

Title	Street Verge Improvements
Policy Number (Governance Purpose)	



Policy Type

Council

Policy Purpose

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

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. Shrubs and approved structures should be set back and clear of kerbs and footpaths by 500mm whilst hardy and dense groundcovers are acceptable in areas adjacent to road kerbs. Clear pedestrian and traffic sight lines must be maintained at all times and can be achieved via a scaled approach to planting heights: a maximum 600mm within 1.0m from the crossover or road network, 800mm between 1.0-2.0m, and a maximum 1.2m height beyond 2.0m from the crossover or road network. Where no footpath is present, a clear unplanted space of 1.5m from the road kerb is required to facilitate pedestrian movement off the road.
3. Where adequate soil volume 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 Urban Forest Plan will inform the preferred street tree.

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4. Unacceptable verge treatments include signs, fences, barriers, lighting, unsafe materials that produce a loose or slippery surface, rocks, stakes, synthetic turf and impermeable surfaces. The City will ask property owners or managers to undertake remedial works to meet requirements should verge treatments present a hazard.
5. 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 and hard surface treatments where more than 25% of the verge is paved. Verges with hard paved areas must demonstrate mitigation of urban heat island through street tree planting or landscaping and verge permeability.
2. 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. Utilities 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) Preliminary Works and Soil Preparation

Ground preparation and soil improvements play a significant role in the success of a verge garden and should be integral to the design and implementation of your verge. The City's 'Verge Guidelines' provides detail on how to best prepare your verge.

(4) Plant Selection

Lists of Waterwise plants suitable for your area are available in the City's Verge Guidelines, from the Water Corporation website and at Waterwise Garden Centres. Subsidised native plants and Sustainability grants are also available to City of Cockburn residents on a seasonal basis. When selecting plants for your verge, be careful not to plant declared weeds, prickly or poisonous plants as they are not permitted.

(5) Mulch

Coarse Waterwise mulch should be used to reduce evaporation, maintain soil temperature, reduce plant stress and suppress weed growth. Mulch should be maintained below the adjoining kerbs and footpaths with a depth of 50mm-10mm.

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(6) Irrigation

The City promotes Waterwise unirrigated verges though if planning to irrigate, property owners or property managers should consult a Waterwise Garden Irrigator via the Water Corporation and only water during specified days and times.

(7) Maintenance

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, pruning, mulching and maintaining any approved structures or furniture in a safe condition.
3. The City will provide a minimum service to ensure unkempt verges are maintained, please refer to Public Open Space Strategy.
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.

(8) 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
Category	Street Trees and Verges
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