trees reported as being unsafe or hazardous by the public or identified as being of concern by staff are to be inspected by an appropriately qualified and experienced Arborist.
- All trees that are to come under the control of Council are to be assessed by a qualified and experienced arborist for their suitability for retention and to identify any remedial works required to bring them up to a good and safe condition prior to handover.
- Identify and manage potential tree risks to the satisfaction of Council's insurer.
- Tree maintenance generated through the tree risk inspection process will be recorded and scheduled for works.



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### TREE PRUNING

Pruning is an essential component of the management of Council's tree asset. Once trees are established, pruning is the key maintenance process to keep individual trees in a safe and visually appealing condition. The pruning of trees should be minimised as trees look more appealing when left to form their natural shape.

Council acknowledges that trees should only be pruned to achieve specific goals. This will be achieved through but not restricted to the following:

- Council trees to be pruned in accordance with the Australian Standard for Tree Pruning, AS 4373 (2007).
- Continuing the urban street tree pruning program, with each tree being visited and pruned as necessary at least once every two years.
- Continuing the ten year cyclic rural roadside pruning program.
- Individual trees may be pruned as necessary in response to customer requests from residents, Council staff or other parties.
- Pruning of Council owned trees is not permitted by anyone other than Council staff or Council engaged contractors.
- Maintain public safety through the removal of structurally unsound limbs.
- Maintain tree health through the removal of dead or diseased material.
- Maintain prescribed clearances from services.
- Maintain prescribed clearances from roads, footpaths and driveways.
- Ensure traffic safety and visibility of road signs.
- Minimise future work requirements through the removal of potential problems at an early stage.

Where private trees overhang Council property, footpaths or roadways the tree is regarded as the owner's responsibility and therefore onus is on the owner to prune the branches when requested. An order for the pruning of overhanging branches can be issued under Council's by-laws.



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### TREE SELECTION AND PLANTING

As most trees in the streets and parks of Latrobe City will occupy their planting sites for many years, a careful considered selection of site and tree species is vital.

Council's Suitable Street Tree Species List was developed to ensure trees are selected to suit the site conditions, including proximity to infrastructure like overhead power lines, drains, and footpaths.

Council acknowledges the selection of appropriate trees for urban street planting is critical for successful establishment and well managed streetscape. This will be achieved through but not restricted to the following actions:

- Prepare a masterplan to guide future planning for tree planting across Latrobe City after consultation with the community and a report being brought to Council.
- Develop a preferred species list after consultation with the community and a report being brought to Council.
- Conduct an annual review of the suitable tree species list and place it out for public consultation.
- Council's Supervisor Arborist shall be consulted on species suitability where there is any departure from preferred species selection.
- Continue to encourage community participation in tree planting programs to promote ongoing stewardship.
- All Council development projects incorporate planting of new trees in conformance with Council's Suitable Street Tree Species List.
- Tree planting by private developers and others in land that will become the responsibility of Council must be done in consultation with and to the satisfaction of Council.
- Where appropriate no more than two different tree species generally to be used in any one street.





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### PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Trees are subject to a range of pests and diseases.

When pests and diseases occur that could affect the immediate or long term survival of Council owned and managed trees, Latrobe City will react appropriately.

There is a significant population of Elm trees within Latrobe City that require special protection. Council is committed to saving the Elm tree population by maintaining an annual Elm Leaf Beetle control program. This consists of soil injection and bark banding treatments. This will ensure Elm trees within Latrobe City are maintained for future generations.

Council acknowledges the need to minimise the threat that pests and diseases can have on the tree population. This will be achieved through but not restricted to the following actions:

- Develop specific control programs where appropriate for major pests and diseases likely to affect trees under the control of Council.
- Monitor Council's tree population to enable timely and appropriate responses when pest and disease outbreaks compromise the immediate or long-term survival of the tree/s.
- Council will undertake to notify owners of privately owned trees of pest and disease outbreaks so that the owner may take action as required.

### TREE REMOVAL

Trees can take many years to develop fully and once removed cannot be quickly replaced.

Removal of any tree has the potential to create a great deal of conflict as trees often instil very emotive feelings, both for and against removal.

Trees are mainly removed for the following reasons:

- Tree threatening to cause significant property damage. (Either to private or Council owned property).
- Tree causing significant interference to services or mains i.e. Power lines, water and sewer pipes, kerb and pavements.
- Tree causing problems for pedestrians and/or motorists.
- Council or other public authorities require the removal of trees to facilitate the construction of new infrastructure.
- Tree being storm damaged or having failed in part due to shedding limbs.
- Tree is dying, diseased or dead.



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The Latrobe City will seek to avoid tree removal wherever possible. This will be achieved through but not restricted to the following actions:

- Council will investigate all tree management options prior to the recommendation for tree removal.
- Council will only remove trees that are not suitable for their location and for which risk minimisation strategies will not be successful.
- Review insurance claims in accordance with advice from Council's insurer and assess the removal and replacement of trees that pose an unacceptable risk.

The strategy should be reviewed every five years in line with the review of the Latrobe City Tree Management Framework (Draft) 2015.

<b>Approved by:</b>	
<b>Date approved:</b>	
<b>Review date:</b>	