

Vegetation Damage Signage

Policy

December 2021

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POLICY

The Vegetation Damage Signage Policy is to support the Council's Greening Central Coast Strategy vision to *Increase Central Coast's Green Infrastructure to enhance its unique identity, landscape and lifestyle*. Increasing canopy cover is the simplest form of Green Infrastructure and includes a single tree (street trees/park trees) to larger natural areas (bushland and coastal reserves). Without stricter controls the ongoing, unauthorised clearance or damage to vegetation on Council-managed land will continue to cause deterioration, habitat modification and fragmentation of canopy cover. This also increases the risk of the Council's ability to deliver the Greening Central Coast Strategy which aims to increase the Precinct's canopy cover to 30% by 2030.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to reduce and deter the occurrence of vandalism of Council owned/managed green assets.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to Council managed Crown land and Council-owned parks and reserves.

PROCESS

The Council will provide clear, accurate and consistent advice through correspondence and possible community education and awareness regarding the requirement for formal prior approval regarding the removal and/or trimming of trees or vegetation.

When unauthorised clearing or vandalism has occurred, the Council may erect signage on Council owned or managed land to educate the community about illegal clearing/damage. The presence of these signs will help the Council to further spread the message that we value our green infrastructure and that these actions are not acceptable and that consequences may apply.

Before signage is installed Council staff must have sufficient evidence to believe intentional vandalism has occurred. This can usually be determined through a visual inspection.

Council staff may consult with relevant stakeholders/property owners who may be impacted by the sign prior to installation. Signage type A will be in place for up to five years or until the damaged vegetation has regrown or been restored back to its original state, whichever is the shorter period. Signage type B will be in place until the vandalised trees recover or they are removed by the Council.

Sign details will be entered into the Signage Register with monitoring timeframes.

In conjunction with installation of the signage, the Council should also consider re-establishment of replacement vegetation, whether it be the planting of single trees or revegetation efforts.

Additionally, other action available to the Council under the *Crown Lands Act 1976* in response to unauthorised clearing may include rehabilitation of the site. In cases where the offender is caught in the act of unauthorised clearing, legal action may be initiated.

PROCEDURE

Educational signage will be erected when clear breaches of the *Crown Lands Act 1976 Part VI – Unlawful Acts relating to Crown Land* have been identified and/or if the Council is confident that an act of vandalism has occurred. The need for signage will be determined by the relevant Council officer based on the significance of the offence/damage using the following signage type:

Signage Type A –

Signage may be used where natural reserves, coastal foreshore vegetation has been damaged (not including declared weeds), including new plantings. Two sign sizes are available depending on the original vegetation height.

Vegetation height up to 1.5m

- Sign size: 900mm x 600mm or 600mm x 900mm on posts up to 3m high.

Vegetation height greater than 1.5m

- Sign size: 1200mm x 900mm or 900mm x 1,200mm on posts up to 5m high.

Signage Type B –

Signage will be used where nature strip trees, park trees and strands of single trees have been vandalised. There is no minimum tree size, the signs can be used for newly planted/young trees or well-established mature trees.

Sign size: 650mm x 500mm

If the vegetation is dead preference is for the sign to be placed on the tree/trees themselves at a height that is visible but not easily removed. If there is a chance that the vegetation may recover preference is that the sign be placed on a single pole close to the tree at a height of 1.2–1.8m.

Refer to Appendix for examples of sign wording and layout.

The following steps will be implemented if vegetation damage has occurred:

- Signage Type A or B will be chosen applicable to the specific situation. Signage will be erected regardless of whether the identity of those responsible for the damage has been identified.
- Replacement vegetation will be planted at the site of the damage to aid recovery where suitable.

- . Signage will remain in place up to a maximum period of five years. During this period, the signage can be removed following a review based on the rate of regrowth and or reestablishment of vegetation.
- . The size of the sign panels/installation height of the signs may change depending on the application and extent of the damage. In some cases more than one sign may be installed particularly if multiple trees have been vandalised or a large area has been cleared.

Not all acts of vandalism will be signed.

REVIEW

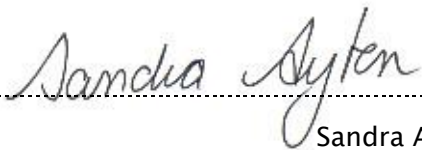
This Policy will be reviewed every three years, unless organisational and legislative changes require more frequent modification.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- . *Crown Lands Act 1976 Part VI – Unlawful Acts relating to Crown land*
- . Central Coast Strategic Plan 2014–2024
- . Greening Central Coast Strategy 2021

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Approved by:

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Sandra Ayton
GENERAL MANAGER

APPENDIX

Example for sign wording

Signage Type A



CENTRAL COAST
COUNCIL

**Our native vegetation is
worth protecting**



**We suspect native
vegetation has been
vandalised**

Native vegetation provides valuable habitat for native
animals and prevents erosion.

We encourage anyone with information to contact the Council

6429 8900

Damaging vegetation without a permit is illegal under the
Crown Lands Act 1976 Part VI.

Signage Type B



CENTRAL COAST
COUNCIL

Our trees are worth protecting



We suspect this tree has been vandalised

We encourage anyone with information
to contact the Council

6429 8900

Damaging vegetation without a permit is illegal
under the *Crown Lands Act 1976 Part VI*.