

FACT SHEET

INFORMATION ON TREE MANAGEMENT ON COUNCIL AND PRIVATE PROPERTIES



OVERVIEW

This information is for residents of the Sorell municipality to understand the importance of trees and how to manage them responsibly on their land. It explains why mature trees are valuable, clarifies Council's role (and limitations) in tree management, and offers guidance on preserving trees during property development. It also highlights Sorell's **rich natural environment** and the many benefits – environmental, social, and economic that trees provide.

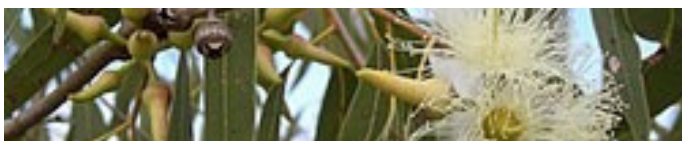
MATURE TREES MATTER

Biodiversity and Habitat: Mature trees are living ecosystems. They provide food and shelter for birds, possums, insects, and other wildlife, supporting Sorell's rich biodiversity. In fact, many native species depend on large old trees.

Climate and Environmental Benefits: Trees play a big role in maintaining a healthy environment. Through photosynthesis, they absorb carbon dioxide and help mitigate climate change by storing carbon. They also shade and cool their surroundings, reducing local temperatures and energy costs (for example, by shading homes in summer).

Recreation, Beauty and Economic Value: Greenery makes Sorell a more beautiful and inviting place to live, play and work.

Mental Health and Wellbeing: Living among trees and green spaces is good for us! Research and local experience both show that green environments improve mental health and community wellbeing.



COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Trees on Council Land (Public Spaces): Sorell Council is responsible for managing trees on public land, such as street trees, trees in parks, reserves, and around community facilities. Council takes this duty seriously and has a dedicated Tree Management Policy head to our website for more details on this policy.

If you have concerns about a tree on public land (for example, a dead limb overhanging a footpath or a tree that looks unhealthy), you can contact Sorell Council to report it via our online portal **Report a Tree Concern** (<https://www.sorell.tas.gov.au/report-a-tree-concern/>). An assessment will be arranged and, if needed, an arborist may be called in to determine the best course of action, such as pruning or other care.

TREES ON PRIVATE LAND - YOUR PROPERTY

Managing trees on private property is fundamentally the responsibility of the landowner. It's important to note that Sorell Council does not impose its own local laws on removing or pruning trees on private land and there is no Council by-law that requires a permit for cutting down a tree in your backyard. In other words, unlike some councils, Sorell Council has no direct legislative power to stop a private landowner from removing a tree, **UNLESS** other laws such as heritage trees, trees within Tasmanian threatened native vegetation community come into play (which may require a certified forest practices plan: www.fpa.tas.gov.au/landowners/clearing_land).

INFORMATION ON TREE MANAGEMENT ON COUNCIL AND PRIVATE PROPERTIES - FACT SHEET P.2



Neighbourhood Tree Disputes: Sometimes issues arise with trees on private land – for example, a tree on one property might be overhanging a neighbour's yard or blocking their sunlight.

Sorell Council has no authority to intervene in private tree disputes between neighbours (unless the tree is an immediate public danger). The best first step is always to talk politely with your neighbour. If you cannot resolve the issue, Tasmania has a specific law to help: the Neighbourhood Disputes About Plants Act 2017.

TREES AND THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

If you are planning any development on your property (such as building a new home, extending an existing building, or subdividing land), it's important to consider tree management early in the planning stage. Sorell's natural assets are a planning priority, and Council (acting as the planning authority) will look at how your development proposal affects existing significant trees or vegetation. Under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Sorell, certain developments trigger an assessment of vegetation. For instance, if your land falls **under the Priority Vegetation Area overlay** or **near a waterway/coastal protection area**, removing native trees will likely require a planning application and careful justification (info sheet – Native vegetation removal <https://www.sorell.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Info-Sheet-Native-Vegetation-Removal.pdf>)



KEEPING SORELL GREEN: TIPS FOR TREE PRESERVATION AND PLANTING

Every resident can play a part in preserving our community's green canopy. Here are some practical ways to manage your trees responsibly and promote a healthy urban forest in Sorell.

Think Twice Before Removing a Tree: Unless a tree is dangerous or causing severe problems, consider alternatives to removal.

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place: If you're planting new trees, choose species well-suited to your location and the space available. Native Tasmanian trees and shrubs are a great choice – they thrive in our climate, support native birds and bees, and typically require less water and care once established.

Care for Your Trees: Basic care can prolong the life of your trees and keep them safe. Water young trees during dry spells to help them establish deep roots. Mulch around the base (but not against the trunk) to conserve moisture and suppress weeds.

MORE INFORMATION

For more detailed important information on tree and native vegetation responsibilities and other relevant legislation, visit our website on: <https://www.sorell.tas.gov.au/trees/>

