

Media Release

5 May 2025

Cockburn community urged to have say on draft tree protection policy until 1 September

The City of Cockburn is developing a draft policy to protect trees and enhance the local tree canopy and is appealing for the community to have a say.

Members of the public can participate in a live consultation about the proposed local planning policy via the City's Comment on Cockburn website until 1 September.

Feedback will inform Cockburn Council which will consider the proposed policy later this year.

The proposed policy aims to provide a clear definition of a 'regulated tree' on private land and when development approval is required for any 'tree damaging' activity, and includes trees already listed on the City's 'Significant Tree' register.

It will prioritise the retention, protection and provision of new trees on private land and establish a clear process for the assessment of the removal of a regulated tree and other tree damaging works.

City of Cockburn Director Sustainable Development and Safety, Dan Arndt, said the policy aimed to promote and facilitate the preservation of large and significant trees at the earliest possible stage of the planning and development process.

"The draft policy is based on the model prepared by the WA Local Government Association, but with adjustments to ensure clarity for the community," Mr Arndt said.

"The aim is to balance the retention of regulated and other trees with the desired built form and land use outcomes anticipated by the zoning of affected land parcels, from small individual lots to large subdivisions.

"It aims to preserve and enhance neighbourhood amenity, current and future character and its sense of place, by mitigating the urban heat island effect, reducing air pollution, improving groundwater quality and enhancing local biodiversity."

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Mr Arndt said the City understood a tree protection policy could affect not just residents but also developers and local businesses.

“We’re working to find the right balance between keeping our beautiful large trees and making space for new homes and developments on private land,” he said.

“The establishment of a policy would create an approval process to help ensure any plans to remove or damage regulated trees are carefully reviewed, and alternative options to keep the trees are explored.

“A thriving urban forest provides significant social, economic, and environmental benefits, particularly large, mature trees that offer aesthetic and cooling advantages.”

Regulated trees on private land would be defined as:

- Trees 8 metres and taller (excluding palms and specific pest species)
- Trees listed on the City’s ‘Significant Tree’ register
- Trees identified to be retained or planted to replace a large tree removal due to subdivision or development.

Find out more about the draft policy and have your say at the Comment on Cockburn community consultation [website](#).

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