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1. Statement

Council acknowledges the key role that urban greening plays in the city's resilience and liveability which protects vegetation and wildlife. Additionally, urban greening contributes to community health and well-being and is important for the protection and enhancement of urban habitat and connectivity to urban corridors.

Council recognises the importance of urban greening within Ipswich and the multiple benefits it provides. Urban greening benefits include mitigation of the impacts and effects of climate change, reduction of urban heat island effect, provision of shade and cooling, carbon sequestration, absorption of air pollutants, filtration of stormwater, provision of mental and physical health benefits, provision of habitat for urban flora and fauna, and increased aesthetic amenity and character values. To that end, council is strongly committed to the protection, enhancement, management, and maintenance of urban greening through timely and cost-effective planting and management practices.

This Urban Greening Policy applies to all vegetation under care and control of council on public land within the urban footprint of Ipswich. This includes streets and road reserves, open space, urban corridors, and council owned land including community facilities.

Council recognises and supports urban greening by private land holders. Further information in relation to this is referenced in the City of Ipswich Natural Environment Policy.

2. Purpose and Principles

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Strengthen council's commitment, approach and strategic direction for the protection, enhancement, management, maintenance and promotion of greening on public land within the urban footprint of Ipswich
- Provide a framework for decision-making, documentation and standardised processes to ensure consistency of the enhancement, management and maintenance of trees on public land within the urban footprint of Ipswich.

3. Strategic Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan themes:

- Vibrant and Growing
- Safe, Inclusive and Creative
- Natural and Sustainable
- A Trusted and Leading Organisation

Associated documents include:

- Natural Environment Policy
- Natural Environment Strategy (once endorsed)
- Nature Conservation Strategy
- Sustainability Policy
- Sustainability Strategy
- Ipswich Urban Greening Plan 2022 - 2042
- Ipswich Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2014
- Active Ipswich Strategy
- Waterway Health Strategy
- iGO Transport Plan
- Active Transport Action Plan
- Recreation Cycling and Walking Action Plan
- Ipswich Streetscape Design Guidelines
- Free Plant Entitlement Administrative Directive

4. Regulatory Authority

The implementation, application and governance of this policy will give consideration to the following regulatory and policy instruments:

- *Nature Conservation Act 2014*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Vegetation Management Act 1999*
- *Planning Act 2016*
- *Biosecurity Act 2014*
- Ipswich City Council Planning Scheme Policy
- Implementation Guideline No. 19 – Vegetation Retention
- Ipswich City Council Standard Drawings
- Local Law No. 7 (Local Government Controlled Areas and Roads)
- Local Law No. 49 (Vegetation Management)
- Australian Standard 4373-2007 – Pruning of Amenity Trees
- Australian Standard 4970-2009 – Tree protection on development sites

5. Human Rights Commitment

Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

6. Scope

This policy is applicable to all vegetation on council-controlled land within the urban footprint and does not replace requirements determined by legislation and associated regulations, local laws or planning scheme requirements.

The following information will be used to ensure that vegetation and trees are planted, protected, maintained, removed and replaced in a sustainable manner. Trees removed will be offset in accordance with the Urban Greening Procedure (Refer Urban Greening Procedure for No Net Canopy Loss Method).

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Following is a list of key internal stakeholders that the Urban Greening Policy is relevant to, or imposes particular requirements on:

Manager (Environment and Sustainability)	Ensure initiatives, programs and projects align with protection, enhancement and expansion of urban greening. Monitor and evaluate changes in area of urban greening.
Manager (Works and Field Services)	Ensure initiatives, programs and projects support management of urban greening.
Field Services Manager	Make sure timely provision of services associated with management of urban greening.
Manager Capital Program Delivery	Ensure urban greening initiatives are included in the capital works programs from the planning phase of projects.
Principal Officer (Natural Area and Urban Forest)	Oversee delivery of services associated with management of urban greening.
Natural Environment and Land Manager	Oversee urban greening monitoring and evaluation programs, as well as review related initiatives, programs and projects for strategic alignment.
Community Partnerships Officer	Ensure volunteer greening initiatives on council land in relation to urban greening is consistent with the policy.

Project Officer (Natural Environment)	Review and maintain the Ipswich Urban Greening Plan and procedure to ensure consistency with this policy.
Urban Designer (Public Open Space)	Ensure standards and guidelines for urban open space planting and land-use development are consistent with this policy. Review and maintain the Ipswich Streetscape Design Guideline to ensure consistency with this policy.
Manager, Compliance	Oversee regulatory activities associated with the implementation of this policy.
Manager, Development Planning	Ensure development assessment supports achieving the principles outlined in this policy.
Team Lead (Traffic and Transport)	Ensure works planned and undertaken on road reserves adheres to the Urban Greening Policy in relation to vegetation retention, removal and replacement.
Technical Officer (Landscape and Recreation)	Ensure assessment and approvals are consistent with this policy and procedure.
Environment Advisor (Internal Projects)	Review relevant documentation and provide advice on legislative requirements associated with this policy.
Conservation Partnerships Officer	To deliver the Habitat Gardens Partnership in alignment with the Urban Greening Policy and promote urban greening on private land through council's partnership programs.

8. Key Stakeholders

The policy applies broadly across all Council departments. Key stakeholders sit within each department and branch. However, stakeholders of note are those in the following roles:

- Manager (Environment and Sustainability)
- Manager (Works and Field Services)
- Manager Capital Program Delivery
- Manager (Performance)
- Infrastructure Strategy Manager
- City Maintenance Manager
- Manager Compliance (Planning and Regulatory Services)
- Manager City Design (Planning and Regulatory Services)

- Natural Environment and Land Manager (Environment and Sustainability)
- Principal Officer (Natural and Urban Forest)
- Team Leader (Strategic Catchment and Conservation Planning)
- Biodiversity Officer (Strategic Catchment and Conservation Planning)
- Technical Officer (Landscape and Recreation) (Engineering, Health and Environment)
- Coordinator (Sustainability)
- Community Partnerships Officer (Environment and Sustainability)
- Project Officer (Natural Environment) (Strategic Catchment and Conservation Planning)
- Environment Advisor (Internal Projects)
- Urban Designer (Public Open Space)

9. Urban Biodiversity

Urban biodiversity supports a range of ecosystem services which are critical for the survival of humans as well as plants and animals. The ecosystem of Ipswich includes habitat for its diverse flora and fauna. Key threats to urban biodiversity and ecosystem services include climate change, increased urbanisation, and pest plant and animals. The following areas are listed to protect, maintain and enhance the urban biodiversity of Ipswich:

Habitat

Habitat trees can be living or dead specimens that provide significant habitat for wildlife. Dead trees with numerous hollows that provide habitat for wildlife should be retained where possible as habitat trees. The habitat value and/or potential of hazardous trees will be considered during visual tree assessments, and where appropriate, endeavours made to retain any such habitat trees.

Where necessary, exclusion zones may be created under habitat trees to exclude the fall zone from public access, with signage indicating that the tree has been retained as a habitat tree. Alternatively pruning may be carried out to effectively manage the risk while allowing ecologically important trees to remain standing. Where hollowed material cannot remain in a tree due to issues of public safety consideration will be given to replacing the sites with nesting boxes. An effort to create future habitat opportunities will also be made in appropriate locations including using pruning techniques to enhance hollow development including roughly cutting or ‘coronetting’ stems or branches and leaving long branch stubs.

Threatened Species

Where trees have been identified as threatened species or species containing significant habitat for wildlife, tree removal will be undertaken only as a last resort. Where tree removal is considered unavoidable, permits and approval requirements must be investigated and met in accordance with the relative legislation, such as *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and/or *Vegetation Management Act 1999*. Advice should be sought on these requirements from council’s Environment Advisor (Internal Projects).

Where trees are to be removed, a wildlife spotter/catcher will be required to assess these trees prior to the commencement of works and provide a report to relevant council sections (Arborist, Biodiversity Officer, Environment Advisor) regarding relocation of any significant

wildlife communities and breeding habitat for threatened species and/or be on site at the time of works to ensure any disturbed wildlife is unharmed and relocated/re-homed. Advice should be sought from council's Environmental Advisor (Internal Projects) in relation to this. Specific permits are required for interference with threatened species breeding habitat.

In situations where trees have been identified as an important habitat or food source, such as Koala or Glossy Black Cockatoo, Flying Fox roosting trees for example, every effort must be made to minimise the loss of vegetation from the location and must be in accordance with relevant state and federal legislation e.g. *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Tree works or action aimed at discouraging the passage through, or presence of native wildlife in trees will not be undertaken unless otherwise dealt within a wildlife management plan such as council's Ipswich Flying Fox Roost Management Plan or required for the safety of wildlife as assessed by an appropriately qualified and experienced ecologist and relative permits have been sought and issued. Refer to Environment Advisor during the planning phase of projects and prior to the commencement of works.

10. Tree Removal on Council Controlled Land

Tree removal will only be considered after avoidance and mitigation options have been pursued. Council has an obligation to manage and preserve trees and native vegetation on council controlled land in an efficient, sustainable and safe manner, while preserving the unique character of the region for current and future generations. Retention of healthy, structurally sound trees is desirable; however in some cases tree retention may not be feasible due to the location or species of tree.

All practicable options for resolving issues with trees should be exhausted before tree removal is considered. Tree removals may require state permits and any tree removal will be offset by replacement tree plantings, preferably in the immediate or surrounding local area, to compensate for the loss of tree/s. Every effort should be made to reuse logs in council projects such as habitat creation (including waterway habitats), bank stabilisation etc.

Determining the Value of a Tree

Criteria such as condition, form, type and the tree's prominence in the landscape are used to determine the tree's Landscape Significance. Three or more criteria in the same Landscape Significance category (High, Medium or Low Landscape Significance) are required for a tree to be classified in that group.

The Landscape Significance value is then combined with the Estimated Useful Life Expectancy of a tree to determine its Retention Value in accordance with the Tree Retention Value – Priority Matrix. For details on how to determine the value of a tree to implement this policy, refer to the Urban Greening Procedure.

11. Tree Removal / Offsets

Requests for removal of trees is managed through Council's customer service channel and referred for assessment to determine appropriate action. Removal of trees will only occur if a

tree is dead, near death, deemed a public risk, performing poorly, an unsuitable species in an inappropriate location after inspection by council's Arboriculture Team.

Where a tree has been assessed and determined for retention, broader community concerns will be considered by a properly made request (written or verbal) submitted through Council's customer service channel and addressed by the Manager (Works and Field Services). Street Trees requiring removal will be removed after advising adjoining residents unless removal is being carried out as part of council's legislative responsibilities under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Where any tree is removed, whether deemed as hazardous or non-hazardous, appropriate offsets must be planted in order to maintain a no net loss which includes the environmental service that the specific tree/s provide. This excludes removal of non-compliant nature strip vegetation where the resident does not desire a council-approved replacement.

A no net loss is achieved by undertaking compensatory planting. Refer to the Urban Greening Procedure for details on how to rate the value of a tree in order to replace tree/s removed over a given period of time.

Trees that require removal for reasons other than declining health or hazard potential are required to be offset in a manner that compensates council and the community for the actual loss of the tree according to its value. Where there is a requirement for the removal of a non-hazardous tree (that does not meet any of the risk based removal criteria) to allow for approved works or other exceptional circumstances and all other design, construction and relocation options have been exhausted, the following applies:

- The tree must be offset according to whether it has been rated as Low, Medium or High Retention Value. If the tree has been classified as High Retention Value, replacement tree planting must achieve a no net canopy area loss within a timeframe of either three or five years of tree removal, depending on where the tree grows (high or low profile location), how difficult re-establishment of trees may be at the specific site and whether the tree is a feature/stand-alone specimen as opposed to growing as a part of a group or stand of trees.
- For council infrastructure projects all costs associated with the original tree/s removal, new tree replacement and establishment are to be met by the person/company/branch of council who requested the tree removal.
- The replacement tree should be planted as close as possible to the location of the original tree or in the local area if this is not possible in accordance with council's relevant policies, guidelines and standard drawings.

In addition to this Urban Greening Policy, Council's Environmental Offsets Policy outlines environmental offsets for Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES) and Matters of Local Environmental Significance (MLES) which are all applicable in the Ipswich LGA. These are collectively 'environmental offsets'. Council recognises that 'environmental offsets' are an important mechanism to mitigate and compensate for the loss of natural environmental values where:

- It has been established that all opportunities to avoid and mitigate impacts have been exhausted; and
- The impacts will not significantly affect the conservation status of natural environment value(s).

The Environmental Offsets Policy guides the assessment and decision making in relation to the use of environmental offsets and is underpinned by principles including:

- Environmental offsets must be undertaken transparently
- Council will set and maintain Matters of Local Environmental Significance (MLES) and include it in the Ipswich Planning Scheme
- Environmental offsets will only be considered after avoidance and mitigation options have been pursued
- Environmental offsets are not appropriate for all activities or impacts
- Environmental offsets must achieve a net gain in the extent and quality of an environmental value and be legally secured and effectively managed
- On ground delivery of environmental offsets must be relevant and proportionate to the significance of the environmental value being impacted

Refer to City of Ipswich Environmental Offsets Policy for further information in relation to MNES, MSES and MLES.

12. Significant Trees

Significant Trees are trees that have exceptional value in terms of their contribution to the local or regional landscape and may be classed as significant due to their historic, aesthetic, or cultural attributes. These trees may require a more intensive or specific inspection and maintenance regime in order to provide a greater level of protection and to maximise the longevity, health and vigour of the tree(s).

Significant trees (or groups of trees) shall be identified following principles found in The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter) and *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*. These principles will be outlined in the Urban Greening Procedure.

Significant trees will be protected under the council's relevant local planning scheme, policies, guidelines, relevant local laws and tree management programs.

Council officers must confirm with council Arborist, during the planning phase of a project and prior to commencement of works, that any tree(s) identified to be removed are not listed as a significant tree in any council register.

Further information on determining a significant tree(s) in order to implement this policy, is outlined in the Urban Greening Procedure.

13. Community Education

Community education is a key theme of the Urban Greening Plan (Plan) which includes a series of targets and actions. The actions will be delivered in accordance with the Plan. Community education will be further improved through regular updating of factsheets being available on council's website (in line with the Plan). A proactive role will be taken to foster

community involvement in enhancing the tree population, as the needs and benefits of trees are often not fully understood. Increased ownership of trees by the community, resulting in greater surveillance and appreciation for trees may also assist to reduce the occurrence of customer complaints and unlawful interference with trees and vegetation on council controlled land. Council will promote and provide urban greening advice to residents and property owners concerning trees on council controlled land.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

Undertake periodic monitoring and evaluation of net changes in the urban greening within the urban footprint of Ipswich including canopy cover in the public and private realm. Manager (Environment and Sustainability) is to ensure monitoring is undertaken, frequency is appropriate, and results reported to council.

15. Policy Owner

The General Manager (Infrastructure and Environment) is the policy owner and the Manager (Environment and Sustainability) is responsible for authoring and reviewing this policy.

16. Definitions

Habitat tree	a living or dead tree that provides significant habitat for wildlife.
Offset	planting or equivalent environmental function replacement undertaken to counterbalance the impact caused by a loss of trees or native vegetation from a particular location and/or the landscape.
Urban Biodiversity	Refers to the diversity of plants and animals and their inter-relationships with the land, air, water, people and other infrastructure within an urban environment.
Urban Greening	The network of natural and semi-natural areas that deliver a range of environmental, economic and social values and benefits to urban places, including protection from flooding or excessive heat, or improving air and water quality, whilst also protecting biodiversity. Examples of urban greening include urban tree canopies, parks and sport fields, nature reserves and wildlife corridors, waterways and wetlands, stormwater harvesting systems, green roofs and walls, and tree-lined streets and pathways.
Significant Tree	Are trees (or stand of trees) with scientific, social, aesthetic or historic value for past, present and future generations (Australian ICOMOS,1999).
Threatened Species	Native flora and fauna species listed as Rare, Vulnerable or Near Threatened under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NCA) or a species listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC)