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1. Statement

Council recognises the importance of Ipswich’s urban forest and multiple benefits it provides from an intergenerational perspective. To that end, it is strongly committed to the protection, enhancement and expansion of its urban forest areas through its timely and cost effective planting and management practices.

2. Purpose and Principles

This policy guides Council’s funding, resourcing and decision making in relation urban tree protection, planting, pruning and removal, as well as management of significant trees.

3. Strategic Plan Links

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

- Natural and Sustainable

4. Regulatory Authority

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

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- 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

Where a tree or vegetation is subject to other regulatory requirements, those requirements prevail in terms of assessment and decisions making.

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 applies to all councillors, council staff, contractors, and others that act on Council’s behalf to ensure they work in accordance with the policy principles and in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The policy relates to Council activities associated with the management of the urban forest.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Following is a list of key internal stakeholders that the urban forest policy is relevant to or imposes particular requirements on:

Role	Responsibility
Manager (Works and Field Services)	Ensure initiatives, programs and projects support management of the urban forest.

Role	Responsibility
City Maintenance Manager	Make sure timely provision of services associated with management of the urban forest.
Principal Officer (Natural and Urban Forest)	Oversee delivery of services associated with management of the urban forest.
Manager (Environment and Sustainability)	Ensure initiatives, programs and projects align with protection, enhancement and expansion of the urban forest. Monitor and evaluate changes in area the urban forest.
Natural Environment and Land Manager	Oversee urban forest 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 the urban forest is consistent with the policy.
Project Officer (Natural Environment)	Review and maintain the Ipswich Streetscape Design Guideline 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.
City Design Manager	Ensure strategic land use planning supports achieving the principles outlined in this policy.
Planning & Regulatory Services Manager	Oversee regulatory activities associated with the implementation of this policy.
Development Planning Manager	Ensure development assessment supports achieving the principles outlined in this policy.

8. Key Stakeholders

The following will be consulted during the review process:

- Manager (Works and Field Services)
- City Maintenance Manager
- Principal Officer (Natural and Urban Forest)
- Manager (Environment and Sustainability)
- Natural Environment and Land Manager
- Coordinator (Sustainability)
- Community Partnerships Officer
- Project Officer (Natural Environment)
- Urban Designer (Public Open Space)
- Manager (Performance)
- City Design Manager
- Planning & Regulatory Services Manager

- Development Planning Manager
- Compliance Manager

9. Tree Protection

- Council will protect the urban forest through best practice management, local laws and planning scheme instruments to ensure its overall increase.
- Council will protect and manage the urban forest based on a risk management classification approach.
- Council will maintain a zero reduction approach of trees on Council controlled land in the urban forest. To that end, any trees removed will be replaced – subject to the tree removal criteria identified below. Replacement trees may not necessarily be in the same position.

10. Tree Planting

- Council will ensure species selected for planting in streetscapes, parks and Council managed land comply with best practice standards and guidelines (e.g. Ipswich Streetscape Design Guideline), where practical be indigenous to the region and will contribute positively to the City's environment.
- All tree plantings on Council controlled and managed land will comply with Councils planting standards and guidelines.
- All tree plantings on Council controlled land will be carried out based on current industry best practises and reflect any local or regional environmental issues at the time of planting.
- Council provides residents with incentives in the form of a free plant entitlement to undertake tree planting activities on private land to enhance the urban forest.
- Residents are not permitted to plant trees or shrubs within the road reserve or on Council managed parks unless approved in writing by Council.
- Residents will not be compensated for trees or shrubs that have been planted without permission that require removal. Residents will be given reasonable notice to remove the planted material if required. Should the material not be removed then Council will remove the planted material. Council may seek associated costs from the resident responsible for the planted material. Any replacement plants will be in line with the Ipswich Streetscape Design Guideline.
- All tree plantings and associated approvals will take into account the surrounding facilities and services, local amenity, design requirements and Ipswich Streetscape Design Guideline.

11. Tree Pruning

- All tree pruning and associated work will be carried out in accordance with the Australian Standard for Pruning of Amenity Trees.
- Where a healthy, safe and appropriate 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 to be addressed by the Manager (Works and Field Services).

- All pruning and associated work to trees on Council managed land must be carried out by or supervised by a qualified arborist, unless in an urgent or emergency situation.
- Trees located in streets or parks that hang over private property and require pruning must be reported to the Council, which will inspect the tree and take appropriate action.
- Trees over hanging and impeding on Council controlled land from private land that are deemed by Council to be a public safety issue will be treated as follows:
 - Notification to the adjacent land owner to trim their tree within a specified period.
 - This period will be based on the public safety aspect of each case, however it will generally be between seven and thirty days.
 - If no action is taken by the adjacent land owner Council will undertake the pruning works. Pruning will only be to the extent to remove the public risk.

12. Tree Removal

- 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 or as approved by the Manager (Works and Field Services).
- 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 any compliance action.
- Residents will be given fourteen days' notice of the tree removal along with the reasons for removal.
- Street Trees that pose immediate public danger will be removed immediately and the adjoining residents notified as soon as practical.
- In line with a zero reduction strategy Council will replace any trees that have been removed. Replacement trees may not necessarily be in the same position.

13. Significant Trees

- A detailed criteria description can be found in the register of heritage and significant trees, however single or grouped trees on Council controlled land may be deemed significant if they fall into one or more of the following categories:
 - High Horticultural Value
 - Based on their age in relation to the urban environment
 - Location in the urban environment
 - Size and aesthetic value
 - Historical Value
- The register of heritage and significant trees will be maintained.

- Trees of significance will only be added to the register after consideration of the relevant criteria.
- Council will develop management plans for significant trees under their control to ensure the longevity and specific needs of those trees are met.
- Significant trees will be protected under the appropriate local planning scheme, relevant local laws and tree management programs.

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

Undertake periodic monitoring and evaluation of net changes in the City's urban forest area including canopy cover, density and vegetation per inhabitant 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. Definitions

Intergenerational Perspective: For the purpose of this policy the term intergenerational perspective describes relating to, involving or affecting several generations.

Properly Made Request (written or verbal): For the purpose of this policy a properly made request is one submitted through Council's customer service channel in either a hard-copy, electronic form or verbally transcribed into electronic form by Council's Customer Call Centre. It must include:

- What aspects of the tree's pruning or removal are supported or opposed (e.g. provide sufficient information for reasons behind the request)
- Name and residential address of the person making the request. For a group request include each person.
- Postal or email address of each person making the request.

Tree: For the purpose of this policy a tree is a woody perennial plant having a hard trunk, branches and leaves.

Urban Forest: Is the term used to describe the collection of trees and vegetation located throughout developed urban areas; irrespective of the tree species origin (native, exotic), location (street, park, school) or ownership (public, private, institutional).

16. Related Documents

- Free Plant Entitlement Administrative Directive
- Ipswich Planning Scheme (including Local Government Infrastructure Plan)
- Ipswich Nature Conservation Strategy 2015
- Ipswich Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2014
- Ipswich Streetscape Design Guideline

17. 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.