

# Tree Removal

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***How do I get approval to remove a tree on my property?***

A complying development certificate for tree management work (PDF) must be completed and returned to The City of Newcastle for processing. Once a determination has been made, you will receive a letter of the outcome. For further information please contact the Customer Enquiry Centre on 4974 2000.

### ***How much does it cost?***

One to five trees - \$83.00  
Over five trees - \$22.00 per additional tree  
Plus archiving fee - \$36.00

### ***What is an arborist?***

An arborist (or arboriculturist) is a specialist with diploma qualifications in the care of urban trees. The DCP5.03 and the Urban Forest Technical Manual (PDF) provide information regarding the necessary documentation and qualification required for an arborist. It is important you determine that the arborist's qualifications meet Council requirements before you employ them.

### ***Hiring a suitably qualified person***

It is important that any person you contract to remove trees, or to diagnose and report on tree risk and condition, is suitably qualified, experienced and adequately insured. It is very important to see evidence of qualifications and insurance cover as there have been local instances of serious misrepresentation of qualifications and skills.

### ***Guidelines for preparing an arborist report for tree removal***

Whilst each arborist (min AQF 5) will approach the task of tree diagnosis and reporting differently, there are some common matters that need to be addressed in most tree reports.

The following matters should be addressed in an arborist report submitted to Council:

- The full name, business address, telephone number(s), evidence of technical qualifications(s) and the experience of the arborist carrying out the tree inspection, diagnosis and reporting
- The full address of the site containing trees
- The full name of the person or company for whom the report is prepared
- The methods and techniques used in the site and tree inspection
- A suitably scaled plan of the site showing: the location of all trees on the site and any trees on adjoining land which overhang the subject land, the lot boundaries the location of above and below ground services/ utilities in proximity to the trees shown
- A table showing for each tree surveyed: the common and full scientific name; the age class; the estimated height; the trunk diameter at 1.4 metres; the canopy spread to the four cardinal points; a summary of the trees' health and structural condition; an estimation of the trees useful life expectancy using appropriate industry methods
- A summary and/ or discussion of other relevant tree and site information such as soil and drainage characteristics, wildlife habitation, roof structure and distribution, pests and diseases, and tree hazard assessment details

- Tree hazard assessments should be conducted and recorded in accordance with industry best practice
- Supporting evidence such as annotated photographs and laboratory results if relevant to the proposed works or to assist in describing tree or site conditions
- A discussion of all options available, including why they are recommended or not recommended, eg can a built structure be relocated, repaired and tree(s) retained?
- A review of the implications of the proposed development on the health and structural condition of trees to be retained
- A description of the recommended protection measures to be put in place to ensure the protection of trees to be retained, and a description of any proposed method of tree removal
- A list of recommendations and the reasons for their adoption
- The sources of technical information referred to in the report References not used in the report should not be included
- Present information as objectively as possible without attempting to support a specific development outcome
- Provide the scientific and common names of all tree species proposed for planting, including recommendations on the size and quality characteristics of trees to be planted.

### ***What happens next?***

A Council officer will review your application and the arborists report and will check the tree before deciding whether it can issue a complying development certificate.

### ***Can I clear my block of land before I put my development plans to Council?***

No. You would be in breach of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. You are required to submit information about the impact of your development on the existing trees with your main development proposal.

It is important to get the appropriate approval before you cut down a tree on your land. Council requires that applications for a complying development certificate for the removal of a tree be accompanied by a report prepared by an arborist who holds the Diploma of Horticulture (Arboriculture) qualification.

### ***Can I place mulch or green waste on Council land?***

No. All cuttings and/or mulch should be disposed of appropriately. Tipping of these materials on Council land is dumping which can incur penalties or prosecution.

### ***Trees on neighbouring land (private)***

To apply for tree removal on a neighbour's property you will need:

- the owner's consent
- to submit an application for a complying development certificate for tree management work to Newcastle City Council for processing.

It is essential that the owner of the land on which the tree is situated signs the complying development application form.