

# VERGE MANAGEMENT Guidelines

## 1. Purpose

These guidelines provide supporting information of Policy 051 – Verges, for the maintenance and development of verges (nature strips) on Council owned road reserve.

### 1.1 What is a verge?

A verge is defined by the area between the back of the kerb (or edge of the road if no kerb exists) and the property boundary. It excludes any paved or formed footpaths and driveways.

## 2. Maintenance of Verges

The maintenance of verges including, lawns, gardens and reticulation is the responsibility of the occupants of the property adjacent the verge.

### 2.1 Clearance Requirements

No trees or shrubs from the verge or private property should encroach onto the footpath.

A pedestrian access / maintenance corridor must be maintained with a minimum clearance width of 1.5 metres (750 mm either side of the centre line) and height of 3 metres from plants and shrubs overhanging from private properties.

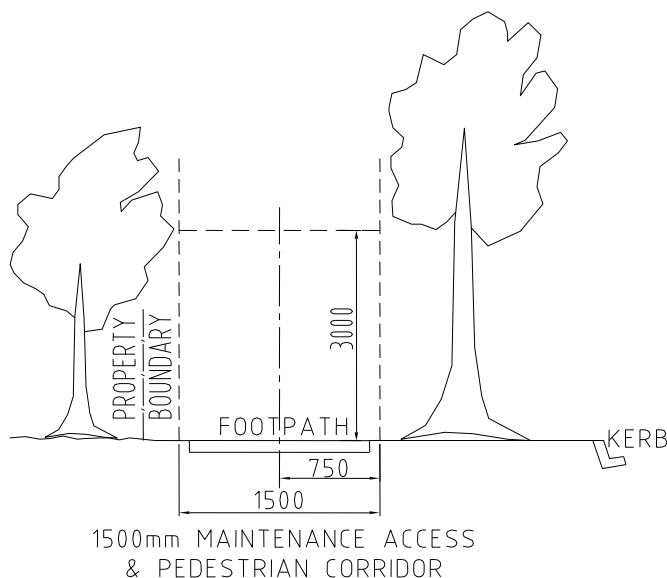


FIGURE 1

| Council Policy No. 051 - VERGES |                 |               |                                                      |                  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Version                         | Decision Number | Adoption Date | Responsible Officer: General Manager City Operations | Next Review Date |
| 2                               | 21\5522         | 27/06/        |                                                      | 23/02/2014       |



# VERGE MANAGEMENT Guidelines

All trees and shrubs must be trimmed to the back of the kerb line and to a minimum height of 4.5 metres above the kerb to allow clearance over the road for vehicular access.

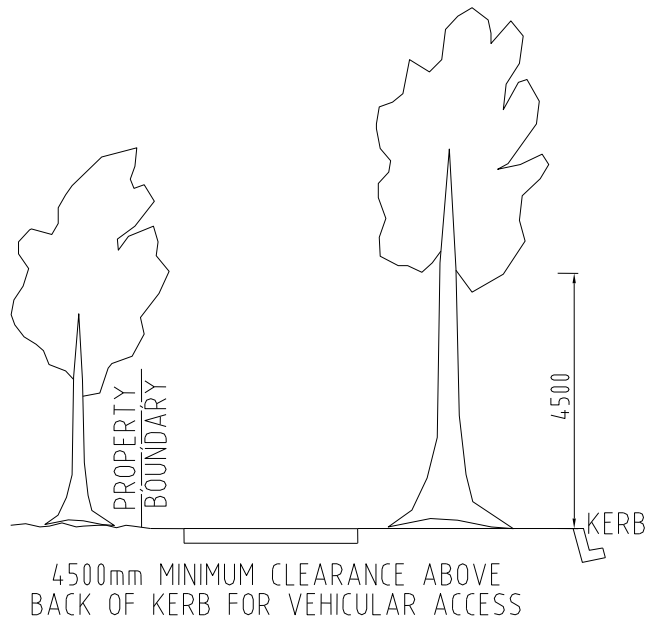


FIGURE 2

Vegetation must be kept clear of power lines and light poles to a minimum distance of 3 metres.

If vegetation is intertwining with or touching powerlines, Power and Water must be notified immediately and can be contacted on 1800 245 092.

*The attention of owners and residents is drawn to City of Darwin By Law 95.*

## 95. Overhanging trees and shrubs

*The Council may, where it considers that a tree, shrub or plant growing on land is causing inconvenience or an obstruction to persons using a public street or footpath or is causing or likely to cause damage to an adjacent public place, serve a notice under by-law 10 on the owner or occupier of the land to trim or remove the tree, shrub, or plant.*

## 2.2 Pruning Requirements

When pruning / trimming a tree it is essential to ensure the natural structure and health of the tree is not compromised.

| Council Policy No. 051 - VERGES |                 |               |                                                      |                  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Version                         | Decision Number | Adoption Date | Responsible Officer: General Manager City Operations | Next Review Date |
| 2                               | 21\5522         | 27/06/        |                                                      | 23/02/2014       |



# VERGE MANAGEMENT Guidelines

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## 2.3 Works Requiring Reinstatement

When a verge is disturbed or destroyed due to an activity undertaken by a Service Authority, reinstatement will be subject to negotiation between the Council and the Service Authority in consultation with the owner / resident.

Where a Council activity or operation disturbs or destroys the verge, Council will endeavour to restore the verge to its original state, provided the original verge development conforms to the Policy and Guidelines.

## 2.4 Future Development

Regardless of any development of the verge area, Council reserves the right to construct or maintain infrastructure on this part of the road reserve at its discretion, and in doing so may remove if necessary, any existing plants, shrubs, groundcover or decorative features, irrigation systems and without compensation to the owner or resident for such removal or alteration.

Property Developers may be authorised to install suitable verge landscaping at their cost to an approved plan, but they and potential purchasers of the properties are advised that Council will not maintain the verge once transferred to Council.

## 3. Development of Verges

Council encourages residents to undertake verge improvements, provided the following processes and guidelines are followed.

### 3.1 Application Process

If an owner wishes to develop the verge area, other than grassing, a Verge Development Application must be submitted for assessment.

The Verge Development Application form is available from City of Darwin's website:  
[www.darwin.nt.gov.au](http://www.darwin.nt.gov.au).

The application will be assessed in accordance with the level of risk, suitability of the development and the safety of the members of the community who will use the verge.

If the application is approved a copy of the approved plan will be sent to the applicant.

If the application is not approved the applicant will be provided with information, advice and possible recommendation for amendments.

The Verge Development Application Process is only applicable to residential landscaping upgrades, not associated with larger developments. For Lot Developments or Subdivision requiring landscaping, please refer to the *Council's Subdivision and Development Guidelines*.

| Council Policy No. 051 - VERGES |                 |               |                                                      |                  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Version                         | Decision Number | Adoption Date | Responsible Officer: General Manager City Operations | Next Review Date |
| 2                               | 21\5522         | 27/06/        |                                                      | 23/02/2014       |



# VERGE MANAGEMENT Guidelines

## 3.2 Development Requirements

Verge Developments must not:

- Prevent any pedestrian from walking safely along the verge area in preference to walking on the roadway, regardless of whether a footpath has been constructed or not.
- Prevent any Service Authority or the Council from installing new services or maintaining existing services.
- Prevent the area from properly draining.
- Inhibit, or potentially inhibit or interfere with adequate street lighting.

Hedges or similar borders of plants must not form a continuous barrier or pose line of sight issues.

Rocks are not permitted to be placed on verges in an attempt to mitigate parking issues.

Mineral mulch, pebbles and stones are not permitted on verges.

### 3.2.1 Planting Locations

It is preferred that planting takes place within 800mm to 1m in from the kerb.

No trees (or dense, bushy shrubs) shall be planted within:

- 4m either side of driveway
- 5m of either light pole or power pole
- 3m of water hydrant

Trees and other plants to be planted under power lines or under house connection wires must be a species that does not grow over 4m or to a height that could obstruct the power lines.

New tree and shrub plantings shall be made with consideration to the location of powerlines, light poles, water hydrants and underground infrastructure (i.e. water pipes, valves, etc) and the expected growth and habit of the trees or shrubs.

Palms must not be planted under power lines or within 5m of power lines.

### 3.2.2 Trees

Tree / shrub plantings and landscaping should comply with the technical specifications of Council's *Subdivision and Development Guidelines*.

Trees are preferable to shrubs and palms. If there is an existing theme of trees in your street, consider choosing the same species of tree to continue that theme. Consideration should also be given to selecting native / indigenous species of tree and shrubs.

Suitable tree species for planting on verge areas may be discussed in consultation with Council Officers.

| Council Policy No. 051 - VERGES |                 |               |                                                      |                  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
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| 2                               | 21/5522         | 27/06/        |                                                      | 23/02/2014       |



# VERGE MANAGEMENT

## Guidelines

Tree must not be planted within 9m of any intersection. The distance is measured from the point where an extension line of the boundary and the kerb line meet.

In some instances (such as intersections involving major carriage ways) Council may assess that in order to satisfy visibility and public safety requirements that tree plantings or garden beds on street corners beyond 9 metres of an intersection are not permissible.

### 3.2.3 Grass

Where grassing takes place, the area should be excavated to 100mm and reinstated with topsoil to be no higher than the top of the kerb (and the top of the footpath if one is present) and be free draining.

### 3.2.4 Non-Permitted Plants

The following plants must not be planted on the verge or on the property boundary:

- Prickly or thorny plants, e.g. Bougainvillea
- Plants with spiked leaves or fronds, e.g. Agave, yucca, cycads
- Poisonous plants
- Plants carrying large, heavy fruit, e.g. coconuts
- Declared weed species

### 3.2.5 Irrigation

If an owner/resident wishes to install permanent sprinklers on the verge, they must use the water meter from that property, and the water source must be from within the property boundary.

All supply pipes should be placed in a conduit under the footpath. Where a footpath is not present the pipes must be buried under the verge with a minimum cover of 300mm.

The sprinkler heads must be the pop up variety or other approved types. High-density pipes (i.e. high density poly pipe) are to be used and drippers may be used as an alternative to sprinkler heads.

The design should be in accordance with the technical specifications for irrigation outlined in the Council's *Subdivision and Development Guidelines*.

If Council is notified of leaking water onto the road reserve, Council will attempt to contact the owner to have it repaired.

### 3.2.6 CPTED

The development should also be in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

Information about CPTED and related issues is available at the Northern Territory Government's webpage on Building Safer Communities: [www.nt.gov.au/justice/bsc/html/other/territory\\_tips.shtml](http://www.nt.gov.au/justice/bsc/html/other/territory_tips.shtml)

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# VERGE MANAGEMENT Guidelines

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## 3.3 Undertaking the Works

A works permit is required prior to starting works within Council land, including verges.

The excavation for grassing and planting line for trees and shrubs on the verge is determined by the location of services. It is the owner/resident's responsibility to contact the relevant authorities for cable and service locations (i.e. contact Dial Before You Dig on 1100).

Barriers for the purposes of establishing a working area are acceptable with the issue of this permit for a maximum time of three months. The barrier must be erected with the use of sturdy poles/stakes, which are not easily knocked over or removed.

The poles/stakes, rope or string must be identified with an abundance of markers to ensure the safety of pedestrians. The poles/ stakes must be capped and have no sharp edges. Star pickets are not acceptable.

Maintenance access, minimum 1.5m wide, must be maintained.

## 4. Artificial Grass on Council Land

Council considers the use of artificial grass in a variety of small scale applications, where it can add value and act as an alternative to other traditional hardscape features. The use of the grass should be determined on a case by case basis depending on the merits of the situation, to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive Officer with all permits to include a maintenance clause.

The following are considered to be suitable applications for artificial grass:

- Base of trees surround by hardscape;
- Public spaces as an alternative to pavers or concrete; and
- Roundabouts and medians where irrigation or access isn't feasible.

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# VERGE MANAGEMENT Guidelines

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## 5 Legislative References

Activities relating to developing and maintaining vegetation on a verge are governed by the City of Darwin By Laws 94 and 95.

## 6 Procedures / Related Documents

For new sub-divisions refer City of Darwin *Subdivision and Development Guidelines*.

There are a range of other Council policies associated with the Verge Policy.

## 7 Responsibility / Application

The General Manager City Operations is responsible for managing implementation of this policy.

## 8 Document Control

| Council Policy |                 |               | Responsible Officer: General Manager City Operations   |                  |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Version        | Decision Number | Adoption Date | History                                                | Next Review Date |
| 1              | 20\2501         | 23/02/10      | Adopted                                                |                  |
| 2              | 21\5522         | 27/06/17      | Amendment for artificial grass on Council land adopted | 23/06/2014       |
| 3              |                 |               |                                                        |                  |

| Council Policy No. 051 - VERGES |                 |               |                                                      |                  |
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