



# Beautification of Nature Strips Policy - 2022

Date of Adoption: July 2022

Date of next review: July 2026

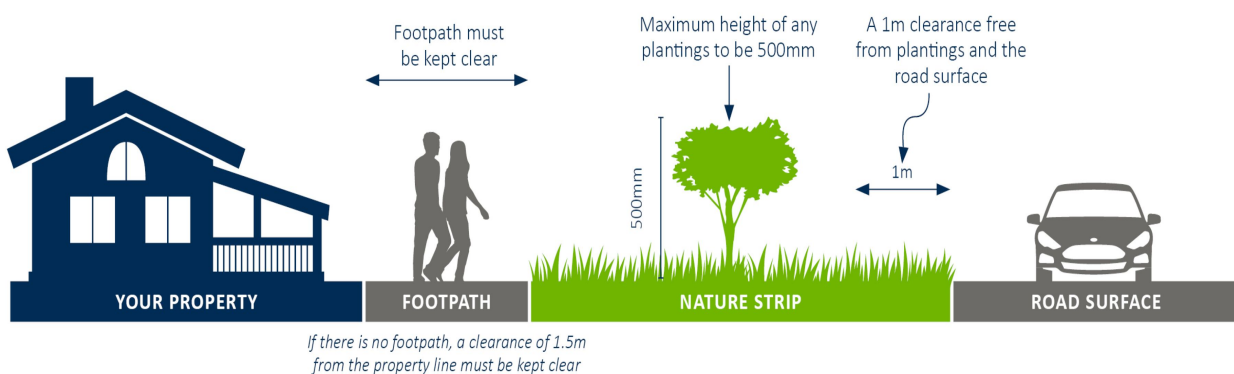
Responsible Officer: Manager Open Space

## PURPOSE

This Policy is to provide residents clear direction on what modifications can be applied to the nature strip adjacent to their property. All alterations to nature strips must adhere to the guidance provided in this document.

## WHAT IS A NATURE STRIP?

A nature strip is an area of public land between the property boundary and the back of kerb, excluding any public pavement. In most cases a nature strip is grassed, however, can be modified by an alternative landscape treatment in accordance with this Policy.



## POLICY SCOPE


This Policy must be read in conjunction with the requirements applying to a particular use or activity in Wyndham City's Community Amenity Local Law. A failure to comply with these requirements may be an offence and could incur a penalty under the Local Law.

*Note: This Policy does not apply to nature strips which incorporate the principles of water sensitive urban design such as swales or rain gardens which are required to be maintained in accordance with the design intent. No additional planting or works may be undertaken in these areas.*

## BENEFITS

Nature strips are an integral part of Wyndham's urban environment because they:

- accommodate power poles, light poles and a range of underground services such as water and gas supply pipes, storm water, sewage, telephone and electrical cables;
- allow for pedestrian access along the street where there is no footpath;
- provide a flat space for the kerbside collection and emptying of rubbish and recycling bins;
- allow vehicles to park safely at the kerbside and for door opening space between the road and footpath;
- provide for pedestrian, pram, pusher and wheelchair traffic between the road and footpath;

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- allow for visibility of and for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians at intersections, bends in the road and near driveways;
  - provide space for street tree planting;
  - can absorb rainwater and reduce storm water runoff; and
  - can visually soften the effect of hard streetscape elements such as roads, footpaths, driveways, fences and buildings.

## **COUNCIL MAINTENANCE OF NATURE STRIPS**

It is the responsibility of the resident/property owner to maintain their nature strip. Wyndham City does not carry out maintenance of nature strips, except for street trees which are cared for and maintained by Council.

## **HOW TO MAINTAIN NATURE STRIPS**

Nature strips must be kept in a well maintained and safe condition by the resident at all times by:

- ensuring that plants are pruned so that they do not protrude onto pathways, driveways or over the kerb;
- keeping plants, including lawn (other than street trees, which are maintained by Council) maintained to a height of no more than 500mm at all times; and
- keeping the nature strip free of weeds and rubbish, tripping hazards or any protruding objects.

## **PLANTING ON NATURE STRIPS**

Residents can plant nature strips adjacent to their property with a range of ground cover plants and low growing shrubs.

Wyndham City will accept plantings on a nature strip if they adhere to the following conditions:

- Provide at least 1 metre clearance from the back of kerb to allow for opening of car doors;
- Ensure there is suitable space provided for the location and emptying of rubbish and recycling bins;
- Allow for safe and suitable access to the footpath for people exiting a parked car;
- Provide a minimum of 1.5m clearance from the property line to allow access for pedestrians and Australia Post

However, Council will **not** permit the use of plants that are:

- Considered woody, prickly or spiky plants; or
- shrubs which grow to more than 500mm in height and/or obscure a driver's line of sight; or
- species considered to be environmental weeds within Wyndham.

## **ALTERNATIVE MODIFICATIONS**

The following modifications will be permitted:

- Fine gravel mulches to a depth of 75mm such as compacted lilydale toppings, or tuscan toppings.
- Pine bark 6mm to 15mm in size, or pinewood or hardwood chips 12mm to 25mm in size, to

a depth of 75mm and natural in colour (except where a nature strip is also used as a bus stop).

- Stepping stones with a non-slip surface. All paving levels must be flush with the finished level of adjoining surfaces at the time of construction or installation and maintained at that level at all times.

Please note that where a fine gravel or wood chip mulch is used:

- it is not allowed onto the footpath, driveways or in the kerb and channel;
- the level of the mulch must not extend above the level of the footpath or kerb; and
- the mulch on the nature strip must be maintained in a reasonably level and kept in a weed free condition.

## **SAFETY**

To ensure the safety of pedestrians and vehicles in the immediate area, the following items are not permitted on the Nature Strip:


- Shredded plant products such as wood chips, bark, pea straw or similar, other than that specified in the Alternative Modifications section of this policy;
- Rocks or pebbles greater than 7mm diameter;
- Bluestone pitchers, railway sleepers or retaining walls;
- Scoria;
- Artificial turf;
- Irrigation systems;
- Letterboxes,
- Temporary or permanent electrical wiring, including tree lights; or
- Metal stakes or star pickets.
- Hard paving such as concrete or asphalt (unless otherwise agreed in writing with Council)
- Materials that could create a tripping hazard.
- Alterations to service pits, fire hydrants, fire plugs, fire plug indicators or any other council asset.

The following must also be taken into consideration:

- During landscaping works, the resident or their contractor is responsible for erecting high visibility wooden stake safety fencing (maximum height for wooden stakes above ground is 500mm), signage and other public protection, which must not interfere with the footpath or be a hazard in itself.
- Where possible, all excavation and cultivation must be by hand and the resident or contractor must call Dial before you Dig (ph: 1100) to establish location of any underground services within the nature strip.
- The resident or their contractor is responsible for repairing any damages to Wyndham City assets caused by landscape works.
- Any modifications to nature strips must not cover or interfere with any Fire Hydrant or their marker post, or other services access pits within the nature strip.

## **PLANTER BOXES ON NATURE STRIPS**

Only previously approved planter boxes are permitted to be placed on the nature strip and can be removed by Council if not well maintained.



Non-permitted planter boxes will be required to be removed and the nature strip rectified at the resident/property owner's cost.

If a resident requires a street tree in the nature strip, a request can be made to Wyndham City's Tree Planting Unit Phone: 1300 023 411

## **PARKING**

Parking on nature strips is prohibited under the Victorian Road Safety Road Rules 2017. Any breaches of this may result in infringement notices issued.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Failure to adhere to some requirements of this Policy may also be a breach of Council's *Community Amenity Local Law*. Where an Authorised Officer determines that there is a breach of the Local Law, a Notice to Comply may be issued requiring that the breach to be rectified within fourteen days. If the works required on the Notice to Comply have not been completed within the stated timeframe, further enforcement action may be taken.

If modifications are made to the nature strip outside of those allowed in this Policy, or if an Authorised Officer considers that the state of the nature strip creates an imminent risk to users of the nature strip, Council will take immediate action to remove the landscaping and reinstate and/or maintain the nature strip to a safe condition.

The cost of the maintenance and reinstatement may be charged to the resident who completed the landscaping works.

## **UTILITIES AND MAINTENANCE WORK**

Utility companies that supply water, gas, electricity and telecommunications may from time to time require access to the nature strip to conduct maintenance work. The utility companies are required to reinstate the nature strip following maintenance work with soil and grass seed, but they are not required to reinstate residential nature strips that have been modified and landscaped other than with grass.

## **KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION**

[Community Amenity Local Law 2015](#)

[Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines](#)

[Caring For Your New Nature Strip Tree Guide](#)

[Building a Crossover in Wyndham](#)

[Application form for Consent to work within a Wyndham City Council Road Reserve](#)