

Media Release

28 May 2026

New City of Cockburn planning policy to protect mature trees on private land now in effect

A new City of Cockburn planning policy that protects trees on private land has now come into effect.

The local planning policy, which aims to enhance Cockburn's tree canopy, provides private land holders with a clear definition of a 'regulated tree'.

The policy regulates when development approval is required for any 'tree damaging' activity, such as tree removal, significant branch lopping or actions that could damage tree roots, including trees already on the City's Significant Tree Register.

The WA Planning Commission and the Minister for Planning approved deletion of the clause in the City's Town Planning Scheme that only protected trees on the City's Significant Tree Register, triggering the new policy to come into effect on 28 May.

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the City had acted on the feedback of 76 per cent of people who had their say in favour of adopting a planning policy to protect mature trees, generally those taller than 8m, on private property.

The draft policy was advertised publicly over four months in 2025 receiving 323 submissions, with the vast majority of respondents supporting the need to obtain Development Approval to remove or damage certain trees on private land.

The policy is based on a model prepared by the WA Local Government Association, but with added adjustments to ensure clarity for the Cockburn community.

"Big trees make a big difference to the lives of people and animals alike, and after our community asked us to act to protect them, we are doing just that," Mayor Howlett said.

"Large, established trees are a defining feature of Cockburn's neighbourhoods. They provide shade, help cool our suburbs, support local wildlife and contribute to the look and feel of our streets.

"Importantly, everyday gardening activities such as routine pruning can continue as normal, and exemptions apply for situations such as hazardous trees and bushfire management requirements."



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To find out if a tree is regulated, learn about exemptions, or apply for approval, visit the City's [website](#).

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