

Nature Strip Policy

PURPOSE

The City of Launceston (CoL) is focussed on achieving the community's long-term vision of creating a diverse, vibrant and liveable environment that is an attractive and safe place to live, work and play. Large trees and green spaces, including nature strips, play an important role in defining the image and culture of the City and suburbs, enhancing aesthetic appeal of our streets and facilities, maintaining urban biodiversity and increasing property values.

Nature strips are the narrow publicly owned green space left unconstructed for vehicles and pedestrians within the road reserve between the edge of the road and property boundaries.

Nature strips also provide:

- space for a range of above and below ground services such as electricity, telecommunications, lighting, water, gas, stormwater, drainage and sewage;
- visibility and sight lines for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists particularly at intersections, curves in the road and driveway access points;
- space for improving accessibility and usability of footpaths for people with mobility issues, prams or walking in pairs or passing;
- space for people walking where there is no footpath;
- safe vehicle parking and space to open doors between the road and footpath;
- space for kerbside collection for bins;
- space for street tree planting;
- unpaved areas to allow infiltration of rainwater and oxygen into the soil improving the health and growth of street trees and reducing stormwater runoff; and
- visual softening of hard streetscape elements such as roads, footpaths, driveways, fences and buildings.

The standard nature strip is a grassed verge with or without a street tree with maintenance requirements generally limited to mowing, edging, weeding and rubbish removal.

Residents are encouraged to maintain the nature strip adjoining their property. The City of Launceston does maintain some nature strips or road verges. The nature strip is part of the road reserve and legally remains owned and managed by the relevant road authority (either the Council or State Growth). City of Launceston maintains street trees in nature strip in accordance with the 26-Plx-005 Tree Management Policy.

The City of Launceston often receives requests to either extend garden or landscaping onto the nature strip or replace the grassed area with hardstand or artificial surfaces.

This document aims to provide a clear and consistent management approach to ensure that nature strips within the Launceston municipality:

- are kept in a safe and well-maintained condition;
- are recognised as publicly owned assets;
- are safe for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; and
- that there is adequate protection for services (above and below ground), street trees and stormwater management.

SCOPE

This policy provides a strategic direction for nature strip management to guide Councillors, employees, residents, planners, developers, contractors and landscapers. It applies to all nature strips within road reserves owned and/or managed by City of Launceston.

This policy is not applicable to conversion of the nature strip to vehicle parking or vice versa nor to proposals including structural components such as footpaths, driveway crossovers, kerb and channel or any other hardstand including concrete, paving, brick or asphalt.

OUR VALUES



Our people matter



We care about our community



We bring an open mind



We go home safe and well

POLICY

The City of Launceston encourages property owners to recognise the value of nature strips and to take pride in maintaining them.

Maintenance of Nature Strips by City of Launceston

The City of Launceston will maintain nature strips or road verges that meet any or all of the following:

- Adjacent to the Council's community facilities.
- Adjacent to parks and reserves.
- Nature strips on state roads where the adjoining properties back onto the state road.
- Nature strips where the resident or owner of the property is unable to physically and financially undertake the work themselves, has made application to the Council, fits the eligibility criteria and has had the application approved by the Council.

The City of Launceston provides a special needs nature strip mowing service for eligible people with disabilities or injuries. If they do not have someone living with them who is capable of mowing the nature strip and financially cannot afford someone on their behalf to perform the works, they may be eligible for this service.

The eligibility criteria includes.

- A permanent resident of the City of Launceston, who occupies the property which is the subject of the nature strip mowing service application;
- Does not have anyone capable to perform the task on their behalf;
- Is unable to manage or causes pain to operate a lawnmower;
- Is totally dependent on others for mobility;
- Has sensory disability or vision impairment;
- The terrain is beyond their physical capability to mow; and
- Other discretionary reasons preventing mowing of the nature strip.

Applicants requesting this nature strip mowing service must fill in the application form and have it signed by their qualified health care professional.

Once the application has been assessed, residents who meet the eligibility criteria will be entered on the Council's special needs nature strip mowing service list.

All recipients of this service are required to reapply annually to reconfirm eligibility. Application forms will be sent out by the Council and the service will be suspended if a response is not received.

The Council reserves the right to remove any person from the nature strip special needs mowing service mowing list at any time with two weeks written notice, if any of the following occur:

- The person sells or otherwise transfers their interest in the property, and/or ceases to occupy the property;
- The circumstances of the owner / occupier of the property change dramatically, such that the person no longer meets the eligibility criteria stated in this policy;
- The person fails to report any changes in their circumstances, which could make them ineligible for inclusion on the nature strip mowing list; or
- Council deems that the person no longer meets the eligibility criteria stated in this policy.

The Council reserves the right to take special conditions into consideration, other than those listed above.

The nature strip mowing service does not provide a guaranteed mowing frequency and site visits under this Policy will generally be no more than five times a year, or at the Council's discretion.

The Council will clean grass clippings from the footpath, driveway and gutter that results from works carried out in the maintenance of the nature strips. No other rubbish, debris or green waste will be cleaned up and/or removed from the nature strip or private property at the time of mowing.

Alternative Nature Strip Plantings and Treatments

Whilst the preferred standard for nature strips is a grassed verge with or without a street tree, the City of Launceston will consider alternative nature strip treatments upon request and under certain conditions.

A resident wishing to replace the grass verge with low maintenance plantings or garden areas must apply in writing to the Council for approval prior to undertaking any works.

Any proposal must comply with the following conditions:

- Road owners consent is granted prior to any works from either the Council or State Growth.
- Any changes to the nature strip does not alienate public land for a private purpose. Nature strips shall remain part of the road reserve and in public ownership;
- Public safety is paramount in all considerations and the works must not create an obstacle or obstruction to the adjoining property owners and/or public use of the nature strip, footpath or road, including pedestrians, cyclists, kerbside parking, rubbish collection and property access;
- Swale drains located within the nature strip are not modified and remain grassed;
- Council is not liable for any damage to underground services. A *Dial Before You Dig* must be undertaken by the resident prior to works commencing;
- Installation and maintenance of alternative plantings and treatments complies with City of Launceston's Guideline for Nature Strips;

- Plantings (excluding street trees) are maintained at a maximum of 60cm;
- Plantings do not include Weeds of National Significance, declared weeds under the *Weed Management Act 1999* or environmental weeds within the Launceston municipality;
- Residents are not permitted to plant, prune, damage or remove street trees in accordance with the 26-Plx-005 Tree Management Policy. Damage includes branches, trunk and roots of the tree. Residents can, however, make a customer service request for a new, replacement or maintenance of a street tree through the Council's Customer Service Centre;
- The Council can require the resident to remove any nature strip treatments that are considered a risk to users of the nature strip, footpath or road, prevents access or impacts of site distances for pedestrians, cyclists or motorists and if the resident does not or cannot maintain the nature strip;
- The Council will not contribute financially to the installation, maintenance or damage caused to an alternative nature strip. The resident is responsible for all costs of ongoing maintenance and the reinstatement back to grass verge if requested or required by the Council; and
- Retrospective approval for nature strips modified prior to endorsing this policy is not required unless deemed unsafe by the Council or there is a failure to maintain the alternative plantings and surfacing in accordance with the City of Launceston's Guideline for Nature Strips.

PRINCIPLES

In line with City of Launceston's vision, purpose and values, the Council provides services for nature strip maintenance where there is no adjoining resident or the adjoining resident is physically and financially unable to maintain the nature strip.

Provided nature strips are kept in a safe and well-maintained condition for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; and that there is adequate protection for services (above and below ground), street trees and stormwater management, the City of Launceston will support alternative nature strips plantings and treatments.

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

[Greater Launceston Plan May 2014](#)

[City of Launceston Strategic Plan 2014-2024](#)

[10-SDx-004 Sustainability Strategy](#)

[26-Plx-005 Tree Management Policy](#)

[26-HLPr-005 - Guideline for Nature Strips](#)

[26-Fmx-042 Special Needs Nature Strip Mowing Services for People with ...](#)

RELATED LEGISLATION

Electricity Wayleaves and Easements Act 2000

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Building Act 2016

Building Regulations 2016

Fire Services Act 1995

Forest Practices Act 1985

Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (Highways) Act 1982

Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993

Nature Conservation Act 2002

Road Rules 2019
Threatened Species Protection Act 1995
Water Management Act 1999
Water and Sewerage Industry Act 2008
Weed Management Act 1999
Urban Drainage Act 2015

REFERENCES

Australian Standard 4373-2007: Australian Standard for Pruning of Amenity Trees.
Australian Standard 4970-2009: Protection of Trees on Development Sites.

DEFINITIONS

Nature Strip: means the unmade area between the edge of the road and adjacent land, but does not include a bicycle path, footpath or shared path.

Tree: Long lived woody perennial plant generally with one or relatively few main stems or trunks.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed no more than 5 years after the date of approval (version) or more frequently, if dictated by operational demands and with Council's approval.