

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale's Council Policy – Permissible Verge Treatments – Rural and the *Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2019*.

## What is a street verge?

The verge (nature strip) is the area between the edge of the road and the private property boundary.

Verges are owned by the Crown, and vested in the Shire. The purpose of a street verge is to:

- Provide a buffer between the road and private property where common public facilities such as footpaths, bus stops, parking bays etc. may be placed
- Provide a section of land where essential services such as power, gas and telecommunications can be placed

## Whose responsibility is a street verge?

The maintenance of a verge treatment such as garden, lawns, reticulation, and paving is the responsibility of the householder of the property adjoining the verge.

This may include the following:

- Pruning plants (with the exception of street trees) and mowing lawns
- Weed control
- Reticulation repair and maintenance
- Topping up and retaining mulch
- Cleaning and repair of approved hardstand (paving or other approved treatment that creates a hard surface)

The Shire is responsible for the planting and maintenance of all street trees and remnant vegetation, and the maintenance of any drainage infrastructure and constructed footpaths and trails.

The design and establishment of a new verge treatment is the responsibility of the resident, or of the developer in the context of new subdivisions.

## Why do we need Guidelines?

Street verges are public domain and important for the installation of necessary services such as drainage, power and communication lines. It is important to have rules to manage safety, access and appearance.

These guidelines will outline what can be done to modify or improve the verge area so that:

- It will not detract from the amenity of the locality
- It will be accessible and safe
- It provides continuity and compatibility within the streetscape and with a Strategy where approved
- It does not interfere or compromise existing infrastructure
- It protects and increases the number of street trees and remnant vegetation

The Shire specifies materials which are acceptable and unacceptable as verge treatments.

Acceptable Materials	Materials with a Maximum Allocation	Non-Permissible Materials
Street trees Plants Organic mulch	Heavy duty paving Open gap brick paving Porous pavers	Retaining walls or other obstructions such as rocks, posts or raised garden beds Artificial turf



<b>Acceptable Materials</b>	<b>Materials with a Maximum Allocation</b>	<b>Non-Permissible Materials</b>
Lawn Unirrigated grass Edible gardens Reticulation	Compacted limestone Compacted gravel Compacted blue metal fines Loose gravel Loose blue metal	In-situ concrete or any asphalt material (crossovers and footpath excluded) Loose materials such as sawdust, crumbed rubber or crushed bricks (except gravel or blue metal) Private infrastructure such as letter boxes, water meters, and electrical wiring (which must be placed within the property boundary)

**Contact us**

It is important to clarify all information within this document prior to installing a verge treatment. All matters related to verge treatments, including design and/or location difficulties, requests for information and/or approvals, should be directed to the Shire by calling 9526 1111 or emailing [info@sjshire.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@sjshire.wa.gov.au).

**Permissible verge treatments**

You must follow the requirements as outlined below:

- Street trees
- Gardens
- Mulch
- Lawn
- Reticulation
- Paving / Hardstand
- Any combination of the above

Gardens

In many cases, verge lawn or unirrigated grass that is not being utilised could be transformed into a garden or revegetated with local native plants.

The establishment of a Waterwise garden or revegetated verge is encouraged by the Shire, especially if local native species are used. They aid biodiversity, reduce pressure on water resources, cool the surrounding area, and enhance the amenity of the rural landscape.

Plants should be selected carefully. Low growing plants and groundcovers are the most suitable for planting in verges as they create a dense cover which does not encourage the growth of weeds and allow clear sight lines at all times.

The following requirements must be met when planting a verge:

- All plants must be placed between the property boundary and the roadside drain.
- Where there is no roadside drain, a minimum 2 m wide area behind the kerb, pavement edge or edge of the trafficable surface shall be left clear and level to allow pedestrians unhindered passage and for emergency vehicle parking.
- Plants must not physically or visually obstruct the roadway or any footpath.
- Any plants on the verge area must not create any undue hazard to road users or pedestrians.
- To ensure adequate sight lines are maintained at vehicle crossovers and at road intersections, plants must not create a sight obstruction. It is important for safety reasons that the plants at these locations are low growing and maintained regularly.
- Where there are overhead powerlines, plants must be maintained with appropriate clearance from the power lines. Pruning can be minimised by selecting plants that will only grow to 2-3m



in height. The required clearance is generally 3m from the power lines. Western Power should be consulted for more detail.

- Plants of a thorny, poisonous, hazardous or weedy nature are not permitted to be installed in the verge area.

### Lawn

Irrigated lawns are not common in rural areas, although drought-tolerant unirrigated grass is often present. Lawns require a significant amount of water. If lawn or unirrigated grass is present or preferred, it is important to choose waterwise grass varieties that will cope with heat and drought.

Some grass types, however, can be very invasive (such as kikuyu and couch), and in some cases (such as in proximity to waterways or natural areas), male sterile varieties will be the only acceptable type of a particular species. Some varieties of kikuyu that are male sterile include Kenda, Village Green, Mallee and Eureka.

### **Verge treatments requiring prior approval**

Verge treatments that require the Shire's approval are any areas of impermeable or semi-permeable hardstand materials in excess of the maximum allocation listed below. Acceptable hardstand materials include heavy duty paving, open gap brick paving, porous pavers, compacted materials (limestone, gravel or blue metal fines) or loose gravel or blue metal. These can be installed up to the maximum allocation (see below) without requiring the Shire's approval.

Any verge treatments that are not listed as either acceptable or not permitted require the Shire's approval.

### Paving / Hardstand

Paving or hardstand in excess of the maximum allocations must be approved by the Shire if you wish to install it on your verge.

The Shire will evaluate each site to determine whether excess paving or hardstand is appropriate. The evaluation process will take into account the following:

- Existing infrastructure
- Existing in-ground services
- Existing trees and their root systems
- Impact on the Shire's operations
- Use as parking (considerations will include the likely impact on sight distances and adequate size to prevent vehicles blocking pedestrian access)
- Road hierarchy
- Site context

The maximum hardstand allocation is 35% of the frontage, to a maximum length of 50m. This length includes any crossovers. Please note, however, that crossovers are subject to a separate approval process and permission must be received to install a crossover. Hardstand verge treatments are additional to compliant internal firebreaks, and cannot be used instead of firebreaks within the property.

### **How to get Approval**

To obtain approval for excess hardstand or unlisted verge treatments, please submit the following information to the Shire office or [info@sjshire.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@sjshire.wa.gov.au):

- Letter explaining the proposed verge treatment, address and contact details; or filled out Verge Treatment Variation – Rural Application Form (attached);



- A diagram, aerial photo or picture showing the verge plan, location and size of the proposed treatment; and
- Take note of existing trees and their location, in relation to the proposed treatment.

### Verge treatments that are not permitted

Verge treatments that are not permitted include the following:

- Retaining walls or other obstructions such as rocks, posts or raised garden beds
- Artificial turf
- In-situ concrete or any asphalt material (crossovers and footpath excluded)
- Loose materials such as sawdust, crumbed rubber or crushed bricks (excluding only gravel or blue metal)
- Private infrastructure such as letter boxes, water meters, and electrical wiring

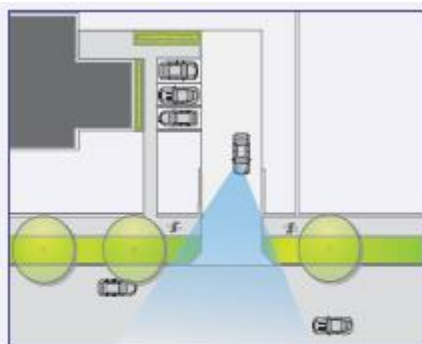
### Design considerations

- Consider plant height to help maintain sight lines, plant groundcovers along the road, with taller plants closer to the boundary, ensuring that plants will not create a sight obstruction. Plants should be lower than 750 mm within sight line areas.
- Consider style of garden or revegetation area you want to establish and choose plants accordingly.
- Group plants with the same water, fertiliser and sun requirements together (referred to as “Hydrozoning”).
- If you wish a ‘green carpet’ look, mass-planted low-growing groundcovers can be used as a lawn/grass substitute. Plants like lippia and dichondra have been extensively used as lawn substitute, although other groundcovers work as well, such as snake bush.

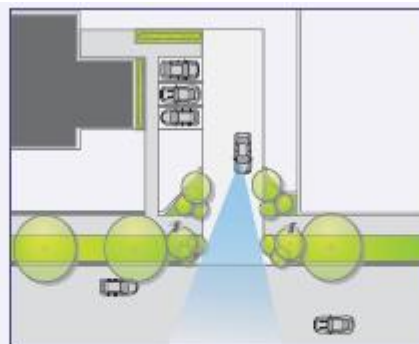
### Sight lines and truncations

Verge treatments must be designed, installed and maintained in accordance with all relevant regulations governing obstruction of sight lines and truncations adjacent to crossovers and intersecting streets (for corner lots). These regulations include the Residential Design Codes of Western Australia, from which the following guide plans are taken.

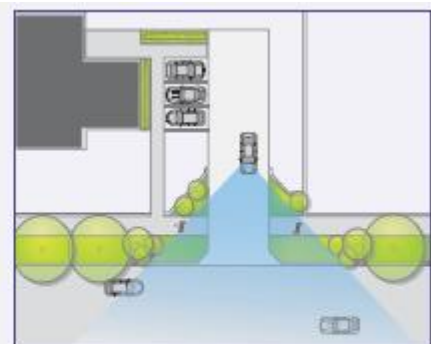
Driveways and crossovers need to maintain adequate sight lines where they intersect streets and footpaths, to ensure visibility and safety:



*Inadequate truncations are provided resulting in poor sight lines.*



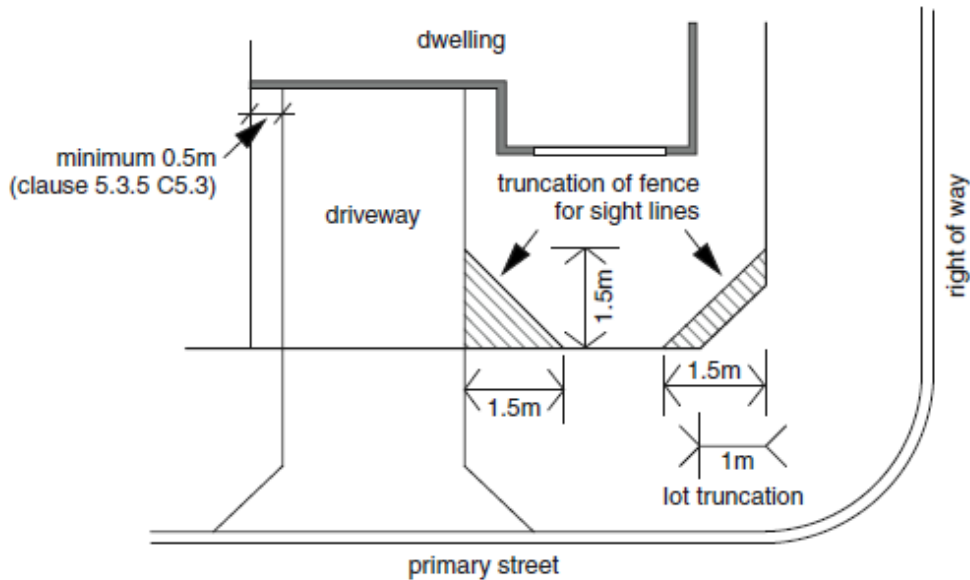
*Adequate truncations are provided, however, the landscaping has not been designed to facilitate clear views to the street.*



*Truncations are provided to the street in a manner that enables a safe view of the pedestrian and vehicular traffic before leaving the property boundary.*

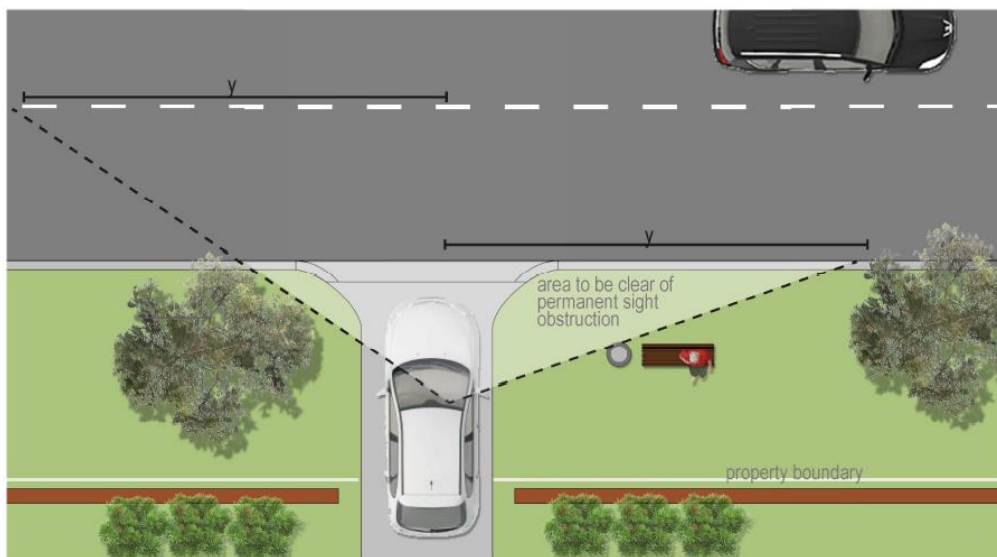


The truncation, or area that must be visually permeable, applies within the property boundary as well as on the verge, and includes any sight obstruction (such as vegetation) as well as fences:



Within these truncation areas (a 1.5m x 1.5m triangle), vegetation and any other sight obstruction must be maintained at less than 750 mm in height.

The requirements for minimum sight distance at the road interface (i.e. on the verge) are defined by Australian Standard 2890 Parking Facilities (guide plan from the WALGA Crossover Guidelines):



The distance Y is determined according to the prevailing speed along the adjoining roadway, and in an 80km/h zone is 105m.



### **Street trees and remnant vegetation**

Proposed verge treatments should be in accordance with the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale's Street Tree Policy and the Urban and Rural Forest Strategy, and are required to take into consideration the retention and protection of existing trees and remnant vegetation.

Advice must be sought from the Shire on the provision of street trees for proposed verge treatments. All new verge treatments are required to include at least one tree per ten metres unless there are serious mitigating circumstances as determined by the Shire.

### **Recommended plant species**

Information on local native plants can be found in the document "Keeping it Local" on the Shire's website.

The Shire runs an annual Free Verge Plants Program for residents, under which residents can apply for an allocation of free local native seedlings to be planted on their verge.

# Verge Treatment Variation – Rural – Application Form

It is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 1995* that permission is sought before any private works are undertaken on a public thoroughfare or local government land. However, the Shire permits the planting or installation of plants, lawn, organic mulch and/or a maximum hardstand allocation without prior approval.

Any works that may affect remnant vegetation or trees requires prior approval. Materials that require prior approval include any impermeable or semi-permeable hardstand materials in excess of the maximum allocation, and materials that are not listed in the Permissible Verge Treatments – Rural Council Policy as permitted or not allowed.

## Property address adjacent to the proposed verge treatment

Lot/House Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Street Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

## Property Owner Contact Details

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge and agree that the email address that I have provided in lodging this application is the email address to which I accept any communications from the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale in relation to this application.

## Contractor Contact Details (if applicable)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I want a copy of the Shire's correspondence to be sent also to my contractor YES / NO (circle one)

## Proposed Verge Treatment Details

Material to be used: Paving / Compacted materials / Loose materials (circle applicable)

Details of treatment: \_\_\_\_\_

Justification: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree that the work will be done in accordance with the Shire's Permissible Verge Treatments – Rural Council Policy and Guidelines, and acknowledge that:

- Works that may affect remnant vegetation or trees are not likely to be approved
- The maximum area allowed for hardstand is specified in this Policy
- Permissible hardstand material is brick and concrete unit pavers, compacted materials (limestone, gravel or blue metal fines) and loose materials (gravel or blue metal)
- Please state hardstand type and size on diagram and clearly delineate the crossover from the hardstand
- The level and grade of the verge is not to be altered, unless to create watering basins around trees
- The landscape treatment must allow for street trees, whether existing or to be installed, with specified setbacks
- No plants higher than 750mm when mature within sight lines, or of hazardous nature are allowed
- No retaining walls, steps or any other items protruding above the natural level of the verge are allowed
- Plants and hardstand can only be placed between the property boundary and the roadside drain

You must provide a plan of the proposed verge treatment which includes the dimensions of the proposed area to be landscaped (space is available on the reverse of this form for this purpose, or a separate plan can be submitted).

The particulars shown in this application are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Continued

## Verge Treatment Variation – Rural – Application Form

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### Verge Treatment Diagram

Please show the location of existing public utilities, street trees, vehicular crossover, footpath, and dimensions and details of the area to be landscaped in the space below, or attach a separate file.