



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Nature Strip Landscaping Policy

APPROVAL DATE: Jan 2021

REVIEW DATE: Jan 2025

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	<i>Nature Strip Landscaping Policy</i>
Policy Type:	<i>Council</i>
Responsible Branch:	<i>City Infrastructure, Infrastructure Services</i>
Responsible Officer:	<i>Director of City Infrastructure</i>
Document Status:	<i>Adopted</i>
Approved By:	<i>Council</i>
Adopted Date:	<i>Jan 2021</i>
Review Date:	<i>Jan 2025</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This policy acknowledges that well maintained nature strips add to the appearance and presentation of streetscapes within the Municipality. They can bring economic benefits to businesses and property owners and residents. Warrnambool City Council encourages property owners to recognise the value of nature strips and to take pride in maintaining them.

Council does not carry out renovation or maintenance (including mowing and watering) of nature strips. It is common, accepted practice throughout Australia that the property owners or residents of abutting properties maintain the grass, plants (excluding trees) and any landscape features on the nature strip.

The Policy is implemented through the Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines on Councils website. The Guidelines provide specific information to guide permit applications.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all nature strips within Council's road reserve within the municipality.

1.3 Definitions

Term	Definition
"Nature Strip"	A nature strip is an area of public land between the property boundary and the back of kerb or table drain, excluding any footpath or other assets such as driveways, utilities pits or fire hydrants. In most cases, a nature strip is grassed.

1.4 References

Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Environment Act 1987 • Road Management Act 2004 • Local Government Act 2020
Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warrnambool City Council Local Laws
Standards or Guidance Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) • Council Standard Drawings
Related Policies/Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Tree Planting & Management Policy • Warrnambool City Council Community Engagement Policy • Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines • Health and Wellbeing Plan • Environmental Sustainability Plan • W2040

2. POLICY

Council's Nature Strip Landscaping Policy provides guidance for property owners who may want to undertake landscape improvements to the nature strip area abutting their residence or place of business.

2.1 Policy Objectives

The objective of this policy is to ensure that nature strips are landscaped and maintained in a way that:

- Compliments and softens the existing streetscape and built environment;
- Provides a vegetated buffer between hard infrastructure such as roads and footpaths; and the title boundary of adjoining properties.
- Minimises risk to the community;
- Provides for the unobstructed and safe flow of pedestrian traffic;
- Provides access for postal deliveries and utility service providers;
- Does not impede access to fire hydrants;
- Does not impact the safety of vehicles using the road;
- Allows kerbside parking of vehicles;
- Provides safe and practical conditions for emptying rubbish and recycling bins;
- Is in keeping with neighbourhood character and heritage areas;
- Provides space for street tree planting.
- Provides biodiversity and habitat.

2.2 Policy Principles

Key principles for the effective management of landscape areas in road reserves are:

- Nature strips will be grassed unless otherwise approved by Council.
- Alternatives to grass nature strips will be permitted under certain circumstances subject to Council approval via a road reserve works permit. A landscape plan is required to be submitted with the road reserve works permit.
- Alternative landscape treatments will require the consent of adjoining property owners.
- In assessing alternative nature strip materials, consideration will be given to the prevailing streetscape and character, amenity and risk in the design, plantings and materials permitted.
- Soft landscaping, mulch, granitic sand and gravel may be permitted if incorporated with native plants and other vegetation and will be considered subject to application and approval.
- Edible plants may be permitted under certain circumstances and only where appropriate permits are obtained.

- Use of synthetic turf is not permitted on nature strips within Warrnambool City Council due to the restriction placed on utilities accessing their assets and damage caused by garbage collection activities.
- Hard surfaces such as concrete, pavers, asphalt or stepping stones and sleepers or similar materials are not permitted in nature strips. If a hard surface is required for vehicle access purposes, a vehicle crossing permit should be obtained. Any feature that is deemed by Warrnambool City Council to be a risk to the public as a tripping hazard, a falling hazard, obstruction or other hazard, may be removed from the nature strip without consultation or warning.
- Nature strips are not intended as spaces for vehicle parking or storage of boats, caravans, trailers etc. Modifications to nature strips to incorporate parking are not supported in this Policy.
- Utility companies (including Council) that supply water, gas, electricity and telecommunications may from time to time require access to the nature strip to perform maintenance work. The utility companies are required to make good the nature strip following maintenance work.
- Unauthorised nature strip plantings will be subject to enforcement action under Council's Local Laws and relevant fines can be imposed, together with associated reinstatement costs charged for any breaches of this Policy or Local Law.
- Any street tree plantings must comply with Council's Street Tree Management and Planting Policy.

* Refer to the Nature strip Landscaping Guidelines for further information.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 Owner

The Director of City Infrastructure is responsible for monitoring the relevance and currency of this policy and for updating it when required.

3.2 Review

The Director of City Infrastructure will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than four years after its adoption or after the last review.

3.3 Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2006).