

Policy

Title: Nature Strip Policy

Category: Recreation, Parks, Bushland and Reserves

Date Last Adopted: 30 May 2022

1. Objectives

This document is for use by City of Hobart officers, residents, planners, developers, contractors and landscapers. It applies to all nature strips within road reserves owned and/or managed by City of Hobart.

This policy along with guidelines for nature strip maintenance and food gardens on nature strips, achieves a clear and equitable, socially responsible guidance for staff and residents outlining what is regarded as their civic duty in taking care of road reservations and nature strips.

2. Background

Achieving the community's long-term vision of creating a diverse, vibrant and liveable environment that is an attractive and safe place to live, work and play. Large trees and green spaces, including nature strips, play an important role in defining the image and culture of the City and suburbs, enhancing aesthetic appeal of our streets and facilities, maintaining urban biodiversity and increasing property values.

Nature strips are the narrow grassed or vegetated areas that are within the road reserve between the edge of the road and property boundaries.

Nature strips provide:

- unpaved areas to allow infiltration of rainwater and oxygen into the soil improving the health and growth of street trees and reducing stormwater runoff; and
- visual softening of hard streetscape elements such as roads, footpaths, driveways, fences and buildings.
- help to cool the surrounding area (transpiration by plants cools the air);
- complement the natural settings of the neighbourhood such as street trees and residential gardens;
- If vegetated, provide biodiversity corridors and fauna habitat;
- where appropriate, can provide some opportunities for food production.



- visibility and sight lines for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists particularly at intersections, curves in the road and driveway access points;
- space for people walking where there is no footpath;
- space to open doors between the road and footpath;
- space for kerbside collection for bins;
- They also commonly accommodate above and below ground services such as electricity, telecommunications, lighting, water, gas, stormwater, drainage and sewage;
- space for street tree planting;

3. Policy

General

It is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner/resident to maintain the nature strip adjacent to their property.

The City of Hobart encourages property owners to recognise the value of nature strips and to take pride in maintaining them.

Road Reservation Maintenance

The City of Hobart will maintain nature strips or road verges that meet any of the following criteria:

- Adjacent to the Council's community facilities.
- Adjacent to parks and reserves.
- Nature strips in the centre median of roads
- Nature strips that have been identified by Council as being too steep to be safely maintained by the adjacent resident
- Adjacent to State Roads, where Council is required to under section 11 of the Roads and Jetties Act
- Nature strips where the adjacent resident of the property meets the eligibility criteria for the Special Circumstance Nature strip Mowing Service.

Grass cutting of nature strips will be undertaken at the same time as mowing of adjoining property. The mowing of road verges and median strips may be undertaken using a brush cutter which provides a much coarser cut.

The Council will clean grass clippings from the footpath, driveway and gutter that results from works carried out in the maintenance of the nature strips.



Assistance for Nature Strip Mowing

The City of Hobart provides a special circumstance nature strip mowing service for eligible people who:

- Are a resident of the City of Hobart; and
- Do not have anyone capable to perform the task on their behalf; and
- Are physically unable permanently or temporarily to operate a lawnmower; and
- Cannot afford to engage a contractor to undertake the mowing;

Or any other discretionary reasons preventing mowing of the nature strip, as approved by the Manager Bushland, Biodiversity and Waterways.

Applicants requesting this nature strip mowing service must fill in the application form and have it signed by their qualified health care professional.

Once the application has been assessed, residents who meet the eligibility criteria will be entered on the Council's special circumstances nature strip mowing service list.

All recipients of this service are required to reapply annually to reconfirm eligibility. Application forms will be sent out by the Council and the service will be suspended if a response is not received.

The Council reserves the right to remove any person from the nature strip special circumstances mowing service mowing list at any time with four weeks written notice, if any of the following occur:

- The person sells or otherwise transfers their interest in the property, and/or ceases to occupy the property;
- The circumstances of the owner / occupier of the property change dramatically, such that the person no longer meets the eligibility criteria stated in this policy;
- The person fails to report any changes in their circumstances, which could make them ineligible for inclusion on the nature strip mowing list; or
- Council deems that the person no longer meets the eligibility criteria stated in this policy.

The Council reserves the right to take special conditions into consideration, other than those listed above.

The nature strip mowing service does not provide a guaranteed mowing frequency and site visits under this Policy will generally be no more than four times a year, or at the Council's discretion.

Nature strip maintenance under this policy will not necessarily reflect the quality of maintenance on private properties. The Council will clean grass clippings from the footpath, driveway and gutter that results from works carried out in the maintenance of the nature strips.



No other rubbish, debris or green waste will be cleaned up and/or removed from the nature strip or private property at the time of mowing

Alternative Nature Strip Plantings and Treatments

A resident wishing to replace the grass verge with low maintenance plantings or garden areas must apply in writing to the Council, and received written approval prior to undertaking any works.

A set of Guidelines for landscaping and maintenance of nature strips and guidelines for food gardens on nature strips has been developed to assist property owners and residents in achieving alternatives to grass nature strips.

Any proposal must comply with the following conditions:

- Road owners consent is granted prior to any works commencing.
- Any changes to the nature strip does not alienate public land for a private purpose. Nature strips shall remain part of the road reserve and in public ownership;
- Public safety is paramount in all considerations and the works must not create an obstacle or obstruction to the adjoining property owners and/or public use of the nature strip, footpath or road, including pedestrians, cyclists, kerbside parking, rubbish collection and property access;
- Swale drains located within the nature strip are not modified and remain grassed;
- Council is not liable for any damage to underground services. A *Dial Before You Dig* must be undertaken by the resident prior to works commencing;
- Installation and maintenance of alternative plantings and treatments complies with City of Hobart Guideline for Nature Strips;
- Removal of plantings may occur at any time due to emergency or planned works. The City will endeavour to provide notice, however this may not always be possible. The City will endeavour to transplant the plants for reuse where possible. If not the city will supply up to 20 tube stock plants from its nursery that are suitable for planting on nature strips.

Landscaping

- Plantings (excluding street trees) are maintained at a maximum height of 60cm;
- Plantings do not include Weeds of National Significance, declared weeds under the *Weed Management Act 1999* or environmental weeds within the Hobart municipality;
- Residents are not permitted to plant, prune, damage or remove street trees in accordance with the City of Hobart's Street Tree Strategy 2017. Damage includes branches, trunk and roots of the tree. Residents can, however, make a customer service request for a new, replacement or maintenance of a street tree through the Council's Customer Service Centre;
- The Council can require the resident to remove any nature strip treatments that are considered a risk to users of the nature strip, footpath or road, prevents access or



impacts of site distances for pedestrians, cyclists or motorists and if the resident does not or cannot maintain the nature strip;

- The Council will not contribute financially to the installation, maintenance or damage caused to an alternative nature strip. The resident is responsible for all costs of ongoing maintenance and the reinstatement back to grass verge if requested or required by the Council; and
- Retrospective approval for nature strips modified prior to endorsing this policy is not required unless deemed unsafe by the Council or there is a failure to maintain the alternative plantings and surfacing in accordance with the City of Hobart's Guideline for Nature Strips.

Food Gardens

- The chosen site should have no major safety, health or traffic concerns. An established food garden should not create hazards or barriers for pedestrians or other road users in the vicinity of the site. The site must not be near high volume traffic areas and traffic conditions will be assessed as suitable.
- The slope of a nature strip must not exceed a gradient of 15 ° (25%) to allow for optimum plant height and sight line safety. There must be no drop-offs or retaining walls in proximity to the installation.
- The site must enable access to all utilities and other essential services, including but not limited to: telecommunication pits, manholes, stormwater pipes, water meters, and electricity poles and lines. The site must also not intrude on aboveground fixtures such as street lighting.
- Nature strip food gardens are only permitted in raised planter boxes approved by the City of Hobart
- Installation and maintenance of alternative plantings and treatments complies with City of Hobart Guideline for Nature Strips Food Gardens.

4. Legislation, Terminology and References

RELATED LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (Highways) Act 1982

Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993

Roads and Jetties act

Weed Management Act 1999

REFERENCES

Australian Standard 4373-2007: Australian Standard for Pruning of Amenity Trees.

Australian Standard 4970-2009: Protection of Trees on Development Sites.



DEFINITIONS

Nature Strip: means the unmade area between the edge of the road and adjacent land, but does not include a bicycle path, footpath or shared path.

Tree: Long lived woody perennial plant generally with one or relatively few main stems or trunks.

| | |
|---|--|
| Responsible Officer: | Director City Life |
| Policy first adopted by the Council: | 30 May 2022 (to take effect from January 2023) |
| History | |
| Amended by Council | Not applicable |
| Next Review Date: | September 2024 |
| File Reference: | F22/56693 |