CITY OF GOSNELLS

City of Gosnells
Verge Guidelines

Contents

Overview

Street verges (nature strips) are in the public domain and house essential services such as drainage, power and communication lines. It is important to have guidelines to manage access to, and safety and appearance of, verges.

These guidelines have been developed to assist residents carrying out landscaping and other improvement works to their verges.

The City is a Waterwise Council and strongly encourages all residents to consider the benefits of a waterwise landscape on their verge to reduce water use, increase biodiversity, and help cool the urban environment.

What is a street verge?

The verge is the area between the edge of the road and the private property boundary. The verge provides a number of benefits for the community including:

- Improving the look and feel of the neighbourhood
- Reduction of heat through provision of street trees and vegetation
- Stormwater management through increased infiltration and groundwater recharging

The purpose of the verge is to:

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

Design considerations

A well-designed verge can improve the liveability and visual appeal of a suburb. The verge can increase biodiversity and habitat for wildlife by providing linkages and corridors between areas of vegetation. A biodiverse, green verge assists to cool the local neighbourhood by reducing the urban heat effect caused by large areas of hard and dark coloured surfaces.

Some design considerations include:

- Vehicular visibility – how your verge treatment impacts vehicle sight lines, both on the road and entering/exiting properties. Plant heights and species should be carefully considered.
- Access and movement – plants or tree limbs encroaching into footpath areas or loose material such as pebbles and gravel are easily displaced and could spill on the road, footpath and adjoining properties posing a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- Services and public infrastructure – the verge is home to a number of services and public infrastructure. Public utilities, state government authorities and their authorised contractors have specific responsibilities and rights to access and undertake works on the verge as required.
- Tree roots – when improving your verge be careful not to cut or interfere with the root systems of mature trees.
- Dial **1100** for Dial Before You Dig or go to **www.byda.com.au** to find the location of any below ground services within your verge.

Planning your verge layout and taking design considerations into account is an important step

Examples of verge design

These designs meet the requirements under the City's verge guidelines.

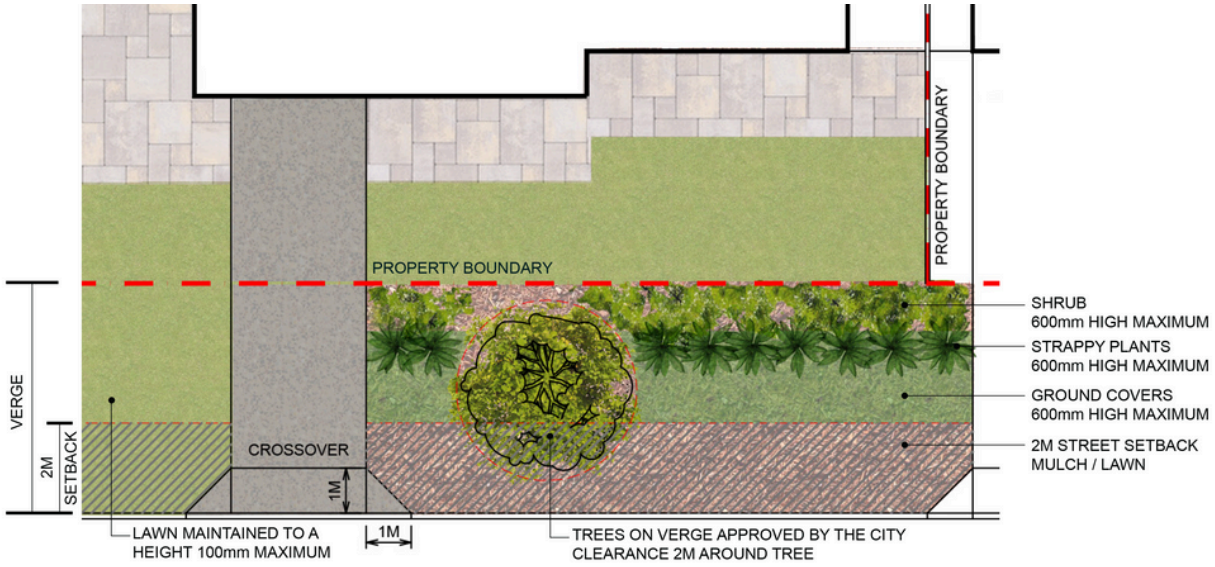


Image 1 shows the suggested layout of a verge garden without a footpath to meet the City's verge requirements.

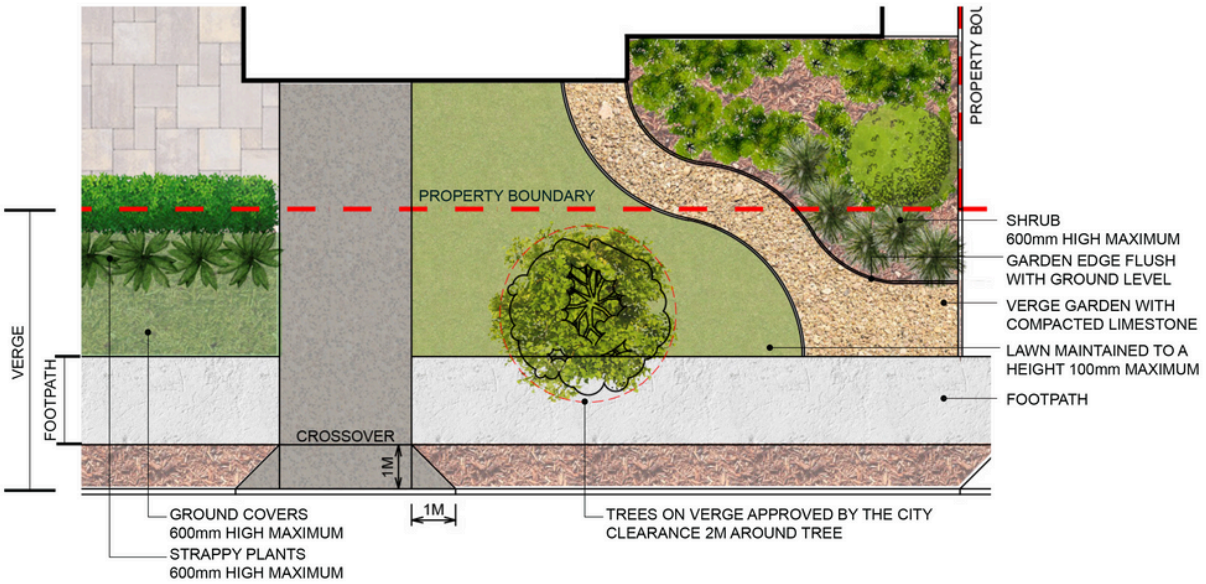


Image 2 shows the suggested layout of a verge garden where there is a footpath present.

Who is responsible for verge maintenance?

The City has management responsibility for verges, however encourages the property owner or occupier to take pride in the verge which borders their property to improve their property and the streetscape.

This may include:

- Pruning plants and mowing lawns
- Weed control
- Reticulation repair and maintenance
- Topping up mulch
- Maintaining approved installed verge treatments
- Helping water street trees.

The City is responsible for the planting, removal and maintenance of trees on the verge to minimise hazards, improve street presentation and ensure their long term survival.

Maintenance requests regarding can be submitted via the **City's website** by selecting 'request tree service', or by contacting the City on 9397 3000.

The City is also responsible for provision and maintenance of public infrastructure located within the verge such as footpaths and kerbing.

Residents are encouraged to take pride in their verge and streetscape.

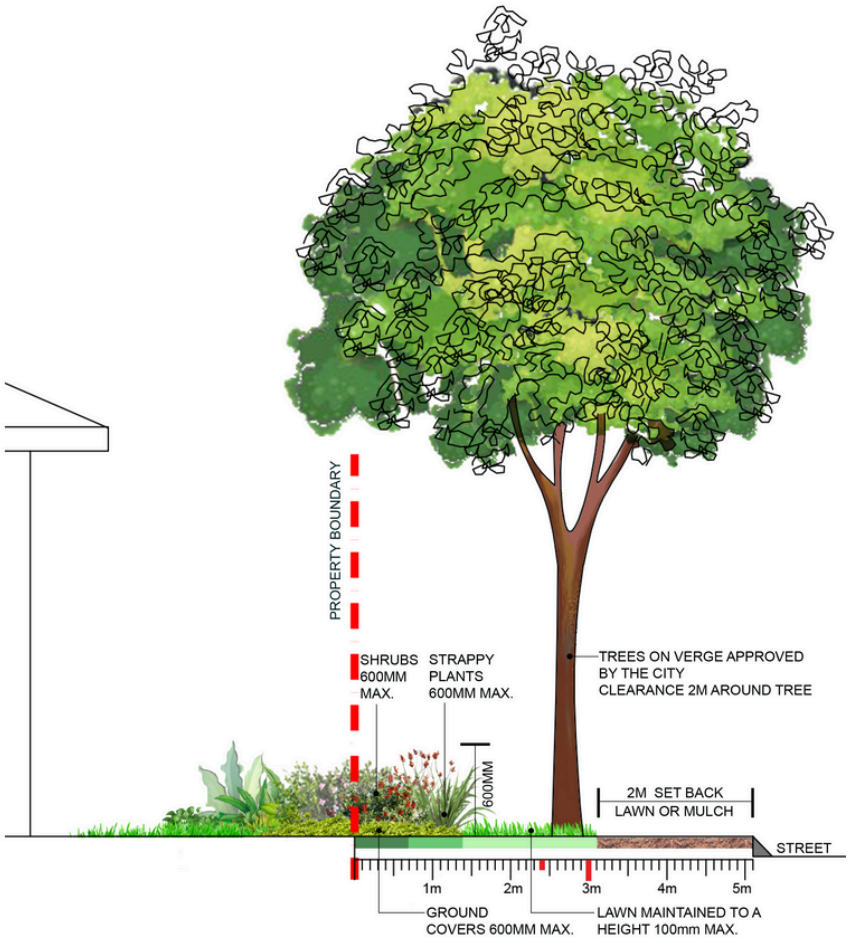
A streetscape that looks inviting can increase market demand and property prices[1]

[1] *Your Home (2020) Streetscapes, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, accessed 30 September 2024*

What is Allowed on the Verge?

The following table provides guidance on what can and cannot be installed on your verge:

Things you can install	Things you cannot install
• Gardens • Plants • Lawn - maintained to a height no greater than 100mm • Woodchips • Organic mulch • Reticulation • Brick paving • Compacted limestone • Artificial lawn	• Barriers or bollards • Structures such as planter boxes • Plants that are thorny, poisonous, or hazardous • Fruit trees • Any impervious materials such as bitumen or concrete. • Mowing strips (brick paved edging or kerbing), where they are not flush with the ground level • Rocks, crushed brick, or similar loose materials that can be a tripping hazard • Star pickets



While hard landscaping such as brick paving, compacted limestone, and artificial lawn is not prohibited, the City prefers the use of soft landscaping such as turf or mulch. Refer to the "Waterwise Verge" section to learn about the benefits of choosing an alternative to hard landscaping.

Any verge treatment installed must not cause an obstruction to the road or footpath. An open space of at least one metre in diameter must be maintained around any street tree where hard landscaping is installed that prevents water penetration (refer diagram).

Street Trees

Property owners are entitled to have a street tree provided by the City for their verge. The City will supply, plant and maintain the tree.

Street trees improve the health of communities, improve the appearance of streets, reduce urban heating and provide shade and shelter for people and wildlife.

Residents can request a free verge tree if one is not already planted on a verge at **new tree request**. Applications can be made by the property owner, property manager or strata body. When submitting your request, you can specify your preferred tree from the approved list at **suggested street trees** or the list of suggested trees at the end of these guidelines.

Street tree requests close in March each year and are subject to availability.

Tree species are selected based on their:

- suitability
- likely impact on services
- the size of the planting space available

A mixture of endemic, native, and exotic trees are planted by the City, as a mix of tree origins ensures a greater level of biodiversity and disease resistance. Properties usually receive one tree per frontage, but corner properties can receive up to three trees with an additional two on the side verge.

The City's tree planting program runs from June through to the end of winter each year. To assist in tree growth, all trees are well watered and a slow-release fertiliser is added. The City also installs a tree well (the black plastic ring at the base of the tree) to help keep water near the tree roots.

The City waters new trees at least once a week, however residents can assist with additional watering if the tree is showing signs of water stress. This will help to ensure new street trees have the best opportunity to thrive. Street verges are harsh environments, due to heat, drought, wind, pollutants as well as vehicular movements. Parking too close to a tree's root system, as an example, can prove harmful as it compacts the soil making it hard for the tree to receive water and nutrients.

Management of street trees is guided by the City's **Street Tree Policy**. This policy guides the City's decisions regarding the planting, management, and removal of street trees.

Waterwise Verges

Improving your verge with waterwise native plants and mulch, while maintaining safety and access, can improve environmental values and increase street appeal. Residents may wish to replace grass, weeds or a hard surface on their verge with a waterwise native plant garden.

The City strongly encourages residents to reduce water use wherever possible. The average household uses around 60% of their water in the garden, so making your verge waterwise can save water and money.

Efficient use of water can be achieved through plant selection, mulching and watering methods. A verge planted with a waterwise garden doesn't need as much maintenance, water, or fertilisers.

See the Waterwise plants list section at the end of these guidelines for a range of plants best suited for verges.

Waterwise Resources for Residents

The City provides a range of resources for residents. These include:

- Regular gardening and sustainability workshops to provide advice and local knowledge
- Brochures to help residents plan gardens that are more likely to thrive in local environmental conditions. Providing for the two main soil types in the City, the brochures have a comprehensive list of suitable native plants, as well as detailed information on garden design, watering, pruning, mulching, and fertilising
- The Switch Your Thinking program, which provides City residents with discounts on products to help reduce waste, energy and water use, including compost bins and worm farms. Visit switchyourthinking.com for more information

More information on these resources is available here **Home Gardening Resources**.

Vehicle Crossings

A vehicle crossing (also known as a crossover) is the part of a driveway that crosses the verge between the kerb and the property boundary. The Residential Design Codes (R-Codes) outline the acceptable locations for crossings and driveways. Information on acceptable locations can be found at **Crossings and Driveways**.

All owners of a developed lot must install a permanent crossing to enable access from City roads, lanes or other thoroughfares.

In addition to any review required during the development approval or building permit process, approval from the City's Engineering team is encouraged prior to constructing a crossing to confirm if the crossover is eligible for a City subsidy. Please note, there is no fee for the application to construct a vehicle crossing. The Engineering Team can be contacted on 9397 3000.

All vehicle crossings are to be constructed in accordance with the City's "Specifications for the Construction of Vehicle Crossings".

In instances where the vehicle crossing is associated with a new house, it is recommended that the vehicle crossing application be made at the same time as the application for a building permit, to minimise the risk of additional costs to relocate services if necessary.

Once you have lodged your application, a City officer will inspect the site to assess if the proposed crossing impacts on any existing infrastructure. This includes impacts to:

- Kerbs
- Footpaths
- Drainage structures
- Street lights
- Street trees
- Any other assets or services

The City provides resources for residents and developers including a specifications document, standard drawings and information sheets. To view these and for more information, or to lodge an application, please visit the City's website at **Crossings and Driveways**.

Any changes to verge infrastructure to accommodate the crossing will be at the applicant's cost. The construction and any future maintenance of a vehicle crossing is the responsibility of the property owner.

Verge Permits

Building and demolition works can sometimes result in damage to the City's infrastructure on the verge including paths, kerbs, drainage and street trees. A verge permit, issued by the City, enables a person to use the verge provided there is no damage to the verge or inconvenience to neighbours and other residents.

The verge permit includes provisions for things such as:

- temporary crossings from the public road to the property, to protect the verge
- storing materials
- locating a bulk waste bin

The verge permit application form along with other information about verge permits can be found here **Verge Permit Application Form**.

The footpath must always remain clear. Where there is a street tree on the verge, it will need to be protected and maintained during any construction or demolition period.

The City's **Guidelines for Builders: using the verge** provides more information for people building within the City on requirements for caring for the verge during construction.

Please contact the City's Building Team on 9397 3000 for guidance prior to works starting.

Waterwise Plants List

Ground cover	Grasses / strappy plants	Shrubs
Blue Lechenaultia *Lechenaultia biloba*	Many-flowered Fringe Lily *Thysanotus multiflorus*	Blue Smoke Bush *Conospermum caeruleum*
Grevillea tenuiloba	Knotted Club Rush *Ficinia nodosa*	Egg and Bacon Plant *Eutaxia myrtifolia*
Grivillea 'Starburst' *Grivillea saccata*	Kangaroo Paw *Anigozanthos manglesii*	Dwarf Agonis *Agonis flexuosa 'Dwarf'*
Dampiera *Dampiera diversifolia*	Native Iris or Purple Flag *Pattersonia occidentalis*	Bottlebrush 'Little John' *Callistemon viminalis*
Southern Blechnum Banksia *Banksia blechnifolia*	Tall Speargrass *Austrotipa flavescens*	Narrow-winged Wattle *Acacia stenoptera*
Sturt's Desert Pea *Swainsona formosa*	Morning Iris *Orthrosanthus laxus*	Grass Wattle *Andersonia lehmanniana*
Snakebush *Hemiandra pungens*	Devon Skies *Sisyrinchium 'Devon Skies'*	Mondorup Bell *Darwinia macrostegia*
Running Postman *Kennedia prostrata*	Blueberry Lily *Dianella revoluta*	Aniseed Boronia *Boronia crenulata*
Couch Honeypot *Banksia dallanneyi*	Spiny Cottonheads *Conostylis aculeta*	Common Brown Pea *Bossiaea eriocarpa*
Granny's Bonnets *Isotropis cuneifolia*	Catspaw *Anigozanthos humilis*	Hairy Yellow Pea *Gompholobium tomentosum*
Coral Vine *Kennedia coccinea*	Grey Cottonheads *Conostylis candicans*	Devil's Pins *Hovea pungens*

Common Trees Planted in Verges Across the City

Common and botanical name	Tree size	Suitable for verges	Origin
Eastern Redbud *Cersis canadensis*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic
Evergreen Ash *Fraxinus griffithii*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic
Crepe Myrtle *Lagerstroemia indica*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic
Magnolia *Magnolia grandiflora 'Little Gem'*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic
Magnolia *Magnolia grandiflora 'Teddy Bear'*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic
Cherry Blossom Plum *Prunus blireana*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic
Ornamental Flowering Plum *Prunus cerasifera 'nigra'*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic
Double-flowered Almond *Prunus dulcis*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic
Capital Pear *Pyrus Calleryana 'Capital'*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges under 2 metres wide Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Exotic

Continued.....

Common and botanical name	Tree size	Suitable for verges	Origin
WA Weeping Peppermint *Agonis flexuosa*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	WA Native
Kings Park Special *Callistemon 'Kings Park Special'*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	WA Native
Weeping Bottlebrush *Callistemon viminalis*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	WA Native
WA Red-flowering Gum *Corymbia ficifolia*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	WA Native
Coral Gum *Eucalyptus torquata*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	WA Native
Red-flowering Paperbark *Melaleuca viridiflora*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Aus Native
Poinciana *Delonix regia*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide	Exotic
Chinese Pistachio *Pistacia chinensis*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide	Exotic
Jacaranda *Jacaranda mimosofolia*	Large (16 metres +)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide	Exotic
Manchurian Pear *Pyrus ussuriensis*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide	Exotic
Ornamental Pear *Pyrus calleryana*	Small (4-8 metres)	Verges 2-6 metres wide Verges 6 metres + wide	Exotic
Queensland Brush Box Tree *Lophostemon confertus*	Large (16 metres +)	Verges 6 metres + wide Suitable for under power lines	Aus Native
Lebbeck Tree *Albizia lebbeck*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 6 metres + wide	Aus Native

Continued.....

Common and botanical name	Tree size	Suitable for verges	Origin
Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata*	Large (16 metres +)	Verges 6 metres + wide	Aus Native
Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata*	Large (16 metres +)	Verges 6 metres + wide	Aus Native
Rough-barked Apple *Angophora floribunda*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 6 metres + wide	Aus Native
Red-flowering Yellow Gum *Eucalyptus leucoxylon 'Rosea'*	Large (16 metres +)	Verges 6 metres + wide	Aus Native
Weeping Paperbark *Melaleuca leucadendra*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 6 metres + wide	WA Native
Narrow-leafed Black Peppermint *Eucalyptus nicholii*	Medium (8-16 metres)	Verges 6 metres + wide	Aus Native
Red-flowering Ironbark *Eucalyptus sideroxylon 'Rosea'*	Large (16 metres +)	Verges 6 metres + wide	Aus Native

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10/24