



North Queensland Conservation Council

... the voice for the environment in North Queensland

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Townsville City Council
103 Walker St
Townsville City Qld 4810

To whom it concerns,

Re: Draft Public Tree Management Policy and Guidelines

North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on Townsville City Council's Draft Public Tree Management Policy and Guidelines.

Established in 1974, NQCC is a not-for-profit incorporated association with a broad mandate to protect the "land, waters and atmosphere of the region". We are the voice for North Queensland's environment and represent over 1300 members and supporters.

Feedback on the Draft Public Tree Management Policy

Section 4. Scope

- Key aspects of the Policy should be extended to include State controlled road reserves within the Townsville City Council LGA, possibly via a consultation framework.
- An adapted version of the Policy should be drafted to adequately include Council controlled bushland and natural reserves.

Section 5. Responsibility

- It is unclear how the Director of Infrastructure and Operations will ensure the Policy is adhered to. This should include appropriate education and training provided to Council workers and contractors working on Council controlled land, which we believe is currently inadequate.

Section 6. Definitions and Interpretation

- The definition of "tree" should be extended to young trees (with a trunk diameter of less than 200mm) that are re-planted as offsets or as part of a greening initiative, to ensure they are offered protection.
- There should be a distinction between declared weed species and other trees, so that they can be considered appropriately and weed species are exempt from protections offered to other trees.

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Feedback on the Draft Public Tree Management Guidelines

Section 1.2 Significant Public Tree Asset Register

- We strongly support a Significant Public Tree Asset Register and the inclusion of Council and community consultation in determining the future of Significant and Highly Significant Public Trees.
- The Significant Tree Asset Register should be made available to the public via Townsville City Council's website.
- Residents should have the (ongoing) opportunity to nominate trees for inclusion on the register.
- Significant Trees on State controlled land should be acknowledged, and this should be extended to private and leasehold land.
- The Draft Guidelines do not define how much time will be allowed for community consultation following a proposal to remove a Significant Tree.
- Vegetation communities should also be acknowledged (e.g. wetlands and grasslands), with Significant Vegetation Communities eligible to be recognised as such, should they fulfil appropriate criteria.

Section 2.2 Offset Tree Plantings

- Offset planting should occur within a localised area of the removed tree/s, where possible, to ensure no neighbourhood or area's net canopy cover is reduced over time.

Section 3.1 Tree Removal Costs

- Tree removal costs should not apply to pest species.

Section 6 Public Tree Hierarchy Classification Table

- It is not clear when a tree's classification will come into effect or how long it is expected to take to determine the classification of trees throughout the Townsville City Council LGA.

Conclusion

We support the drafting of this Policy, and particularly the decision to offer residents the opportunity to provide feedback. It is vital the Policy recognises the strong connection between the health and wellbeing of our natural environment and that of our community.

We look forward to working with Townsville City Council to promote, protect and improve the natural values of Townsville's vegetation into the future.

Yours sincerely,



Crystal Falknau – Coordinator
North Queensland Conservation Council