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# 10.29 Verge Management Policy

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<b>Policy Owner</b>	<b>Works Committee</b>
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>Date of Adoption</b>	<b>26 August 2020 - Resolution 070820</b>
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	<b>26 August 2020 - Resolution 070820</b>
<b>Date Next Due for Review</b>	<b>3 years / or earlier if required</b>

**OBJECTIVE**

To provide guidelines for the effective management of road verges within the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu.

**POLICY**

This policy caters for the management of verges under the jurisdiction of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. The Shire cannot authorise any private works on road reserves under the control of other authorities (i.e. Department of Main Roads).

**Guidelines: -**

**Scope**

This policy applies to road verges located in a dedicated road reserve within the Shire.

Although conservation of roadside vegetation is an objective of this policy, road safety and road asset protection are the principal consideration.

**Legislation**

This legislation is relevant to the Shire, setting limitations for road infrastructure works, and landowners who wish to undertake work in road reserves.

- *Environmental Protection Act 1986*
- *Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004*
- *Local Government Act 1995*

## Definitions

### ***Designated Maintenance Corridor***

Environmental Protection legislation, in particular Regulation 5, Item 22 "Clearing for maintenance in existing transport corridors" of the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004, provides that local government can carry out activities to maintain and protect the integrity of road infrastructure within the designated 'maintenance corridor' as shown in Diagram 1.



Diagram 1 Designated Maintenance Corridor

### **Application of Policy**

#### **Road Construction Operations:**

All works shall be planned to ensure that there is no damage to any vegetation outside the limits of the designated maintenance corridor. Where necessary, the Shire will make application for the appropriate clearing permits from the Department of Water and Environment Regulation (DWER) prior to undertaking any road construction. If required, as conditions of the permit, special considerations for declared or threatened flora and/or fauna will be made during works.

Rural road widening is to be carried out according to the requirements of the Council and will take into consideration the preservation of roadside vegetation wherever possible by clearing only one side of the road.

#### **Road Maintenance Operations:**

The Shire's road maintenance program includes grading, slashing, herbicide application, pruning, drain cleaning, drainage improvements, bitumen resealing, bitumen shoulder grading and gravel re-sheeting. Road maintenance activities will be contained within the 'maintenance corridor', which comprises the running surface, shoulder, table drain and batter/ to the top of the backslope/batter.

If major weed control works are to be undertaken, in areas outside the 'maintenance corridor',

consultation will occur with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), DWER and local catchment management groups.

As part of the Shire's annual road program, unsealed shoulders subject to significant traffic will require periodic grading and gravel re-sheeting. During this process all grasses and vegetation within the designated maintenance corridor will be removed and disposed of offsite.

Some maintenance grading requires occasional clearing of vegetation to accommodate the machine and ensure road safety, however, where possible, this will be minimised.

Drains are usually mechanically cleared and maintained using a grader, and/or slashed if covered with grass. Drains inaccessible to mechanical equipment may require maintenance with hand tools or approved herbicides. In the cases where these practices will not provide for an acceptable level of drainage the use of excavation equipment may be used.

The Council will take all care not to damage any portion of the rural road reserve from the batter/backslope to the fence line.

### **Removal of Dangerous Vegetation:**

Occasionally it is necessary to remove a dangerous tree/vegetation that pose/s a threat to public safety, such as impeding sight along the roadway or a tree that has been subject to storm damage and is threatening to fall over a fence line or a roadway. Following inspection by a Shire Officer, tree removal will be in accordance with the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004.

### **Pruning:**

It may be necessary to prune vegetation that impedes sight distances for motorists or impacts on the performance of drainage. The Shire refers to Austroads Engineering Guidelines to determine road visibility and safety requirements.

The Shire will prune/remove trees that:

- impede sight distances for road users, or
- have been subject to storm damage, and
- have an imminent threat to public safety, in accordance with the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, or
- are impacting on infrastructure.

### **Services and Utilities:**

Alignment of services is to be encouraged to minimise impact on roadside vegetation where possible. Under the Utility Providers Code of Practice for Western Australia, utility providers are to liaise with the Shire regarding the positioning of services and the reinstatement and rehabilitation of disturbed areas. Alignment of services is to be encouraged to minimise impact on roadside vegetation where possible. However, if removal of vegetation is required, it is the responsibility of the service providers to obtain a valid clearing permit from DWER.

All materials are to be removed from the road verge by the utility providers on the completion of works. All trenches, if relevant, are to be backfilled, adequately compacted and trimmed to ensure they are safe.

Gazetted Flora Roads within the Shire currently include Waddington Road. These roads shall be managed to minimise any disturbance to the roadside flora, consistent with the provision of a safe and efficient roadway.

### **Unauthorised Clearing and/or Activities within Rural Road Reserves:**

Clearing of a rural road verge or unmade road reserve without the relevant permits is prohibited. Penalties may also apply in accordance with the Environmental Protection legislation. The *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and Clearing of Native Vegetation Regulations apply to rural residential areas and a permit may be required to remove native vegetation.

Refer to Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for more information or the fact sheet at the following link: [https://www.der.wa.gov.au/images/documents/your-environment/native-vegetation/Fact\\_sheets/fs1\\_legislation.pdf](https://www.der.wa.gov.au/images/documents/your-environment/native-vegetation/Fact_sheets/fs1_legislation.pdf)

No works shall be undertaken in rural road reserves without written approval from the Shire. This includes planting (including native species), drainage work, fencing, spraying, burning off, clearing vegetation or seed collection.

### **Seed Collection from Road Verges:**

Landowners wishing to collect seed from native vegetation in road verges should refer to Council Policy 1.6 – Taking of Wildflowers/Seeds. A permit for seed collection may also be required from the DBCA. It is the responsibility of the landowner to check they have the relevant approvals in place.

### **Annual Spraying Program:**

The Shire's annual spraying program is conducted within town sites and on rural road verges to reduce the amount of flammable material whilst targeting weeds.

Landowners should note that the drains to the top of the backslope/batter will be sprayed if considered necessary to maintain the integrity of the drainage system.

### **REVIEW**

Reviews of this policy are to be undertaken every three years or earlier if required.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The Manager Works and Services is responsible for applying this policy.