



## REPORT: Review of the Public Tree Removal - Amenity Valuation Policy (2023)

**DIVISION:** Community, Culture and Places  
**REPORT DATE:** 2 April 2023  
**TRIM REFERENCE:** ID23/676

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seek endorsement</li><li>• Adopt a policy</li></ul>	
<b>Issue</b>	Readoption of the Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy.	
<b>Reasoning</b>	This policy assists in the protection of public trees by assigning an amenity valuation of the tree based on the contribution of the tree to the landscape. Members of the public can request the removal of a public tree, on the basis that they pay the amenity value that goes back into tree planting programs.	
<b>Financial Implications</b>	Budget Area	Community Culture and Places – Recreation and Open Space
	Funding Source	Policy generates income to assist in future planting programs.
	Proposed Cost	\$0
	Ongoing Costs	\$0
<b>Policy Implications</b>	Policy Title	Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy (2019)
	Impact on Policy	Update of Policy

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan is a vision for the development of the region out to the year 2040. The Plan includes six principle themes and a number of objectives and strategies. This report is aligned to:

Theme: 6 Environmental Sustainability

CSP Objective: 6.2 We recognise, plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change

Delivery Program Strategy: 6.2.1 The impacts of climate change are identified and addressed through collaboration with our community and government

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That the report Review of the Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy (2023) be noted.**
- 2. That the Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy (2023) be adopted with the amendments.**
- 3. That the report Review of the Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy (2023) be placed on public exhibition for four weeks in April/May 2023.**
- 4. That a report to be tabled at the July 2023 Ordinary Meeting of Council for consideration of adopting the Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy (2023), with amendments if required from the public exhibition.**

*Kim Hague*  
Director Community, Culture and Places

*IM*  
Manager Recreation and  
Open Space

## BACKGROUND

### Previous Resolutions of Council

<p>Infrastructure, Community and Recreation Committee</p> <p>(ICRC19/52 - TREE AMENITY VALUATION ON PUBLIC TREES)</p>	<p><i>I refer to this matter and advise that Council at its Ordinary meeting of Council resolved:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. That the report from the Manager Recreation and Open Space, dated 5 August 2019, be noted.</i></li> <li><i>2. That the Tree Amenity Valuation on Public Trees be adopted and implemented, with any funds raised as a result of the policy placed in a Restricted Asset for future Street Tree planting.</i></li> <li><i>3. That the Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy be adopted.</i></li> <li><i>4. That the Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy is reviewed annually with the Chief Executive Officer having the authority to modify/strengthen the policy, as required, to reflect an increased knowledge base as the policy is implemented, and changing community expectations.</i></li> </ol>
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## REPORT

In September 2019, following community consultation, the Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy was adopted by Council. This Policy effectively enabled a value to be calculated for an individual or group of trees using the City of Melbourne’s model based on Yau’s 1990 modified Maurer-Hoffman Formula. This model takes into account a number of factors including the size of the tree (that is related somewhat to the age of the tree), the species of the tree, the aesthetic value of the tree (eg: is it a single tree, or part of an evenly planted avenue), its location (eg: whether it is a reserve, village, residential street or park) and its overall condition (eg: health, vigour, life expectancy).

Under the Policy a Developer or member of the public can request to have a public tree removed for any number of reasons. Prior to the implementation of the Policy Council had limited means to discourage or dissuade the developer/member of the public to retain the tree.

However, the adoption and implementation of the Policy has proven to be extremely successful in helping to retain our public trees. Under the Policy a tree is valued and correspondence sent out the resident/developer advising them the amenity value, the cost of removal and replacement of tree. In the majority of cases the customer chooses not to proceed with the removal of tree due to the value of the tree and associated costs. Since the implementation of the Policy possibly an estimated 60 trees have been retained in our landscapes. Examples of where the policy has been applied and trees have been retained include:

Ronald Street Bore

Council was requested by a nearby resident to remove a mature Lemon Scent Gum from Operational Land. The basis of the request was the tree dropped leaves, fruiting bodies and bark into the resident's yard. The resident also raised concerns about potential limb drop.



Figure 1. Ronald Street Bore site – Lemon Scented Gum

The tree was assessed by Council's arborist and it was determined that it was healthy with no structural integrity concerns. The tree was valued at \$19,024, plus the cost of removal and the re-establishment of a new tree. In total the resident would have been required to pay \$21,024 to have this tree removed from the landscape.

As a result of the implementation of the valuation policy the tree has been retained.

**Church Street**

Council was approached by the Developer to have 2 Hoop Pines removed to make it easier for construction works to take place.



Figure 2. Church Street – 2 Hoop Pines.

Council's arborist valued the trees collectively at \$13,439 plus the costs of removal and the re-establishment of 2 trees. In this instance the Developer would have been required to pay for the installation of root vaults as the replacement trees would have been required to be planted in the road pavement. This increased the cost required by the Developer to pay to \$40,283.

As a result of the valuation policy the trees have been retained, with protective measures installed.

**Kintyre Park (Lincoln Parkway)**

Council was approached by two residents, who had recently constructed dwellings in the area, to remove a total of 5 Lemon Scented Gums. These trees were planted approximately 17 years ago as part of the development of the Kintyre Estate.





Council's arborist valued the 5 trees with a value of \$37,463 being identified. With removal costs and re-establishment of replacement plantings the total cost for the removal of the trees would have been \$54,844.

As a result of the implementation of the valuation policy the trees have been retained in the landscape. Council undertook formative pruning of the trees to reduce impacts to residents.

The changes in the proposed Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy include:

1. The Director Community Culture and Places being the final approval authority for the removal of public trees for civil infrastructure works or emergency works.
2. A clause allowing Council to pursue and recoup the amenity value of a tree or trees where a tree has been wilfully killed, and the individual/s can be positively identified.

In these instances the latest data on the tree and images will be used to calculate the value of the tree/s.

3. The \$/cm (Diameter at Breast Height) table has been updated using the 2020 figures that are available.

### **Consultation**

Consultation was undertaken with internal staff (Recreation and Open Space and Greenspace Operations) as was discussed at Executive Leadership Team in 2021.

This is an update of an existing Policy and the proposed changes are not significant.

### **Resourcing Implications**

No further resources are required to continue to implement this Policy.

### **Planned Communications**

The Public Tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy to be placed on public exhibition for 28 days with the community invited to make comment.

If adopted the updated Public tree Removal – Amenity Valuation Policy will be uploaded to the Council website and made available to the public.

### **APPENDICES:**

- 1 [↓](#) Council Policy - Amenity Valuation of Public Trees 2023 draft
- 2 [↓](#) CALCULATING TREE AMENITY VALUE 2020 Template revised April 2023