Woollahra Tree Management Policy

Adoption Date:	8 August 2011
Review Date:	
Version:	1
Division/Department:	Technical Services/Open Space & Trees
Responsible Officer:	Manager – Open Space & Trees
HPE CM Record Number:	18/79439

Table of Contents

1   Introduction

The Woollahra Tree Management Policy has been developed by the Vegetation Management Working Party in response to requests from Councillors and residents for a new Tree Management Policy to cover public and private trees in the Local Government Area.

The Policy focuses on high level policy statements; however it does give an indication of how Council's more detailed procedures will be used with regard to some of our more frequent requests such as clearance, view and solar access pruning.

The policy covers the key principles and processes we will use for maintaining our public and private tree collections in a safe, healthy and environmentally sensitive way.

The policy aims to improve the safety and wellbeing of the public, and of staff and contractors working on trees.

This Policy is to be used as a reference by staff, Councillors residents and tree workers who need to make or understand decisions about managing and maintaining public and private trees in the local government area.

1.1 Benefits of Trees

Trees in parks, streets and private properties give Woollahra much of its unique look and feel. Our leafy character is valued and identified by the extensive tree canopies that exist throughout the Municipality, and many people are attracted to live in Woollahra as a result of our trees and landscapes.

Trees play a vital role in our local ecosystem. Just a few of their benefits include removing pollutants from the atmosphere and providing oxygen and food for humans and other animals. Trees stabilise the soil and keep our artesian water tables at appropriate levels. They reduce the overall temperature and the shade they cast prolongs the life of many built surfaces.

Our approach to tree management is not just considering trees for their aesthetic values, but also consideration of the benefits of trees on our environmental, ecological, social, psychological and economic wealth. Looking to the future the environmental and social benefits of trees will be increasingly important as we adapt to climate change and to increasingly densely populated urban areas. Effects such as summer temperature reductions and pollutant interception are strongly linked to large trees, large canopy areas and well vegetated areas.

Some of the environmental and ecological benefits of trees are:

* trees make areas cooler in summer with shading and evaporative cooling trees reduce the need for air conditioning and artificial shading of buildings
* trees provide protection from solar radiation
* trees reduce the "heat island effect" around city and urban industries.
* trees make areas warmer in winter, with blocking of cold winds

- trees provide improvement in air quality, with leaf absorption of some pollutants and interception of particles that are then washed to the ground
- trees provide storage of carbon dioxide (carbon sequestration)
- trees intercept rainfall and provide slow delivery to the ground, taking the pressure off stormwater systems in heavy rainfall events
- trees provide ecosystem services including the purification of air and water, detoxification of wastes, biodiversity, habitat for pest controlling insects and birds and habitat for pollinators etc.

Some of the aesthetic and visual benefits of trees are:

- trees provide interest with different forms, colours and textures
- trees assist with the softening of hard surfaces e.g. concrete and bricks
- trees can define spaces
- trees emphasise the seasons
- trees provide privacy and the screening of undesirable views
- trees help to unify areas and provide local character
- trees attract birds and other fauna

Some of the social and psychological benefits of trees are:

- well landscaped and treed areas are linked to the reduction of aggression and crime
- trees are known to help children with ADD and ADHD – reduction of symptoms; allow them to concentrate
- trees and parks help build communities – with green places to meet and socialise
- trees and parks encourage health and physical activity
- people living in greener environments are healthier

Some of the economic benefits trees provide to our local businesses are:

- trees add value to the sale price of houses
- well treed and landscaped business areas have lower vacancy rates and achieve higher rents
- well treed and landscaped areas provide spaces where people are happy to meet and socialise

1.2 Managing Trees

Woollahra Municipality is well known for its leafy character. Significant concentrations of historic and cultural plantings exist that are remnants from historic estates, older subdivisions, and commemorative plantings. In addition there are significant areas of remnant or replanted bushland. There are over 20,000 trees in public parks and streets, plus many thousands of trees on private property.

Our tree collections represent a diverse range of species, naturally occurring or planted during various historical periods, and as a result of this diversity the management of our

trees is a large and complex job. Trees are long term, dynamic assets and their establishment and removal is often difficult from both the technical and social points of view.

Given the broad age range of our trees, we need to manage our older trees in public areas giving consideration to risk management and public safety issues.

Tree management also demands an insight into the long term impact of specific trees and the local residents' environment, which should not be adversely impacted by the selection and planting of trees in public spaces.

In addition to establishing and managing trees throughout their lives, Council's tree management policy also looks at options for tree replacement programs which will allow for the emergence of new significant trees for future generations to enjoy.

The Woollahra Tree Management Policy aligns with the goals of the Council's *Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program*, with the *Australian Standard for the Pruning of Amenity Trees*, and with industry best practice.

The policy aims to improve the safety and wellbeing of the public, and of staff and contractors working on trees.

1.3 Aims

To promote, maintain and conserve the leafy character of the Municipality.

To recognise trees as important components of liveable cities.

To ensure trees in our care are healthy and well maintained.

To provide a balance between public and private amenity.

1.4 Objectives

To manage our green infrastructure balanced against the management of built infrastructure.

To ensure appropriate succession planting and tree replacement strategies which consider the needs of the tree as well as the needs of nearby structures and property.

To develop management principles for tree selection, maintenance, removal and replacement, taking into account changes in urban landscape and built form.

To develop management principles for tree selection, maintenance, removal and replacement in coordination with the Street Tree Master plan.

To manage and maintain trees for public safety.

To ensure that all tree management and maintenance practices are carried out safety.

To educate the community on the environmental and social benefits associated with appropriate tree plantings.

To consult with the community on tree management projects and Park Plans of Management.

To conserve significant trees of historic, cultural, commemorative, scientific, visual or aesthetic importance.

To conserve and renew tree plantings which define the character of a particular area.

To find a balance between maintaining our canopy cover and preserving recognised vistas and view corridors.

To find a balance between maintaining our canopy cover and preventing excessive loss of solar access.

To protect and enhance habitat and wildlife corridors for indigenous fauna through appropriate tree planting.

1.5 Tree Management and Maintenance Actions

All tree management and maintenance actions will have consideration for the *Australian Standard AS 4373 (2007) "Pruning of Amenity Trees" and Australian Standard AS 4970 "Protection of Trees on Development Sites" (2009)*.

In assessing trees for appropriate management actions, one of the most commonly used methods used by Council arborists is Safe Useful Life Expectancy - SULE. Each tree is evaluated as to how long it could be expected to provide good, safe long-term amenity at its location. This includes criteria such as tree species, condition, retention value, age, vigour, sensitivity to disturbance, and how visible is it to the adjoining area.

In consideration of the above, and subject to inspection by one of Council's arborists using agreed criteria, the following maintenance actions may be granted approval for a private tree, or be carried out by Council for a public tree:

- thinning, selective pruning or reduction pruning to improve a tree's structure and safety
- thinning to provide more solar access to private dwellings
- general pruning to remove dead, diseased, dying, defective and conflicting branches or foreign matter deemed to be detrimental to the health or structure of the tree
- selective or formative pruning to remove identified branches that are causing a problem, or to reduce encroachment on utilities or buildings
- crown lifting for pedestrian safety or vehicular access
- remedial pruning to prolong the useful life expectancy of a damaged tree
- root pruning to prevent future damage to built or natural structures, and
- removal, if unsuitable or hazardous, subject to replacement plantings being undertaken where appropriate and in accordance with this policy.

1.6 Woollahra Tree Canopy

Trees provide many aesthetic amenity benefits and community feedback surveys have shown that most of our residents believe that our tree lined streets and parks are a principal component of the beauty and value of our local area.

To conserve Woollahra's leafy character on an ongoing basis, care must be taken to maintain an overall canopy cover. Tree replacements on public land generally take place as part of our tree asset management and maintenance schedules; however maintaining our private tree cover can be more difficult.

As with most Sydney metropolitan councils, changes in built form in Woollahra have trended towards larger or multiple dwellings on existing land parcels. Council officers assessing development applications look for replacement planting solutions which enable a change in the number, positioning or species of the trees to retain overall canopy in instances where the original trees cannot be retained (see section 3.8).

We will set a target for the retention of canopy cover, based on assessments of the extent of tree canopy and the recent rate of loss of canopy due to building development activity and ageing of trees. This target may be reviewed from time to time.

2   Public Tree Management

2.1 General principles

In making decisions about tree selection, planting, pruning, removal and replacement, we will consider the public interest and private interests. Public interest will generally take precedence over private interests, but a major private benefit may take precedence over a minor public detriment. Each request will be assessed on its merits.

We will select and manage trees taking into account:

- the aims and objectives of this policy
- the goals and strategies of Council's current Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program
- the relevant provisions of the Woollahra LEP and relevant DCPs, REPs and SEPPs
- the relevant provisions of Community Land and Crown Land Plans of Management
- Council's aims and objectives for ecologically sustainable development.

We will consider environmental, heritage, local character and residential amenity factors when selecting species for planting in streets and parks. We will plan for the full life cycle of the trees in the selection process so that the impact of the trees when fully grown is taken into account.

We will take the longevity and lifecycle stages of trees into account with respect to selection, procurement, planting, formative development, mature stage management and removal and replacement.

Where appropriate, Council will promote the use of local native plant species and indigenous trees in remnant bushland areas will not be permitted to be pruned or removed except where warranted by the poor condition of the tree.

We will manage our trees in line with contemporary best practice standards including the *Australian Standard for Pruning Amenity Trees,* the *WorkCover Code of Practice for Amenity Tree Work* and the *Protection of Trees on Development Sites.*

We will manage our trees as valuable landscape assets and we will select and maintain our trees using best practice and best design principles.

2.2 Council owned and managed trees

Woollahra Municipality is renowned for the extent and diversity of its public trees and leafy landscapes. Our extensive park and street tree plantings are a significant component of this environment and we have many outstanding examples of tree plantings which define and reinforce the architectural and landscape character of the area.

We will manage our public trees through scheduled maintenance cycles, in response to customer requests, and through planned removal and replacement planting, and new planting programs.

2.3 Significant and heritage trees on public land

Woollahra Municipality has significant collections of historic and cultural plantings which comprise a diverse range of species planted over a number of historical periods. In addition to our trees with cultural and historical significance, there are many other "special" trees and/or groups of trees which have values such as: visual significance, recognised aesthetic qualities, rarity in botanic or scientific terms and trees planted as part of commemorative ceremonies.

In general significant trees on public land will only be pruned or removed for public safety issues. Refer to section 3.10 for Significant Trees on Private Land

Many of Woollahra's significant trees can be referenced in the following documents which are available on our website.

Volume 1 – Significant Trees under Private Ownership Part 1. A listing of trees located on private property that Woollahra Council has identified as significant to the surrounding area. Features Darling Point, Edgecliff, Paddington and Woollahra.

Volume 2 – Significant Trees under Private Ownership Part 2. A listing of trees located on private property that Woollahra Council has identified as significant to the surrounding area. Featuring Double Bay, Point Piper, Bellevue Hill, Rose Bay, Vaucluse and Watsons Bay.

Volume 3 – Significant Street Trees. A listing of street trees identified by Woollahra Council as significant to the surrounding area.

Volume 4 – Significant Trees in Public Parks. A listing of park trees identified by Woollahra Council as significant to the surrounding area.

2.4 Avenue plantings

Woollahra Municipality has a number of park and street trees which form visually significant avenues which often frame a view or overarch a road or pathway. Although not always traditional in design (single species and double sided) our avenue plantings are often a dominant landscape element in our parks and streets, and they are generally associated with a particular period in landscape design or with previously existing gardens or estates.

In most instances we will document our significant avenue plantings as part of our register for Significant and Heritage Trees.

We also aim to promote new avenue plantings and to retain or enhance the uniformity, spacing and management practices for our existing avenue plantings.

2.5 Natural area trees

Woollahra Council manages approximately 30 hectares of natural area bushland in parks including Trumper Park, Cooper Park, Parsley Bay Reserve, Gap Park and Harbourview Park. We also have several significant areas of bushland managed by other agencies in the Local Government area, including Nielsen Park and South Head.

Wherever possible we choose natural regeneration methods over revegetation or replanting options, and generally we will use plants provenanced from the local area to preserve our local floristic gene pool.

We will investigate the use of composite provenance plantings to maximise the evolutionary potential of some local species in line with current and expected climate change models.

Indigenous trees in remnant bushland areas will not be permitted to be pruned or removed except where warranted by the poor condition of the tree.

2.6 Scheduled maintenance programs

An effective tree maintenance system achieves a safe and healthy collection of trees through appropriate selection, establishment, pruning, removal and replacement.

We will maintain an annual inspection and pruning program for street trees, and we will extend this practice to selected park trees.

In assessing trees for maintenance pruning we will apply the principles and key assessment criteria outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.10.
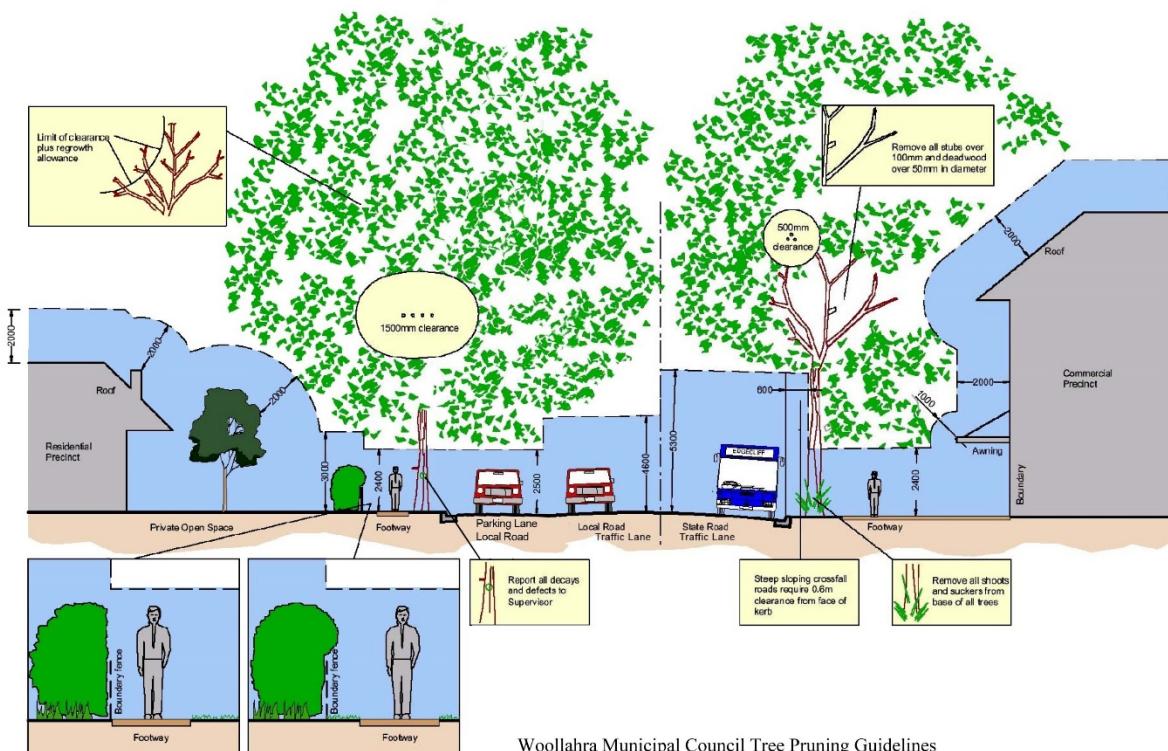
Council owned trees may only be pruned by Council's staff or contractors. Pruning, removal or poisoning of trees is an offence and may result in prosecution.

2.7 Pruning public trees for clearances

Woollahra is renowned for its large mature street trees, and as such these guidelines will be used when assessing the opportunity of maintaining clearance heights of existing trees around parking areas.

As an important part of our annual tree pruning program we will maintain reasonable, safe clearances between trees and pedestrians, vehicles and built structures.

We have developed tree pruning guidelines, which are referred to by our arborists to determine if clearance pruning is required. These guidelines complement the standards of surrounding councils as well as those used by the Roads & Maritime Services (RMS).

Woollahra Municipal Council Tree Pruning Guidelines

2.8 Pruning public trees for electrical wire clearance

Ausgrid staff and contractors undertake pruning of public trees to provide clearance from overhead power lines. Ausgrid staff and contractors have specific training and authority for close approach to power lines, which Council staff do not have.

The Ausgrid website provides information and residents may contact the Ausgrid Customer Service Centre on 13 13 65.

Wherever possible we will take into consideration the likely need for such pruning in our selection and placement of public trees.

2.9 Customer requests and claims

Residents may make a request to Council to undertake some form of pruning work to park or street trees near their property to protect their living environment, enhance public safety, or to carry out some remedial work to preserve the good health of a tree.

If a Council owned or managed tree is considered to be damaging or encroaching on public or private built structures or posing a hazard or potential hazard to persons or built structures, residents may make a request to Council to prune, root prune, remove or make the tree safe.

Requests for inspections on Council trees should be made to a customer service officer who will log the request in our customer request management (CRM) system.

We will process the requests in accordance with our adopted customer request service standards.

We will apply the principles and key assessment criteria outlined in sections 2.1 - 2.10 in responding to such requests.

All inspections and subsequent work will be carried out by qualified arborists working to the Australian Standard.

Residents who believe that Council owned or managed trees have damaged their property, and wish to make a claim against Council, may contact our Risk Department for advice.

2.10   Assessment criteria for pruning or removal

When considering the pruning or removal of a tree on public property, we will refer to the preceding principles (see section 2.1) and the following criteria:

- the potential risk of personal injury
- the potential risk of damage to buildings and structures*, civil infrastructure or utility services
- the tree's health, growth habit, stability, aspect and structural soundness and the condition of the ground it is in
- the effect upon adjoining residents' living environment
- the effect on the landscape or streetscape and the tree's amenity value to the local area
- whether the tree forms part of a green corridor or a streetscape theme planting
- whether the tree is a remnant indigenous species, and its effect on bio-diversity
- the suitability of the species to its location, and
- whether the tree is listed as a significant tree, and its cultural/heritage significance, particularly in a conservation area.

* Note: In instances where a tree may be compromising a structure such as a masonry wall which is not a core element of a building, staff are encouraged to find a solution which maintains both the tree and the structure.

2.11   Tree work which we will not carry out

Generally, we will not consider leaf, or fruit, or sap drop, or bird or bat droppings, which are all natural processes of trees and wildlife, as valid reasons for pruning trees.

2.12   View pruning

Many parts of the Woollahra Municipality enjoy views of the harbour and the city which are greatly valued by residents. Council has for many years adopted a practice of providing a user pays view pruning service for some street trees in specified circumstances. Guidelines for view pruning have been developed and refined over time to maintain pre-existing views, while avoiding pruning practices which disfigure trees, and to maintain public trees in a healthy and safe condition.

With the growing of many public trees to their mature size, and with increased multi-unit and multi-level residential development in recent years, the guidelines have been amended to take into account the circumstance of trees growing into a previously uninterrupted view.

On the other hand, residents developing or making alterations or additions to properties, or purchasing newly developed properties should recognise that established trees between their property and the harbour, or other significant views, will not generally be considered for view pruning to create a new or improved view.

2.12.1 View pruning service

We will provide a user pays view pruning service for street trees which meet specified criteria, as set out in the principles in section 2.12.2 and the guidelines in section 2.12.3, and subject to inspection and agreement by the applicant to charges and conditions of approval.

2.12.2 View pruning principles

Pruning of public trees for views may be considered where the trees affect significant views and view corridors.

Pruning will be managed to take into account the health and safety of the tree and to provide a balance between private and public interests.

Where repeated view pruning is assessed as detrimental to the condition of a tree, consideration will be given to removal and replacement planting which will allow views beyond, over or through the selected species.

2.12.3 View pruning guidelines

Our guidelines for view pruning aim to maintain pre-existing views, while avoiding pruning practices which disfigure trees, while also maintaining public trees in a healthy and safe condition.

The guidelines make provision for consideration of trees growing up into a previously unobstructed view.

Guideline 1.   The tree has been inspected and has received approval by Council for view pruning within the last two years.

        OR

Guideline 1a. In instances where a growing tree encroaches on a previously uninterrupted view, consideration may be given to pruning to restrict the impact on the view.

Guideline 2.   The applicant has provided documentary evidence such as photographs to show the previous existence of a view*

Guideline 3.   The tree is centrally located in the view corridor of the principal living area and within approximately 50 metres of the viewing point.
        (Note: long-standing view pruning relationships / services on trees not centrally located to the principal living area may be maintained if not detrimental to a tree's health)

Guideline 4.   Pruning may only be approved if it will not disfigure the tree. The term "disfigure" will generally mean pruning beyond the guidelines of the Australian Standard for the Pruning of Amenity Trees.

Guideline 5.   Trees located in parks may be pruned.

* Evidence of the previous existence of a view will not be accepted from new owners of a property applying for a view prune if these residents bought the property with the tree of a similar size to the size at application time.

However as outlined in guideline 1a, property owners who have had, and recently lost, a preexisting view will receive consideration in line with the guidelines.

New owners of a property which has an established view pruning relationship with Council may continue this relationship as long as the application is in line with the guidelines.

2.13   Solar access pruning

2.13.1 Solar access pruning service

Council may provide a user pays solar pruning service for street trees which meet specified criteria, as set out in the principles in section 12.13.2 and the guidelines in section 12.13.3, and subject to inspection and agreement by the applicant to charges and conditions of approval.

2.13.2 Solar pruning principles

Pruning of public trees for solar access may be considered where the tree or trees significantly affect light levels to residences. Pruning will be managed to take into account the health and safety of the tree and to provide a balance between private and public interests.

Where repeated solar pruning is assessed as detrimental to the condition of a tree, consideration will be given to removal and replacement planting which will allow solar access over or through the selected species.

2.13.3 Solar access pruning guidelines

Council's guidelines for solar pruning aim to maintain pre-existing light levels when required, while avoiding pruning practices which disfigure trees, and to maintain public trees in a healthy and safe condition.

The guidelines make provision for consideration of trees growing and obstructing solar access.

Guideline 1.   The tree has been inspected and has received approval by Council for solar pruning in the past.

OR

Guideline 1a. In instances where a growing tree significantly obstructs solar access, consideration may be given to pruning to improve solar access.

Guideline 2.   The applicant has provided documentary evidence such as photographs to show the previous existence of light levels.

Guideline 3.   The tree is located within approximately 25 metres of a habitable room with significantly reduced light levels.

Guideline 4.   Pruning may only be approved if it will not disfigure the tree. The term "disfigure" will generally mean pruning beyond the guidelines of the Australian Standard for the Pruning of Amenity Trees.

Guideline 5.   Trees located in parks may be pruned.

2.14   Replacement Plantings

We will strive to maintain and conserve overall canopy cover while seeking to avoid adverse impacts on the living environment of residents. Generally we will replace each tree removed at or close to the removal site, and with new semi-advanced plants (minimum 45 litre pot size) grown to best practice nursery standards (Australian Standard 2303/2015 Tree Stock for Landscape Use ('AS2303')).
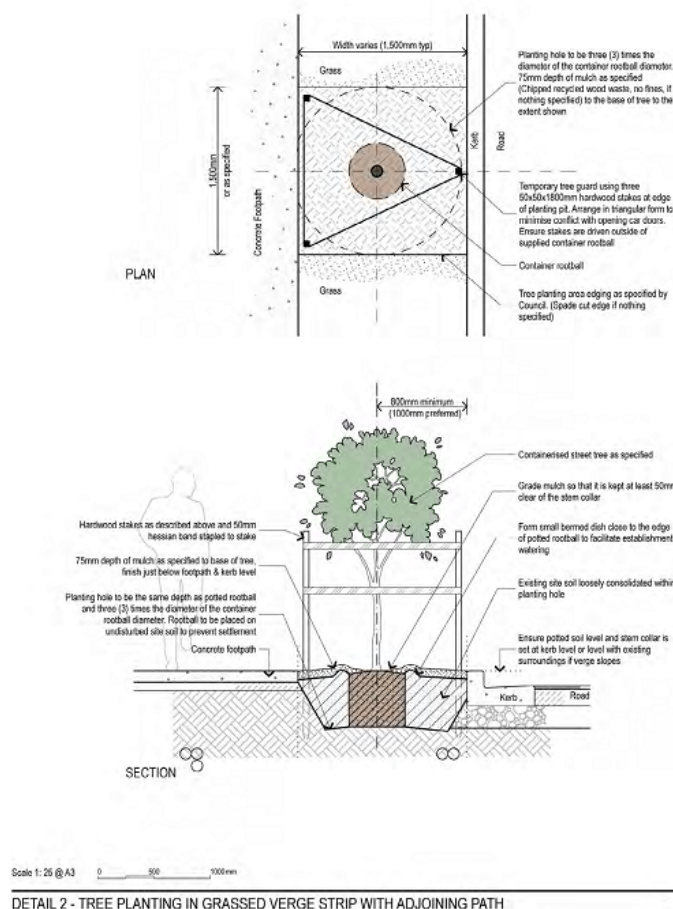
In many instances we will replace like for like, but, as discussed elsewhere in this document, tree selection criteria are diverse and the particular needs of an area may change over time. In some instances larger trees may be installed in parks; however, in-ground services generally restrict the installation of super-advanced trees in streets.

Subject to the selection of appropriate species for their scale and other impacts, as outlined in section 4.1 our planning and practices for replacement plantings will consider soil types, microclimates and other environmental factors which will enhance the establishment of a particular species in a specific location.

Where possible we will notify residents of recently planted trees, especially street trees, and residents will be encouraged to assist with watering during the establishment phase for a new tree. Woollahra Council has adopted a street tree master plan to rationalise new or replacement trees in roadside situations, as outlined in section 4.1.

2.15   Tree planting on public land

Woollahra staff and contractors will plant trees grown to AS2303 nursery standards in all public open spaces. Tree species grown to AS2303 standards will be self-supporting, however Council staff and contractors are advised to use stakes as protection for establishing trees as outlined in the following diagram; Detail 2 – Tree Planting in Grass Verge Strip with Adjoining Path. For additional planting details.

DETAIL 2 - TREE PLANTING IN GRASSED VERGE STRIP WITH ADJOINING PATH

From time to time we encounter situations where residents plant trees without authorisation on Council land. Although these trees are sometimes suitable and fit in with our policies and plans, there is a range of issues relating to insurance, public safety and the integrity of in-ground services which must be considered.

We will not permit planting of trees on Council land by persons other than Council staff or contractors and we reserve the right to remove any such trees, to avoid tree plantings which:

- do not provide the appropriate level of shade, for example too much shade in narrow streets
- are too closely spaced and will not grow into a safe and healthy shape
- when mature will be out of scale with surrounding properties or infrastructure
- when mature may have adverse impacts on nearby residents
- lack compatibility with the streetscape or heritage character of an area
- have invasive root systems potentially interfering with underground services
- do not support our Greenweb strategy of providing wildlife corridors between natural area parks, and
- will in future require lopping for power line clearances.

2.16   Tree pits in footpaths

We will aim to match the size of tree pits, especially those in footpath situations, with the predicted mature size of the tree.

Except in specific situations such as traffic management devices, we will not under-plant tree pits with shrubs or ground covers.

Where tree pits planted out by residents create a hazard or restriction of pedestrian or vehicle movement, we will take appropriate action to remove or reduce the hazard or restriction.

2.17   Tree vandalism and poisoning

This policy aims to reduce the incidence of vandalism to trees through consultation and education on the placement and importance of trees.

In situations where trees have been vandalised we will undertake remedial pruning to re-establish a reasonably natural and safe shape and structure as quickly as possible.

Council staff will investigate tree vandalism and the information gathered may result in court prosecutions. As required Council will work with the NSW Police to pursue investigations and gather information for review or litigation.

In situations where trees have been poisoned or maliciously damaged , staff may leave the tree standing and / or place a banner or other signage on or near the tree advising the public of the illegal action and calling for information, so long as this practice is safe and does not affect the stability of the tree.

3   Private Tree Management

3.1 The Woollahra Tree Management DCP 2015

The Woollahra Municipal Council DCP 2015 applies to all trees (native and exotic) with a height greater than 5 metres or a spread greater than 3 metres. Details of the Woollahra Municipal Council DCP 2015 are available on the Woollahra Municipal Council website www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au

There are exemptions for:

• emergency and safety related tree work
• listed undesirable tree species, and
• certain classes of minor clearance pruning work.

All other work on trees protected under Council's DCP 2015 may only be carried out with the prior written consent of Council, and may be subject to conditions that are attached to that consent.

To undertake work on trees protected by the DCP 2015 prior to or without obtaining consent from Council is an offence, and may lead to prosecution and fines in the Land and Environment Court or through the Local Government system.

When assessing an application to prune or remove a tree on private property, or considering the pruning or removal of a tree on public property, we will refer to the principles outlined in sections 2.1 and to the criteria listed in Assessment Criteria (see section 3.2).

Applications to prune or remove trees protected by Council's DCP 2015 will be inspected (if necessary) and assessed by a delegated Council Officer with suitable experience, training and qualifications.

Applications to prune or remove a tree which are supported by a suitably qualified arborist's report detailing the risks or potential danger associated with the tree may not need a detailed inspection by Council staff. In these instances the turnaround time for application assessment may be reduced.

Where applications are received for view pruning of private trees they will be considered in accordance with the view pruning guidelines contained in section 2.12.

3.2 Assessment criteria for approving pruning or removal

When assessing an application to prune or remove a tree on private property, we will refer to the preceding principles (see section 2.1) and the following criteria:

• the potential risk of personal injury
• the potential risk of damage to buildings and structures*, civil infrastructure or utility services
• the tree's health, growth habit, stability and structural soundness and the condition of the ground it is in
• the effect on the landscape or streetscape and the tree's amenity value to the local area

- whether the tree forms part of a green corridor or a streetscape theme planting
- whether the tree is a remnant indigenous species, and its effect on bio-diversity
- the suitability of the species to its location, and
- whether the tree is listed as a significant tree, and its cultural/heritage significance, particularly in a conservation area.

* Note: In instances where a tree may be compromising a structure such as a masonry wall which is not a core element of a building, staff are encouraged to find a solution which maintains both the tree and the structure.

3.3 Trees which may be removed or pruned without consent

Council has a comprehensive Noxious Weed Policy and Strategy which includes information on tree species which may be weeds. This information is available on the Woollahra Council website under "Weeds".

Council will not require an application to prune or remove a tree which is included in the Woollahra's Tree Preservation Order primary list of undesirable trees which do not require any approval to prune or remove, or the secondary list of potentially problematic species which may be removed without consent if they are under 10 metres in height. These species are listed in the DCP 2015 under "Private Trees" on the Council's website.

3.4 Tree work which we will not approve

Generally, we will not consider leaf, or fruit, or sap drop, or bird or bat droppings, which are all natural processes of trees and wildlife, as valid reasons for pruning trees.

3.5 Development controls

Trees which are affected by development proposals will be assessed as part of the Development Application process and in accordance with the controls in the LEP and DCPs. These controls give general guidance in tree selection and management; however, they are not intended to be prescriptive, particularly for single tree plantings.

Development Application submissions which contain landscape plans are reviewed by staff from Development Control and from Private Tree Management. Tree selections in these submissions may be assessed using the replacement species principles found in this Policy, or in the case of the Paddington DCP a list of preferred species is available.

Relevant provisions of the Woollahra LEP and DCPs are set out below.

3.6 Woollahra Local Environment Plan (LEP)

Relevant objectives of the LEP are:

(f) *In relation to the landscape:*

   i.   *To protect and enhance the natural landscapes throughout the area of Woollahra;*

   ii. *To promote the retention of trees and the planting of suitable new trees in appropriate locations;*

   iii. *To control or minimise the impact of future development upon natural features such as significant trees or stands of trees, ridgelines or land within view of any waterway;*

   iv. *To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the area of Woollahra through the appropriate management and conservation of the existing pattern of vegetation; and*

   v.   *To protect the native flora and fauna.*

3.7 Development Control Plans (DCP)

Woollahra has a number of place-based Development Control Plans with more specific landscape guidelines, for example, the Paddington Heritage Conservation Area Development Control Plan 2008.

3.7.1   Development Controls

Extracts from the Paddington DCP which cover tree management include:

- The amount and composition of landscaped open space play important roles in stormwater management, energy efficiency of developments and access to sunlight. Trees and vegetation can support indigenous wildlife populations and habitat.
- Deep soil landscape area is an important element of a site's overall landscape capabilities. To be effective, deep soil landscape area needs to be a suitable size, configuration and location to sustain medium to large vegetation. This means there needs to be adequate width and depth of soil profile for root volumes and long term stability of vegetation.
- O2 To retain and reinstate traditional landscaping and open areas at the front of buildings.
- O7 To ensure that trees and other vegetation do not have an adverse impact on the fabric of buildings and works and have no or minimal adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of properties.
- O9 To ensure provision of adequate deep soil landscape area capable of sustaining medium to large vegetation.
- C8 Appropriate vegetation types are to be planted in the deep soil landscape areas having regard to the dimensions of the area and the nature of subsurface soil and rock profiles.

- C21 Trees and shrubs at maturity should not have an adverse impact on the fabric of buildings, infrastructure, power lines or other structures and have only a minimal adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of properties.
- C22 Where significant mature trees are to be retained, structures are to be located at least 3m from the base of the tree.
- C23 Where possible, vegetation should be located to improve privacy between dwellings.
- C24 For infill development, trees are to be selected and located to contribute to energy efficiency and amenity by providing substantial shade in summer, especially to west facing windows, and by admitting sunlight to indoor and outdoor living areas in winter.
- C25 Landscaping must ensure the retention of adequate sight lines for pedestrians and vehicles, especially at street corners.

As DCPs are reviewed we will incorporate similar provisions where appropriate to the local conditions.

3.7.2 Tree assessment on development sites

In assessing a tree for required retention or permitted removal on a development site Council staff will consider the aims and objective of this Tree Management Policy. We will also refer to the guidelines contained in the Australian Standard for the Protection of Trees on Development Sites AS 4970, as well as the tree's Safe Useful Life Expectancy (SULE).

Particularly relevant are criteria such as tree species, condition, age, vigour, sensitivity to disturbance, how visible is it to the adjoining area, the feasibility of preserving the tree weighed against the scale and nature of the proposal and local conditions. If the final decision is that the tree may be permitted to be removed appropriate replacement plantings will be conditioned.

In assessing development applications we will identify proposed species and proposed planting locations which have the potential to impact adversely on neighbouring properties, and will recommend appropriate development control conditions to minimise or eliminate this impact.

We will place a bond on substantial trees on public property (generally street trees) which are affected by a Development Application, as determined by their amenity value and significance, to ensure their protection during development. This is to provide security to the Council and community that measures will be taken to protect the tree and may be forfeited in whole or in part if the tree is damaged or destroyed.

3.8 Replacement plantings

Where trees are permitted to be removed because of poor condition or danger to public safety, replacement planting will occur with the objective of restoring (over time) lost tree canopy and the ambience and amenity desired in the location.

Where trees are permitted to be removed as part of a Tree Works approval, replacement planting will be required as a condition of approval with the objective of restoring (over time) lost tree canopy and the ambience and amenity desired in the location.

Where trees are permitted to be removed as part of development consent, replacement planting will be required as a condition of consent with the objective of restoring (over time) lost tree canopy and the ambience and amenity desired in the location.

Preferred species for private property, street and park tree replacement plantings will generally be indigenous or will be compatible with area local character and existing culturally significant trees, where applicable.

Species selected will take into account specific local needs and constraints such as solar access, shade, overhead wiring, adjacent buildings, soil type, soil pathogens (where present), harbour views and view corridors.

Species selected for planting will be avoided which have potential to cause damage to or interfere with public infrastructure, private property, or iconic views.

Replacement trees should be sourced from stock grown to best practice nursery standards (AS2303).

3.9 Vexatious plantings

During the period of consultation for this policy Council staff received a number of enquiries about vexatious plantings, particularly view blocking trees.

When assessing development applications our development control staff in conjunction with our tree management staff will assess each relevant application for trees to be affected and or planted as part of the DA

As previously outlined in 3.7.1 DCP Development Controls we will assess to ensure that trees and other vegetation do not have an adverse impact on the fabric of buildings and works and have no or minimal adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of properties.

However it is beyond the scope of this Policy and of Woollahra Council to control all one off, or small scale plantings which will not need a landscape plan to be reviewed by Council, but still may affect neighbours views.

In addition to replacing potentially view blocking trees with smaller species when reviewing plans as part of a DA process, Council staff will work with and advise residents of their tree management options under our DCP 2015. However any contentious or disputed cases should be referred to the Land and Environment Court and dealt with under the Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Act 2006.

3.10   Significant trees on private land

Significant and heritage trees in Woollahra are located on both public and private land; their management with respect to Council land is discussed in section 2.3.

Heritage trees on private property listed in Woollahra's LEP will need development approval for removal except in cases with urgent safety related issues. In these cases the removal must be accompanied with an arborist's report (minimum AQF level 5)

In some instances heritage trees are listed in Woollahra's LEP, and for Council owned trees, refer to section 2.3 for significant trees on public land.

The following documents are available on the WMC website and contain information on significant trees on private land.

Volume 1 – Significant Trees under Private Ownership Part 1. A listing of trees located on private property that Woollahra Council has identified as significant to the surrounding area. Features Darling Point, Edgecliff, Paddington and Woollahra.

Volume 2 – Significant Trees under Private Ownership Part 2. A listing of trees located on private property that Woollahra Council has identified as significant to the surrounding area. Featuring Double Bay, Point Piper, Bellevue Hill, Rose Bay, Vaucluse and Watsons Bay.

4   Tree selection

Choosing the most appropriate species for a site must take many criteria into consideration. The planting history and the "look" of the area is important; however we also need to consider the proximity of built structures, in-ground services and overhead services for street trees, and issues of scale, shade and amenity for park trees.

As our public trees were initially planted progressively with selection often dependant on availability, we have ended up with mixed results with respect to aesthetics, amenity, appropriateness and longevity. Improvements to street and park tree selections can be made through application of the Street Tree Master plan and updates of Plans of Management for parks.

We have a mix of native and exotic plants as would be expected in an older area, and where appropriate, culturally historic exotic species will be maintained on an ongoing basis.

Otherwise, local species will be promoted where possible and Council will continue to implement the Greenweb strategy to provide wildlife corridors for local animal species between our natural area parks.

The Greenweb strategy aims to protect and enhance native plant and animal populations by identifying key areas of bushland habitat and establishing corridors to connect them.

When using naturally occurring species we will consider provenance and composite provenance issues when selecting plants and propagation material for our eastern suburbs bio-region.

The mix of evergreen and deciduous species is of consideration both when planning shade and amenity values, as well as when planning scheduled maintenance. Woollahra has

around 415 different species for park and street trees; however, there is a handful of signature species such as Figs, Jacarandas, Planes, Norfolk Island Pines and Brush box which are synonymous with Sydney's eastern suburbs.

Where there is the opportunity, we will aim to define suburbs or local precincts with a change in the species mix, giving each area a slightly different look and feel, based on the historical or naturally occurring species associated with that area.

Despite their widespread use, trees like London Plane and Brush Box are as popular in Woollahra as anywhere else. Species, which establish easily, tolerate pollution and harsh conditions, and recover from pruning events with minor decay, are useful and safe options.

In many streets in the Municipality there is a mix of many species. Where there is some unifying element this may look attractively eclectic; however, the effect may be undistinguished and undesirable. Our long term aim is to maintain our use of diverse species while reducing the number of species in designated streets to two or three.

Greenweb streets will not be subject to this principle of limited species.

Where possible we will reflect the biodiversity of a nearby natural area park in the street planting.

Woollahra Municipality has a variety of soil types and microclimates, some of which have been mapped or documented. We will take environmental factors into account when selecting a species to maximise the tree's potential to establish and grow to the desired form.

Soil diseases such as ***Armillaria*** and ***Phytophthora*** can easily spread in urban conditions. We will strive to limit diseases such as ***Armillaria*** and ***Phytophthora*** through appropriate methods of cultural control. We will work with other industry experts on improving future control techniques and identifying disease resistant replacement species.

4.1 Street Tree Masterplan

Woollahra Council has developed a street tree masterplan which will help staff chose new or replacement trees in roadside situations with street by street information on species selection, hazard management design principles and adjacent services.

Council will apply the street tree masterplan for tree selection and replacement. The masterplan indicates which species are currently in the street, whether these species have any historical significance, and where applicable, what the new preferred species will be. Some factors which have been considered in selecting the new species have been:

- scale and size practicality – especially in small streets with narrow paths
- soil types, microclimates and other environmental factors which favour the establishment and health of a particular species
- proximity to overhead and underground services and road infrastructure
- proximity to buildings and structures
- soil depth and drainage
- impact on footpaths, and kerbs and gutters

- agreed local species areas; different looks for different areas
- agreed avenue plantings and cultural plantings
- sun / shade / deciduous plantings
- trialling new species; performance-tested species
- moving to simplify streets with numerous species
- special plantings – gateways, bookends, sentinels, and
- significant trees; and heritage landscapes.

4.2 Park trees

Unlike street trees, park trees often have a larger area to provide amenity and shade to, and they are generally less restricted by services and infrastructure. We will aim to consider planting layouts and locations within parks to avoid creating undue adverse impacts on the boundaries of parks.

As the visual character of most of Woollahra's parks is well established, we will generally replace like trees for like in the same position or a nearby position.

When the visual character or use of a park is to be reviewed and potentially changed this will be done through community consultation and the development or updating of a Plan of Management.

A Plan of Management is a document that identifies issues affecting public open space, and outlines how that open space is intended to be used, improved, maintained and managed in the future. A Plan of Management is typically accompanied by a landscape plan that shows proposed on-the-ground changes to that open space.

The issues and objectives identified in the Plan of Management for a park may lead to the development of a graphic Master plan which will include tree species and placements.

5   Acknowledgments and Conclusion

The Woollahra Tree Management Policy has been developed through collaboration between Councillors and staff of Woollahra Council, and industry experts and community representatives contributing their time and expertise to the Vegetation Management Steering Committee. Steering Committee members included experts from the University of Technology Sydney, the University of Western Sydney, Ryde College of TAFE (Ryde School of Horticulture), Centennial Parklands, Historic Houses Trust and eminent botanists and tree management specialists from around Sydney. Woollahra Council thanks all contributors for their time and effort.

The Policy focuses on high level policy statements; however it does give an indication of how our more detailed procedures will be used with regard to some of our more frequent requests such as clearance, view and solar access pruning.

The policy covers the key principles and processes we will use for maintaining our public and private tree collections in a safe, healthy and environmentally sensitive manner.

This Policy is to be used as a reference by staff, Councillors, residents and tree workers who need to make or understand decisions about managing and maintaining public and private trees in the local government area.

Policy Amendments

Date	Responsible Officer	Description