

# Vegetation and Tree Protection

### What is it?

Trees and vegetation are an important component of Bayside's character as they define the natural setting of streets and houses on lots, and significantly improve amenity both in the public and private realm.

Urban and natural environments foster biodiversity and the urban forest is important in maintaining biodiversity and providing for a healthy ecosystem into the future, particularly as urban environments develop more intensely.

### Why is it important?

Trees help enhance the Bayside's liveability and provide many environmental, economic and social benefits. Trees help shade our suburbs and reduce stormwater loads and air pollution, provide oxygen, store and sequester carbon, provide biodiversity corridors and habitat for animals and wellbeing benefits for humans.

Council has a strong policy framework which seeks to protect vegetation and improve landscape outcomes across the municipality in response to the high value that our community places on trees and vegetation.

### What are the challenges?

The community has expressed concern about the incremental and cumulative impact of tree and vegetation loss from both low-scale development and applications to remove trees generally. There is concern that this trend will continue and have significant impacts on neighbourhood character, amenity and biodiversity.

The role that trees and vegetation play in the built environment has become increasingly important and recognised as development continues to increase the density of built form resulting in the loss of trees and vegetation, accompanied by issues (such as storm water run-off) associated with increased site coverage. There is also a broader issue associated with tree and vegetation loss across the municipality as the effects of climate change are starting to emerge and the Urban Heat Island effect is felt with more intensity than in the past.

Although Bayside enjoys a high level of tree and vegetation cover across the municipality, there is a need to monitor tree coverage and ensure that this is maintained and enhanced into the future.



**To read the Housing Strategy Review or to have your say please go to:**

**[bayside.vic.gov.au/HaveYourSay](https://bayside.vic.gov.au/HaveYourSay)**



### What are we proposing to do about it?

Update the actions in the Housing Strategy in relation to protecting and enhancing vegetation in Bayside to:

- Commence an update / review of the Neighbourhood Character Policy;
- Undertake an "Urban Forest Strategy" to identify issues and opportunities to enhance Bayside's tree canopy and vegetation cover;
- Review existing local laws and the criteria used to identify trees that require a permit for removal;
- Investigate the option of introducing a bond scheme that seeks the retention of trees in the public (and potentially private) realm;
- Investigate options to incentivise tree retention and educate the community (particularly younger generations) about the benefits of protecting trees, including through publication and information on the Council website.