

## Policy Type

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Council

## Policy Purpose

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This policy details the key considerations for the development, improvement, enhancement and maintenance of verges within the City of Cockburn. This policy must be read in conjunction with the City's 'Verge Guidelines'.

This policy aligns with the City's Sustainability Strategy, Sustainability Action Plan, Strategic Community Plan and Urban Forest Plan.

## Policy Statement

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The City of Cockburn defines verges as the portion of Crown land which lies between the edge of a road and the adjacent property line. The verge is a shared area, important for access and services including utilities, crossovers, street trees and footpaths.

### (1) Design Considerations

Well-designed verges can play an important role in enhancing the liveability of a suburb. The design of a verge should consider utilities, safety, urban cooling, biodiversity, functionality, Water Sensitive Urban Design and permeability, whilst also enhancing human and neighbourhood interaction.

1. Permissible verge treatments include approved trees, mulched gardens, edible gardens, drought tolerant lawn, low groundcovers and mid-level shrubs. Verges can also include slight depressions or in some instances; rain gardens that act as water catchments and assist in stormwater retention and treatment. Structures such as fruit and vegetable planters and other street furniture items are permitted although approval by the City is first required to ensure public safety.
2. Verges with footpaths – shrubs must be set back 500mm minimum from footpath and kerb. Mulch or grass are acceptable in areas adjacent to road kerbs.
3. Verges without footpaths – a clear unplanted space of 1.5m from the road kerb is required to facilitate pedestrian movement off the road. Grass and mulch are permitted.
4. Clear pedestrian and traffic sight lines from the verge must be maintained at all times and can be achieved via a tiered approach to planting heights.
5. Crossover planting clearances – setback 1.5m from kerb, a maximum 600mm shrub height, between 1.5-2.5m from kerb a maximum 800mm shrub height, and 2.5m from the kerb, a maximum 1.2m shrub height.



6. Where adequate verge width is available, every verge is required to have a street tree to assist in creating a mature tree canopy for the future. Trees will be supplied, installed and maintained by the City. The City's Street Tree Master Plan will inform the preferred street tree.
7. Not supported verge treatments include signs, fences, barriers, lighting, unsafe materials that produce a loose or slippery surface, rocks, stakes and some impermeable surfaces. The City will ask property owners or managers to undertake remedial works to meet requirements and comply with City of Cockburn Consolidated Local Laws (Part IX) should verge treatments present a hazard.
8. Design examples are included in the City's 'Verge Guidelines' and the City can provide further advice in regard to uncommon or difficult verge situations such as bus stops and corner blocks.

## (2) Approvals and Controls

1. Approval is required for street furniture, play equipment to ensure public safety.
2. Approval is required for synthetic turf or hard surface treatments where more than 25% of the verge is paved. Verges with hard paved or impermeable areas must demonstrate mitigation of urban heat island through street tree planting or landscaping and verge permeability.
3. When developing a verge landscape, property owners or property managers should be aware of utility alignments for both underground and overhead services and must refer to the Utility Providers Code of Practice and Dial Before You Dig. Utility providers have the right to dig up verges to access, upgrade or repair services and rectification of the verge may be the responsibility of the property owner.

## (3) Plant Selection

Plants which are declared weeds, prickly or poisonous plants are not permitted.

## (4) Mulch

Organic mulch to a depth of 75mm is recommended in garden beds to reduce water evaporation, maintain soil temperature, reduce plant stress and suppress weed growth.

## (5) Irrigation

The City promotes Waterwise unirrigated verges though if planning to irrigate, property owners are required to connect to their residential potable water mains and only water during specified days and times.

## (6) Maintenance

Title	Street Verge Improvements
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1. The City of Cockburn is responsible for maintaining all verge trees. Property owners, property managers or residents that require maintenance to their verge tree must contact the City.
2. Property owners, property managers or residents whose property is connected or adjacent to the verge are responsible for verge maintenance including mowing, weeding, shrub pruning, mulching and maintaining any approved structures or furniture in a safe condition.
3. The City will provide a minimum service of verge mowing to ensure unkempt verges are maintained. This service is provided at the residents request and at a frequency described in the City’s Public Open Space Strategy 2014-2024.
4. Where Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features such as swales or rain gardens are installed on residential verges, they should be designed with minimal maintenance in mind and it is the responsibility of the property owners, property managers or residents to maintain them.

(7) Further Information

Property owners, property managers and residents should reference the City of Cockburn ‘Verge Guidelines’ for more detailed information on verge design, preparation, installation and maintenance.

Strategic Link:	Sustainability Strategy Urban Forest Plan
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Lead Business Unit:	Operations and Maintenance
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