



COUNCIL POLICY

Council Policy Title:	Street Tree Management
Council Policy ref. no:	13.6
Responsible Department:	Infrastructure and Services
Date of adoption/review:	23 October 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Street Tree Management Policy was developed by Colac Otway Shire Works and Services Parks & Gardens Section in consultation with the Risk Management, Infrastructure, Planning, Environment and Local Laws departments as required.

The Colac Otway Shire has various Council adopted Streetscape strategies, which relate to specific towns, and result in a multiple of planting methods and themes within our streetscapes.

The aim of this policy is to provide clear direction and also provide a framework for making consistent well informed decisions for all Council managed trees so that the community and visitors alike can be assured Council is committed to caring for its trees and improving the environment.

The Colac Otway Shire Council has approximately 10,000 street, park and reserve trees. Many of which are street trees that grow in a built environment containing conflicting demands on the same space. Also, in addition, many of the coastal towns have numerous high conservation value road reserves, where large areas of indigenous vegetation exists. Urban infrastructure requirements take a heavy toll on existing trees. Overhead and underground services, residential construction and associated works all impact significantly on the trees health and safety.

Colac Otway Shire Council Plan outlines Council's commitment to achieving environmental sustainability, a healthy urban forest and attractive urban amenity

2. TREES AND THEIR IMPACT

The importance of trees in our urban environment has been well documented over recent times.

There are a number of positive and negative factors influencing the use of trees. The following is a brief outline of some of the most obvious positive and negative factors that influence our use of trees as street trees or park trees.

a) Positive Aspects

- are fundamental for the existence of life as we know it (oxygen/carbon and water cycles);
- can soften a harsh building environment by creating improved aesthetics and visual amenity;
- can reduce noise pollution;
- help purify the air by removing particulates which otherwise contribute to respiratory issues amongst the public;
- can help stabilise the soil and help reduce erosion;
- can reduce wind drag in areas;
- can attract wild life;
- give a feeling of privacy between properties;
- can create a unique character to an area or town, adding to that town's sense of pride and sense of place;
- contribute to the world's biodiversity and when planted in public places promote their use;
- slow water movement;
- contribute to carbon sequestration;
- reduce heat island impacts in built up areas;
- can act as a buffer against ember attack in wildfire events (non-flammable species); and
- can significantly contribute to psychological wellbeing and health in general.

b) Negative Aspects

- can lift or crack pavement, driveways or walls;
- can infiltrate pipes;
- can lose limbs through either storm damage or natural attrition;
- can be a home for white ants and other pests;
- when poorly selected, often have to be pollarded under power lines;
- can lose fruit, nuts and leaves creating problems for residents and Council;
- can create public liability situations.

Street trees help to create softness and beauty in otherwise harsh streetscapes. Trees also have roles in ecology, microclimate modification and traffic control. As such they add significantly to the enjoyment of our Shire, our citizens and to the value of properties. By applying appropriate levels of resources and best practice management, Colac Otway Shire Council will develop streetscapes of attractive, healthy and safe trees for the benefit of the entire community, both now and in the future.

3. POLICY BENEFITS

Arboriculture is something that the majority of people have little understanding of and this often results in having expectations beyond that which Council can provide in relation to Tree Management.

Street trees provide many social, economic, and environmental benefits for our Community. This policy will identify suitable and unsuitable characteristics of trees that are planted and greater strategic planning can occur so that the correct tree can be planted in the most suitable location.

Future plantings should reflect the requirements of the Council so that tree-related problems that we have inherited can be avoided in the future. A decision to develop the Colac Central Activity Area and entrances as a Botanic Garden Town has the potential to add significantly to the selection of tree species and has the potential to create an iconic landscape.

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions will apply –

Tree - A woody plant that can be expected to exceed five (5) metres in height under normal growth conditions, typically with a single, dominant stem (trunk).

Shrub - A woody plant that would not be expected to exceed five (5) metres in height under normal growth conditions.

Pruning - The intentional removal of parts of a plant to improve its form or function.

Street tree - A tree growing within the road reserve, including nature strips, separators and medians.

Street landscape – includes trees, shrubs, or other plants included in nature strips which provide a continuum of connected green streets linking public parklands and private spaces throughout the urban environment.

Environmental Weed: Plants that invade native vegetation, usually adversely affecting regeneration and survival of the indigenous flora and fauna. They can be exotic plants, or plants that do not naturally grow in the area.

AS 4373 - Australian Standard 4373 - *Pruning of Amenity Trees*.

5. OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF TREES

Council is responsible for all planting, removal and maintenance of roadside and parks trees with the following exceptions: -

- a) Electric line clearance in areas considered non-declared urban areas. This is Powercor Australia's responsibility.

b) The Arterial road network within the municipality is the responsibility of VicRoads. These roads include:

- Princes Highway
- Great Ocean Road
- Timboon Colac Road
- Cape Otway Lighthouse Road
- Colac Lavers Hill Road
- Colac Carlisle River Road
- Gellibrand River Road
- Lavers Hill Cobden Road
- Colac Forrest Road
- Forrest Apollo Bay Road
- Skenes Creek Road
- Beech Forest Road
- Warncoort Birregurra Road
- Birregurra Road
- Birregurra Deans Marsh Road
- Birregurra Forrest Road

Council is responsible for the management of street trees on Arterial roads within urban areas. An urban area has the same meaning as under the *Road Management Act 2004*.

Council may plant trees on the arterial road network and maintain them subject to agreement with Vic Roads.

c) Trees outside speed restriction zones are classified rural. The following should be taken into consideration with regard to Rural Trees:

- roadsides have been classified under Council's Vegetation Protection Overlay Plan, either low, medium or high conservation value;
- comment/permission from Department Sustainability and Environment (DSE) for removals/pruning other than rural indigenous trees required under roadside safety requirements;
- roadside low value classification comment/permission required of DSE if vegetation present has large crown area or, habitat value present.
- Potential fire mitigation plantings.

6. STAFF

Training should be conducted to keep staff up to date with the latest arboricultural requirements and suitably trained staff should carry out tree inspections.

Staff training is conducted on an "as-needs" basis, to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and quality assurance requirements.

Any planting/tree works and removals, or works that could effect Council trees should be done by or in consultation with Council staff or a representative qualified in arboriculture.

7. PLANNING APPROVALS & ENGINEERING REQUIREMENTS

Within the function of Local Government, there are many departments that have an influence on whether trees are grown in a harmonious environment or not. Departments such as Town Planning and Engineering have a major impact on the streetscape by way of design or the granting of applications for works to be carried out near trees. The street tree is considered by Council as a permanent fixture and a valued asset, consequently the tree will not be considered for removal until all options have been explored by an architect/developer and the Council.

Council may at times amend its Planning Schemes, which can impact the Council Arborist's decisions relating to Street Tree Management. The Planning Department will need to keep Council's Arborist up to date with all changes or amendments to Schemes relating to Street Tree Management.

8. LIABILITY

All claims for damages where Council trees are considered to be the cause must be in writing and will be referred to the Colac Otway Shire's Risk and OHS Coordinator.

9. PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Council will intervene in pest and disease outbreaks where the immediate or long term survival of the tree or trees is compromised or where particular tree disease epidemics are a factor or property is substantially affected. In these circumstances the efficiency and cost effectiveness of available treatments will be assessed and, if justified, the appropriate integrated pest management techniques may be applied as required.

10. MANAGEMENT OF TREES AND SHRUBS AS ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDS

There are many trees and shrubs in the Colac Otway Shire that are now considered to be environmental weeds. These trees and shrubs were planted before their environmental impacts were known. Council's Environment Department will work closely with the Parks and Gardens Department to develop a long-term program to remove these species and replace them with more appropriate species.

11. INFECTIOUS MATERIAL

Chipped material, logwood, stump grinding and other debris from trees infected with or that may be infected with a pathogenic organism shall be disposed of in a manner to prevent spreading the infection. All equipment, vehicles and personal items that come in contact with infected or potentially infected material must be disinfected by approved methods before being returned to service.

12. TREE VALUATION

Council has not been required to utilise a tree valuation formula to date, however it is intended to use the German Maurer Hoffmen Method, which is used by other Municipalities. The Colac Otway Shire will use this method for accurate tree evaluation assessment to achieve an average figure. Valuations will be carried out by Council's qualified arboricultural officer as required or determined by vandalism, vehicle damage, building development, road construction or other works which would require compensation for damage for tree maintenance or tree removal.

13. UNAUTHORISED ACTIONS

Pruning or removal of Council owned or managed trees by anyone other than Council staff or contractors engaged by Council shall not be permitted. Council may prosecute persons who prune, disfigure, damage, kill or remove Council trees without explicit authorisation from the Council's relevant Manager or delegated Officer, under the Summary Offences Act or other appropriate laws or local laws.

Council may recover costs and compensation for replacement, loss of amenity value and remedial works required from authorised persons and contractors who prune, remove or cause damage to Council trees by failing to comply with this Policy, contract document conditions and other relevant policies and Guidelines.

14. EDUCATION

A key part of Council's community responsibility is to educate the community in responsible tree care and management. Council will actively promote responsible arboriculture to the community.

Council will also educate the community on appropriate species to plant in their own yards, avoiding additional environmental weeds being planted.

15. STREET TREE REMOVAL REQUESTS

Removal or non-removal of trees from nature strips and parks is potentially the greatest cause of conflict in the management of the Council's trees. Understandably, customers become very attached to a tree that has been living and growing near their home for many years. Prudent tree management requires Council to assume that every tree, no matter how insignificant it may appear, has some value to someone. Unfortunately, it sometimes becomes necessary to remove trees, either because of a problem with the tree itself, or to facilitate development or installation of infrastructure.

Colac Otway Shire Council will seek to avoid street tree removal wherever possible. However, street tree removal is an acceptable management option when required for human health and safety, to protect infrastructure, to facilitate approved development and infrastructure improvements, to maintain a healthy urban forest or for ecological restoration.

Street trees and groups of street trees may be removed only when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The tree or tree group poses a severe safety hazard that is unable to be corrected by pruning, transplanting or other treatments.
- The tree or tree group severely interferes with a neighbouring tree or tree group to the extent that neither tree can develop to its full potential. The more desirable tree will be preserved.
- The aesthetic values of the tree or tree group are so low or negative that the site is visually enhanced by the trees removal.
- Tree or tree group is dead or close to death.
- The tree or tree group poses an extreme and agreed public nuisance.
- Where improvements, infrastructure repair or maintenance required to be made around the tree or tree group will kill or render the tree a hazard or significantly impact on the trees condition and useful life expectancy.
- The tree is found to be substantially contributing to damages to public or private property and no other viable means are available to rectify the situation.
- The tree or tree group is infected with an epidemic insect or disease where the recommended control is not applicable and removal is the recommended practice to prevent transmission.
- When urban redesign requires the replacement of certain trees with more suitable species.

Council will not consider street tree removal for trees that do not meet the above criteria but will provide advice to affected persons on how the perceived problem(s) may be limited.

Experience has shown that the concern associated with the removal of trees can be minimised through proper consultation with customers and demonstration of respect for the importance of trees by Council and the communication of these views to the community. Decisions regarding tree removal become necessary in response to applications by customers, developers and external authorities or through observation of problem trees by Council staff. Falling leaves, twigs, fruit and flowers are considered normal expected tree behaviour and are not valid reasons for removal under this Policy unless the fruit or other material cause significant public nuisance or threatens public safety. Similarly, failure to establish grass, loss of view or other planting under a street tree is not a valid reason for removal under this Policy. Authority for removal will rest with the Council Arborist in consultation with other relevant staff as required.

16. COST

The cost for general tree removal under this policy will be borne by Council within the capacity of the Street Tree Maintenance budget. Tree removals to facilitate Council infrastructure upgrade or repair shall be borne by Council through the budget of that infrastructure project. Tree removals to facilitate private works shall be borne by the person carrying out those private works.

17. PRUNING

Council will undertake all necessary pruning of street trees to achieve the following:

- The highest standard of Arboricultural Practice.
- Providing safe access to both pedestrians and vehicles.
- Ensuring safe visibility to both pedestrians and vehicles.
- Ensuring that suitable clearances are maintained under Powercor services and aesthetics of the tree, street and surrounding area. Clearance of street trees from overhead power lines will be conducted in accordance with Council's Electric Line Clearance Management Plan and to achieve compliance with the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010*. In general Council will progressively move to replace unsuitable trees under electrical lines.
- Ensuring healthy tree growth by the use of skilled tree surgery methods and formative pruning to repair physical damage and maintain shape.
- Avoiding pollarding trees in streets.
- Preventing intrusion of roots and branches onto private property.
- Clearing signs if warranted.
- Clearance of street trees from street lighting, traffic signals, advisory signs, road and foot paths located within road reserves managed by Council will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Road Management Plan. All pruning work carried out by or for Colac Otway Shire Council must comply with Australian Standard 4373 – 2007 *"Pruning of Amenity Trees"* as a minimum.

18. STREET TREE ROOT MANAGEMENT

Root management works, including root pruning, root deflector and soil moisture cut-off barriers, are occasionally required to be performed on street trees. This work is required for risk management, to maintain public safety and contain tree root growth where necessary to prevent damage to property, roads, kerb and channel and footpaths.

The problem of root intrusion, when occurring will be addressed by one or more of the following methods:

- a) Skilled pruning and removal of the offending roots
- b) Provision of root barriers
- c) Chemical control of roots
- d) Removal of the offending tree if all other methods fail.

Root pruning is the practice of removing a portion of a tree's root system. The circumstances necessitating root pruning vary, but the outcome is to always ensure the health, stability, and longevity of the street tree. Root pruning of street trees will not be permitted without the approval of Council's Arborist or delegated representative.

Council will ensure that it is kept up to date with current trends in the management of street tree root systems. Council will adopt appropriate action in

the management of street tree roots that are causing damage to roads, kerb and channel, footpaths and associated infrastructure within the road reserve. The action will include but not be limited to the use of root deflectors, road, kerb and channel and/or footpath replacement and reinforcement, root pruning or tree removal.

19. TREE ROOTS AFFECTING SEWERS OR DRAINS

It is often asserted that roots damage underground services (particularly pipes). Although roots may be found sheathing a pipe or growing inside it, they are generally not the cause of damage - they can neither detect water in a sound pipe nor exert sufficient pressure to break into a sound pipe to gain access to the water it may contain. However, if a pipe is already damaged and leaking, tree roots may be attracted by the moisture, enter the pipe, proliferate and ultimately cause a blockage.

Jointed vitrified clay or earthenware pipes are most prone to invasion by roots, particularly as the joints may fail due to gradual deterioration or ground movement. Modern plastic pipes made of PVC plastic and fibreglass and those using rubber sealing rings are more resistant if constructed properly.

Sewer services lines and storm water drains from the supply mains or sewer are the responsibility of the owner of the property to maintain. The Colac Otway Shire Council will not accept liability for the maintenance or cost incurred to repair or remove tree roots from sewers or drains unless it is able to be demonstrated that Council managed street trees have contributed to any damage .

Any claims for compensation for removal of a tree due to roots in the sewer or drain will be assessed on an individual basis by Council's Risk and OHS Coordinator in consultation with Council's Arborist.

Where evidence is provided which demonstrates a Council owned tree(s) is the cause of damage, the Council will take appropriate action, which may result in the pruning or removal of the tree, particularly where no other alternative solution exists.

20. CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES CAUSED BY STREET TREES

In order to reasonably assess whether Council managed street trees are contributing to structural damage to privately owned property, the property owner is required to provide:

- A plan of all existing on-site and surrounding vegetation within the past 10 years (preferable);
- Investigation of soil at the base of the building or other effected structures to determine The presence, size, depth, and amount of roots present;
- Identification to genus level of any roots found as a result of the root investigation;

- Structural engineers assessment of the site to determine:
 - Recent history of patterns of movement in the affected building(s);
 - Age and condition of building; and
 - Depth and condition of building footings.
- A geotechnical investigation to determine:
 - Soil moisture levels around the site and the building;
 - Soil moisture tension, soil bulk density, shrink/swell index and soil load bearing capacity; and
 - Conditions and discharge points of stormwater from site.

Claims against Council for damage to dwellings and other built structures on private property shall be routinely referred to Council's Risk and OHS Coordinator for assessment in conjunction with Council's arborist.

21. POWER LINE CLEARANCE

Street trees are cleared in accordance with Council's annual Electric Line Clearance Management Plan which fulfils Council's obligations as set out in the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010* (the 'Regulations').

Specified clearances are to be maintained free of vegetation. There is the additional requirement to maintain a regrowth space. This is measured as the average annual growth by the number of years in a vegetation management cycle.

Dimensions for clearance of vegetation from overhead power lines are outlined in Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance, written under the Regulations.

Other management options that Council will investigate to minimise requirements to clear vegetation adjacent to power lines are presented below:

- Optimum location of power lines;
- Relocation of overhead power lines to underground power lines in agreement with relevant service authorities. Boring or tunnelling under existing trees is to be undertaken so as not to negatively impact on the health of the tree;
- Use of aerial bundle cables to reduce clearance space requirements in some areas of important vegetation where funding is available;
- Investigation and development of innovative tree management and pruning methods to improve line clearance methods;
- Removal and replacement of inappropriate vegetation where possible; and
- Investigation and use of appropriate species in new and replacement planting.

Where significant tree plantings are identified, Council will look at other methods to save these trees from being pruned severely to meet the Powercor standards. Aerial Cable bundling or underground cables will be looked at as the most appropriate way of reducing the severity of current pruning methods.

Where Council has decided to use another form of power supply line, it will ask Powercor for a quote so the matter can be referred to its annual budget process.

Council will then seek full or shared funding from Powercor as established under its Power Line Improvement Plan Scheme.

Council will continue to have its employees trained by the relevant authorities for the clearing of trees near overhead wires.

When trees are to be planted in the pavement or roadway, Council must check for locations of services, both above and below ground.

a) Declared Urban Areas

Council is the responsible body for maintaining required clearance limits for street trees under overhead power lines in Declared Areas within the municipality. The nominated Declared Area within the Shire is defined by the boundaries of the former City of Colac.

For further information refer to the Council's Electric Line Clearance Management Plan.

b) Non-Declared Urban Areas

Powercor is the responsible body for the pruning of trees under power lines in Non Declared Urban Areas. Notification should be given to Council of intended works by Powercor and an inspection carried out with a Powercor representative to ensure the trees are pruned to Council's satisfaction.

22. PRIVATE POWER LINES – TREE MAINTENANCE

Council will not carry out any tree maintenance to clear privately owned power lines.

Private power services are usually located on private land and any maintenance to the service lines to remove vegetation interfering with private lines is the responsibility of the owner.

Council will, however, at the request of the property or power lines owner clear vegetation at the owners expense.

23. TREE PRESERVATION

a) Indigenous Vegetation

Where naturally occurring indigenous vegetation exists on road reserves, efforts will be made to preserve and maintain it in line with Colac Otway Shire's Roadside Vegetation Management Plan, environmental strategies, and all other relevant acts and regulations which relate to the protection of environmental values. Retention and preservation of indigenous vegetation must be balanced against the needs of public safety.

b) Significant trees

Council's appropriate Manager or delegated Officer e.g. Arborist or Environment Officer, taking into account the following criteria, may deem a street or roadside tree as significant if the tree:

1. Has significant cultural value (e.g. trees in an Avenue of Honour);
2. Has significant historical value (e.g. planted by a dignitary);
3. Is a rare, threatened, endangered, indigenous or native species,
4. Has significant value to the community through its contribution to the streetscape;
5. Is an outstanding specimen of its species as a result of its size or another growth characteristic;
6. Is an endangered exotic species; or
7. Is a habitat tree for an endangered species.

c) Significant Tree Register

Where a street or roadside tree/plantation is identified as significant it should be recorded on a central database and communicated to relevant departments.

If a significant tree is deemed unsafe, diseased or dead, where possible all effected parties will be consulted to find the most appropriate solution.

d) Consultation

Council and its various communities have the opportunity to make a real statement with the careful selection and planting of trees within its streetscapes. The character of an area can be enhanced for residents and visitors alike providing a visually pleasing and lasting impression for all to experience.

Community consultation will ensure that the individual characteristics and requirements of an area are maintained and enhanced whilst at the same time meeting Council's objectives to produce streetscapes that provide a lasting impression for residents and visitors alike.

The content of this Policy and existing and future strategies and plans relating to street trees and streetscapes will form the basis for the future direction of management of street trees within the Colac Otway Shire.

24. TREE PLANTING PROGRAMS

a) Customer Planting Requests

Persons making a request for street tree planting will be advised whether the request can be accommodated. If the site is suitable, the person making the request will be advised of the species to be planted and the approximate timelines in which the works will be completed. Street tree planting will occur in the planting season following the request. Planting seasons are usually conducted between April and August. Council will endeavour to meet requests for

planting made during the planting season although planting will be subject to timing of the request, stock and resource availability.

Requests for block planting or planting along the length of streets shall be considered as part of an overall street tree planting program dependant on allocation of funding. Where such a request cannot be fulfilled in the current planting year, it shall be deferred to the following year's program for consideration should resources be available.

b) Opposition

The establishment or maintenance of an avenue of trees or a consistent planting theme can sometimes require Council to plant a tree in a nature strip against the wishes of the customer immediately adjacent. This is a difficult situation that calls for Council to make a judgement regarding the rights of the wider community over the individual resident. When making such a decision, it should be borne in mind that a major factor in the survival of a newly planted street tree is the cooperation of the nearest resident in maintaining that tree.

Where a consistent avenue of trees or a strong consistent planting theme exists and a gap in this theme will detrimentally affect the overall streetscape, trees will be planted to fill the gaps despite opposition from adjacent customers.

In all other instances, the relevant Coordinator overseeing the project shall make a decision regarding planting in consultation with the Council Arborist.

c) Unauthorised Planting

Unauthorised planting of street trees by residents shall be discouraged, but recently planted trees shall be allowed to remain provided they are:

- Of a suitable species which is compatible with the surrounding streetscape;
- Good quality specimens;
- In a suitable location; and
- Planted to Council standards.

Where a tree does not meet these conditions, the adjacent resident shall be asked to remove the tree. If the resident does not comply, the tree will be removed by Council staff or contractors and used or disposed of as seen fit by Council at the cost of the resident.

d) Nature Strip Garden Beds

A permit system applies and all applicants should contact Colac Otway Shire's Local Laws Department for an application form.

25. STREET TREE SUITABILITY

Councils throughout Australia have inherited problems with street trees caused by historical planting decisions or in some cases adverse infrastructure installations.

The principle of planting suitable trees, given the limitations of the site, including utility services should be adopted.

There should be a gradual replacement of unsuitable trees with more suitable species which avoids the needs for annual line clearance and similar pruning.

Some trees are suitable for specific locations more so than others with species deemed unsuitable on a nature strip situation, may be utilised in a larger car park or CBD area.

Trees and shrubs with a known potential to become environmental weeds, should be avoided especially near bushland or rural areas.

Street trees can be of a suitable species, but they have been planted in an inappropriate location, for example in narrow footpath or nature strip areas or under power lines.

Other streets also have been planted with a mixture of species; age and shape and do not tend to provide an attractive or unified streetscape. A street tree removal program should be in place to gradually remove unsuitable species replacing them with more appropriate plantings that tend to be uniform and also to reduce long term maintenance costs.

26. TREE SELECTION

The right tree for the right place with due consideration to biological and functional, aesthetic and design requirement criteria is of paramount importance. The most successful course is to match the planting site limitations with the right tree for that site.

There is no one perfect urban tree. It is also important to understand that there is no one urban environment. The urban environment is a varied conglomeration of microclimates. Above ground or below ground site conditions can change dramatically within the space of a few metres. Consequently, a site analysis of each major planting site will allow more appropriate tree selections. Appropriate site assessment and tree selection can have the following benefits.

- Mitigate conflicts between tree roots and adjacent infrastructure.
- Reduce the incidence of pest and disease outbreaks. This can be achieved through selecting resistant varieties of trees and increasing species diversity through the urban forest.
- Increase plant performance by attributing species to particular soil conditions.

- Increased tree longevity so that tree benefits exceed the costs. The benefit of an urban tree is directly proportional to its crown size or volume and longevity in the landscape.
- Reduced maintenance costs, e.g. pruning requirements can be reduced by selecting smaller trees under power lines or narrow canopy form for busy roads.
- Produce attractive streetscapes that reinforce the pervading landscape and streetscape character.
- Reduced environmental demand - trees that have tolerance of drought and generally do not require additional resource inputs.

Tree selection will take into account relative plant tolerances and adaptability, and integration into surrounding and strategic planting themes.

Procedural solutions such as community consultation and the detailed review of horticultural, arboricultural, planning and historical literature associated with the proposed planting site will be considered.

Species will be selected that do not require excessive resource input to maintain them in a safe and aesthetically pleasing manner. Tree species known to cause excessive damage to infrastructure will be avoided. Tree species that are known for their structural integrity and limited litter drop are preferred.

Australian species from other localities and exotic species can make positive contributions to the landscape. In some cases, these species are better adapted to the conditions of the highly modified urban environment and have positive attributes that fulfil specific landscape functions.

Remnant and indigenous vegetation has an important role to play in urban landscapes. The maturity of existing remnant vegetation is impossible to replace and the diversity of natural plant communities is difficult to replicate. Preservation of existing remnant vegetation is the most efficient way to incorporate biodiversity in urban landscapes.

The use of indigenous tree species in streets will have greater impact and benefit when used adjacent to or to link open space that has significant remnant vegetation. Tree selection will be based on the following criteria:

a) Biological Requirements

This relates to a tree's ability to tolerate urban conditions. The species selected should have high tolerance levels that will allow establishment and sustained growth while producing desired benefits with low management inputs. This also relates to available root space to sustain the potential tree size.

b) Ecological Issues

This includes tree diversity, maintaining and enhancing existing significant areas of native and remnant indigenous vegetation, and selecting plants that do not have the potential to become woody weeds and impact on natural systems.

c) Functional and Spatial Issues

Functional and spatial issues are connected with crown and foliage types within the constraints of the urban environment and the tree's tolerance to pruning. It also relates to the tree's root system and its limited impact on adjacent infrastructure.

d) Aesthetic Issues

The ability for trees to enhance the visual amenity of a streetscape or area, without negative impact to surrounding infrastructure and the fit with neighbourhood character, including existing street trees, is also a consideration. This also includes the execution of plantings which are aligned with Council's strategies and plans which detail desired urban streetscape outcomes.

e) Health Considerations

Species selection will utilise trees that have no known or low levels of toxic or allergenic characteristics.

f) Tree Longevity

The longer a tree is allowed to grow in a site the greater the benefits to the landscape and return on initial investment the trees will have.

g) Commercial Availability

Availability of tree stock is important to successfully provide the desired numbers and size for tree planting programs.

27. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be implemented by the Colac Otway Shire and is subject to periodic review.

ADOPTED/AMENDMENT OF POLICY

Policy Review Date	Reason for Amendment
24 March 2004	Adopted by Council
24 May 2006	Review
23 October 2013	Review