

Council Policy (WCC.023)

West Coast Nature Strips

Responsible Officer: General Manager

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Definition and Application	1
3	Responsibilities	1
4	Service Levels	2
5	Support for Residents	2
6	Parking	2
7	No Spray Requests	3
8	Storage of Materials	3
9	Nature Strip Gardens	3
10	Garden Guidelines	3
11	Legislation and Related Documents	7

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1 Introduction

This policy provides service level guidance for nature strips on the West Coast, on responsibility for care of nature strips and a mechanism for residents to utilise for parking or for gardens. Nature strip maintenance is currently an expensive activity for the West Coast Council and our current regular maintenance of nature strips is different to most other LGA's where residents have the primary responsibility.

2 Definition and Application

2.1 Nature strips are the area of public land between a property boundary and the adjacent road. The land is set aside for a variety of purposes, providing space for:

- Footpaths
- Access in and out of vehicles
- Essential services and utility infrastructure (such as: power, sewage, water, stormwater, and telecommunications)
- Street trees
- Placement of waste and recycling bins for collection
- Streetlights, bus stops and shelters
- Extra visibility for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists at intersections and driveways.

2.2 These guidelines apply to both nature strips and roadside verges (referred herein as 'nature strip'), with a specific focus on nature strips in urban areas.

2.3 The service levels in the policy will commence 1 July 2024.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 West Coast Council has general responsibility for the management of local road reservations. It installs and maintains footpaths, signage, street trees, and other important streetscape elements within nature strips.

3.2 Council will only maintain nature strips in accordance with the service levels in section 4. Residents can maintain and mow any lawns or other vegetation (excluding street trees) within the nature strip adjacent to their property should they wish to keep it in a more maintained state.

3.3 Residents should ensure that vegetation within the nature strip adjacent to their property does not obstruct line of sight for vehicles, pedestrians, or cyclists. Other than street trees installed and managed by Council, all vegetation within the nature strip should be maintained to a maximum height of 900mm. Additionally, any foliage on a resident's property that overhangs the nature strip and footpath must be pruned to maintain a minimum clearance of 2m above the nature strip and footpath.

3.4 Residents must not do maintenance or utilise a nature strip for gardening or another purpose under this policy where it is unsafe to do so. Residents are at all times responsible for their own safety.

3.5 Residents are requested to report any obstructions, safety hazards or street tree issues on nature strips or footpaths to Council via its website or on (03) 6471 4700.

4 Service Levels

4.1 West Coast Council will not regularly maintain nature strips within town boundaries.

4.2 West Coast Council will take action to ensure that vegetation on nature strips (except trees and gardens in accordance with this policy) remain below 40cm in height during fire risk seasons.

4.3 Where West Coast Council does take this action to reduce fire risk it will contact the relevant landowner to remind them of Council's policy that they maintain the nature strip.

5 Support for Residents

5.1 If you are unable to maintain your nature strip to a reasonable standard, you may apply to West Coast Council for assistance. Written requests for assistance can be submitted to the General Manager for consideration. Please clearly outline your individual circumstances and the reason(s) why you are unable to maintain your nature strip. We will consider requests for assistance and may provide up to two mowing services per annum.

6 Parking

6.1 Residents may park on the nature strip adjacent to their property. This must only occur where it will neither impact pedestrian or driver safety, or damage infrastructure.

6.2 Where residents park on their nature strip they will be required to provide for all maintenance on that nature strip and to ensure that the nature strip is returned to its previous state after parking is no longer required.

6.3 Council has no authority to issue parking infringements for parking on nature strips but may take legal action to recover losses from damage to those nature strips.

- 6.4** You will not be permitted to:
- Drive over the road kerb to access your property or nature strip,
 - Park partly or wholly over a footpath,
 - Park within the nature strip adjacent to your neighbours.

7 No Spray Requests

- 7.1** Residents can request that there be no chemical sprays used on their nature strip. Where they make this request the address will be added to the No Spray Register. The resident will then be responsible for all maintenance on the nature strip and be required to sign an agreement indicating their understanding of that requirement.

8 Storage of Materials

- 8.1** Council will consider issuing a permit for the temporary storage of building materials, skip bins, or storage containers within the road reservation. To apply for a skip bin please contact Council.

9 Nature Strip Gardens

- 9.1** West Coast Council supports alternatives to mown grass within nature strips, provided these comply with this policy.
- 9.2** Residents are responsible for any gardens in the nature strip adjacent to their property. If the garden does not comply with these Guidelines, then Council may issue a direction to remove or make changes to your garden.
- 9.3** Your garden must not encroach onto your neighbor's nature strip. We encourage residents to talk with their neighbours before installing a garden in their nature strip.

10 Garden Guidelines

- 10.1** Small shrubs, groundcovers or grasses (under 900mm) are permitted but must be pruned away from the edge of the footpath are permitted.
- 10.2** Vegetable gardens are not recommended, and root vegetables are not permitted due to the regular digging and soil cultivation required. Edible plants under 900mm height are permitted but remember, if you grow edible plants in your nature strip people may harvest from your garden.
- 10.3** If there is no formed footpath within the nature strip adjacent to your property then a clearway of at least 1.2m is required to provide safe and convenient access for waste and recycling bins, pedestrians and postal services.
- 10.4** All costs associated with the installation and maintenance of gardens are the responsibility of residents.

- 10.5** Council is not responsible for reinstating or compensating any damage caused to a nature strip garden – this includes damage caused by animals, persons, utility service providers, or weather events.
- 10.6** Utility service providers may require access to the nature strip to install, maintain or remove their infrastructure. Clear access to any utilities and essential services must be maintained, this includes access to telecommunication pits, manholes, stormwater pipes, water meters and electricity poles or lines.
- 10.7** Utility service providers (or their contractors) are required to reinstate nature strips to a ‘normal condition’ (generally top-soil and grass seeds) after undertaking installation or maintenance works. The service authority is not obliged to reinstate alternative landscaping like-for-like.
- 10.8** Level nature strips (not subject to erosion) may contain organic mulch or fine to medium gravel (4mm-20mm particles). To suppress weed growth, coverings should be kept to a depth of 75mm and will need periodic top up and weeding. The covering must be compacted and contained. Loose material can be an environmental and safety risk and road drains empty into our streams and rivers without treatment.
- 10.9** You must initiate and complete a Dial Before You Dig (DBYD) application prior to any excavation or digging within the nature strip. Excavation deeper than 300mm will also require a Works in the Road Reservation Permit from Council. Do not dig before you have completed a DBYD, and where required receive an approved Working In Road Reservation form which is obtainable from Council’s Operations Department.
- 10.10** Council may issue a notice or direction to remove any works (including gardens) within the nature strip that do not comply with these Nature Strip Guidelines, or that present a safety hazard, or impede vehicular, pedestrian, or bicycle access.
- 10.11** The following are NOT permitted on nature strips (unless a permit is granted by Council):
- 10.11.1 Hardscape elements or structures (such as rockeries, retaining walls, paving, sculptures)
 - 10.11.2 Fencing (temporary protective fencing may be permitted with written approval from Council)
 - 10.11.3 Concrete or asphalt
 - 10.11.4 Coarse gravel or pebbles (20mm-63mm particles)
 - 10.11.5 Synthetic turf

- 10.11.6 Declared weeds
- 10.11.7 Trees or large wooded plants (other than Council planted street trees)
- 10.11.8 Prickly, spikey and poisonous plants, or plants that are common causes of allergies
- 10.11.9 Root vegetables
- 10.11.10 Irrigation systems.

10.12 Whilst not a complete list, the below table provides an indication of the types of native species that may be planted in nature strips.

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Allocasuarina monilifera</i> 'Necklace Sheoak or Little Sheoak'	Necklace Sheoak (prostrate form)
<i>Aotus ericoides</i>	Golden Pea
<i>Astroloma humifusum</i>	Native Cranberry
<i>Austrodanthonia caespitosa</i>	Wallaby Grass
<i>Bauera rubioides</i>	Wiry Bauera (prostrate Form)
<i>Bossiaea cinerea</i>	Showy Bossiaea
<i>Brachyscome multifida</i> 'Break O Day'	Cut-Leaf Daisy
<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>	Bulbine Lily
<i>Callistemon citrinus</i> 'White Anzac'	Lemon Bottlebrush (prostrate form)
<i>Carpobrotus rossii</i>	Pigface
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Yellow Buttons
<i>Coronidium scorpioides</i>	Creeping Everlasting
<i>Correa backhouseana</i> var. Velvet Correa	Velvet Correa (prostrate form)
<i>Correa reflexa</i>	(semi-prostrate form)
<i>Craspedia glauca</i>	Billy Buttons
<i>Deyeuxia monticola</i>	Bent Grass

Botanical Name	Common Name
Dianella brevicaulis	Coastal Flax-lily
Dianella revoluta	Blue Flax-lily
Dianella tasmanica	Tasman Flax-lily
Dichondra repens	Kidney Weed
Diplarrena moraea	Butterfly Flag, White Iris
Epacris impressa	Common Heath (prune to max. allowable height)
Euryomyrtus ramosissima, prev. Baeckea ramosissima	Rosy Baeckea
Ficinia nodosa	Knobby Club Rush
Goodenia ovata	Hop Goodenia (prune to max. allowable height)
Hibbertia procumbens	Spreading Guinea-flower
Hibbertia riparia	Erect Guinea-flower
Kennedia prostrata	Running Postman
Leptospermum lanigerum 'Petal Point Spread'	Woolly Tea-tree (prostrate form)
Leptospermum scoparium 'Hobart Spread'	Common Tea-tree (prostrate form)
Lissanthe strigosa	Peach Heath
Lomandra nana	Dwarf Mat-rush
Melaleuca gibbosa 'Slender Honey-myrtle'	(Compact form, prune to max. allowable height)
Melaleuca squarrosa 'Coastal Capet'	Scented Paperbark (prostrate form)
Microlaena stipoides	Weeping Grass
Ozothamnus obcordatus 'Grey Everlasting'	Grey Everlasting
Patersonia occidentalis	Long Purple Flag
Pelargonium australe	Native Storksbill, Wild Geranium
Pimelea nivea	Bushmans Bootlace (prune to max. allowable height)

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Poa labillardieri</i>	Silver Tussock-grass, Silver Tussock-grass
<i>Poa poiformis</i>	Coastal Tussock-grass
<i>Poa rodwayi</i>	Velvet Tussock-grass
<i>Poa sieberiana</i> var. <i>sieberiana</i>	Grey Tussock-grass
<i>Pultenaea pedunculata</i>	Matted Bush-pea
<i>Rhodanthe anthemoides</i>	Chamomile Sunray
<i>Stylidium graminifolium</i>	Grass Trigger Plant
<i>Styphelia adscendens</i>	Golden Heath
<i>Themeda triandra</i> , prev. <i>Themeda australis</i>	Kangaroo Grass (maintain to max. allowable height)

11 Legislation and Related Documents

Nil.