

Council Policy – Reserve Development and Community Volunteers

Responsible Directorate	Operations
Responsible Business Unit/s	Operations
Responsible Officer	Manager Operations
Affected Business Units	Operations

Objective

The objective of this Policy is to provide direction in the maintenance and development of the Shire's reserves, undertaken by community volunteers, is carried out within an approved and managed framework.

Scope

This Policy is intended for use by shire staff, volunteers, and other relevant stakeholders.

Policy

Introduction

Community volunteers can have valuable input to the enrichment and management of reserves within the Shire. Their role contributes to:

- restoring the conservation values within natural areas
- raising community awareness on the values of the reserves and facilities
- promoting healthy living and improved mental health
- learning new skills and techniques
- community awareness and stewardship of an area

When volunteers want to undertake an activity within a Shire managed reserve there is a process that needs to be followed to ensure the volunteering effort has a positive and lasting effect on the area. It is designed so the Shire has knowledge and approves all on ground community works in the reserves before they commence.

Before an application is submitted, it is recommended for the Community groups to contact Shire Officers to discuss the proposal. They can provide advice on site preparation, suitable native species, location of plants, location of structures and maintenance requirements.

The proposal of works can include but not limited to: planting, watering, mulching, slashing, mowing, installation of signs, seating and some types of fencing.

This process also ensures the community activities align with the Shire's maintenance works. Agreement should also be reached on the ongoing management and Shire budget considerations.

Community volunteers are to submit a Reserve Improvement or Development Application Form online, before works are due to commence, to ensure application is assessed in a timely fashion.

The Shire assesses the application against the following principles:

- follows the endorsed Reserve Management Plan (or similar) recommendations if one is available,
- the proposed works are in accordance with the purpose and values of the reserve,
- only locally native plant species, or Shire approved plants to be used within the Reserve,
- activities do not cause any safety issues,
- maintenance activities of the site decided,
- volunteers have the skills to undertake the works or can be instructed on the best practice.

Unless in an agreed partnership with the Shire for the project, the nominated community volunteers are responsible for the ongoing maintenance of any planting within Shire reserve for two years. This may include weed control, plant watering, mulching, plant surrounds/stakes maintenance and general care of the site.

The application process will involve those Shire officers that have a vested interest in the reserve, including those that currently undertake maintenance of the area. This will ensure the Operations staff are aware of the works taking place and can prevent damage to plants or other structures during maintenance activities.

Definitions

Development is the growth and advancement of an area.

Maintenance activities to protect and enhance the condition of an area.

Reserve is an area classed as a natural area or park managed or owned by the Shire.

Volunteers are individuals or a group that provide support to help organise and undertake activities, willing to participate while not being paid.

Related Documents

- Council Policy - Control of Weeds
- Urban and Rural Forest Strategy 2018-2028

Legislation / Local Law Requirements

- *Local Government Act 1995*

Amendment Record

Relevant Delegations		Nil	
		Date	Resolution Number
Council Adoption		Not identified	
Version	Date	Resolution Number	Amendment Details
2	25 January 2010	OCM023.1/01/10	
3	29 September 2015	OCM187/09/15	
4	18 December 2017	OCM179/12/17	
5	17 March 2025	OCM068/03/25	Formatted to new policy template