

Council Tree Removal for Private Development

Guidelines

Lifestyle Capital of Victoria

Council regularly receives requests for removal of council trees that do not meet the objectives for removal as outlined in Frankston’s Urban Forest Policy. The most common reason for non-arboricultural removal is provision of access to property. Such removals are actively discouraged unless the proponent can show that other solutions have been investigated and proven to be non-viable.

It is appropriate for customers to pay for removal of trees in these circumstances. Requiring payment of a fee attributes costs on a user pays basis and compensates the community for loss of amenity and other values that the tree provided. The requirement to pay a fee may also cause applicants to consider alternatives that might otherwise have been ignored.

Council’s fees are set annually and incorporate the cost of removal as well payment for planting new trees across the Municipality to compensate for the loss of amenity. The number of trees replanted is proportional to the size of the tree removed. Due to the value of indigenous trees across the landscape the cost of removing self-sown indigenous trees is higher (see table below). The replanting fee includes the cost of planting a tree (advanced tree, planting and staking) and maintenance for 2 years (watering, formative pruning, removal of stakes and guards etc) Council will plant new trees in a location that is as close as practicable to where the tree has been removed.

Table 1. Re-planting ratios for removal of Council trees for private development

Size of tree	Re-planting (standard council tree)	Re-planting (indigenous self-sown)
Small <5 metres high & <150mm DBH*	2	4
Medium <10 metres high & <300mm DBH	4	8
Large >10 metres high or >300mm DBH	8	16

Council occasionally receives requests for removal because of allergies and the like. In some cases, while having no arboricultural reason for removal, these trees could be removed without significant impact on the surrounding area. If a customer is prepared to pay for the removal, then in some cases it may be appropriate to grant such a request. Such requests would be assessed on a case by case basis.

Falling leaves, twigs, fruit and flowers are considered normal and expected tree behaviour and are not valid reasons for removal under these Guidelines. Similarly, failure to establish grass or other planting under a street tree is not a valid reason for removal under these Guidelines.

Removal of trees for newly installed solar panels is also discouraged. If you have shading from trees, look at positioning your solar panels where they get the least amount of shade, and preferably no afternoon shade. Trees offer a lot of value to the landscape and community, as well as reducing your cooling bill in summer and combatting the urban heat island effect. Solar panels should be positioned so as to not require pruning or removal of the tree.

Approval for removal under these Guidelines will only be granted where the following criteria have been met:

- An application form has been received by Council, accompanied by a plan showing the proposed works, existing structures and the council tree/s and other assets affected, and
- A detailed description of all reasonable alternatives to removal that have been investigated, costed and documented in the application.

Please note: Council will refuse removal of a council tree that provides amenity to the surrounding area and is assessed to exhibit good health and structure, if there is existing or an alternative assess to the property or an alternative solution to the reasons for the proposed removal. Approval of any application under these Guidelines is at the absolute discretion of Council.

If approval for removal of the tree is granted, the applicant will be advised in writing, including the appropriate fee to be paid (see table below). Upon receipt of the appropriate fee, Council will arrange removal of the tree within ten (10) working days of payment.

Table 2. Fees for removal of Council trees for private development

Size of tree	Fee (GST Inc.) (standard council tree)	Fee ⁺ (GST Inc.) (indigenous self-sown council tree)
Small <5 metres high & <150mm DBH*	\$1300.00	\$1900.00
Medium <10 metres high & <300mm DBH	\$2500.00	\$3630.00
Large >10 metres high or >300mm DBH	\$4000.00	\$6760.00
Pruning or Replanting only	\$360.00	
* Diameter at breast height (measured 1.4m from ground level).		
† Fee is increased where tree is a self-sown, indigenous species.		

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