

Removing & pruning trees

Tree management in Randwick

Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of tens of thousands of public tree assets within streets, parks and reserves and open space areas throughout Randwick City. The majority of tree maintenance works are undertaken by approved tree trimming contractors engaged by Council and all tree works comply with *Australian Standard AS 4373 – 2007 – Pruning of amenity trees*.

Public trees

Pruning works are only undertaken to maintain the health and vigour of trees and to ensure that the following objectives are achieved:

- Unimpeded pedestrian and vehicular thoroughfare
- Removal of deadwood or structurally unsound branches
- Building and services clearances
- Improved line-of-sight
- Formative pruning of young trees

The following will not generally be considered as justifiable reasons to prune public trees or native vegetation:

- leaf drop into gutters, downpipes, pools, lawn areas, etc
- to increase natural light, where it is the sole consideration
- to improve street lighting into private property
- to enhance views or reduce the height of trees
- to reduce shade created by a tree/s
- to reduce fruit, resin or bird droppings falling onto driveways and/or cars

Council does not prune trees within private property but may serve Notice on property owners to prune or remove vegetation encroaching onto public land.

Pruning around overhead powerlines and service wires is undertaken by contractors employed by Ausgrid and usually involves clearance of at least 1.5 metres from bare low voltage powerlines and an allowance for regrowth over a twelve month period.

Ausgrid may be contacted in an emergency on 13 13 88 or for general enquiries on 13 13 65, or you can log onto their website at www.ausgrid.com.au (<http://www.ausgrid.com.au/>)

Pruning or removing public trees

If you would like a street or park tree pruned or removed you are advised to contact Council's Call Centre on 1300 722 542 so that a service request can be logged. The subject tree or trees will then be assessed by Council staff and if required appropriate action will be undertaken.

You may also make any such request by emailing Council at council@randwick.nsw.gov.au (<mailto:council@randwick.nsw.gov.au>) or by writing to Council and addressing any such correspondence to:

General Manager
Randwick City Council
30 Frances Street
RANDWICK NSW 2031

When lodging a request with Council for a public tree to be pruned or removed, please ensure you provide the following information:

- Your name, address and daytime contact number
- Where the tree/s is located
- Reasons for the requested pruning/removal

The removal of public trees will generally only be undertaken if it can be proven that they are dead, diseased or dangerous or where they are causing serious and increasing damage to either public infrastructure or private property that cannot be managed by pruning, root pruning or the installation of a tree root barrier.

Planting trees on public land

Randwick City Council encourages community participation in the greening of our streets and is keen to see the community involved in the enhancement of our streetscapes and the raising of awareness of environmental issues.

If you would specifically like a street tree planted outside your property, please contact Council's Call Centre on 1300 722 542 and log a request for tree planting. This request will then be assessed by a Council tree officer and if appropriate the requested planting will be

undertaken.

Planting is generally undertaken by Council tree planting contractors who plant to an approved Specification which includes a six month maintenance period. No planting is undertaken during December-February because of summer temperatures and the detrimental affect these temperatures have on tree survival.

Alternatively, you could download and complete a [Street Tree Planting Request form PDF, 70.68 KB](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/23174/Street-Tree-Planting-Request-form.pdf) (http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/23174/Street-Tree-Planting-Request-form.pdf) to apply to have one or two trees planted outside your house. You can then contribute in a very practical way to the ongoing care and maintenance of those newly planted trees by participating in Council's [Adopt a Street Tree Project PDF, 2343.9 KB](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/23165/Adopt-a-Tree-Program.pdf) (http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/23165/Adopt-a-Tree-Program.pdf).

If you would like to become actively involved in the planting out of a larger section of your street and are prepared to coordinate the selection, planting and maintenance of planted trees, it is recommended you consider signing up to Council's [Community Street Tree Planting Project PDF, 75.28 KB](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/23177/Community-Street-Tree-Planting-Program.pdf) (http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/23177/Community-Street-Tree-Planting-Program.pdf).

A minimum of five (5) households are required for any particular project to proceed and Council must make sure that any projects are carried out in an appropriate manner that ensures both the success of the project and the safety of the participants.

Council needs to know who is involved in these projects and that these people fully understand the conditions applied to volunteers involved in such projects.

Please ensure that the conditions on the form are read and fully understood before registering your name on the first line, with additional participants registering on subsequent lines. When you have completed the form, please return it to Council for assessment.

Private trees

You must obtain consent from Council to remove/prune ANY palm tree (except Cocos palms), cycad or tree fern of ANY size on your own property, ANY tree in recognised bushland, ANY tree on public land or any hollow bearing tree/s.

When approval is required to remove or prune a tree on private property

Council consent is required for any tree works proposed for trees with:

- a height equal to or exceeding six (6) metres;
- a canopy width equal to or exceeding four (4) metres;

- for a single trunk tree species, a trunk circumference equal to or exceeding one (1) metre at a height of one (1) metre above ground level; or
- for a multi-trunk tree species, a combined trunk circumference (measured around the outer girth of the group of trunks) equal to or exceeding one (1) metre at a height of one (1) metre above ground level.

You require development consent to prune/remove ANY tree if you are within a Heritage Conservation Area, if the tree is or forms part of a Heritage Item, is or forms part of an Aboriginal object or is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance or if the tree is listed on Council's Register of Significant Trees (<http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/trees/significant-tree-register>). Development consent is also required for tree works on land that is listed on the State Heritage List.

Rather than removing a tree, you may consider having the tree's canopy thinned out to obtain filtered light. A qualified arborist will usually be able to open up the canopy of a tree in a way that will allow considerably more light to penetrate.

With larger trees this process will probably have to be repeated every few years. However, thinning out the canopy is an effective way of both preserving a tree and retaining your access to sunlight.

The following will not generally be considered as justifiable reasons to remove a tree/s or native vegetation within private property:

- leaf drop into gutters, downpipes, pools, lawn areas, etc;
- to increase natural light, where it is the sole consideration;
- to improve lighting into private property;
- to enhance views or reduce the height of trees;
- to reduce shade created by a tree/s;
- to reduce fruit, resin or bird droppings falling onto driveways and/or cars;
- minor lifting of driveways, front fences, paths and footpaths by tree roots; or
- potential damage to sewer mains or stormwater pipes, unless supported by written expert advice and only where reasonable alternatives are not feasible (e.g. relocation or encasement of mains and replacement of damaged pipes in PVC plastic).

How to obtain consent

Download and fill out an [Application for Permit to Prune/ Remove Tree\(s\) form PDF, 36.13 KB](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/23150/D02403421-Permit-to-Prune-Remove-trees-application-form-2016-17.pdf) (http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/23150/D02403421-Permit-to-Prune-Remove-trees-application-form-2016-17.pdf). The cost for an inspection and determination is currently \$73.50. This all-inclusive cost covers the inspection of any number of trees growing within a particular property by a Council tree officer.

For vegetation located within a Heritage Conservation Area, within an Aboriginal place or heritage significance or which is listed on Council's [Register of Significant Trees](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/trees/significant-tree-register) (<http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/trees/significant-tree-register>) you will need to submit a [DA for Tree Works Application form PDF, 68.76 KB](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/23858/D02403420-DA-for-Tree-Works-application-form-2016-17..pdf) (http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/23858/D02403420-DA-for-Tree-Works-application-form-2016-17..pdf) for any proposed pruning/removal works, including a cheque for \$110.

Both applications can be lodged at [Council's Customer Service Centre](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/about-council/council-and-councillors/contact-us) (<http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/about-council/council-and-councillors/contact-us>) or by mail, supplying all details of work to be carried out. Cheques should be made payable to Randwick City Council.

Properties which receive a pensioner rebate on their rates assessment are entitled to a fifty (50) percent rebate on tree pruning/removal application/inspection fees.

It can take up to two weeks to assess your application. We will post our response to you once an inspection has been undertaken and a determination has been made by a Council tree officer.

Review of Permit to Prune/Remove Tree(s) Determination

Any applicant who is dissatisfied with Council's decision can request a review by writing to Council outlining the reasons for seeking the review and attaching any relevant **new** information. This information should include documentation such as a detailed arborist's report, a structural engineer's report and/or a plumber's report with diagrams of any affected/damaged pipes and/or underground services.

Upon receipt of any such request Council's tree management coordinator will review the documentation and if the new information provides enough evidence to then support a decision to approve the request a report will be prepared for Council's consideration and a final decision made to either approve or refuse the application.

Review of Development Application Determination

Section 82A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* provides that an applicant may request Council to review the determination of an application. This means that an application which has been refused by Council, or the conditions attached to an approved application, may be reconsidered under this section of the Act.

If you are dissatisfied with Council's determination, you may:

- apply for a review of the determination by lodging a [Request for Review of Determination form PDF, 49.43 KB](http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/13816/D00440615-DA-Procedures-Manual-Request-for-a-review.pdf) (http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/13816/D00440615-DA-Procedures-Manual-Request-for-a-review.pdf) with Council (the request must be made in writing and the review determined within six months of the determination date); or
- appeal the decision at the Land and Environment Court (the appeal must be lodged within 6 months of receiving your determination).

When approval is *not* required to remove or prune a tree on private property

- if the tree is dying or dead or is a risk to human life or property and is not required as the habitat of native fauna
(<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cpp/AssessHabitat.pdf>
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- if the tree is growing within two (2) metres of any building (excluding an outbuilding) measured horizontally from the closest point of the trunk at one (1) metre from ground level to the closest point of the vertical alignment of the building structure which must be the eave, guttering or fixed awning of the building;
- tree works to give affect to a development consent that permits the pruning or removal of the subject tree/s;
- tree works on public land owned or under the care, control and management of Council and carried out by persons authorised by Council;

Details of the tree species, its condition, location, the risk it poses and digital photographs should be provided to Council to verify that a tree is:

- dying
- dead or dangerous, or
- that it is within two (2) metres of a residential building

PRIOR to the removal/pruning of any such tree/s.

Such evidence should also include a report by a qualified arborist or a written statement from the State Emergency Services (SES) if any tree works are undertaken by the SES at the owner's request.

Although Council consent is not required to remove trees as nominated above, Council strongly advises property owners or their agents to contact its Call Centre - 1300 722 542 - on the day that any such tree is being removed with details of the property address, species of tree/s being removed (if known), reasons for removal and the name of the contractors engaged to undertake the works.

This will allow Council staff to provide details to the general public should the removal of any such tree be reported to Council as well as avoiding any potential conflict between the tree owner and neighbouring property owners or residents.

You also do not require Council consent to prune any tree on private property:

- if the pruning is required or authorised to be done under the *Electricity Supply Act 1995*;
- if the pruning is in accordance with the Australian Standard (*AS 4373 - 2007*) to provide 500mm clearance of insulated domestic electricity supply cables;
- for minor or maintenance tree works, including crown thinning by a maximum of ten (10) percent in any two year period, pruning of deadwood more than 50mm in diameter, the removal of live branches to a height of 2.5 metres from ground level and the formative pruning of young trees as defined in *AS 4373 - 2007*.

Plants declared under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* to be a noxious weed in respect of land within the City of Randwick or any tree listed in the table below can also be pruned or removed without Council consent.

Botanical name	Common name
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree of Heaven
<i>Alnus jorullensis</i>	Evergreen Alder
<i>Arecastrum romanzoffianum</i>	Cocos palm
<i>Bambusa species</i>	Bamboo Species
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Hackberry
<i>Cotoneaster species</i>	Cotoneaster
<i>Cupressocyparis x leylandii</i>	Leyland Cypress
<i>Erythrina species</i>	Coral tree
<i>Ficus elastica</i>	Rubber tree
<i>Lagunaria patersonia</i>	Norfolk Island Hibiscus
<i>Ligustrum species</i>	Privet
<i>Morus species</i>	Mulberry
<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander
<i>Ochna serrulata</i>	Ochna
<i>Olea europea var. africana</i>	African Olive
<i>Populus species</i>	Poplars
<i>Salix species</i>	Willows
<i>Schefflera actinophylla</i>	Umbrella tree
<i>Toxicodendron succedaneum</i>	Rhus tree

Comprehensive details and descriptions of these exempt tree species can be obtained from the Royal Botanic Gardens plantnet (<http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/>) website.

Replacing or planting a tree

Most problems associated with trees and tree roots are caused by planting the wrong tree in the wrong location. Careful consideration should be given to the characteristics that any tree will have when it reaches maturity.

Those considerations include:

- Mature height of the tree/s
- Mature spread of canopy
- Root system
- Fruit drop
- Excessive pollen production
- Thorns or spikes

The space available both **above** and **below** the ground where the tree/s is to be planted should therefore be considered relative to the growth habits and any special requirements of the tree/s.

Restrictions such as overhead powerlines/service wires, underground pipes/services, proximity to buildings, drains, fences and solar access are also important considerations.

For the best advice on what is appropriate for planting within the Randwick City area please contact Council's Community Nursery (<http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/randwick-community-nursery/about-the-nursery>).

Council also has a Street Tree Identification Manual (<http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/trees/identify-a-tree>) which details all species of trees and shrubs nominated in its Street Tree Masterplan PDF, 8942.64 KB (http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/20468/Street-Tree-Master-Plan.pdf) for planting throughout the Randwick City area. This manual is also a useful resource for assisting in the selection of appropriate tree species for planting on private property.