



HUME CITY COUNCIL
**STREET AND RESERVE
TREE POLICY 2019**
Addendum

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction:	3
2	Summary of Operational Procedures:	3
3	Operational procedure Tree Root Management:	4
3.1	General Tree Root Issues	4
3.2	Council adopts three broad strategies to reduce infrastructure damage	4
3.3	Storm and Sewer Drainage Responsibilities	5
3.4	Tree Roots and Blocked Drains	6
4	Operational procedure SOLAR ACCESS:	8
5	Operational procedure Risk Management:	11
6	Operational procedure Development Tree Removal :	12
7	Internal Review Procedure for Tree Related Disputes:	16
7.1	How to request an internal review of a tree management decision?	16
7.2	What happens after I submit an application for review?	16
7.3	What happens if your application for review is successful?	17
7.4	What happens if your application for review is unsuccessful?	17
7.5	What role do the Mayor and Councillors play in the review process?	17

Hume City Council – Tree Management

<p>Hume City Council 1079 Pascoe Vale Road Broadmeadows VIC 3047</p>	<p>Document: Street and Reserve Tree Policy 2019 Addendum</p>
<p>PO Box 119 Dallas VIC 3047</p> <p>Telephone: (03) 9205 2200 Fax: (03) 9309 0109 Email: contact.us@hume.vic.gov.au Website: www.hume.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>Synopsis:</p> <p>This addendum has been prepared to provide guidance on aspects of tree management that have changed or were outside the original scope of the 2004 policy.</p> <p>Council's approach to the management of the City's trees and maintain compliance with legislative requirements relating to tree management.</p>

1 INTRODUCTION:

The Street and Reserve Tree Policy 2019 is the main guiding document in the administration and management of the City's trees. However the evolution in our city overtime requires that Council provide guidance on changes in legislation, Australian Standards, industry best practice tree management techniques and new and emerging challenges.

Operational plans are a tool by which Council can update, strengthen or provide policy guidance to planning and operational decision making.

It is intended that the operational plans in this addendum be read in conjunction with the current Street and Reserve Tree Policy 2019. However, supersede the policy where updates and new additions have been provided.

2 SUMMARY OF OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES:

General Tree Root Issues

Solar Access

Tree Risk Management

Development Tree Removal Requests

Tree Related Disputes Internal Review Procedure

3 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE TREE ROOT MANAGEMENT:

3.1 General Tree Root Issues

- a) Tree roots are opportunistic and grow wherever the environmental conditions permit. Roots may exploit infrastructure weaknesses and failures, such as cracks and joins in poorly maintained pipes, or poorly constructed buildings. They are rarely the primary cause of the issue and as such it is not possible to manage the potential risk of these interactions, without recognising the part infrastructure design, construction and maintenance plays.
- b) Council employs preventative and remedial strategies to manage tree root issues aimed at preventing, reducing and correcting infrastructure damage.
- c) Too often a very simplistic view is taken to suspected tree root issues i.e. often the mere presence of a tree or roots in the vicinity leads to the assumption that they are causing the issue and other obvious explanations (or contributing factors) are overlooked.
- d) In most cases, the removal of the tree will not resolve the problem, and the main contributing factors may not be rectified which were the cause of the infrastructure damage. If the tree were to be removed, there would be a loss of amenity and a substantial cost to remove and establish another tree in that location.
- e) Often the presence of tree roots is a symptom of underlying infrastructure failure not the cause of it. Example: Tree roots found blocking a pipe, if a pipe is well constructed and maintained tree roots are unlikely to enter the pipe causing the blockage in the first instance.
- f) For this reason, tree removal should not be the first response nor will it provide an enduring solution to the problem.
- g) Tree root treatment works are required on occasions to manage public safety, contain tree root growth, infrastructure repairs or prevent damage to property, roads and pavements. However, these works should be undertaken in consultation with Council's Arborists to ensure the health, stability, and longevity of the tree/s are maintained.
- h) In order to maintain documentation on roots. Council has adopted the MAV Insurance Guidance Document - Tree Root Risk Assessment Tool December 2014. This process assists in the evaluation and investigation of claims of infrastructure damage caused by tree roots. Though this tool is used to assist in evaluating claims, the onus of proof that the reported damage is directly linked to the tree rests with the person/persons making the claim.

3.2 Council adopts three broad strategies to reduce infrastructure damage

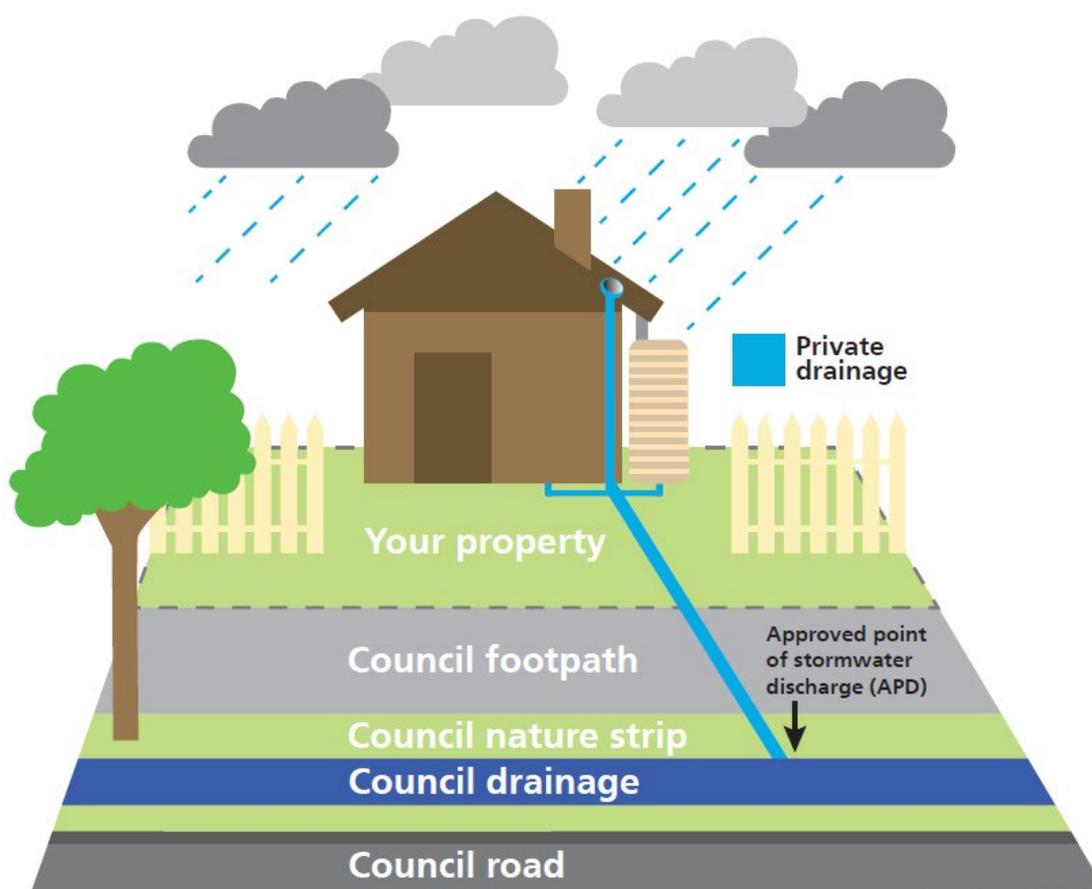
- 1) Tree based approach considering species selection and root pruning. The first being integral and the latter being potentially problematic to the tree and should be used with caution (using industry best practice and in conjunction with Arboricultural advice).

- 2) Infrastructure-based strategies; consider design and engineering solutions such as increasing the size of planting sites and strengthened paving or footing systems.
- 3) Root-zone based strategies; strategies that consider redirecting root growth (root barriers) or modify soil environments.

3.3 Storm and Sewer Drainage Responsibilities

- a) The property owner is responsible for the storm water pipes and connections within the private property, to the legal point of discharge, usually the public main drain. This includes the section of storm water pipe underneath the foot path and nature strip. A diagram outlining Council's and the resident's responsibilities are shown in Figure 1 below.
- b) As these pipes are owned by the property owner, the owner is therefore also responsible for the maintenance and/or renewal of that asset as required.

Figure 1 *Stormwater Drainage Maintenance Responsibilities*



3.4 Tree Roots and Blocked Drains

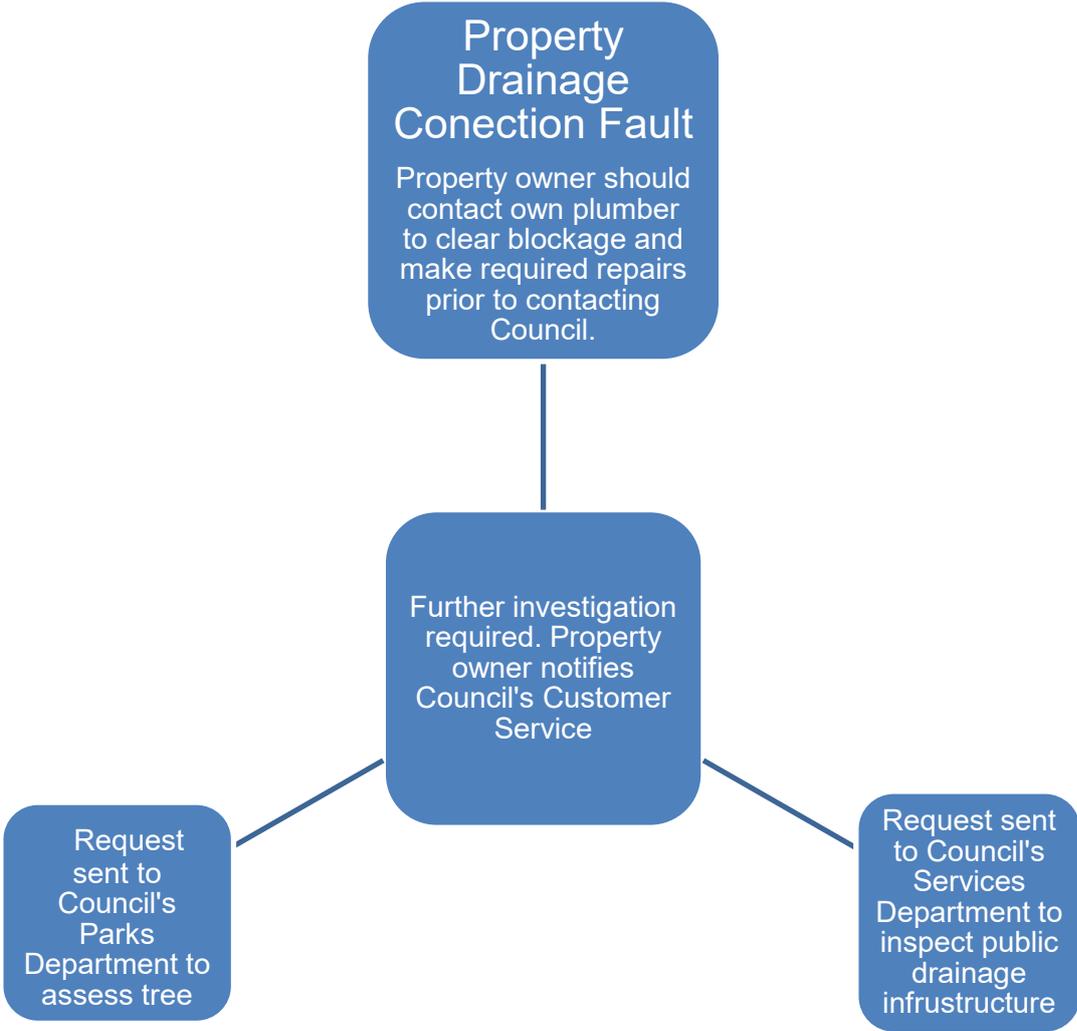
- a) Properly constructed and maintained pipes are designed to withstand normal tree root and traffic loadings. However as pipes approach the end of their useful life, their structural condition is likely to decrease and be more susceptible to root infiltration through poor joins, gaps and holes. In this case it is not the roots that have caused the issue but rather the poor condition of the pipes, which have provided the opportunity the roots to enter the service.
- b) However, once damage has occurred and tree roots gain entry, blockages are inevitable as they will quickly proliferate in the moist environment and can exacerbate the extent of the damage. Removal of the tree is not a solution as the underlying pipe issue will result in the issue reoccurring unless appropriate repairs are undertaken.
- c) The tree roots can be removed from the pipe by a plumber, which should not be detrimental to the health and condition of the tree. Council should be advised if roots of the Council tree are to be damaged/removed, other than those within the pipe. The resident may require a 'Consent to work within a Hume City Council Road Reserve' permit. This can be obtained via the following link https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Building_Planning/Building_Renovations_Extensions/Driveways_amp_Naturestrips. A Council Arborist can assess and determine the best course of action in relation to root pruning if required.
- d) When a blockage occurs and the resident's plumber has identified that the blockage is beyond the domestic connection, Council will undertake an inspection of Council's drainage infrastructure and undertake the required works.
- e) In some instances, where mechanical displacement to pipes is proven by the resident to have been caused by a large tree root and pipe failure has occurred the resident maybe eligible to claim costs of repair.

An example of this, is when a root is above or below the pipe and due to the increase in the root's diameter over time, it can exert pressure on the pipe resulting in damage or displacement. This scenario is uncommon.

Figure 2 shows the blocked drainage procedure to be followed.

Figure 2 - Blocked Drainage Procedure

Blocked Drainage Procedure

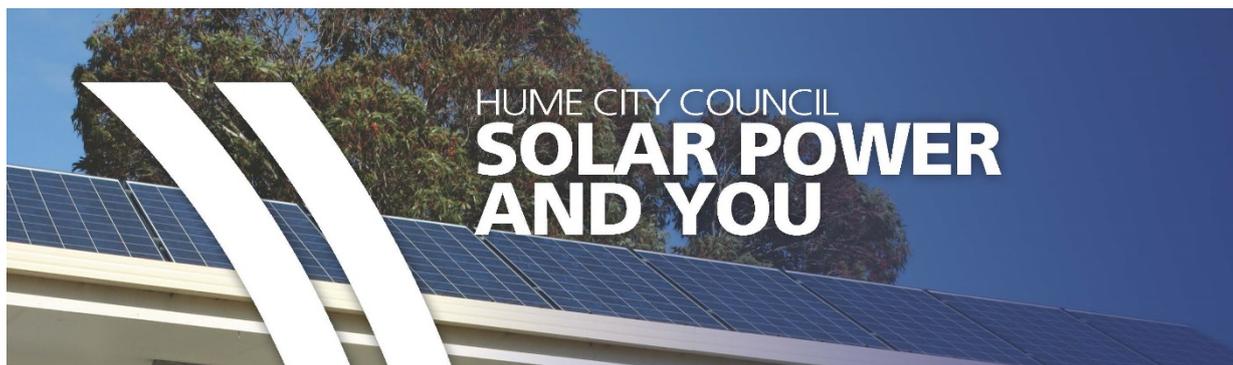


4 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE SOLAR ACCESS:

- a) Though Council is a strong advocate for renewable energy, it does not support the removal or pruning of existing trees to facilitate solar power or hot water generation. The impact of mature and establishing trees should be considered and factored into the feasibility assessment for the installation of solar panels by potential owners of solar panels prior to their installation.
- b) Consideration of the shading impact on existing solar power and hot water generation installations and balanced against loss of community benefit will be taken into account when planting new trees.

Refer to Figure 3 Solar Panel Information Fact Sheet, in particular the 'Trees and Shading' section

Figure 3 - Solar Panel Information Fact Sheet



Solar Power and the benefits

With more and more Australian households 'going solar', now is a good time to consider joining them. Australia is the sunniest country on earth so it's smart to harness the sun's energy as much as we can.

Solar PV systems are affordable and reliable. As well as significantly reducing your household's environmental impact, they allow you to save money on your energy bills. Generating your own electricity and being more self-sustainable can also offer valuable peace of mind.

Some things to consider when thinking about solar PV systems...

Energy efficiency first

Taking energy efficiency actions around your home will reduce your energy bills and reduce the size of the solar PV system that you'll need. Council provides information on energy efficiency actions you can do at XXX.

Grid Connection

Grid-connected solar PV systems are currently the most practical and affordable option. Off-grid battery systems usually only occur in remote areas due to the higher cost, regular maintenance requirements and environmental issues of disposing of the batteries. A grid-connected system means that if your solar PV system is producing more electricity than you need it will be exported to the grid, if you produce less electricity than you need electricity will be imported. If there is a power outage in your street, your home will also be without power.

Trees and shading

If there is significant shading on your roof, installing a solar PV system may not be feasible for your property. Keep in mind that it is illegal to remove, prune or damage trees in public areas including nature strips, and penalties do apply. Trees provide many environmental benefits and shade from trees to roofs and/or windows can reduce indoor temperatures by 6–12°C in summer. This reduces the amount of energy needed to cool your property and can save you more energy than solar panels generate!

Government support

- An upfront discount is available for solar PV and solar hot water systems under an Australian Government scheme by generating Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs). Installers factor this upfront discount into their quotes.
- Feed-in tariffs refer to the amount you receive for solar electricity exported to the grid. They differ by state/territory. In Victoria, the standard feed-in tariff is currently 8c/kWh.



Your patterns of electricity use

Installing solar PV systems provide most financial benefit to households that use electricity during the day. This is because the solar feed-in tariff currently offered in Victoria (8c/kWh) is significantly less than the cost of purchasing electricity from your retailer (around 25c/kWh) – so it is better to create solar electricity when you need to use it the most and minimise/ avoid exporting power to the grid. Similarly, once solar panels are installed it is best to shift as much electricity usage as possible (e.g. washing machines, dish washers, battery charging, air-conditioning if required) to during the day.

PV system orientation

Solar panels orientated north will maximise the amount of solar electricity that your panels generate. Solar PV panels should ideally be in full sun from at least 9am to 3pm. Solar panels orientated north-west could also be beneficial for some households (particularly those not at home during the middle of the day) to allow solar electricity to be generated and used in the afternoon/ early evening.

PV system size

Solar companies can help you to determine what size solar PV system you need. Ideally, your solar panel system should be sized to match the solar electricity generated by the panels to your average household electricity use during the day. In general terms, a 1kW system in Melbourne averages over the year around 4kWh production per day. You can check your electricity bill to find out how much your household uses on average per day. Solar PV system size is also dependent on how much you are prepared to spend, the portion of your electricity use that you would like to cover and the amount of unshaded roof space available.

Your electricity retailer and distributor

It's important to contact your electricity retailer and distributor before commencing your solar PV installation. The Clean Energy Council's Consumer guide to buying household solar panels (photovoltaic panels) contains a comprehensive list of questions to ask your electricity retailer and distributor (see page 22), including querying any changes to your peak/ off peak electricity rates, any required smart meter upgrades and obtaining approval for grid connection. You will need a smart meter for energy exported from the grid to be accredited to your electricity account. The electricity distributor in the Hume area is Jemena. Jemena provides a free online Community Outlook portal to allow households to track their daily electricity use and solar generation.

Shop around

As with any major purchase, it is important to get a few quotes before selecting a solar provider as there is a range in quality of solar PV panels, inverters and installers. Your provider must be accredited with the Clean Energy Council to access government discounts and support. The Clean Energy Council's Consumer guide to buying household solar panels (photovoltaic panels) contains a comprehensive list of questions to ask your solar provider/ installer (see page 19).

Helpful resources and further information:

- Clean Energy Council's Consumer guide to buying household solar panels (photovoltaic panels) PDF
- Find accredited solar installers near you:
www.solaraccreditation.com.au/consumers/find-an-installer.html
- Jemena's Community Outlook portal:
<http://jemena.com.au/customer/electricity/smart-meters/portal/>



5 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE RISK MANAGEMENT:

- a) Embedded in all Council risk management procedures is the Risk Management approach outlined in Council's 'Risk Management Policy 2014' (RM Policy) which accords with best practice guidelines and the Risk Management Standard – AS/NZS ISO 31000: 2009.
- b) Council's Risk Management Systems aims to identify, analyse and evaluate risks across all areas of council's operations and develop appropriate measures to treat and manage the risk to minimise losses and maximise the opportunities of Council. Council seeks to manage the financial resources and operations under its control in a prudent, risk averse manner.
- c) Tree management processes are no different, Council aims to mitigate risk to public safety from potentially hazardous trees through:
 - Tree evaluation and arboricultural management processes;
 - The systematic allocation of tree management resources through targeted maintenance programs, developed from proactive tree assessments, reactive tree inspections requested by customer and internal requests, which prioritise works from highest to lowest risk;
 - Priority is given to situations and locations with a high probability of tree failure and high potential for damage or injury;
 - Rigorous selection, placement and planting of trees to minimise long-term risk;
 - Employing qualified and experienced arboricultural staff and contractors that have sound knowledge of tree physiology and tree failure patterns;
 - Ongoing maintenance and continuous improvement of Council's existing tree management database;
 - The utilization of CFA fire hazard mapping to inform line clearance compliance.

6 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT TREE REMOVAL :

In the event that a request/application is made for the removal of a Council owned or managed tree to enable development such as but not limited to the widening or creation of new crossovers, enable site development, new infrastructure, new electric/communication lines installation etc, Council will employ the following options:

- 1) **First option:** A Visual Tree Assessment undertaken by Council Officers on the subject tree(s) and assess the tree(s) against the Tree Removal Criteria (Figure 4) and Section 2.3 'Tree Removal' in the Street and Reserve Tree Policy (2019)
- 2) **Second option:** avoid any impact on tree/s; (As per Australian Standard 4970 – 2009 Protection of Trees on Development Sites.)
- 3) **Third option:** if impact cannot be avoided the next step is to minimise impacts on tree/s by employing engineering or arboricultural maintenance solutions;
- 4) **Fourth option:** Finally if all other alternatives have been exhausted and a tree will be significantly compromised or requires removal, it will need to be offset with by appropriate financial compensation to enable replacement tree/s to be planted. The number and size of trees to be planted to offset the loss will be determined by the size and significance of the tree being removed as determined by Council's Tree Removal and Replacement Fees. This calculation is outlined in Figure 5 Hume City Council Tree Removal and Replacement Fees Matrix.

Figure 4 - Hume City Council Tree Removal Criteria

This tree removal criteria has been updated from the Street and Reserve Tree Policy 2004 – Appendix 4

Tree removal, will be approved if the tree meets one or more of the criteria set out below. The tree removal criterion is used to prevent indiscriminate removal. Safety is the priority, however, aesthetic and ecological factors, including wildlife habitat will be considered when making all tree management and removal decisions.

The tree or tree group needs to be inspected and assessed for the above criteria by a qualified arborist. Tree health (vigour), structure, Useful Life Expectancy (ULE), and hazard potential must be assessed.

Trees that are to be handed over to Council from developers must have a ULE of greater than ten years otherwise the trees should be removed prior to hand over to Council management. The exception is in areas of high conservation where the trees contribute to the habitat values of a site. In these cases, public safety will be addressed through the use of appropriate pruning works, advisory signage and design of open spaces to discourage / prevent public access.

Council acknowledges that some residents have concerns with the leaf litter, fruit, bark or other debris that a tree may shed over the seasons. However, tree removals will not be authorised based on this reason alone.

Trees and groups of trees may be removed only when one or more of the following criteria are met.

- That is dead or close to death. Exceptions considered where tree or tree group is located in indigenous vegetation conservation sites.
- Infected with a disease where the recommended control is not applicable and removal is the recommended practice to prevent transmission.
- Poses a severe safety hazard that cannot be corrected by pruning, transplanting or other treatments.
- Severely interferes with a neighbouring tree or tree group to the extent that neither tree can develop to its full potential. The more desirable tree will be preserved.
- The aesthetic values are so low or negative that the site is visually enhanced by the tree removal.
- Work improvements or infrastructure repair or maintenance required to be made around the tree or tree group will kill or render the tree a hazard or significantly impact on the trees condition and useful life expectancy.
- The tree is currently or has future potential to substantially contribute to damages or nuisance to public or private property and no other viable means are available to mitigate the situation.
- The tree or group of trees is included in the street tree rejuvenation program as identified by Council.

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Figure 5 - Hume City Council Tree Removal and Replacement Fees Matrix

Note: All prices are baselined on 2015 contractor rates and will be subjected to annual CPI increases and do not include GST

Tree and Stump Removal Cost (TSRC)

	Task	2019/2020 Cost
		(Note: Price will increase with CPI)
(a)	Tree and Stump Removal – Trees less than 300mm DBH*	\$227.06
(b)	Tree and Stump Removal – Trees greater than 301mm to 600mm DBH	\$817.00
(c)	Tree and Stump Removal – Trees greater than 601mm to 1000mm DBH	\$1465.33
(d)	Tree and Stump Removal – Trees greater than 1001mm DBH	Contractor to quote task

Tree Replacement and Establishment Cost (TREC)

(e)	Tree Replacement Cost	\$507.64
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Note: Tree replacement includes the cost of tree purchase, planting and three years establishment maintenance. Replacement trees may not be planted in the exact location as the tree/s were removed if it is unsuitable but in a more suitable location nearby.

* DBH = Diameter at breast height (Diameter of the trunk at 1.3m above ground level)

Tree Removal Modifier

Note: The tree removal modifier is applied to counteract the impact of large tree loss. Council adds additional replacement trees to the cost of removing a larger tree as per table below.

(a)	Trees less than 300mm DBH	1
(b)	Trees greater than 300mm to 600mm DBH	2
(c)	Trees greater than 600mm to 1000mm DBH	4
(d)	Trees greater than 1000mm DBH	8

Figure 5 - Hume City Council Tree Removal and Replacement Fees Matrix (continued)

Cost Calculation = Tree & Stump Removal Cost (TSRC) + (Tree Replacement and Establishment Cost (TREC) x Tree Removal Modifier (TRM))

Example: 1 x <300mm DBH and 1 x 550mm DBH Trees are removed

Cost = (TSRC=(\$227.06+\$817.00)) + (TRP=(\$507.64 x (1 + 2))

Cost = (TSRC) \$1044.06 + (TRP) \$1522.92 = Cost

Total Cost = \$2566.98 + GST

Total Cost Inc GST = \$2823.68

7 INTERNAL REVIEW PROCEDURE FOR TREE RELATED DISPUTES:

In addition to Council's robust street and reserve tree auditing program, Council welcomes residents to make customer service request for tree inspections when they have specific safety and service related concerns.

These Customer Service Requests will be lodged in Council's Customers Service System and attended to by Council's qualified and experienced Tree Inspection Officers.

Tree assessments are undertaken in accordance with Hume City Council's Street and Reserve Tree Policy (Electric Line Clearance) Regulation 2015 and (Bushfire Mitigation) Regulation 2013 with guidance from the AS 4372-2007 Pruning of amenity trees.

However Council acknowledges that from time to time residents are not always satisfied with the outcome of these inspections and wish to raise further concerns or request a review of the inspection outcome.

To facilitate this process Council has an Internal Tree Assessment Review Procedure.

7.1 How to request an internal review of a tree management decision?

Submit an application for internal review online. You may upload up to three images or documents in support of your request.

Applications for internal review can also be submitted via:

- Email: contactus@hume.vic.gov.au
- Mail: PO BOX 119, Dallas VIC 3047
- Fax: 03 9309 0109

Requests must:

- be in writing
- include the address and description of the tree, customer service number if known.
- include a return postal address
- state the grounds for review and include any supporting documentation
- note which section of the Street and Reserve Policy you are contesting against.
- be accompanied by a claims request form if relating to a potential insurance claim.

The Street and Reserve Tree Policy can be found at:

www.hume.vic.gov.au/streettrees

7.2 What happens after I submit an application for review?

When a valid application for review is received by Hume City Councils Parks Department an assessment of the tree and previous inspections will be undertaken

Hume City Council – Tree Management

which may take up to 60 days and you will be notified of the outcome in writing to the postal address provided within the appeal.

An internal review of the review request will be undertaken by an independent internal expert and if it is related to an insurance matter it will be referred to Hume City Council's Governance Department for review, if not it will be continue to be reviewed by Hume City Parks Department.

To check the progress of an appeal, please call Hume City Council on 9205 2000. Please do not send an email to check the progress of an existing review.

7.3 What happens if your application for review is successful?

If your request for review is successful and the decision is changed, you will receive written notification and Hume City Parks Department will program the required remedial works.

7.4 What happens if your application for review is unsuccessful?

If your appeal is not successful and the original assessment is upheld, you will receive written notification.

You are entitled to make only one application for review and the Hume City Council will not consider any further correspondence regarding this matter. However this does not preclude you making further customer service request for this or other trees in the future should the tree's condition change or for works of a different nature.

Following the review if you are still not satisfied with the decision you have the right to make a complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman.

The contact details for the Ombudsman are:

Ombudsman Victoria

Level 1 North Tower
459 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone 03 9613 6222
Fax 03 9614 0246
www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

7.5 What role do the Mayor and Councillors play in the review process?

The Mayor and Councillors role and responsibility is for the creation of policy and strategic direction that guides effective tree management across the municipality not to get involved in operational matters.

The Hume City Council is committed to ensuring that the correct legal process is followed and; to ensure an independent and fair administration of the system, the Mayor and Councillors will not intervene in specific tree management matters as it would be inappropriate and contrary to good governance.