

16.14 ROAD RESERVE PLANTING

Source: Operations 13/4/00, item 8

Scope

The scope of this policy is for planting on Council road reserves. Plantings on recreation reserves or other Council land falls outside the scope of this policy. "Planting" includes, but is not limited to trees, shrubs, hedges and flowers.

Relevant Legislation

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1974 Sections 355 and 357. The Buller District Council District Plan Section 7.93 has also been considered.

General Policy

No planting shall be carried out on road reserve without the written consent of Council who require that they be indemnified against any consequences arising from such planting.

Requests

Random plantings in an unco-ordinated manner may result in an unsatisfactory mix of styles and species. Council may also be held liable for any damage caused as a result of planting on its road reserves. Plantings need to be planned and budgeted for to fit within the scope of existing maintenance contracts. The following criteria apply:

- Individual requests for trees may only be approved if the new tree replaces a missing tree.
- Individual requests for trees may not be approved if the tree will be in isolation from any other trees, either through species selection or location.

- Memorial and/or donated trees shall be planted in the district's parks and reserves and not as street trees.

Whilst generally Council's policy of retaining the traditional berm treatment of predominantly mown grass is to be adhered to, in certain selected areas, a departure from this policy could be acceptable, each case being treated on its merits.

Criteria by which requests for extended garden plots in berms would be considered include:

- A consistently high standard of garden and street frontage maintenance over several years.
- Support and agreement by the majority of residents for such a scheme.
- A commitment by residents to undertake the preparation, planting and ongoing maintenance of any berm plantings.
- The Council reserving the right to require the garden plots to be returned to grass should any of the criteria (a) to (c) not be met.

A variation on the above theme is where either residents request the Council to introduce planting eg natives, ground cover etc in specific parts of a street as an alternative to mown grass, or the Council itself initiates such a scheme. In either case criteria by which such requests or initiatives would be considered include:

- A clearly demonstrated benefit to the street in terms of improved visual and landscape quality.
- Traffic and pedestrian safety not being compromised in any way.
- Capital costs, together with ongoing maintenance, whether by the residents or the Council, being achievable and affordable.
- Support and agreement by the majority of residents for such a scheme. This would include consultation with residents by the Council at the time of initiating the scheme.
- The Council reserving the right to modify or dispense with any of the planted areas (after consultation with residents) should any of the criteria (a) to (d) cease to be valid.

Planting of the above nature may also be appropriate in other parts of a street eg where there are garden plots, special parking areas etc, as may be found for example in some cul-de-sacs.

Planned Planting

Council may carry out planting in the following areas:

Footpaths

Trees only of a suitable species are permitted, shrubs are not permitted due to visibility problems (vehicles and pedestrians).

For sealed or paved footpaths less than 3 metres, no trees are permitted.

Trees may be planted in unformed footpaths provided they are clear of underground and overhead services and will not obscure traffic and pedestrian sightlines. Consideration should also be given to the possible future provision of footpaths.

Thresholds

Threshold construction in streets as part of traffic calming measures may include the planting of trees and/or ground cover.

Road Medians

Trees may be planted in medians provided they will not be a hazard to vehicles, obstruct traffic or pedestrian sightlines or obscure traffic signs or signals.

Road Shoulders or Carriageways

No new plantings will be permitted on sealed or grass shoulders other than the replacement of trees in an already established street planting without the previous consent of Council.

Choices of Species

While suggestions from residents and interest groups will be considered, the final decision on choice of species will be made by Council. Factors influencing choice include:

- Soil type
- Drainage
- Local climate
- Width of footpath, carriageway
- Proximity of dwellings or buildings
- Aspect (shading)
- Frangibility
- Underground/overhead services
- Availability of species
- Suitability of species in relation to growth habit and other characteristics

Existing Planting

Council acknowledges that there are areas of existing planting that do not conform to this policy.

It is not Council's intention to actively eliminate all non-conforming areas. Rather, Council will only remove plantings where:

- The tree, shrub or plant is dead, dying or considered to be in poor health to the extent that its retention is not worthwhile or it is likely to cause a hazard.
- The hazard presented by the tree, shrub cannot be rectified by remedial pruning.
- The planting is a source of nuisance to neighbouring properties - such nuisance could be property damage, shading, excessive leaf or limb loss etc.
- The planting is causing severe disruption to services and no option other than removal is viable.
- The removal is part of a redevelopment plan.