

Naturestrip Renovation Policy

Policy Type:	Council
Version:	1.0
Date Adopted:2021
Service Unit	Asset Management
Directorate:	Community Assets & Infrastructure
Review Date:	2024-25

1. Purpose

A naturestrip is the strip of public land located within a road reserve, between a property boundary and the adjacent roadway. Naturestrips add to the amenity of the local area, facilitate pedestrian movement and also provide a space for assets such as footpaths, trees, street furniture or utilities (gas, water, telecommunications, power etc). Council wants to achieve a high amenity outcome for urban areas and to discourage vehicles parking on the nature strip which is prohibited under Council’s Local Law.

Whilst Council are the authority that manage the road reserve, it is the expectation that the adjacent owner or occupier will undertake maintenance of the naturestrip area to ensure it is maintained in a neat and tidy condition. Under the Local law (Section 3.2) the owner or occupier of land in a residential area where the speed limit is 60kph or less has a responsibility to maintain the nature strip in a neat and tidy condition. To alter a Council asset, including a nature strip, a permit must be obtained under Local law (Section 3.1). Council undertakes maintenance of naturestrips only along town entrances and in high-profile areas such as the CBD and are also responsible for the Council planted street trees within the naturestrip.

Council receives numerous requests from residents in relation to what is/is not permitted with respect to the alteration of the naturestrip area adjacent to their properties. This may include requests to replace the grassed area with other materials such as crushed rock, or the installation of landscaping items such as plantings, features or formalised garden beds.

The purpose of this policy and the associated Draft Naturestrip Guidelines is to provide clear and consistent guidance to residents and Council in the planning and assessment of naturestrip landscaping works, whilst protecting the core functions of the naturestrip, safety of pedestrians and road users and amenity of the local area.

2. Definitions

MSC	Moorabool Shire Council
Naturestrip	The strip of public land located within a road reservation, between a property boundary and the adjacent roadway.
Urban area	An urban area in accordance with the Moorabool Planning Scheme or adjacent a roadway with a speed limit of 60kph or less.

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3. Scope

This policy, the associated guidelines and permit process apply to all naturestrips adjacent to local roads within the urban areas of the municipality. Applications for naturestrip alterations outside of these areas will be considered on a case by case basis.

It is noted that there may be additional restrictions on properties that have an overlay applied to them (eg. heritage, waterway etc) and residents are encouraged to contact Council to discuss further.

The management and maintenance (including planting and replacement) of urban street trees is Council's responsibility and is specifically excluded from the provisions under this policy.

4. Non-Compliance

If any works are undertaken contrary to the provisions of this Policy or the Naturestrip Guideline there are provisions under the Moorabool Council Community Local Law that allow Council to take action to remedy the non-compliance. The options for addressing non-compliance are extensive and can range from simple request to reinstate the nature strip to its original condition to taking action through Magistrates court and physically undertaken works to remedy any non-compliance and seeking to recover costs through the courts. Any noncompliance will be dealt with Moorabool Shire Council Local law on complaint basis from the community.

5. Policy

The aim of this policy and the associated guideline is to ensure that clear, consistent direction is available for residents and staff in the planning and assessment of proposed naturestrip renovations, and to ensure that any works undertaken:

- Minimise risk to the community and Council
- Consider safety of pedestrians, cyclists and road users
- Do not contravene, or do not promote activities in contravention with, the requirements of Council's Local Law or other laws or regulations (eg. parking on naturestrips)
- Provide unobstructed access to other assets within the road reserve (pits, pipes etc)
- Are managed and maintained ongoing (including removal and reinstatement works)
- Are in keeping with the amenity of the local area
- Maintain the core functions of a naturestrip (providing a space for paths or to facilitate pedestrian movement, other assets, people getting in/out of vehicles and the placement of kerbside collection bins)

Council is committed to improving the appearance of the Shire through the maintenance and enhancement of naturestrips, and supports certain works being undertaken by residents, providing that the requirements of the Naturestrip Guidelines are adhered to and an approval is provided by Council where required.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Council's Naturestrip Guidelines which sets out the specific roles and responsibilities relating to the naturestrip area and defines the improvements that will and will not be considered by Council, along with the relevant approval process.

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Whilst the reinstatement of a grassed naturestrip due to failure or poor performance does not require a permit, any resident wishing to undertake additional landscaping should refer to the Naturestrip Guideline for further information.

6. Related Legislation & Documentation

- Moorabool Shire Naturestrip Guideline 2021
- Moorabool Community Local Law No 1. 2019
- Moorabool Shire Urban Street Tree Policy
- Local Government Act 2020
- Road Management Act 2004
- Road Safety Act 1986

7. Council Plan Reference

Objectives: Providing good governance and leadership
Context: Our assets and infrastructure

8. Review

As a minimum, this policy will be reviewed in 2024-25 unless required sooner as a result of changes to related policies, procedures or legislation.