

Name of Policy: Management of Illegal Removal of Vegetation from Council Controlled Reserves

Policy Code: PL-PRK-004

Date Originally Adopted: 12/12/2006 **Minute No.:** 281

Date Last Reviewed: 14/04/2009 **Minute No.:** 032

Date Last Amended: 26/04/2016 **Minute No.:** 215

Responsible Division: Engineering Services

Responsible Section: Parks & Recreation

Related Council Documents:

Relevant Legislation : Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979
Local Government Act 1993
Crown Lands Act 1989
State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007

Objective:

To mitigate the impacts of illegal removal or damage of vegetation from Council managed land.

This accords with Council's responsibilities as land owner/trust manager under the Crown Lands Act 1989, Local Government Act 1993 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to properly manage, develop, protect, enhance and conserve the environment for which it is responsible.

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to set down a sequence of actions to be taken in the event of reported/identified illegal damage to vegetation on council managed land.

Requirements:

1. Sequence of Action to be undertaken

If the area is already known to be or has the ability to be a future environmental asset then:-

- i. Assess scale of damage to vegetation based on the following matrix:

Low Impact incident	Examples may include unauthorised pruning of small trees or the repeated removal of recently planted street trees or landscaping or regeneration sites.
Medium Impact incident	Examples may include illegal pruning of tree limbs or clearing or poisoning of understorey vegetation.
High Impact incident	Examples may include poisoning, ringbarking or removal of mature trees or damage to large areas of native vegetation. The vandalism has a significant visual impact to other residents and the public and/or impact to surrounding environment.

- ii. Development of a Vegetation Management Strategy that identifies the scale of the vandalism and intended actions. This strategy is to maintain a balance between vegetation retention and the community's social & economic needs. Where possible council officers are to encourage the surrounding community's involvement in developing and implementing the proposed solution.
- iii. For Medium-High Impact incidents council staff are to seek approval through Council Resolution to support identified actions. Report to Council is to outline the issue and proposed response measures relative to the scale of the illegal damage to vegetation.

- iv. Information is to be distributed to local residents highlighting what has occurred, the environmental value of the area, how assistance can be given and Council's intended future course of action.
- v. If physical barriers are to be erected, they can be used to display further information pertaining to the vandalism sustained and offer advice to the community as to how assistance can be given to prevent any future vandalism. Any proposed development is to be undertaken in accordance with relevant planning guidelines (eg. State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007).
- vi. Once regeneration of the effected area reaches a level where it can be self-sustaining the physical barriers and/or signage can be removed.
- vii. Throughout this process every effort is to be made to provide additional information to the community.

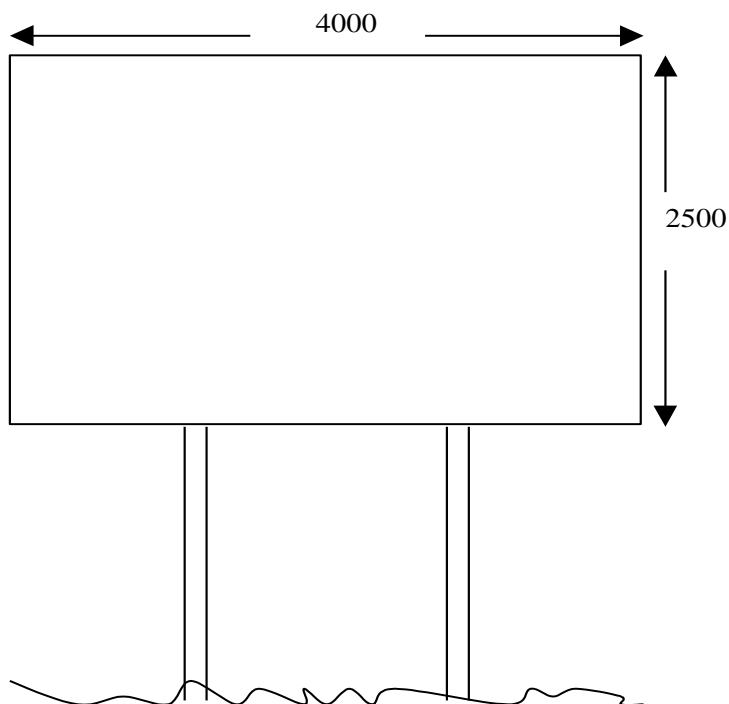
2. General Conditions for responding to Medium-High Impact incidents

This policy must be adhered to by all Council Asset Owners/Trust Managers holding responsibility for the management of natural areas.

Prior to the erection of any permanent or semi permanent structure, the approval of Council must be granted through a Council Resolution supporting identified actions.

3. Signage - Building Materials

- i. All signage must indicate the nature of the damaged vegetation, Council's intended course of action and contact details.
- ii. Signage can be pictorial in nature as well as providing written information.
- iii. Signage can be a maximum 4000mm x 2500mm, excluding the support post area (see diagram below).



- iv. Signage is to be placed in the most pronounced area of damage and be of high visibility to surrounding residents.
- v. All materials are to be of the highest quality and vandal resistant.

4. Physical barriers

- i. Physical barriers can be of a chainwire style fence or other suitable material for the intended purpose.
- ii. Physical barriers are to be located to minimise entry to the effected site.
- iii. Physical barriers are not to exceed the height of the damaged vegetation.
- iv. The exact location of the barrier is to be illustrated on a plan for the purpose of Council approval
- v. Physical barriers are to be removed when protected vegetation has re-established or regeneration work has reached a maturity that can sustain independent growth.
- vi. Wind screening can be attached to fencing.

5. Vegetation Management Strategy (VMS)

A Vegetation Management Strategy is to be created for the immediate area, if one does not already exist.

The Vegetation Management Strategy is to clearly identify what works are to take place, species selection, anticipated height of vegetation and outline actions for the restoration of the site and/or damaged vegetation into the future.

6. Financial Capabilities

It is recognised that budgetary and resourcing constraints will depict the speed at which this policy can be applied in individual situations.