

BUSHLAND CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

POLICY

POL-EVM 02

Objective:

The City of Mandurah (the 'City') recognises the value of effectively managing local bushland reserves for biodiversity and conservation outcomes for our community.

This Policy provides a broad direction for which the City will ensure bushland under the responsibility of the City is managed in a way that complies with federal and state environmental legislation and regulations; and enhances conservation and biodiversity outcomes beyond that which are achieved through existing planning and development processes.

Statement:

The scope of this policy is for bushland under the management control of the City and is defined as:

Land that contains significant coverage of remnant native vegetation. Significant coverage meaning vegetation that would classify as a minimum of good under the Keighery vegetation condition scale; remnant meaning of a size large enough that could be reasonably considered to retain environmental values into the future; and native vegetation meaning vegetation communities of local provenance that have not been replanted or directly seeded within the previous 10 years.

The City aims to implement the following measures to achieve the objectives of this policy:

1. Identification and Assessment of Local Bushland

The City will identify and prioritise areas of bushland for management and protection through the creation and revision of a Biodiversity strategy. The biodiversity strategy will be used to help guide decision making processes around the placement of future infrastructure including community facilities, recreation grounds and landscaping, to avoid negative impacts on environmental values.

2. Management of Council Controlled Bushland

The City is frequently required to undertake clearing of native vegetation on its managed land for the provision of infrastructure as well as mitigation of bushfire risk. These actions may trigger requirements for approvals under State and Commonwealth legislation.

The City acknowledges that it is an offence to clear native vegetation without the authority of a permit from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation or an exemption. It also understands that actions that have, or are likely to have, a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance require approval from the Australian Government Minister for the Environment (the Minister).

In both cases there may be times where environmental offsets are also required as a part of the approvals process.

In meeting the legislative requirements outlined above, the City will create and regularly revise the *Environmental Planning Strategy – Clearing Permits and Environmental Offsets* focusing on potential future projects where there is a high likelihood of the City requiring a clearing approval and where a requirement to provide environmental offsets is likely. The strategy will seek to plan for all of the City's clearing approval and offset requirements and ensure that anticipated offsets are reserved for projects planned to commence in the longer term.

The City and the State do not support private access and use of crown reserves or private encroachments onto crown reserves. Where historical encroachments exist, the City will put in place appropriate measures for their removal.

To help ensure this, all City officers are encouraged to identify any projects requiring the clearing of native vegetation and refer these to Environmental Services for assessment prior to the project commencing in order to determine appropriate site selection and inform the clearing permit process. Adequate details on the project such as the location, size and extent of the anticipated clearing footprint are required to facilitate this assessment. Environmental Services will subsequently liaise with the relevant regulatory agency/ies where referrals from City officers require clearing approvals, and will also assist with the preparation of offset proposals where required.

The City will not pursue clearing approvals or undertake clearing of bushland as defined in this policy for the purposes of reducing Bushfire Attack Levels (BAL) on other properties.

3. Purchase of bushland

The City will establish an environmental reserve fund. This will be used for the purchase of local bushland where appropriate, for conservation purposes. Potential bushland purchases will be identified and prioritised under the City's *Property Strategy – Future Land Purchases* using the following conditions for assessment:

Priority criteria for bushland purchases:

- Example of regional vegetation type that is threatened through a lack of management or future development;
- A site that supports a population of declared rare flora;
- Vegetation in good condition or better;
- Bushland preferred as future public open space, for conservation purposes;
- Wetlands of local significance or in a relatively pristine state

General criteria for bushland purchases:

- Suitable for passive recreation or has the potential for scientific or educational study;
- Having cultural heritage values of local significance;
- Regular shape is desirable unless the area functions as a significant corridor between two areas of bushland;
- An area of vegetation capable of regeneration;
- Bushland which has a reasonable degree of local community recognition.

Responsible Directorate:	Sustainable Communities
Reviewer:	Manager Arts, Culture and Environment
Creation date:	Minute G.23/12/01, 12 December 2001
Amendments:	Minute G.57/2/12, 28 February 2012 Minute G.35/2/15, 24 February 2015 Minute G.12/7/19, 23 July 2019
Related Documentation and/or Legislation:	<i>Planning and Development Act 2005</i> <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986 (WA)</i> <i>Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> City of Mandurah Property Strategy City of Mandurah Environmental Planning Strategy