



LACHLAN SHIRE COUNCIL NATURE STRIPS: MOWING, PLANTING AND LANDSCAPING POLICY

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Version: 1	Commencement Date: 30/07/2023	Last Review Date:	Next Review Date: 30/7/2027	Records Management D23/13830

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1. BACKGROUND

Nature strips are public land and not part of residential property, however it is well recognised that a shared maintenance approach between Council and the community provides the maximum opportunity for individual and town wide benefits.

Where this relationship exists, the nature strip can perform its essential role as a conduit of services and make a highly valuable contribution to the street character, which in turn can lead to higher individual property value and sustainability benefits.

While many aspects of nature strip maintenance is the responsibility of Council, it is accepted practice that the adjacent landholder or resident is responsible for some maintenance and for ensuring that any landscaping development is safe and appropriate.

For example, the landholder is expected to ensure that trees and shrubs growing on private land do not impede access to the nature strip or the footpath. Likewise, residents who wish to landscape their nature strip may do so but only in a way that provides for safe access and use by the public.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council owned and/or controlled nature strips within the Lachlan Shire LGA.

Council has had a long-standing practice of relying on residents and businesses to maintain those grassed nature strips adjoining their property. This policy restates this practice identifying the importance of community involvement and cooperation.

This policy does not extend to the mowing of grass or landscaping on private property; which is the responsibility of the owner or occupier of the property.

3. DEFINITION/S

Nature strip: means any Council owned and/or controlled land located between a constructed road and a parcel of private property (that is, the street verge) but does not include land reserves for a public purpose or bushland. It is generally that portion of the street verge that is grassed and may contain street trees.

4. POLICY

4.1 Principles

Lachlan Shire Council is committed to ensuring that the streetscapes are maintained in partnership with the residents of Lachlan Shire. Nature strips contribute significantly to the streetscape and visual amenity of local neighbourhoods. Council aims to maintain an overall consistency and appearance of nature strips.

Council maintains the street trees but relies on residents to maintain the grass. Council also relies on residents to keep garden plants within their property or along the fence line trimmed to ensure it

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does not obstruct pedestrian access on the footpath or nature strip and doesn't interfere with cyclist or motorist sightlines.

It is Councils responsibility to ensure that members of the public are safe and not caused injury wherever possible while they are on Council owned footpaths and nature strips.

To ensure safety and amenity the following general principles apply:

- Narrow strip gardens between the footpath and the fence line can be paved, turfed or planted with small, low-growing, soft-foliaged plants which must be trimmed back away from the footpath.
- The footpath area, either formed concrete/asphalt pathway or unformed grass verge must be maintained with sufficient clearance (generally 1.2 – 1.5 metres wide) to allow pedestrian to walk along comfortably
- Wide grass verges generally with street trees must be free of obstructions that interfere with a pedestrian walking on the nature strip or a driver and/or passenger using the roadway or driveway.

4.2 Mowing of nature strips

4.2.1 Areas that Council will mow and maintain

Council undertakes to maintain the nature strips or verge areas that meet any or all of the following criteria:

- Adjacent to Council community facilities.
- Adjacent to parks and reserves.
- Nature strips where the resident or owner of the property is unable physically and financially to undertake the work themselves and has made application to Council and had it approved for Council to maintain the area.

Council, at its discretion may maintain other nature strips.

4.2.2 Areas to be mowed by owners/residents

Council generally relies on the community spirit of its residents to help maintain the local amenity of their neighbourhoods by mowing the grassed nature strips adjoining their properties.

All areas not maintained by Council are expected to be maintained by the owners and/or residents of the adjoining private property. Grassed nature strips are expected to be mowed regularly by residents or property owners and kept neat and tidy such that they provide a safe environment and contribute to the general appearance of the streetscape.

It is recognised that some residents may appoint a contractor to undertake this work for them. It is considered reasonable that the nature strip mowing would be carried out in conjunction with the mowing of the private property. Nature strips will generally not be mowed by Council if other lawns on the private property are being maintained by the resident or a contractor on behalf of the resident.

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4.2.3 Eligibility criteria for Nature Strip Mowing Service adjacent to private property

Council provides a nature strip mowing service in circumstances where residents, due to health or financial reasons, are unable to mow the nature strip adjoining their residence, to ensure that Lachlan Shire grassed nature strips and streetscape amenity is maintained.

Only where residents meet certain criteria will the nature strip mowing service be provided by Council.

The nature strip mowing service is not an entitlement program. At all times the mowing service will only be provided subject to availability of funding.

- Be a permanent resident of Lachlan Shire, and occupy the property which is the subject of the nature strip mowing service application; and
- Be receiving or be assessed as eligible to receive home care services such as Meals on Wheels, Gardening Service, or have a disability or other medical condition which makes it impossible for that person to mow their nature strip; and
- Be the holder of a current Pensioner Concession Card issued by the Commonwealth Government or in receipt of a Service Pension; or some other type of income substitution resulting from a physical disability that restricts a person from mowing their nature strip e.g. worker's compensation or income protection benefit; and
- Have no other members of the household who are able to mow the nature strip.

Council reserves the right to take special conditions into consideration, other than those listed above.

4.2.4 Mowing Service schedule

The nature strip mowing service does not provide a guaranteed mowing frequency and site visits under this Policy will generally be no more than 6 times a year, or at Council's discretion.

Council will clean grass clippings from the footpath, driveway and gutter that results from works carried out in the maintenance of the nature strips. No other rubbish, debris or green waste will be cleaned up and/or removed from the nature strip or private property at the time of mowing.

4.2.5 Approval process for Nature Strip Mowing Service

Applicants requesting this nature strip mowing service must fill in the relevant application form.

Once the application has been assessed, residents who meet the eligibility criteria will be entered on Council's nature strip mowing list.

All recipients of the service are reviewed annually and may have to re apply at Council's discretion.

The Council reserves the right to remove any person from the nature strip mowing list at any time with two weeks written notice, if any of the following occur:

- The person sells or otherwise transfers their interest in the property, and/or ceases to occupy the property.
- The circumstances of the owner / occupier of the property change dramatically, such that the person no longer meets the eligibility criteria stated in this policy.

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- The person fails to report any changes in their circumstances, which could make them ineligible for inclusion on the nature strip mowing list.
- Council deems that the person no longer meets the eligibility criteria stated in this policy.

4.3 Gardens and vegetation on nature strips

4.3.1 Existing gardens on nature strips

The nature strip must not be landscaped to look like private land and/or used for a private purpose.

Garden plants on nature strips must be kept in a safe, clean, healthy and attractive condition. Understorey plants must be kept to a maximum height of 1 metre and maintained so as not to obstruct pedestrian, cyclist or vehicular traffic.

4.3.2 Replacing grass with garden plants on nature strip

A resident wishing to replace the grass with low maintenance plantings or garden areas must apply in writing to Council for approval prior to undertaking any works. Any proposal must comply with the following essential terms:

- The area to be improved must not be used for any purpose other than the landscaping of the nature strip, to enhance the existing streetscape aspect of the area. There must not be any alienation of public land for a private purpose.
- The landscape works must not represent an obstacle or an obstruction of any nature to the adjoining property owner(s) and/or users of the road or nature strip, including pedestrian access, kerb side parking and cyclists.
- The current topography of the nature strip must not be altered and no garden beds or retaining structures may be erected.
- All vegetation to be planted on the nature strip must be approved by Council and the garden must grow no higher than 1 metre.

If Council gives approval for the conversion, Council will not contribute financially to the cost of the work or its ongoing maintenance, regardless of any change of ownership/ occupancy of the adjoining property.

4.4 Street Trees

All street tree planting will be carried out by Council in accordance with Council's Tree Management Plan.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Nothing in this policy limits any applicable legislation.

Greg Tory

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APPENDIX 1: NATURE STRIP MOWING SERVICE APPLICATION FORM

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Nature Strip Mowing Service Application Form

Important Information	Council provides a Nature Strip Mowing Service for those residents who are unable to maintain the nature strips to meet eligibility requirements. Please complete this form to enable Council to determine your eligibility for placement on the Nature Strip Mowing List.	
Details of Applicant	Name: Address: Phone: Email:	
Resident Status	1. Do you live at this address permanently?	Yes No
Home care eligibility or disability / mobility / health status	2a. Do you currently receive any home care services, Eg. Meals on Wheels, Linen Service, Easy Care Gardening Service?	Yes No
	If Yes, provide further information:	
	2b. If no, do you have a physical disability or mobility problem?	Yes No
	If Yes, what type:	
	2c. Does your health prohibit you from mowing the nature strip?	Yes No
	If Yes, please attach medical certificate.	
No mowing by others	3. Do you have family who can assist you with mowing?	Yes No
	4. Do you have a lawn within your property?	Yes No
	5. Who currently mows the lawn within your property?	
	6. Who has been mowing your nature strip up until now?	

Area requested to be mown	<p>7. How large is the area of nature strip that requires mowing? (approx. dimensions in metres)</p> <p>Front Nature Strip</p> <p>Side Nature Strip (if corner block)</p> <p>Rear Lane (if applicable)</p>												
Person making the Application (if different to the person requiring the service)	<p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Phone:</p> <p>Email:</p>												
Privacy	<p>The information supplied by you in this form (Information) is supplied voluntarily and you have consented to it being collected and held by Council for the purpose specified in this form pursuant to the operation of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIP Act). The intended recipient of the Information is any authorised Council officer or third party responsible for assessing your application and/or storing the information. The failure to provide accurate, up to date and complete Information may result in Council being unable to properly assess your application and may lead to a refusal of your application. You are entitled to access the Information and you may request the correction of any error in the Information held by us subject to the operation of the PPIP Act.</p>												
Declaration by Applicant	<p>I declare that the above information is true and correct:</p> <p>Signature: Date:</p> <p>I have attached copies of relevant documents to support this application</p>												
For office use only	<p>Eligibility Criteria</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">1. Resident Status</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Satisfied</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Not Satisfied</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2a. Home Care Eligibility</td> <td>Satisfied</td> <td>Not Satisfied</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2b. Disability/Mobility/Health Status</td> <td>Satisfied</td> <td>Not Satisfied</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. No mowing by others</td> <td>Satisfied</td> <td>Not Satisfied</td> </tr> </table> <p>Approved applicant must satisfy all eligibility criteria 1-3. Approved Not Approved</p>	1. Resident Status	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	2a. Home Care Eligibility	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	2b. Disability/Mobility/Health Status	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	3. No mowing by others	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
1. Resident Status	Satisfied	Not Satisfied											
2a. Home Care Eligibility	Satisfied	Not Satisfied											
2b. Disability/Mobility/Health Status	Satisfied	Not Satisfied											
3. No mowing by others	Satisfied	Not Satisfied											

Extract from Nature Strip Mowing Policy

The following criteria will be considered in assessing a person's eligibility for inclusion on the Nature Strip Mowing List. Council reserves the right to take special conditions into consideration, other than those listed.

- Be a permanent resident of Lachlan Shire, and occupy the property which is the subject of the nature strip mowing service application; and
- Be receiving or be assessed as eligible to receive home care services such as Meals on Wheels, Gardening Service, or have a disability or other medical condition which makes it impossible for that person to mow their nature strip; and
- Be the holder of a current Pensioner Concession Card issued by the Commonwealth Government or in receipt of a Service Pension; or some other type of income substitution resulting from a physical disability that restricts a person from mowing their nature strip e.g. worker's compensation or income protection benefit; and
- Have no other members of the household who are able to mow the nature strip.

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