

# Responsible tree management

Bundaberg Regional Council is committed to preserving and maintaining trees in the urban environment and increasing the numbers of new trees planted. Every effort will be made by Council to preserve and protect existing trees within streets, road reserves and parks.

#### We value our trees

Trees are highly valued in our urban and rural landscapes due to their positive contribution to the health of our communities. They provide beauty and shade, reducing the effects of UV radiation and can provide privacy through screening.

Trees also represent the character of our towns, particularly our subtropical identity, and provide a sense of place. Trees also provide attractive commercial streetscapes, and can contribute to tourism and improved property values and reduce noise pollution.

Importantly trees provide wildlife habitat, release oxygen, absorb air pollutants and decrease stormwater runoff and erosion. Studies show trees can cool our urban environments and even help decrease our energy consumption.

"Council has a vision for one million thriving trees to be planted in the Bundaberg Region by 2024.

#### **Trees on Council land**

Council manages trees on Council controlled land including parks, cemeteries, tourist parks, urban precincts, road reserves and footpaths. These trees are protected and cannot be removed, pruned or damaged without permission from Council.

If residents are concerned about trees they should contact Council who will engage a qualified arborist to assess the tree. If the tree is considered a hazard, that is, a danger to people or property due to being structurally unsound, dying or causing significant damage to infrastructure, then Council could take action to remove the tree.

Public safety is a priority, but tree removal is the last resort when assessing risks relating to trees. Council's arborist will first consider pruning, infrastructure modification, root severance or other management options.

### Planting on Public Land

To help avoid traffic hazards, obstruction of drains and impacts on infrastructure, residents are required to gain approval from Council to undertake tree plantings in park land or on road verges. Details are available on Council's fact sheet entitled "Planting Trees on Footpaths"

### Council will not undertake tree removal for landholder's personal preference in areas of:

- Deposit of mould residue
- Shading of dwellings or landscapes
- Improvement of views from private property
- Solar access
- Minor stick deadwood
- Leaf, flower, fruit drop
- TV, radio, satellite reception
- Leaves and seeds in swimming pools
- Views to advertising billboards/signage

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## Frequently asked questions

### Q. Does Council regulate trees on private land?

A. Trees on private land may be protected under the Queensland Government's Vegetation Management Act 1999 and the Nature Conservation Act 1992.

Residents should contact the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRE) and the Department of Environment and Science (DES) before taking or clearing vegetation from private land. Marine plants such as mangroves and saltwater couch are protected through provisions of the Fisheries Act 1994.

# Q. There is a termite nest in a tree on Council land and I am concerned that it will affect my property

A. Termites are found naturally in the environment and play an important role in nature. When dealing with termites, prevention is the key. It is the responsibility of the landholder to treat any termites found on their property. Council does not have any legal responsibility to treat termites found in trees or on land under its control.

## Q. Should I put grass clippings around my trees or around trees on Council land?

A. Grass clippings used as mulch at the base of the trees is not recommended. Instead use well composted mulch, spreading it widely around the tree and never against the trunk. This could affect the bark of the tree, damaging the root collar.

### Q. A tree on the footpath or foreshore in front of my property is blocking my view. Can I prune or remove it?

A. Council owned trees cannot be removed or damaged. If you do so, you may face prosecution under Council Local Laws and state or federal laws around tree protection. The removal of trees can negatively affect the character of the area that is valued by other residents. Generally removal would not occur unless the tree was assessed by an arborist as being unsafe or diseased.

#### Q. What is the best tree to plant?

A. Select a potted plant that is healthy and not competing with weeds. Check the climate and soil conditions required by the plant for optimum growth and consider if your garden can support these requirements.

Ensure your tree receives a good soaking to encourage the roots to grow down, helping the stability of the tree and survival during dry times.

### Q. What do I do about weeds on my property?

A. You do not require Council approval to remove trees that are declared pest plants under the Biosecurity Act 2014 or Council's Biosecurity Plan for the Bundaberg Regional Council Local Government Area.

When removing pest plants always ensure that you do not damage native vegetation and contribute to soil erosion. To access a list of these weeds contact Bundaberg Regional Council on 1300 883 699.

### Q. Do Council provide free trees to residents?

A. Yes. Council has a Resident Voucher Program where you can get 2 free seedlings. It is part of Council's ambitious goal for One Million Trees to be planted in our region (see ourbundabergregion.com.au/million-trees-bundaberg-region). Council also encourages residents to participate in the

Plant Swap Program. If you have a noxious weed in your garden contact Council who can make a positive identification. If you can remove the weed, Council will provide you with a voucher for a free native plant."

# Q. My neighbour's tree branches are overhanging into my garden. Can Council ask them to prune the branches back?

A. Council cannot make a neighbour prune or remove a tree as this is considered a civil matter. Residents are encouraged to consult with each other. If the matter cannot be resolved residents are encouraged to contact the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).



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