



Policy No. 2013- 12

Tree & Vegetation Vandalism Policy

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Introduction

Central Highlands Council acknowledges the many benefits that trees and vegetation contribute to the local environment. Apart from providing shade, habitat for native wildlife and aesthetic beauty, trees also instil a sense of community pride.

When a tree dies or is damaged by a selfish act of vandalism it affects the community in many ways including loss of amenity of the street or park and the expense of removing a vandalised tree and the cost of its replacement.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all trees and vegetation on Council owned and managed land.

Policy Statement

Council is committed to the preservation of our public trees and vegetation. Council will:

- Investigate all reports of vandalism of trees;
- Notify the police of reported vandalism;
- Assess and attempt to repair damage to vandalised trees on public land;
- Notify residents and the public of what has occurred and ask for their co-operation – this may be done by notice in the Highlands Digest;
- Erect signage on/or near trees/vegetation that has been vandalised (see below);
- Replace severely damaged trees with advanced trees; and
- Encourage residents to take pride in the trees in their street and to report any suspicious activities near trees.



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What can the Public do to help

Residents and the public will be encouraged to become involved by:

- Contacting Council if they notice any unusual behaviour around trees; earlier notification provides a better chance of catching those responsible and being able to save a tree;
- Volunteering to help nurture a tree back to health or 'adopt a tree' if the vandalised tree needs to be replaced; and
- Talking to their neighbours to encourage awareness of any tree vandalism.

Responses to vandalised trees in public land

(a) Remedial work

If the damage to a public tree is serious, remedial work will be carried out to lessen the stress on the tree and to minimise any potential injury to the public. Council staff will obtain advice from an experienced person on the best remedial action to take if required.

(b) Replacement of Vandalised Tree

If removal of a vandalised tree becomes necessary, an advanced tree will be planted as close to the site of the original tree. The siting of the replacement tree will be governed by the same criteria for planting of new trees. These include location of underground services, sightline difficulties, proximity to built structures, suitability or replacement tree and remaining tree roots that may inhibit planting space.

(c) Protection of Replacement Trees

A sign similar to the one below will be placed alongside the replacement tree detailing the reasons why the new tree was planted and encouraging residents to contact Council if they become aware of any further attacks:



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