



Randwick City Council  
a sense of community

# Tree Management Technical Manual



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## Scope and Purpose

Randwick City Council has a very important resource in its trees and, as with the management of any resource, there are significant problems associated with the maintenance and retention of trees growing within the urban environment.

Trees are potentially the largest and most significant elements in the urban landscape. As such, they provide the greatest opportunity to define and develop a particular identity and character for the City, as well as being a source of shade and shelter, a provider of habitat and food source for native birds and other wildlife and providing several other environmental and commercial benefits – including enhanced property values.

Trees are also significant contributors to people's daily experiences and their absence or removal, and the resultant loss of visual amenity has serious implications for the community's sense of well-being.

Council is therefore committed to the protection and enhancement of this very valuable natural resource, while at the same time recognising that urban development presents a range of challenges and opportunities requiring careful planning and increasingly professional arboricultural management.

As a result of ongoing urban consolidation and development, large numbers of established and significant trees on both public and private property are becoming increasingly vulnerable. To protect these valuable community assets, Randwick City Council has adopted a suite of management documents including a Street Tree Masterplan, Urban Forest Policy, and a Register of Significant Trees.

In addition, there are a range of specific tree management and preservation controls contained in Part 2.2 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021 and Part B5 of the Randwick Development Control Plan 2026.

These documents are the primary regulatory tools used to provide protection to nominated trees throughout the City and for ensuring that these assets continue to remain significant contributors to the landscape, while at the same time recognising that they help define the unique character of the Randwick City area.

To help co-ordinate and facilitate the proper management of trees on both public and private property and to ensure that appropriate tree care standards are complied with in the maintenance and management of tree assets, Council has produced this Tree Management Technical Manual.

This manual is intended to be used as both a regulatory and reference document by Council officers, Council operational staff, contractors, property owners, strata managers and developers in relation to all tree management and maintenance procedures.

It defines the technical standards and Specifications necessary for the proper management of trees – particularly in relation to urban development and construction works – while at the same time providing recommendations for a range of works associated with tree management in the urban environment.

The manual does not contain specifications or procedures for tree planting operations undertaken in central business districts or commercial centres. These are predominantly capital works projects that involve the planting of large trees (100-200 litres), coupled with the installation of site specific tree grates and/or tree guards. They often involve a more rigorous and detailed maintenance regime than that usually associated with the planting and maintenance of 25 litre tree stock.

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# 1. Introduction – Use of the Manual

## 1.1. Randwick City Council's Protected Trees

This manual details the procedures and standards required for the proper management and preservation of trees within the City of Randwick.

Under the provisions of Part B5 of the Randwick Development Control Plan 2026, a person must not, on land to which these plans apply, ringbark, cut down, top, lop, prune, remove, poison, tree root prune, destroy or injure any tree/s covered by these documents without the consent of the Council.

Trees which fall into the following three categories are defined as 'Protected Trees' within the City of Randwick and must be maintained in accordance with recognised standards and practices. A permit or development consent (whichever is applicable) must be obtained from Council prior to the pruning or removal of any 'Protected Tree'. These include:

- **Private Trees**
- **Public Trees**
- **Significant Trees**

**Note:** Any tree with a height of less than five (5) metres, a canopy width of less than four (4) metres or a circumference less than one (1) metre measured one (1) metre above the ground may be pruned and/or removed without the consent of Council. This excludes palm trees, cycads or tree ferns of any size, which are protected by Part B5 of the Randwick Development Control Plan 2026.

## 1.2. Required Practices

All **REQUIRED** practices are to be undertaken by the property owner, managing agent, strata manager, project supervisor or contractor wherever stipulated by Council - these are the minimum requirements by which the care and maintenance of a 'Protected Tree' are to be administered.

- The **REQUIRED** practices identified throughout this manual are considered reasonable measures that are consistent with best management practices in the tree care industry intended to promote healthy, structurally sound trees.
- In all circumstances the Director – City Services or Director – City Planning or their delegated representatives shall, if justified by specific on-site conditions such as conflict with utilities or services, have the discretion to modify or alter any condition, practice or standard stipulated within this manual.

## 1.3. Recommended Practices

- **RECOMMENDED** practices identified throughout this manual are NOT mandatory but provide additional proactive measures for the care of trees and include procedures such as fertilising, tree hazard reduction, planting trees, pruning techniques, etc.
- A **RECOMMENDED** practice may be required if it is so specified within the conditions of approval for a development consent or tree removal/pruning permit, or for the mitigation of injury or hazard.

- In all circumstances the Director – City Services or Director – City Planning or their delegated representatives shall, if justified by specific on-site conditions such as conflict with utilities or services, have the discretion to modify or alter any condition, practice or standard stipulated within this manual.

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## Definitions

Words and terms that are particular to the arboricultural and construction industries are specifically defined in this manual to provide a uniform understanding of the terms and concepts used in the manual. Words that are defined within this document are noted in *italics* and are detailed in this Section.

For the purposes of this manual and the interpretation of standards and procedures, the following definitions shall apply:

**qualified arborist** means a person who holds a minimum qualification from the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Certificate 5 in Arboriculture or a person employed by Council as a qualified person for the purposes of arboricultural management.

**Australian Standard** means Australian Standard AS 4373 – 2007 – Pruning of Amenity Trees.

**buffer zone** relates to vegetation planted for the express purpose of providing protection for identified core habitats and remnant bushland strips.

**bushland** means land on which there is vegetation which is either a remainder of the natural vegetation of the land or, if altered, is still representative of the structure and/or floristics of the natural vegetation **clearing native vegetation** means any one or more of the following:

- a) cutting down, felling, thinning, logging or removing native vegetation;
- b) killing, destroying, poisoning, ringbarking, uprooting or burning native vegetation;
- c) severing, topping or lopping branches, limbs, stems, roots or trunks of native vegetation;
- d) substantially damaging or injuring native vegetation in any other way.

**culturally significant tree/s** means trees which are significant features of the cultural landscape and which are listed in Council's Register of Significant Trees.

**dead** tree means a tree with no living vascular tissue.

**diameter at standard height (DSH)** means the diameter of the trunk of a tree measured at standard height (1.4m above ground level).

**exotic** means a tree/s that is not locally indigenous.

**hazardous** – means a tree that has structural defects (ie, multiple fallen branches, split trunk, advanced decay) that could result in the tree collapsing or falling without warning.

**height** means the distance measured vertically between the horizontal plane of the lowest point of the base of the tree/s which is immediately above ground level and the horizontal plane of the uppermost point of the tree/s.

**indigenous** means a tree/s or other vegetation being of a species that existed in, or on land in the vicinity of, the Randwick Local Government Area (LGA) before European settlement.

**injury or injuring** means damage to a tree and includes:

- a) lopping and topping;
- b) poisoning, including applying herbicides and other plant toxic chemicals to a tree or spilling (including washing off or directing water contaminated by) oil, petroleum, paint, cement, mortar and the like onto the root zone area

c) cutting and tearing of branches and roots that is not carried out in accordance with accepted arboricultural practices, does not qualify as 'pruning' (as defined within AS 4373 – 2007 – *Pruning of Amenity Trees*) or which is done for invalid reasons;

d) ringbarking, scarring the bark when operating machinery, fixing objects (eg, signs) by nails, staples or wire, using tree climbing spikes in healthy trees (except for access to an injured tree worker) or fastening materials that circle and significantly restrict the normal vascular function of the trunk or branches;

e) damaging a tree's root zone by compaction, excavation or asphyxiation (including unauthorised filling or stockpiling of materials);

f) underscrubbing, particularly carried out by mechanical tools such as brushcutters and the like.

**lopping** means the cutting of branches or stems between branch unions or at internodes on trees.

**native vegetation** has the same meaning as in the *Native Vegetation Act 2003 (NV Act)*, and means any of the following types of indigenous vegetation:

- a) trees;
- b) understorey plants;
- c) groundcovers;
- d) plants occurring in a wetland.

**prune** or **pruning** means cutting branches from a tree/s in a planned and systematic manner that is carried out in accordance with the provisions of Australian Standard AS 4373 - 2007 - *Pruning of Amenity Trees*, and which consists of the following pruning types:

Crown maintenance\* pruning involving:

- a) General pruning
- b) Thinning
- c) Deadwooding
- d) Selective pruning
- e) Formative pruning

\*Crown maintenance pruning relates to pruning according to the growth habit of the tree/s without reducing the area of the crown, while retaining the structure and size of the tree/s.

Crown modification\* pruning involving:

- f) Reduction pruning
- g) Crown lifting
- h) Pollarding
- i) Remedial pruning
- j) Powerline clearance

\*Crown modification pruning relates to pruning that changes the structural appearance and habit of the tree/s.

**public land** has the same meaning as in the *Local Government Act 1993*.

**qualified arborist** means an Australian Qualification Framework Level 5 (Diploma) qualified arborist (AQF5). This is the minimum qualification accepted by Council for the purposes of the preparation of an qualified arborist's report.

**remnant tree or remnant vegetation** means a native tree or any patch of native vegetation which remains in the landscape on the original soil profile, after removal of most or all of the native vegetation in the immediate vicinity.

**remove or removal** means to cut down, fell, destroy, kill, take away, uproot or transplant a tree from its place of origin.

**significant tree** means a tree or trees which are significant features in the City's heritage or cultural landscape and which are listed in Council's Register of Significant Trees. They may be historic, unique, rare, large or have community support for their retention.

**topping** means cutting away part or all the tree canopy, leaving a trunk and stubbed main branches.

**trade qualified arborist** means a tradesperson who holds the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Certificate III in Horticulture (Arboriculture) or other national or international qualification considered equivalent by Council.

**tree or trees** means a perennial plant with at least one self-supporting woody or fibrous stem, being of any species whether indigenous, exotic or introduced which:

- a) is five (5) metres or more in height; and/or
- b) is four (4) metres or more in canopy width, and/or
- c) For a single trunk tree species, a trunk circumference equal to or exceeding 400 mm at a height of one (1) metre above ground level, or a multi-trunk tree species, a combined trunk circumference (measured around the outer girth of the group of trunks) equal to or exceeding 400 mm at a height of one (1) metre above ground level.
- e) is any tree on public land of any size; or
- f) is any tree in bushland of any size.

**tree worker** means a tradesperson who holds the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Certificate II in Horticulture (Arboriculture) or other national or international qualification considered equivalent by Council.

**trunk** means the main stem of the tree, as distinguished from the branches and roots.

**undesirable species** means plants that are listed in Appendix B5-2 of the Randwick City Council Development Control Plan 2013 which are deemed undesirable due to their location or as having characteristics which may lead to poisoning, weed infestation, brittle and hazardous wood, excessive spread of roots or bushland invasion.

**width** means the distance measured horizontally (in metres) between the two (2) widest points of a tree's canopy.

**wildlife corridors** are vegetative corridors that link habitat which is suitable for animals (fauna) to travel along in relative safety.

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## 2. Removal/Pruning, Replacement and Planting of Trees

Part B5 of the Randwick Development Control Plan 2026 is designed to protect and preserve trees growing within the City of Randwick.

To provide additional protection to trees which have significant heritage value, Council has adopted a Register of Significant Trees. This Register contains a variety of *culturally significant* trees that have been recognised as having exemplary heritage/botanic/cultural/aesthetic values.

Council approval or development consent is required for the *pruning/removal* of all trees covered by Part 2.2 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021 and Part B5 of the Randwick Development Control Plan 2026. Development consent is specifically required for major *pruning* and/or *removal* of all trees listed in its Register of Significant Trees or which are located within Heritage Conservation Areas, where those tree works will have an impact on heritage significance or amenity.

***For information relating to the removal and pruning of trees, please refer to B5 Preservation of Trees and Vegetation in Council's Development Control Plan (Appendix A).***

### 2.1. Tree Replacement

The loss of tree canopy cover reduces public amenity and environmental benefits and should be prevented and compensated with suitable native species.

Council will determine that any tree approved for *removal* within private property is **REQUIRED** to be replaced with an appropriate number of suitable trees. The number and species of trees shall be determined by the assessing Council officer and any such replanting determination will generally be required to be complied with in accordance with any approval for removal.

Any replacement planting will be **REQUIRED** to be nurtured and maintained in a healthy and vigorous state until maturity, especially when the removal of the original tree or trees impacts on neighbours or the streetscape.

Before planting any tree it is **RECOMMENDED** that the mature *height* and size of the tree be considered, particularly in relation to:

- services such as gas, water, sewerage, stormwater and domestic service wires
- buildings, footings, pathways
- solar access
- potential overhang into neighbouring properties
- species suitability to the site – *native* and *indigenous* coastal species are recommended

This replacement mechanism is necessary to ensure that tree canopy loss from development is compensated wherever possible by replacement plantings, whether on the development site itself or on adjacent *public land*.

#### 2.1.1. Technical Guidelines

Please refer to Council's ***Technical Guidelines for Urban Planting*** for further information on the planting of trees for street verges, tree placement and plant tree and soil specifications.

## 2.2. Qualified Arborist Reports

Professional *qualified arborists* are **REQUIRED** to prepare any *qualified arborist's* report lodged with Council. The minimum accepted qualification for an *qualified arborist* is the Australian Qualification Framework Level 5 (AQF Level 5).

Where trees are deemed by Council to be *culturally significant*, (ie, those listed in Randwick City Council's Register of Significant Trees) a report is **REQUIRED** to be prepared by a *qualified arborist*. The minimum accepted qualification is the Australian Qualification Framework level 5 (Diploma) (AQF5).

The following information is **REQUIRED** to be included in any qualified arborist's report:

- Who commissioned the report
- Why the report was commissioned
- What the report examines
- The address of the site containing the trees
- The methods or techniques used in the inspection
- An overview or synopsis of the inspection
- The date of the inspection
- A map of the site showing the location of the trees and the trees numbered to correspond with the text
- For each tree give the scientific name, common name, heights, canopy spread, trunk diameter at 1.4 metres above ground level and form
- A discussion of the data collected - this may include detailed information regarding wounds, cavities, cracks, splits, forking, root zone, pests and diseases, hollows for wildlife (if appropriate) and a Tree Hazard Assessment (if appropriate)
- Supporting evidence such as photographs where appropriate
- Do not list references unless they are referred to in the report
- Do not include data unless it is used in the report to lend weight to a contentious issue
- A discussion of all the options available - why they are recommended or why they are not recommended – e.g. can the building or structure be repaired and the tree retained?
- A recommendation as to the preferred option and the reasons therefore - including proposed replacement plantings, landscaping and/or soil remediation
- Tree protection measures and post-construction tree maintenance program which can be used as development conditions should they be necessary
- Comprehensive Resistograph or Picus Sonic Tomograph report on designated tree/s where requested by Council

The report must also contain the name, address and telephone number of the person or company carrying out the report, as well as their professional qualifications and experience in the arboricultural industry.

The above list is not exhaustive and there may be other site considerations necessary to ensure adequate information is supplied to Council.

*Qualified arborists* and their contact details may be obtained from the Institute of Australian Consulting Arboriculturists (IACA) on their website at [www.iaca.org.au](http://www.iaca.org.au) or from Arboriculture Australia at [www.arboriculture.org.au](http://www.arboriculture.org.au)

For further information, please visit Council's website:

<https://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/trees/tree-faqs>

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### 3. Trees on Development Sites and Public trees for Complying Development Sites

This section details the negative impacts that development and construction can have on established trees and provides a range of measures designed to minimise the adverse impacts of development on trees.

Typical adverse impacts on trees that can occur during construction works include:

- mechanical injury to roots, trunks or branches by site machinery, scaffolding, vehicles, etc;
- compaction of soil by vehicular/pedestrian movement which degrades functioning tree roots and inhibits new root development, as well as contributing to fungal disease infiltration;
- changes in soil profile or soil level, which can sever or suffocate tree roots;
- alteration of the water table – either raising, lowering or re-directing water flow;
- microclimate changes – exposing previously sheltered trees to increased sun and wind.

For development on land which contains any trees which are covered by the relevant NSW Legislation and Council's own controls, there are several matters that are **REQUIRED** to be addressed prior to the commencement of any works.

On any such site the property owner or entity may be **REQUIRED** to ensure that a comprehensive tree report is prepared by a *qualified arborist* that assesses the impact of the proposed development on trees and *vegetation* both within the site itself and on adjoining land.

That report must contain a tree protection plan as well as recommendations for mitigating any adverse impacts on trees designated for retention. Any such report must provide site specific details of both the Structural Root Zone (SRZ) and Nominal Root Zone (TPZ) areas surrounding any trees to be retained. The calculation of SRZ and TPZ radiuses must comply with the calculation methodologies detailed in Section 3 of Australian Standard AS 4970 – 2025 – *Protection of Trees on Development Sites*.

This report must also contain tree protection measures and a post-construction tree maintenance program which could be incorporated into development consent conditions.

To make sure that all these conditions are met and clearly understood by all parties and to ensure that retained trees are afforded appropriate protection, the following actions are **REQUIRED** to be strictly complied with:

#### 1) Site Plan

On all site plans associated with the development, the property owner is **REQUIRED** to ensure that all tree *trunk* locations and the canopy *widths* of all trees or groups of trees to be preserved within the development (and adjoining properties, if appropriate) are clearly identified and accurately plotted on any such plans.

In addition, those plans shall clearly indicate to scale the extent and location of any tree protection zones to be erected around protected tree/s.

## 2) Verification of Tree Protection

The project manager or *qualified arborist* may be **REQUIRED** as a condition of consent to verify, in writing, that all requested tree protection conditions (eg, tree protection fencing, *pruning*, erosion control) have been complied with prior to commencement and during works.

## 3) Pre-construction Meeting

The applicant is requested in the first instance to review their conditions of development consent for clarification on tree matters, as requirements can vary from site to site.

The DA may require the property owner, construction supervisor and project *qualified arborist* to meet with Council's Landscape Development Officer on-site prior to the commencement (or during critical stages) of works to review procedures, assess tree protection measures, and to ensure that the installation of tree protection zones has been complied with.

The property owner is advised to pay particular attention to issues such as site access and machinery access requirements, as well as soil/materials storage areas.

## 4) Protective Fencing for Protected/Designated Trees and Street Trees regardless of the type of development

Fenced enclosures are **REQUIRED** to be erected around trees to be protected to achieve three primary objectives:

- To keep canopies and branches clear from contact by equipment, materials and activities;
- To preserve tree roots and surrounding soil in a non-compacted state;
- To clearly identify the Tree Protection Zone where no soil disturbance or activities are permitted.

### Size and Type of Fence

Fencing is **REQUIRED** to be constructed from 1.8-metre-high chain link wire or welded mesh suspended by galvanised steel pipe or equivalent (Figure 1.5 above) and it is **RECOMMENDED** that it should be erected (wherever possible) directly underneath the dripline of any trees to be retained.

Fencing is **REQUIRED** to be erected before demolition, grading or construction works begin and shall remain in place until the completion of ALL works.

Signs are **REQUIRED** to be prominently displayed on these fences and must clearly display the following wording - 'Tree Protection Zone – Keep Out' (Figure 1.6 below).

The enclosed area is **REQUIRED** to be mulched, irrigated and kept free from building materials and/or contaminants and must not be used for storage of any building materials.

### Trunk Protection Measures

Where a Council officer has determined that it is not possible or it is impractical to install tree protection fencing, *trunk* protection measures are **REQUIRED** to be undertaken. Lengths of timber (100mm x 50mm x 2000mm) should be used to protect the tree's *trunk* during construction works. The lengths of timber should be laid over geo-textile, underfelt or layers of hessian and fastened around the *trunk* at 200mm centres with hoop iron strapping or similar.

### Tree Protection Zone

Tree Protection Zones are areas specifically set aside to ensure that retained trees are adequately protected during development and construction activities. Each tree to be retained is

**REQUIRED** to have a designated Tree Protection Zone segregating an area sufficiently large enough to protect the tree and its roots from disturbance or damage.

The **REQUIRED** Tree Protection Zone for any tree must extend to at least the dripline of any protected tree. Where this is not possible the zone should extend as far as possible in all directions from the *trunk* of the tree.

The Tree Protection Zone shall be clearly shown on all site plans for the development.

### **Mulching**

Wherever tree protection fencing is installed, the area inside the Tree Protection Zone is **REQUIRED** to be mulched to a depth of at least 100mm or more using composted green waste mulch. The mulch should be free of weed seeds and other contaminants.

### **Soil Compaction**

During construction works there may be considerable traffic movement associated with general construction activities. Reducing traffic volumes and limiting machinery and vehicular access to specified tracks will reduce the effect on adjacent trees.

Should heavy and regular vehicular access be required onto the site, it is **RECOMMENDED** that an access track should be formed using large diameter railway ballast (100mm) over a geo-fabric to prevent soil compaction. Please refer to *AS4970-2025 Protection of Trees on Development Sites* for an example illustration.

### **Irrigation**

Where the construction process reduces water availability to a retained tree, it is **REQUIRED** that temporary irrigation be provided to the tree's root zone to maintain adequate soil moisture levels.

### **Erosion Control**

If a retained tree is adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of a graded slope of eight degrees or more, approved erosion control or silt barriers are **REQUIRED** to be installed outside the Tree Protection Zone to prevent siltation and/or erosion within that zone.

Activities **prohibited** within the Tree Protection Zone include:

- Storage of building materials, refuse, excavated spoils or dumping of toxic materials on or around trees and tree roots. Toxic materials include, but are not limited to, paint, petroleum products, concrete, stucco mix, dirty or contaminated water or any other material which may be detrimental to tree health;
- The use of tree *trunks* as a winch support, anchorage, as a temporary power pole, sign post or other similar function;
- Severing of tree roots by utility trenching, foundation excavation, placement of kerbs and other miscellaneous excavation without Council approval;
- Soil, grade or drainage changes – particularly altering soil levels by any more than 200mm, as this could lead to the death of any adjacent vegetation.

Any approved excavation within a development site which is required for footings, structures, retaining walls, basement car parks, services, pipes, detention tanks, stormwater infiltration systems, paving, etc, shall be undertaken by hand and only under the direction of a *qualified arborist*, with all roots being cleanly cut where required.

### 3.1. Street Trees and Construction Work

Unless otherwise specified, protective fencing is **REQUIRED** to be constructed around Council owned street trees. This fencing is to be erected before demolition, grading or construction works begin and shall remain in place until the completion of ALL works.

The fencing is **REQUIRED** to be constructed from 1.8-metre high chain link wire or welded mesh suspended by galvanised steel pipe or equivalent and it is **RECOMMENDED** that it should be erected (wherever possible) directly underneath the dripline extremity of any street tree/s to be retained.

Signs are **REQUIRED** to be prominently displayed on these fences which clearly display the following wording - 'Tree Protection Zone – Keep Out'.

The enclosed area underneath any street tree is **REQUIRED** to be mulched and kept free from building materials and/or contaminants and must not be used for storage of any building materials.

A refundable deposit in the form of cash, cheque or bank guarantee will often be **REQUIRED** to be lodged with Council to ensure compliance and, ultimately, to ensure the retention of protected street tree/s.

This deposit will be eligible for refund at the completion of all site works, but only after a satisfactory inspection of any protected street tree/s has been completed by a Council officer.

The contravention of any Council controls relating to a protected tree at any time during works may result in Council claiming all or part of any lodged security to perform any rectification works required.

#### 3.1.1. Street Tree Removal

If Council authorises the *removal* of a street tree as part of a development approval, it shall detail the tree *removal*/replacement requirements in writing in the development consent document. This is often applicable where approved development includes the construction of a driveway crossover into a property.

If a tree is supported for removal on the Council verge, and replacement tree will be conditioned to be planted in the immediate location. This is to ensure that the loss of amenity and habitat from the tree, is restored over time.

The cost to the property owner to *remove* a Council tree asset is determined by calculating the amenity value of the subject tree/s, with this value then being amalgamated with the cost for Council to *remove* the tree and to replace it with another tree/s at the completion of works.

The amenity value of a tree or trees is calculated by utilising the draft Australian Standard *DR 99307 – Amenity Trees – Guide to Valuation* (with the *removal* and/or replacement component being calculated by the assessing Council officer).

Where the subject street tree is diseased or dying or is an 'undesirable species' no amenity value will be incorporated into any such calculation.

The total cost of such work is **REQUIRED** to be paid to Council by the property owner prior to any approved *removal*/replacement works being undertaken by Council.

Unless otherwise specified, all work undertaken on Council street tree assets shall only be performed by Council or its authorised agents.

All Council tree assets that are *removed* as part of Council's ongoing tree maintenance regime are to be *removed* in compliance with adopted Council policies and procedures and all such works are to comply with the appropriate Australian Standard.

Tree removal for development purposes will only occur when all other methods are explored to retain the tree.

### 3.1.2. Street Tree Roots and Public Infrastructure

Conflicts often arise when Council street trees are growing adjacent to paving, driveways, footpaths, kerb and gutter and other public and private infrastructure. Careless or improper *removal* of these elements may cause severe injury to the roots and instability or even the death of affected trees.

Roots will not grow if there are not suitable site conditions. This can include too much water, no water, not enough oxygen, or if the spaces in the soil are too small. It is recommended that a suitably qualified arborist assist with the design of infrastructure in proximity to trees. Equally important is the provision of sufficient space to allow for the growth of healthy trees.

Tree roots are mechanisms for storage, so they do have the potential to generate new roots after being cut, yet, primary woody structural roots are not replaced as they were, once severed. A tree will usually generate new roots when roots are cut cleanly, but if roots are torn then they are most likely to decay and die leading to a potential loss of tree stability.

The following measures must therefore be evaluated before the root cutting of any Council street tree asset is undertaken.

- Grinding raised footpath and/or driveway slabs
- Substituting concrete with asphalt where possible
- Re-directing the footpath or kerb and gutter around or away from tree roots
- Installing flexible or rubberised footpath sections

Where these options are not feasible and tree roots are required to be severed, the following procedure is **REQUIRED** to be complied with by both Council staff and/or contractors:

1. Roots less than **50mm** in diameter may be severed without a Council tree officer or *qualified arborist* in attendance but must be cleanly cut with appropriately sharp tools;
2. Roots greater than **50mm** in diameter are only to be severed with the approval of a Council tree officer who has assessed the tree/s on-site;
3. All roots to be severed are to be cleanly cut with sharp tools such as secateurs, hand saws, long handled pruners, chainsaws, or specialised root *pruning* equipment;
4. Wherever possible, the roots to be *pruned* should be located and exposed using techniques such as hand digging, compressed air or water jetting, or mapped using non-invasive methods such as ground penetrating radar.

Prior to the root pruning of ANY Council tree asset, detailed calculation of the tree's Structural Root Zone (SRZ) area must be undertaken to determine whether any required root cutting is actually feasible.

For information on the calculation of Structural and Nominal Root Zones, please refer to ***AS4970-2025 Protection of Trees on Development Sites (Section 3 Determining protection zones)***

However, wherever possible, no root pruning activities should take place within the following recommended radial distances from any Council owned tree on public land:

| Trunk Diameter @ DSH<br>(diameter at standard height<br>– 1.4 m above ground level) | Restricted Radial Distance |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Less than 200mm                                                                     | 2 metres                   |
| Between 200mm – 400mm                                                               | 3 metres                   |
| Greater than 400mm                                                                  | 4 metres                   |

If the amount of root material requiring removal exceeds twenty percent of the Structural Root Zone area, particularly in the case of large *Ficus macrocarpa* var. 'Hillii' (Hill's Weeping figs), then a report is to be prepared for Council recommending the removal and replacement of any such tree/s because root pruning would not be a viable management option.

***This procedure is certainly REQUIRED to be implemented in cases where public tree roots are causing damage to private property, where any such damage extends beyond simply causing minor damage to front fences, driveways, etc, to causing actual damage WITHIN the property.***

***Instances of minor damage such as those to front fences and/or driveways, roots greater than 50mm must not be severed.***

When Council staff and/or contractors are removing footpath slabs, driveways, kerb and gutter, road pavement sections or foundations located above tree roots, the following procedure is **REQUIRED** to be adhered to wherever possible:

1. Break concrete, bitumen, sandstone, etc, into manageable pieces with a jackhammer, crowbar or mattock and load pieces onto a truck or loader;
2. Footpath slabs or driveway slabs should only be removed by a backhoe or bobcat if that machinery can undertake those works without driving on or manoeuvring over tree roots;
3. If hardscape materials are to be loaded onto a truck or loader those vehicles must remain on undisturbed footpath or the adjacent roadway during loading operations.

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## REFERENCES

Australian Standard AS 4373 – 2007 – *Pruning of Amenity Trees*. Standards Association of Australia.

Australian Standard AS 4970 – 2025 – *Protection of Trees on Development Sites*. Standards Association of Australia. Sydney.

Australian Standard (Draft) DR 99307 – *Amenity Trees – Guide to Valuation*, Standards Association of Australia. Sydney.

Randwick City Council (2026), *Randwick Street Tree Masterplan*, Randwick City Council.

Randwick City Council (2026), *Register of Significant Trees*, Randwick City Council.

Randwick City Council (2012), *Randwick Local Environmental Plan 2012*, Randwick City Council.

Randwick City Council (2013), *Randwick Comprehensive Development Control Plan 2013*, Randwick City Council.

Statewide (2022), *Best Practice Manual - Trees and Tree Roots (Version 9)* – Statewide. Sydney.

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# Appendix A

## Part B5 – Randwick Comprehensive Development Control Plan

Please refer to Part B5 of our Development Control Plan – Preservation of Trees and Vegetation

[https://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/13737/Part-B-General-Controls.pdf](https://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/13737/Part-B-General-Controls.pdf)

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## Appendix B

### Legislation, Planning Instruments and Council Documents Applying to Tree Removal and/or Pruning

Applications for tree pruning and/or removal need to comply with the provisions of a range of legislation, planning instruments and Council policies, control plans and documents including, but not limited to, the following:

- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 - fauna, fauna habitat, protected plants
- Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 – State legislation covering ecological communities, critical habitat, endangered and vulnerable species, key threatening processes, recovery plans
- Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 – Commonwealth legislation covering ecological communities, critical habitat, endangered and vulnerable species, key threatening processes, recovery plans
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 – State legislation which works in conjunction with the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 in relation to endangered or threatened organisms
- Native Vegetation Act 2003 - clearing native vegetation, regional vegetation management plans, property agreements
- New South Wales Heritage Act 1977
- Rural Fires Act 1997 - authorised removal of fire hazards
- New South Wales Heritage Act 1977
- Biosecurity Act 2015 – clearing/removal of priority weeds
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021
- Randwick Comprehensive Development Control Plan (DCP) 2013
- Part B5 of the Randwick Development Control Plan 2013 – [www.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au) / Council Services / Greening Our City / Trees / Preservation of trees and vegetation
- Randwick Street Tree Masterplan – [www.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au) / Council Services / Greening Our City / Trees / Street Tree Masterplan
- Register of Significant Trees – [www.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au) / Council Services / Greening Our City / Trees / Significant Tree Register

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## Appendix C

### Tree Protection Plan

A Tree Protection Plan details the measures that are to be put into place to protect designated trees from injury and damage during development and construction works. A designated tree is a tree on a development site, adjacent land or public land which is required to be retained and protected as a condition of development consent.

#### Requirements for Tree Protection Plans

For Council to be able to adequately assess the appropriateness or otherwise of proposed tree protection measures involving protected trees on both development sites and adjacent private property and/or public land, a Tree Protection Plan providing the following information must be submitted to Council:

A site plan (to scale) accurately showing:

- i) location of tree/s on the subject site and any adjoining trees which may be affected by any development. Trees identified on the plan should be numbered;
- ii) all trees which are to be removed and their details;
- iii) all trees to be retained (protected trees) specifying tree number, species, common name, height, canopy width, DSH, general condition;
- iv) optimum and minimum tree protection zones;
- v) location and description of tree protection measures to be installed;
- vi) lot boundaries, dimensions and North point;
- vii) proposed development including services, driveways, and any alteration to existing soil levels and drainage.

Detailed calculation of the Structural Root Zone (SRZ) and Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) radiuses of any protected tree/s.

Tree Protection Zones are areas specifically set aside to ensure that retained trees are adequately protected during development and construction activities. This zone must comprise an area sufficiently large enough to protect a designated tree or trees and their roots from disturbance or damage.

The TPZ for any tree should wherever possible extend to at least the dripline of any protected tree. Where this is not possible the zone should extend as far as possible in all directions from the trunk of the tree.

Generally, the TPZ radius should be calculated by multiplying the subject tree/s diameter at 1.4 metres above ground level (DSH) by a factor of twelve.

The Structural Root Zone of any tree/s is the minimum area required to ensure the stability and long-term viability of the tree/s.

The calculation of the SRZ and TPZ radiuses of protected trees must comply with the procedures and calculation methodologies detailed in the Australian Standard AS 4970 – 2025 – *Protection of Trees on Development Sites*.

A tree management plan detailing measures to ensure the health and stability of protected trees, including any proposed canopy or root pruning, excavation works, site controls on waste disposal, vehicular access, storage of materials and installation of utilities. As a rule, however, no excavation works should be undertaken within the following recommended radial distances from protected Council-owned trees on public land.

| Trunk Diameter @ DSH<br>(diameter at standard height<br>– 1.4 m above ground level) | Restricted Radial Distance |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Less than 200mm                                                                     | 2 metres                   |
| Between 200mm – 400mm                                                               | 3 metres                   |
| Greater than 400mm                                                                  | <b>4 metres</b>            |



**Randwick City Council**  
a sense of community

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