

## BACKGROUND

As part of Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining and managing safe, high quality parks and reserves and reduce risks on Council land, it is required to undertake pruning maintenance and removal tasks on trees on a regular basis. This work is undertaken by skilled and qualified Arborists who utilise a wood chipper to process tree branches into a mulch material.

Tree mulch is a direct by-product of maintaining the City's street and parks tree canopy. Mulch is considered a useful recycled resource which aids water retention in landscaped parks and gardens.

## OBJECTIVE

Significant cost savings can be made by the reuse and redistribution of mulch for approved purposes, as set out in this policy, by negating the need to transport and dispose of mulch at waste disposal sites.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Council's procedures for dealing with requests for mulch from both internal and external customers have been formulated after taking into account the following considerations:

- Council's Code of Conduct
- Council's Financial assistance Policy
- Working relationships and practices;
- Council's Waste Classification procedure.
- Employee and workplace management policies and practices;
- Councils disposal of assets and impounded items procedures
- Time, Cost and quality outcomes;
- Co-operative liaison within organisational divisions and functions, community volunteer groups and private property owners and contractors;
- Pro-active planning (includes human, physical, financial, occupational health and safety and environmental issues);
- Organisation and information systems and standards;
- Ensuring priority yet equitable treatment of all requests;
- Record keeping consistent with organisational requirements;
- Organisational changes relating to Council's customer service provision;
- Provisions relating to this process have been developed for the purpose of protecting Council and its employees against justifiable criticism;
- Ensuring probity and transparency of all dealings; and
- Alternative external sources of mulch for potential recipients.

## STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

Council officers will regularly be requested to provide mulch to a variety of stakeholders including divisional and functional groups within Council, community volunteer groups and private property owners.

### 1 ELIGIBLE REQUESTS

Only requests falling into one of the following categories can be accepted. All requests from private landowners will not be accepted.

#### **Priority A: Council Divisional Requirements**

- New Projects
- Depot Stockpiles
- Landfill rehabilitation
- Maintenance of Council's Operational land (by Council or volunteers)
- Maintenance and refurbishment of existing Council Infrastructure, eg MacCabe Park, Russell Vale Golf Course, Botanic Gardens, City Beach, Pools, Beaton Park Leisure Centre, Caravan Parks, Libraries, Crematorium etc

#### **Priority B: Volunteer Community Groups and Individuals working on Council owned or managed lands**

- Volunteers involved in projects on new and existing sites located on Community land, eg, groups and individuals who are formally registered with Council, such as Bush Care, Aboriginal Land Council projects
- Maintenance of Crown land under Council's care and control

#### **Priority C: Non Council owned and controlled sites.**

- Council will supply mulch for the purpose of maintaining school grounds (primary and secondary) or community-based pre-school/day care facilities located within the Wollongong LGA as the availability of mulch allows

All other requests for mulch, such as from private residents or businesses, will not be accepted and the applicants advised to source mulch from a commercial mulch provider.

Variation of the above in exceptional circumstances will be granted only by approval of the General Manager as per section 3.5 of the Disposal of Assets and Impounded Items Procedure.

It is recommended that mulch is applied to land within 30 days of the delivery date

### 2 RECEIVING REQUESTS

All eligible requests to provide mulch must be entered into Council's Customer Service system that manages request for trees and tree services and directed to the relevant City Works Division Depot (North, Central or South).

Ineligible requests will be rejected upon receipt by Customer Service and will not be entered as Customer Requests.

Eligible requests will be dealt with in a prompt, fair and equitable manner that is consistent with the scope of these procedures. At the time of receiving a request, no commitment can be made on the type of mulch to be delivered or the timing of the delivery. Deliveries are subject to availability. Applicants should be advised that Category A requests will be prioritised over Category B requests.

The Customer Request for eligible requests should clearly identify the name, address and contact details of the individual or group submitting a request for consideration. The request should also confirm the item for action as "Mulch Request". The other comments section of the Customer Request should identify the exact location of the delivery point. The Customer Request should be allocated to the relevant Depot closest to the delivery site.

### 3 PROCESSING REQUESTS

Following receipt of a Customer Request for an eligible mulch delivery request, the relevant Parks Coordinator is authorised to plan, process and action Council's Arborist crews to complete the delivery at a time scheduled to minimise any costs to Council. Consideration should be given to availability of requested quantity of mulch and the availability and proximity of the crew's scheduled work to the delivery site.

All mulch processed by Council for distribution must be classified using Council's waste Classification Procedure.

In accordance with the EPA Resource recovery Order for Mulch 'The Mulch Order 2016', mulch supplied will be classified as being free of asbestos, engineered wood products, preservative treated or coated wood residues, or physical contaminants, including but not limited to glass, metal, rigid plastics, flexible plastics, or polystyrene.

The mulch must also be ready for land application.

The mulch should not contain any weed, disease or pest to a consumer for use in an environmentally sensitive area.

When actioning a request the following details are to be updated into the Work Order in Hansen for auditing purposes:

- Volume and type of mulch delivered
- Delivery address
- Date and time of delivery
- Name of Arborist Crew Leading Hand at time of delivery
- Date and time of acknowledgement of delivery by recipient

Upon completion or cancellation of the task, the Work Order and Customer Request are to be noted as completed.

#### 4 DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING

All Customer Requests for mulch are to be maintained within the customer service system and Work Orders within the Hansen system.

All supporting documentation such as correspondence, emails etc are to be attached to the relevant Customer Request or Work Order.

The Waste Classification docket should be saved in Council's document management system at the completion of the Waste Classification book.

#### 5 AUDIT ASSESSMENTS

The above procedure may be audited for compliance at regular intervals.

#### 6 PROMOTION OF POLICY

To ensure equity and transparency in the application of this policy, a copy will be placed on Council's website and its contents actively promoted to registered volunteer and community groups and individuals.

SUMMARY SHEET	
Responsible Division	City Works and Services
Date adopted by Executive Management Committee	28 November 2017
Date of previous adoptions	15 July 2013, 24 March 2004
Date of next review	November 2020
Responsible Manager	Operations Manager - North
Authorised by	Manager City Works and Services