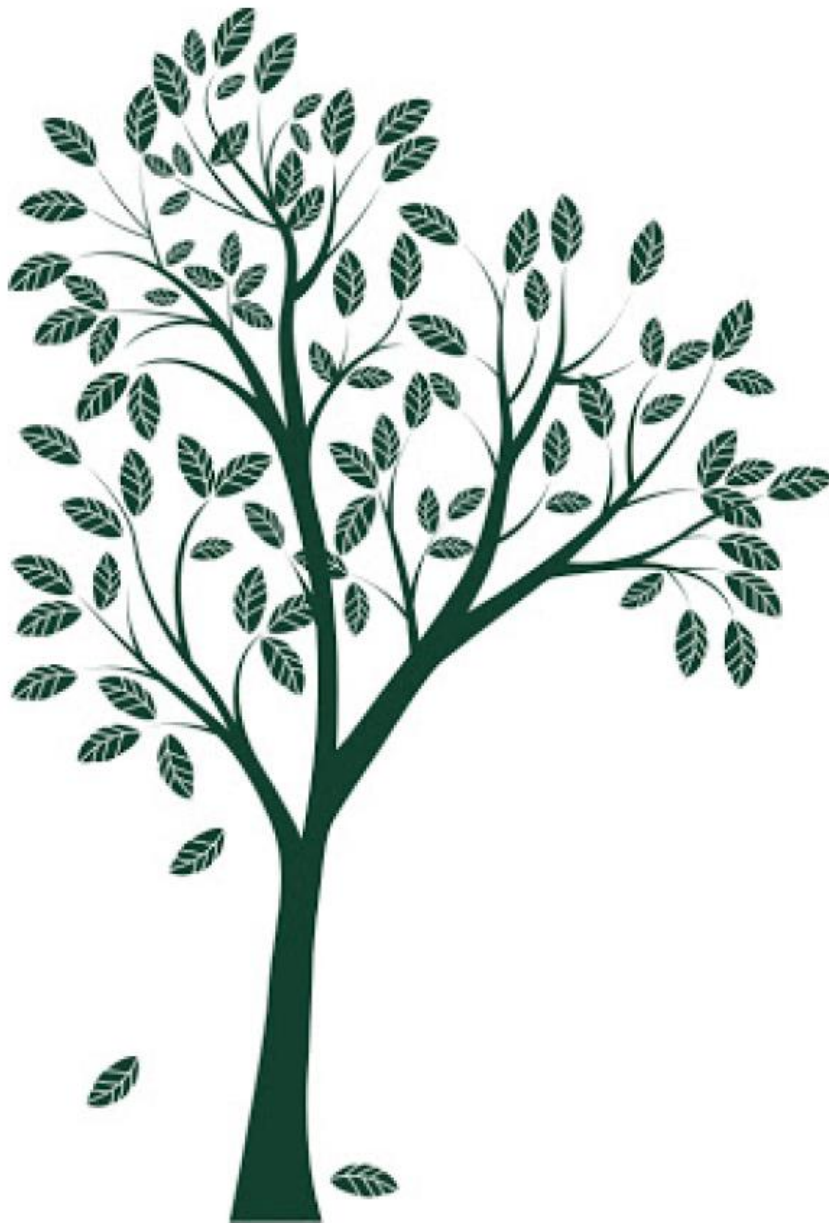


Waitaki policy for Council trees 2014



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September 2014

Published by

Waitaki District Council
Private Bag 50058
Oamaru 9444
New Zealand

Executive Summary

The Waitaki Policy for Council Trees 2014 specifies the outcomes and policies associated with the ongoing stewardship of trees by Waitaki District Council on council-administered land and reserves.

This document helps to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the planting, management and maintenance of Council trees located on Council administered land and reserves, and all Memorial Oak trees across the district.

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Background	5
2.1 Background to tree planting and management in the Waitaki District.....	5
3.0 Statutory context.....	6
4.0 Outcomes and policies	7
4.1 Outcomes	7
4.2 Policies	7
Tree species selection and planting	7
Tree maintenance and replacement.....	8
5.0 Monitoring, review and improvements.....	9
5.1 Introduction	9
5.2 Monitoring, review and plan effectiveness	9
5.3 Improvement Plan.....	10
6.0 Appendices	11
Appendix 1: Glossary.....	12

1.0 Introduction

This policy is to be known as the Waitaki policy for Council trees 2014.

This document applies to trees including individual trees, groups of trees, and areas of existing and regenerating bush areas on Council administered land and reserves, Council owned or controlled trees on all road reserves, including State Highway within the 70km/hour area and all Memorial Oak trees across the district.

The outcomes and policies identified in this document assist with:

- Upholding Council's commitment to managing trees on Council administered land and reserves as a valued asset of the district, recognising the benefits of trees both to the environment and to people;
- Providing a mandate and rationale for the council's involvement in both the direct management of and indirect advocacy for trees on Council administered land and reserves as an integral component of urban and rural environments in the district;
- Providing consistency in methodology and decision-making in response to tree-related issues on Council administered land and reserve;
- Complementing the statutory protection of trees under the Operative Waitaki District Plan, and the management of reserves under the Waitaki Reserves Management Plan 2014.

This document will be reviewed every ten years.

2.0 Background

2.1 Background to tree planting and management in the Waitaki District

Native and exotic trees on Council administered land and reserves provide a wide range of benefits to the community including amenity, soil stabilisation, shelter, shade, landscape screening, and biodiversity habitat – in both rural and urban areas. They contribute to the local character, setting and sense of place and enhance the amenity of our District.

Reserves and road corridors can be managed to create and maintain ecological corridors with special attention to low maintenance plantings. It is important to encourage indigenous vegetation in these locations and to enhance the ecological values of these areas.

Historical details of the history of trees on Council administered land and reserves across the District (including the Waitaki Memorial Oak Trees) are not well documented. Additional research has been scheduled in the Improvement Plan set out in section 5 of this document.

3.0 Statutory context

In the Waitaki District, various legislation/guidelines cover trees on Council administered land and reserves including:

- Operative Waitaki District Plan – Appendix B – Heritage Items;
- Reserves Act 1977 (Section 42) – maintenance and management of trees on Recreation Reserves;
- Local Government Act 1974 (Section 355) – nuisance overhanging and hazardous trees on private property that impact on public safety;
- Government Roadway Powers Act 1989 – section 55 (removal of trees, hedges etc that obscure visibility of interference with a public work);
- Electricity (Hazards from trees) Regulations 2003 – maintenance responsibility of local authority and line owner.

4.0 Outcomes and policies

Policies have been developed to ensure that trees on Council administered land and reserves are managed in a consistent manner across the District. Outcomes have also been developed to identify the desired end-results of effective management of our district's trees located on Council administered land and reserves.

EXPLANATION:

The planting of trees on reserves have often resulted in blocked views, leaf litter blocking drains and shading to adjacent residential properties. Council has also had historical issues with requests for private tree maintenance where the trees are on the boundary or adjacent to reserves but have been planted by past residents and are not recognised as street trees by Council.

Street trees may also need to be managed in terms of theme, replacement and removal – significant trees are protected under the Operative Waitaki District Plan.

4.1 Outcomes

Outcome 1

The quality of the Waitaki District, and the enjoyment of its streets and reserves, is enhanced by the judicious planting and maintenance of trees.

Outcome 2

The community has a clear understanding of when Council will maintain, remove or replace trees on Council administered land and reserves.

Outcome 3

There is a planned approach to the planting of new street trees, and the maintenance of existing trees on Council administered land and reserves, reducing maintenance costs, adverse effects on the community and on infrastructure.

Outcome 4

There is a consistent approach to planting and landscaping of Council administered land and reserves through the development and implementation of landscape plans.

4.2 Policies

Tree species selection and planting

Policy 1

Preference will be given to the planting of tree species on Council administered land and reserves which:

- a. Reflect the unique natural and cultural/heritage environment of Waitaki; and
- b. Are appropriate to the site conditions; and
- c. Reflect the community's identity; and/or
- d. Have low allergenic affects; and
- e. Don't drop debris on footpaths; and
- f. Require low maintenance.

Policy 2

All indigenous plantings on Council administered land and reserves will be sourced (where possible) from a local seed stock.

Policy 3

The effects on adjacent properties and underground and overhead services will be considered when planting trees on Council administered land and reserves, and the relevant property owners will be consulted by Council.

Policy 4

Food sufficiency plants and heritage themed crops will be provided in neighbourhood reserve locations as identified in the Waitaki Reserves Management Plan 2014.

Policy 5

Fruiting plants will not normally be used as street trees to avoid fruit accumulation on footpaths, streets and in drainage structures.

Tree maintenance and replacement

Policy 6

Trees on Council administered land and reserves will only be pruned, removed or maintained for private benefit (e.g. improving private views) when the following criteria have been met:

- a. The removal will not result in adverse effects to the reserve; and/or
- b. There are proven adverse health consequences e.g. allergy as a result of the presence of the tree; and
- c. The tree is not protected under the District Plan; and
- d. The work is carried out by a suitably experienced person to accepted arboriculture standards; and/or
- e. A private individual is prepared to pay for any costs incurred in the maintenance work; and/or
- f. Council has deemed that the tree is inappropriate or is contributing to a loss of amenity for adjacent neighbour/s.

Policy 7

Council will only manage, maintain or replace street trees on Council administered land and reserves when Council has planted the tree/s, or when Council has formally accepted responsibility for the maintenance of the tree/s.

Policy 8

Trees on streets and in Council administered lands and reserves will be removed by Council when they are:

- a. Part of a planned replacement programme; and/or
- b. Part of a larger redevelopment of the street or reserve (as identified in a Council approved plan); and
- c. Deemed by a suitably qualified arborist to be dead, dangerous or severely diseased or damaged; and/or
- d. Result in proven adverse health consequences e.g. allergy; and/or
- e. Causing danger to life or property.

Policy 9

Listed trees in the operative Waitaki District Plan requiring removal (as determined by Council) will be replaced with a similar species. Listed trees will not be replaced when the original tree site no longer has the capacity to support a tree of the original scale.

Policy 10

A permit and consultation with the relevant Council department is required when removing or managing vegetation near network utilities including transmission lines, underground services and pipelines (except in emergency situations).

5.0 Monitoring, review and improvements

5.1 Introduction

Under the Local Government Act 2002, Council policy is required to be continuously monitored so that it can adapt to changing circumstances. This section identifies a monitoring process to ensure that this document remains relevant for the community, Council managers and decision makers (Council).

A clear monitoring process enables:

- Accountability to the community;
- A means for determining how well the policies contained within the document are working in practice; and
- Continuous improvement of Council's management practices of trees on Council administered land and reserves across the District.

This section also identifies improvements to this document to implement over its lifetime.

5.2 Monitoring, review and plan effectiveness

Policy 11

The document will be reviewed at least every 10 years, unless a review or variation is initiated by:

- a. Results from monitoring that indicate the need for a change or review;
- b. The identification of new management issues, problems or activities that are not addressed in the policies of this document but for which policy is required;
- c. Changes in national policy including new or amended laws, regulations or other actions which may render the document inoperable or illegal;
- d. Policy changes made by Waitaki District Council that affect the way trees on Council administered land and reserves are managed e.g. changes to the operative Waitaki District Plan or relevant Council Bylaws;
- e. Treaty of Waitangi settlements that require changes in the way that management occurs or decisions are made.

Policy 12

The following methods will be considered when reviewing and measuring the effectiveness of the policies within this document:

- a. Whether or not the outcomes of this document have been met;
- b. Feedback from community satisfaction surveys (undertaken at least 5 yearly);
- c. Feedback from intercept surveys (undertaken at least 5 yearly); and
- d. Feedback from daily operational experience (contractors and staff).

5.3 Improvement Plan

The following improvement actions have been identified to progress over the lifetime of this document:

Action	Priority	Timeframe
1) Work with the Memorial Oaks Committee and the Oamaru Beautification Society to provide for the management and maintenance of the Memorial Oaks across the District.	H	1-3 years
2) In conjunction with interested community groups facilitate the development of a separate document on the history of trees in the Waitaki District to complement the policies of this document.	M	3-5 years

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

Trees: In relation to this Plan, trees include the following – individual trees, groups of trees, and areas of existing and regenerating bush areas on Council administered land and reserves, Council owned or controlled trees on all road reserves, including State Highway within the 70km/hour area and all Memorial Oak trees across the district.

Private benefit: In relation to this plan, the removal of a tree that will result in a private rather than public gain e.g. for views.