



Name:	Works on Council Verge		
Type:	Council Policy		
Owner:	Director Technical Services		
Responsible Officer:	Director Technical Services		
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1 Purpose and Application

This policy provides a threefold approach to the development, utilisation and maintenance of verges throughout the Municipality.

2 Principles

Council is committed to providing quality parks, gardens and open spaces for the benefit of our community. In the specific matter of verges Council encourages ownership and ongoing maintenance of verges by the adjoining owner.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Verge	That area of public land between the property boundary and the back of kerb or edge of road.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 VERGES

Council does not carry out renovation or maintenance (including mowing and watering) of verges. It is accepted practice throughout Australia that the adjoining property owners or residents maintain the verge. Generally maintenance amounts to weeding, mowing and edging turf.

The verge is likely to contain various types of Council and service infrastructure such as, but not be limited to footpaths and/or cycle ways, driveways, pedestrian (pram) ramps, signage, street trees, irrigation and landscaping, drainage pits, street lighting poles, utility underground services such as sewer, water, electricity (also overhead), communications, and other associated infrastructure.

It is important to note that all of the utility service authorities have access rights to defined areas of the road reserve and verge and includes unobstructed and safe flow of pedestrian traffic, full and appropriate access for the disabled, access for postal deliveries and for waste collection.

4.2 VERGE TREATMENT OPTIONS

4.2.1 Grassed Verge

Grassed verges remain the most common and preferred form of nature strip treatment within the City of Palmerston.

- The use of tropical grasses provides a low maintenance treatment which requires periodic mowing and weeding.
- Grassed verges must allow for pedestrian traffic and ensure clear site lines for pedestrians and motorists.
- No permit is required to establish a grassed verge.

4.2.2 Alternative Plantings

If an owner proposes anything other than grassing on the verge, a submission to Council is required. Owners are advised that all maintenance activities for a landscaped verge are to be undertaken by the owner at no cost to Council.

The following information is to be contained in the submission:

- A sketch of the landscape proposal on for the verge. This need not be to scale however all relevant dimensions are to be included.
- A list of the plant species to be used.
- Confirmation that the applicant is the owner of the property.

The submission should also contain a signed letter from the owner indicating:

- They will irrigate the landscaped area from a supply within the property.
- They accept all physical and fiscal responsibility for any required maintenance of the landscaped area.
- They accept that should the need arise Council may request the removal of the landscaped area.

Completed submissions can be sent to City of Palmerston, PO Box 1, Palmerston NT 0832 or emailed to palmerston@palmerston.nt.gov.au for Council's consideration.

The submission will then be reviewed and the owner will be notified in writing of the outcome. Should the submission obtain approval from Council the owner will then submit a 'Permit to Work on Council Reserves' prior to the commencement of any works.

4.2.3 Non-Approved Plants

Plants that must not be planted on the verge or on the property boundary include, but are not limited to:

- Prickly or thorny plants, e.g. Bougainvillea.
- Plants with spiked leaves or fronds, e.g. Agave, yucca, cycads.
- Poisonous plants.
- Plants carrying large, heavy fruit, e.g. coconuts.
- Declared weed species – see www.nt.gov.au/environment/weeds/declared-weeds for more information.

4.2.4 Prohibited Items

The following items are not permitted to be placed on the verge at any time:

- Rocks.
- Timber posts/poles/sleepers.
- Retaining walls.
- Ornaments of any type.
- Hard surfaces such as concrete, pavers, asphalt or stepping stones.
- Temporary or permanent electrical wiring (e.g. lighting of trees).

Please note: In the event that the landscaped verge is not consistent with the original submission and does cause risk to the public, the treatment may be removed by Council and Council may seek to recover removal costs.

4.3 GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A VERGE

4.3.1 Excavation and Cultivation of the Verge

Excavation and cultivation must be by carried out by hand. Mechanical excavation (bobcat/dingo) or cultivation (rotary hoe) is not permitted as it may damage underground infrastructure and services. This may also cause damage to existing street trees and their root systems.

The property owner must contact 'Dial Before you Dig' to ensure the location of services prior to carrying out works.

The owner is responsible for repairing any damage to infrastructure caused by any landscaping works.

4.3.2 Clearways

Clearways are to be established and maintained on the verge:

- A minimum clear pedestrian width of 1.5 metres is to be retained on the verge.
- The buffer zone MUST be grassed to ensure sight lines are maintained.
- No trees or shrubs from the verge or private property should encroach onto the footpath or impede pedestrian thoroughfare.
- Vegetation should not encroach onto road ways or impede the vision of motorists.
- A clear height of 4.5m for vegetation at the kerb line is required.
- Approved plantings are to be maintained preferably below a height of 300 millimetres with a maximum unpruned height of 600mm.

4.4 WORKS ON VERGES BY COUNCIL AND OTHER AGENCIES

Regardless of any development of the verge area, Council reserves the right to construct or maintain infrastructure on any part of the verge at its discretion.

If necessary, in doing so, Council may remove any existing plants, shrubs, groundcover, irrigation systems or decorative features without compensation to the owner or resident for such removal or alteration. Remedial work will be undertaken to reinstate the verge however the treatment will be grass only.

Utility companies may require access to the verge to perform maintenance work from time to time.

- The companies are required to make good the verge following maintenance work, but are not required to re-instate residential verges that have been landscaped other than with grass.
- Council will not be responsible for replacing plants or landscaping as a result of such works by others.

4.5 RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY

The City of Palmerston is dedicated to providing a safe environment within the municipality.

Any feature placed by an owner that is deemed by Council to be a risk to the public as a tripping hazard, obstruction or other hazard, or for which a permit has not been issued or does not comply with the requirements of the permit, may be removed from the verge without consultation or warning.

Where it deems appropriate, Council will act to rectify problems in relation to tripping hazards or safety issues.

Council will write to the relevant owner requiring that they attend to the identified problem.

If the owner fails to take action, a delegated Council Officer will issue a 'Notice under By-Law 11' of the City of Palmerston (Public Places) By-Laws, requiring that the specific problem be remedied within a specific time frame.

Failure to take action following a notice may result in fines or further legal action.

Council may also undertake the required works at the expense of the property owner.

5 Associated Documents

Permit to Work on Council Reserves

6 References and Related Legislation

The Northern Territory Local Government Act
City of Palmerston By-Laws