

ITEM 8 POLICY REVIEW - FOOTPATHS AND ROAD RESERVES MOWING COUNCIL POLICY

Road verges play an important role in enhancing the streetscape and contributing to the local environment by providing a green buffer between roads and adjoining properties. Council encourages residents and property owners to take pride in their neighbourhoods by maintaining these areas. This includes regularly mowing the grassed verge or establishing and maintaining attractive verge gardens in accordance with Council’s Verge Garden Guideline.

In accordance with Council’s governance framework, the Footpaths and Road Reserves Mowing Policy is subject to review once per Council term to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with strategic objectives. This existing policy has been reviewed, with minor changes to wording and references to supporting documents proposed. These changes are administrative in nature and do not alter the intent or principles of the policy. This Report recommends that Council adopts the draft Footpath and Road Reserves Mowing Council Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Council adopts the revised draft Footpaths and Road Reserves Mowing Council Policy.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Paul Tracey, Manager Open Space + Environmental Services
 Authorised by: Joanne Page, Director Infrastructure + Works

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Draft Footpaths and Road Reserves Mowing Council Policy

BACKGROUND

Road verges are a key feature of the public domain, enhancing neighbourhood amenity and creating a visually appealing streetscape. They provide a green buffer between roads and adjoining properties, contributing to the character and environmental quality of our city. Council encourages residents and property owners to take pride in their surroundings by maintaining these areas, which may include regular mowing and / or maintenance of verge gardens.

This Policy identifies the important role the Community plays in maintaining footpath and road reserves adjoining their properties. This Policy confirms that Council will not mow vegetated road verges adjoining private properties, commercial properties or properties owned by other government agencies, except in key strategic locations or under exceptional circumstances to manage public safety.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Goal 2 – ‘We have well planned, connected and liveable spaces’. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2035		Delivery Program 2025-2029
Strategy		Service
2.1	Urban areas are planned and well maintained to provide a healthy and safe environment for our community to live, work and play.	Environmental Services

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Council is committed to fostering sustainable practices within our community. Regular maintenance of road reserves by residents and property owners enhances neighbourhood amenity and delivers important environmental benefits including:

- Reduced Emissions – Using standard residential mowers and edgers instead of large commercial machinery significantly lowers greenhouse gas emissions.

- Improved Stormwater Quality – Regular mowing and responsible disposal of clippings reduces the amount of vegetation entering stormwater systems.
- Better Vermin Control – Well-maintained verges limit overgrown areas that can provide habitat for pests and vermin.
- Enhanced Streetscape – Consistent upkeep contributes to a more attractive public domain.

Council encourages residents to maintain the grassed verge or create compliant verge gardens in line with Council's Verge Garden Guidelines.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Council will only maintain footpaths and road reserves adjacent to privately owned property where the:

- owner / occupier has failed to maintain the area; and
- owner / occupier has received multiple requests to maintain the area; and
- lack of maintenance is impacting public safety or pedestrian movement.

Council will only undertake maintenance to a minimum standard to maintain public safety and pedestrian movement, as outlined in Our Asset Management Plan 2025 – 2035 and Encroachment Council Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Maintaining all road reserves across the local government area would require significant resources, including staff, equipment, and operational budgets, with minimal overall community benefit. This Policy assists Council in allocating resources to high priority areas such as parks, reserves and town centres.

There are no changes required to operational or capital budgets as a result of updates to this Policy.

CONCLUSION

Due to proposed changes to this Policy being of an administrative nature with no change to intent, it is recommended that Council endorse this Policy.



FOOTPATHS AND ROAD RESERVES MOWING COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY GOVERNANCE]

PURPOSE

Council owns the land on which public roads and roadside reserves lie. Council maintains the footpaths and road reserves adjacent to Council owned properties. Council encourages adjoining property owners to maintain footpaths, including the mowing of grass **or the establishment and maintenance of verge gardens in accordance with Council's Verge Garden Guidelines**, to provide a safe and attractive appearance of the road reserves.

POLICY INTENT

This Policy defines the extent of Council involvement in mowing **and maintenance** of footpaths and roadside reserves

WOLLONGONG 2032 OBJECTIVES

~~Link the policy to Council's strategic plan and deliverables and document what outcomes it hopes to achieve. Give particular focus to any innovation or sustainability objectives the policy hopes to achieve.~~

<u>Strategic Goal</u>	<u>How will we get there?</u>	<u>Council's Services</u>
1 - We value and protect our environment	1.2 - Manage and effectively improve the cleanliness, health, biodiversity of land and water including creeks, lakes, waterways and oceans.	Environmental Services
5 - We have a healthy community in a liveable city	5.2 - Urban areas are created and maintained to provide a healthy and safe living environment for our community 5.12 - Plan and deliver an accessible, safe, clean and inviting public domain.	City Centre Management Aquatic Services Community Facilities Botanic Garden Parks and Sportsgrounds

POLICY

Council will maintain footpaths and mow road reserves adjacent to Council-owned properties to a standard outlined in this Policy.

1 Adjacent to Council-Owned Properties

- a ~~Properties with a high public visibility, such as Libraries and Council run facilities—the footpaths in the vicinity of these properties will be maintained to a suitable standard, including mowing, edging and removal of clippings.~~

Council will maintain, to a suitable standard, footpaths in the vicinity of properties with a high public visibility, such as Libraries and Council-run facilities, which will include mowing, edging, weed management, removal of grass clippings and minor tree branch pruning.

- b Other Council properties - Mowing will be carried out to a minimum standard ~~standard~~ sufficient for safe and nuisance-free pedestrian usage.

Council staff will determine the most appropriate treatment method to undertake this work.

FOOTPATHS AND ROAD RESERVES MOWING

COUNCIL POLICY

2 Adjacent to Government-Owned Properties

Council does not mow footpaths and road reserves adjoining other Government owned property as a standard service.

3 Adjacent to Private Properties

In those cases where mowing is not being carried out, the property owner is to be asked to carry out the work, and if the work is not then done, Council will undertake work to the minimum standard the minimum amount necessary to provide safe and nuisance-free access for pedestrians.

These considerations are to apply to tenanted or leased Council-owned properties with the exception that the tenant or lessor is first to be asked to carry out the work instead of the owner.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every term of Council, or more frequently as required.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Authority to approve exceptions to this policy due to special circumstances is the responsibility of the Manager Open Spaces + Environmental Services~~City Works and Services~~.

RELATED STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

~~Document title of related procedures and their location. Do not document the procedure here. Procedures are related to task orientated areas and are not to be included in the policy. Procedures may require EMC approval in accordance with the Policy Framework.~~

- [Verge Garden Guidelines - Website Link to PDF](#)
- [Encroachment Policy - Council Policy Link - The Hub](#)

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Open Space and Environmental Services
Date adopted by Council	[To be inserted by Corporate Governance]
Date/s of previous adoptions	25 June 2018, 26 March 2013, 5 August 1985
Date of next review	[Not more than three years from last adoption]