

Sydney Harbour
Foreshore Authority



Tree Policy 2006

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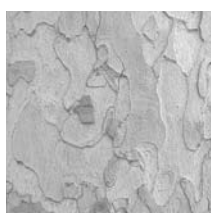
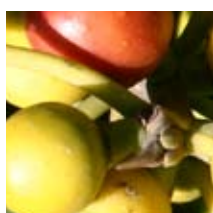
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General

Introduction

In many ways the values of a city are reflected in the health and vigour of its trees. Trees lift the human spirit and contribute to improving quality of life within an urban environment. Trees create amenity by providing shade and wind protection. Trees may have heritage significance in themselves or create settings for heritage buildings or places. Trees provide habitat for wildlife and improve environmental values. Trees are often taken for granted but are a living asset, embellishing the places in which we live and work.

The proactive management of trees in the public domain is an increasingly important role for all authorities. Trees are both an asset and liability in that while they contribute to improving the quality of life, they also create risks for property and for the safety of people. In particular, the community generally recognises and acknowledges the importance of trees in a sustainable environment, yet some in the community view trees as impinging on their property and lifestyles. The management of trees within a holistic life-cycle is essential to maximise their useful life, to plan for the future and to manage the replacement process, particularly in consideration of community expectations and sensitivities to tree removals.

The Foreshore Authority's key aim is to maintain the environmental values of its places by balancing individual needs within the context of broader community expectations.

Vision Statement

The Foreshore Authority's vision is "to make unique places in Sydney that the world talks about".

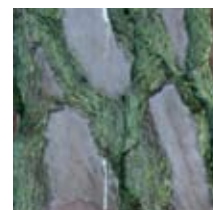
To achieve this vision, a healthy and attractive tree population will demonstrate to the community that sound tree management is an expression of social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Policy Aim and Objectives

The aim of this tree policy is to establish strategic control for the management of trees, for which the Foreshore Authority has responsibility.

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Provide the framework for forward planning and management of urban trees in the public and private domains.
2. Respond to environmental issues identified in the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority Act 1998 and other relevant State and regional instruments applicable to lands applying to this policy.
3. Demonstrate to the community and stakeholders that trees are managed in a sound and responsible manner.
4. Improve community awareness of trees and the contribution they make to the urban landscape.
5. Manage safety and asset risks that trees bring to the public and private domains.
6. Encourage the preservation and maintenance of existing trees.
7. Encourage opportunities for the planting of new trees.
8. Guide developers, consultants and applicants on the potential impacts on trees arising from developments, and identifying solutions to manage tree protection and maintenance where necessary.
9. Assess and manage proposals for tree works in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979 as amended and other relevant environmental planning instruments.
10. Manage the process for the pruning and planting of trees in the public domain.



General

Legislative Framework

The legislative instruments central to managing environmental issues for the Authority are the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act as amended (1979), the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Act, 1998 and the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan - (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005.

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Act

The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Act 1998 requires the Authority to protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the harbour foreshores.

Sydney Regional Environmental Plan - (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005

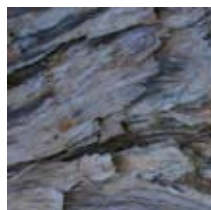
The Sydney Harbour Catchment Plan covers the area of Sydney Harbour, including Parramatta River and its tributaries and the Lane Cove River. The plan aims to establish a balance between promoting a prosperous working harbour, maintaining a healthy and sustainable waterway environment and promoting recreational access to the foreshore and waterways.

In summary, SREP Sydney Harbour Catchment 2005 reinforces the need to maintain, protect and enhance the existing tree canopy within a broader agenda of natural value protection.

Where this Policy Applies

The Tree Policy applies to all lands for which the Authority has delegated planning assessment role on behalf of the New South Wales Minister for Planning. These lands are identified by State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005.

The State Policy allows development in these precincts with a capital investment value of less than \$5 million to be dealt with as a standard Development Application under Part 4 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979. This will apply to most tree planting and/or removal applications.



Policy

The policy statement has been structured into 5 management areas with various individual policy provisions for each management area as follows.

- 1 Governance policies to manage administrative issues common across the Foreshore Authority lands.
- 2 Asset register policies to locate and describe the existing tree stock.
- 3 Planning and design policies to guide selection of new species appropriate to place and function.
- 4 Consultation policies to ensure the community has a means of representation in tree related matters.
- 5 Maintenance policies to create a systematic and consistent means of managing the asset over time.

1	GOVERNANCE
1.1	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will ensure an informed approach to tree management throughout its precincts so that staff, tenants and community can have confidence that the tree resource is being appropriately managed.
1.2	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will ensure the policy reflects the key values of all applicable statutory documents.
1.3	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will manage the removal of existing trees and the planting of new trees to ensure relevant stakeholders have the opportunity for comment.
1.4	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will manage emergency situations where life or property is at immediate risk, by ensuring public safety takes precedence in tree removal determinations.

2	ASSET REGISTRATION
2.1	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will ensure it has current asset data so the tree resource can be holistically and proactively managed.
2.2	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will specifically identify trees that have special cultural, aesthetic, social or environmental values.

3	PLANNING AND DESIGN
3.1	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will ensure it maintains a consistent tree canopy across its precincts and expands the canopy cover where opportunities arise.
3.2	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will manage tree placements and canopy growth to maintain recognised view corridors and vistas within the public domain.
3.3	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will utilise endemic, native or exotic plant material as appropriate to location or function.
3.4	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will continue to enrich the diversity of species across the precincts to improve native wildlife habitat.
3.5	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will locate and plant trees being mindful of potential future impacts on in-ground and overhead utility services, vehicle and pedestrian sight lines, building and other infrastructure.

4	COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
4.1	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will consult with the community on proposals to remove or relocate trees within the public domain.
4.2	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will consult with the community on new planting proposals within the public domain.

5	MAINTENANCE
5.1	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will manage trees on a 'whole of life' basis recognising that tree decline is a natural process and tree removal and replacements need to be proactive in order to provide a sustainable tree population for future generations to enjoy.
5.2	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will establish ongoing inspection and maintenance practices for trees owned and managed by the Foreshore Authority, to minimise public risks arising from the natural decline of a tree or from damage caused by human impacts.
5.3	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will permit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pruning of trees to ensure sightlines and remove branch hazards for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. • The removal of trees that are recognized weed species in accordance with the Noxious Weeds Act 1993.
5.4	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority may permit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The removal of trees considered within the normal property development approval process. • The pruning of trees to ensure sightlines for closed circuit television coverage. • The removal of trees that are within three metres of a building and demonstrably damaging the building structure or fabric. • The removal of trees that are damaging footpaths and creating unacceptable hazards for pedestrians.
5.5	The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority will not permit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The removal of trees to provide or improve views from either tenancies or private adjoining lands. • The removal or pruning of trees to reduce the inconvenience of native animal habitat that might be considered annoying or disruptive. • The removal or pruning of trees to reduce or eliminate inconvenience of fruit or leaf-drop, however in special circumstances the Foreshore Authority may agree to the removal of fruit before it drops and becomes a nuisance. • The altering of soil levels within the canopy drip line of a tree. • The removal of trees to facilitate the construction of hoardings or other construction based impacts.

Removal of Trees

Planned Removals

The planned removal of trees will be managed by a normal development application process. Key documentation requirements for an application include:

- A report from a suitably qualified arborist detailing the current condition of the tree or trees, pending impacts and recommendations for removal arising.
- Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE) describing the reasons for the removal and define the actions intended to replace the trees or ameliorate the site.
- Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) describing the impacts where the tree is either significant in its own right or contributes to a heritage setting and define the actions intended to replace the trees or ameliorate the site.

Emergency Removals

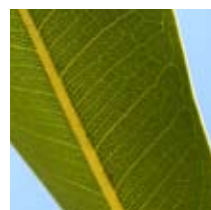
In rare situations where a tree is an immediate risk and danger to the community and the area around the tree cannot be secured whilst a development application process is followed, the removal process will be managed as follows:

- The Security and Logistics manager in consultation with the Services Manager determines that the tree cannot be secured and the public remains at risk.
- The Chief Executive Officer concurs that the tree or trees pose an immediate risk and approves removal.
- Tree removed immediately.

Exempt Removals

Applications for removal are not required for the following situations:

1. Trees that are listed on the Noxious Weeds list at Section 6:
 - A report from an arborist will be required to confirm the tree is a noxious weed.
 - The report is to be lodged with the Services Manager and approval given before work commences.
2. Trees that are demonstrably dead
3. The pruning or removal of trees lawfully conducted in accordance with:
 - Telecommunications Act 1997.
 - State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989.
 - Electricity Supply Act 1995.
 - Roads Act 1993.
 - Noxious Weeds Act 1993.



Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

“Tree”

For the purpose of this policy a tree is defined as:

- A perennial plant having a woody, self supporting main stem or trunk and recognised as a tree species,
- A plant that is either native, endemic or exotic,
- A plant with a height of at least 5m or a trunk of 300mm in circumference, 1200mm from the ground or a canopy exceeding 4m in diameter, and
- All plants regardless of dimensions which are identified as rare or threatened or listed on the Register of Significant Trees.

“Planning Instruments”

Means any act, policy, order or regulation that protects trees or regulates tree removals.

“Development Application”

Refers to the process by which the Foreshore Authority determines the appropriateness or otherwise of a development proceeding and the conditions of development which will apply to an approved application.

“Pest Plants”

Means noxious weeds as defined by the Noxious Weed Act 1993 and as declared by the NSW Minister of Agriculture as nuisance plants and urban environmental weeds.

“Public Domain”

Means all publicly accessible land and places including parks, urban spaces, road corridors, bushland and commercial/retail spaces.



“Arborist”

Means a suitably qualified / experienced specialist in the assessment, care and maintenance of trees. The arborist and team will hold Australian Qualifications Framework Certificates (AQF) levels relevant to their work. As a minimum, the ground worker will have an AQF level 2 certificate, tree worker will have an AQF level 3 certificate and the consultant arborist will have a Diploma of Horticulture (Arboriculture) and an AQF level 5 certificate.

“Emergency”

Refers to a situation arising where a tree’s structure has substantially failed and the tree is in imminent danger of collapse. The tree and its immediate surrounds can not be reasonably secured to prevent ongoing occupational health and safety risks.

“Pruning”

Refers to the process of trimming or cutting away branches or shoots in order to train the plant, maintain its health, improve the quality of its flowers, fruit or foliage or to restrict its growth.

“Maintenance”

Refers to the planned actions (human resources, materials and technology) needed to ensure the ongoing appearance, health and vigour of a tree.