

Draft Tree Management Policy FAQs



Mornington
Peninsula Shire

Trees matter on the Mornington Peninsula

The Shire is taking a proactive approach to tree management, and we want to hear your thoughts.

Trees shade our streets, shelter wildlife, and give the Peninsula its distinctive character, from the tall tree trails of the Red Hill hinterland to the mangroves along Western Port.

Looking after them well is something our whole community cares about.

About this policy

This draft Tree Management Policy explains how Mornington Peninsula Shire cares for trees across the region. It covers how we maintain and, when necessary, remove trees on public land, roadsides, and parks. It also sets out how we respond when trees pose a safety risk.

A dedicated policy means our community can trust that we make decisions about trees consistently, transparently, and with safety at their core. Our roadside vegetation and electrical safety programs ensure trees and branches don't create hazards on roads, footpaths, or near power lines, while still protecting the green canopy we value. Consistent, transparent decisions build community trust and help guide future investment in the Shire's urban forest.

Have your say

This is a draft policy, and community input helps shape the final version. Whether you're a resident, a landowner, or simply someone who loves the Peninsula's landscape, your thoughts are welcome. Complete the survey via the link: [Draft Tree Management Policy | Shape Our Future](#)

Community Health

How do trees benefit our community?

Trees help make our neighbourhoods cooler, greener, and more enjoyable places to live. They provide shade in summer, improve air quality, support wildlife, and make streets and parks more attractive.

Why does Council need a Tree Management Policy?

The policy provides a clear and consistent way to look after trees across the Shire. It helps guide decisions about planting, pruning, and removal so trees can deliver the greatest benefit to our community while being managed responsibly.

How does the policy support health and wellbeing?

The policy supports community health and wellbeing by helping to create welcoming, green public spaces where people can be active, relax, and connect with others. Well-managed trees contribute to cooler, more comfortable outdoor environments and support both physical and mental wellbeing.

Does the policy make decision-making fairer?

Yes. By providing clear guidance, the policy helps ensure tree decisions are made consistently and openly, giving the community confidence in how decisions are reached. It also provides a common framework for balancing safety, tree health, environmental values, and community needs.

Why does it look like the Shire has "butchered" street trees?

Tree pruning can sometimes appear significant, particularly after safety-related works or storm response. However, pruning is carried out by qualified contractors or arborists in accordance with Australian Standards 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees and arboricultural best practice.

Works are undertaken to manage public safety, tree health, or infrastructure conflicts, and trees are monitored over time to ensure they recover and continue to provide community benefits.

Community Safety

Does the Tree Management Policy help keep people safe?

Yes. The Tree Management Policy establishes Council's overall commitment to managing trees in a way that balances public safety with environmental and community benefits. It provides high-level principles that guide how safety risks are considered in tree management decisions.

Detailed tree inspections and risk assessments are carried out at an operational level, using established assessment processes and risk matrices to identify and manage specific hazards such as falling branches or unstable trees.

Does Council inspect trees regularly?

The Shire has a proactive tree inspection program for trees that have been identified by a Shire arborist as requiring ongoing monitoring. These trees are placed on a scheduled inspection cycle of 1, 3, or 5 years, based on their assessed level of risk.

Not all trees are included in this program. Trees may be added to the inspection schedule following an arborist assessment, reports from the community, or after significant weather events, as determined by the Shire arborist team. The Tree Management Policy provides high-level guidance on how risks are prioritised and responded to, while detailed tree inspections and risk assessments are undertaken at an operational level.

What happens if a tree is considered hazardous?

If a potential safety issue is identified, it is assessed by Council at an operational level using established tree risk assessment processes. Based on the outcome of that assessment, appropriate action is taken to manage the risk. This may include pruning, increased monitoring, or removal where the risk cannot be reasonably managed in another way.

Why aren't all risky trees removed straight away?

Not all risks are the same. Many issues can be managed through pruning or ongoing monitoring. The policy helps balance safety with the environmental and community value trees provide, so removal is a last resort.

How do you report a tree observation or a non-urgent concern?

Please use the "[Report a tree concern](#)" option on the Shire's website. These reports are assessed by Council's operational teams in line with established inspection and assessment processes.

What should I do if I believe a tree poses an immediate risk?

If you believe a tree presents an immediate danger to people or property, please contact the Shire directly on [1300 850 600](tel:1300850600) so the issue can be prioritised. Urgent safety risks are assessed promptly, and appropriate action is taken based on operational risk assessment processes.

How does the policy help manage risks during storms or extreme weather?

The Tree Management Policy provides a high-level framework for managing trees in a way that balances safety, environmental values, and long-term tree health. During severe weather events or emergencies, Shire teams respond in line with established emergency response protocols and operational instructions, including the Shire's relevant emergency management plans.

This approach helps ensure storm-related tree damage is responded to efficiently and safely, while also supporting the ongoing health and sustainability of the Shire's tree population.

Can the community report a tree safety concern?

Yes. Community members play an important role in identifying potential tree safety issues. Tree concerns can be reported through the Shire's website using the "[report a tree concern](#)" option.

Reports are assessed by the Shire's operational teams in accordance with established inspection and risk assessment processes. The Tree Management Policy provides the high-level framework that supports consistent and transparent decision-making, while site-specific assessments and responses are managed at an operational level.

[Contact Us - Mornington Peninsula Shire](#)

Why doesn't Council act every time a tree is reported?

Not all reported issues require action. Each report is assessed by Council officers using established inspection and risk assessment processes to determine whether a tree poses an unacceptable risk or requires management.

If no action is required, the tree may continue to be monitored or reviewed in the future.

Why am I being asked not to submit repeat reports for the same tree?

Submitting multiple reports about the same tree does not speed up the assessment process and can divert resources from other priority safety issues.

Once a report has been assessed, the appropriate response is determined based on risk, and the tree is managed accordingly. Additional reports are only necessary if conditions change, or new concerns arise.

What happens if illegal tree works occur?

Illegal tree works, including unauthorised removal, pruning, or damage to trees on Council-managed land or trees protected under the Planning Scheme, may be investigated by the Shire.

If unlawful activity is confirmed, Council may take enforcement action in line with relevant legislation, which can include fines, remedial planting requirements, or legal proceedings.

Council monitor their condition over time. Once identified, these trees are given additional consideration in planning and decision-making before any significant works are undertaken

What about trees on private property?

Trees located on private property are generally the responsibility of the property owner. Issues such as overhanging branches, leaf litter, root impacts, or disputes between neighbours are typically considered private civil matters and are managed between the affected property owners.

The Shire's Tree Management Policy applies to trees on Council-managed land. While the Shire may provide general information, it usually does not intervene in disputes involving privately owned trees unless there is a clear risk to public safety or a matter that falls within Council's regulatory responsibilities.

Tree works and the Planning Scheme

Tree removal and pruning may require a planning permit under the Planning Scheme.

Planning controls can apply even if:

The tree is on private land, or

Nearby properties do not appear affected.

Property owners are responsible for ensuring all required approvals are in place before starting works.

For advice, contact Council Planning Services prior to engaging a contractor or undertaking tree works.

What about tree issues related to NBN or Telstra infrastructure?

Trees interfering with NBN, Telecommunications overhead lines are generally managed by the relevant NBN or Telecommunications service provider. These organisations are responsible for maintaining safe clearances around their assets.

Council is not responsible for managing trees solely due to NBN, Telecommunications infrastructure impacts.

Climate and Environment

How does the policy help with climate change?

Trees play a key role in cooling our towns and cities and reducing the impacts of extreme heat. A Tree Management Policy supports long-term planning to increase canopy cover in public spaces and ensure trees continue to provide climate benefits into the future.

How does the policy help protect important trees?

Some trees are especially valued because of their size, age, or environmental or cultural significance. The policy provides a framework for identifying and recognising these important trees, which may include mapping, records or other management tools.

Mature and valued trees may also be identified for inclusion in a proactive inspection schedule, helping

