



NATURE STRIPS and ROAD VERGE POLICY

MOWING, PLANTING, LANDSCAPING, MAINTENANCE AND REMOVAL

Adopted by Council 9 July 2025

Date/Resolution No: 2025/419

Introduction

Nature strips are public land, not private property, but their maintenance is often shared between Council and residents. This partnership helps improve street appeal, property values, and overall sustainability. While Council manages key elements like trees and public safety, residents are encouraged to help with basic upkeep and ensure any landscaping is safe and accessible.

This policy outlines Council's approach to the planting, maintenance, and management of nature strips and vegetation within the road reserve.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Clarify Council's responsibilities and cost expectations for the construction and maintenance of nature strips;
- Acknowledge and support the community's role in maintaining nature strips;
- Promote mowing, planting, and landscaping practices that enhance streetscape character and neighbourhood amenity;
- Establish clear criteria for assessing resident requests for Council assistance with mowing grassed nature strips;
- Provide guidelines for evaluating resident proposals to landscape or plant out nature strips; and
- Outline Council's approach to the planting, management, and removal of trees on public land.

This policy applies to all Council owned and/or controlled nature strips within the Narromine Shire LGA urban environment.

General

Narromine Shire Council is committed to maintaining attractive, safe, and functional streetscapes in partnership with the community. Nature strips are a vital part of the local environment, contributing to the visual appeal, safety, and comfort of neighbourhoods.

Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of street trees, while residents are expected to maintain the grassed areas adjoining their property. Residents must also ensure vegetation on their property does not obstruct pedestrian access or interfere with visibility for cyclists and motorists.

To support safety, amenity, and environmental outcomes, the following general principles apply to the management of footpaths and verges:

- A minimum clear path of 1.5 metres must be maintained along the verge or footpath—whether concrete, asphalt, synthetic turf, or grass—to allow safe and comfortable pedestrian access.
- Any construction works within the road reserve require Council approval via a Section 138 application under the *Roads Act 1993*, submitted to the Infrastructure and Engineering Department.
- Prior to application, property owners or residents must identify all underground and aboveground services (e.g. using Dial Before You Dig).
- Groundcovers, native grasses, and shrubs up to 50 cm in height may be planted to help maintain clear sightlines.
- Compacted gravel can be installed on up to 50% of the nature strip, with the remainder comprising low-level shrubs or grass. This combination supports water filtration and contributes to urban cooling.
- Temporary protective fencing may be used for up to 13 weeks to assist with the establishment of new grass or shrubs.
- No trees or shrubs may be planted in the footpath area without written consent from Council.
- Council will determine the need for street tree planting within urban areas and ensure that species selection and placement align with this policy.
- Management of the verges are the responsibility of the home owner or occupier.
- The risk to public safety (including road users) and property will take priority in tree removal in decisions in emergency or unsafe situations.

Nature Strip Maintenance

Areas Maintained by Council

Council will maintain nature strips or verge areas in the following situations:

- Next to Council-owned or operated community facilities.
 - Adjacent to parks and public reserves.
 - In front of properties where Council has issued a clean-up notice or order (maintenance will occur approximately every six months, depending on conditions).
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- Where the resident or property owner is unable to maintain the verge due to physical or financial hardship and has submitted and received approval for assistance from Council.

Areas Maintained by Residents

Residents or property owners are responsible for maintaining the nature strip in front of their property, excluding Council-managed street trees. This includes:

- Mowing grass
- Watering and weeding
- Edging turf
- Removing loose material that could pose a slip or trip hazard

Nature strips should be kept neat and tidy to ensure safety and contribute to the overall look of the street. If a resident hires a contractor for general yard or garden maintenance, it's expected that mowing the nature strip will be part of that work. Council will not mow nature strips if the private lawn is already being maintained by the resident or a contractor.

Trees and Shrubs on Private Property

Property owners are responsible for maintaining trees and shrubs within their property boundaries. If vegetation overhangs into the road reserve and poses a safety risk or obstructs visibility for drivers, Council will take the following steps:

- a) Contact the property owner to raise the issue;
- b) Provide a reasonable timeframe for the owner to carry out the necessary works; and
- c) If the issue is not resolved within the agreed timeframe, Council may arrange for the removal of the hazard, with all associated costs to be borne by the property owner.

Legislation

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
 - Roads Act 1993
 - Civil Liability Act 2002
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