

Planning Application Handout

Tree Removal/Pruning

Is this the right handout for me?

This checklist is for vegetation removal or pruning only. If vegetation removal is associated with other use, development or works, please refer to the relevant handout.

How do I know if I need a permit to remove or prune my tree?

It can be tricky to work out if you need a planning permit for tree removal or pruning, as there are different controls within the Knox Planning Scheme which protect vegetation – and it will depend on the zoning and overlays that apply to your land, as well as the size and type of vegetation you want to remove.

Find out what planning controls apply to your land by doing a [property and parcel search](#) on the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning website.

This handout gives you some information to help you determine if a planning permit is required, and Council's Planning Services team are here to help if you need it!

Canopy trees in residential areas

[Amendment VC289](#) was gazetted by the Minister for Planning on 15 September 2025. The Amendment introduced Clause 52.37 into all Planning Schemes across Victoria.

From that date, you may be required to get a Planning Permit to remove a tree from your property if it is located within a residential zone, even if there are no overlays on the property.

This is in conjunction with any other overlays that may already apply to properties which require a Permit for the removal, destruction or lopping of trees.

When is a permit required?

A permit is required to remove, destroy, and lop a canopy tree over 5 metres in height, in the above residential zones:

- Anywhere on a vacant lot
- Where there is an existing dwelling on the land – the canopy tree is located within 6 metres of the narrowest street frontage or 4.5 metres from the rear boundary.

What is a canopy tree?

A canopy tree means a tree that has:

- A height of more than 5 metres above ground level; and
- A trunk circumference of more than 0.5 metres, measured at 1.4 metres above ground level; and
- a canopy diameter of at least 4 metres.

By comparison – a single storey house with a pitched roof on a flat site is about 5 metres in height.

Are there exemptions?

Dead trees and [noxious and environmental weeds](#) are exempt.

In some cases, there are exemptions for emergencies and fire prevention – this is a bit more complicated and should be discussed with the Planning Services team.

Overlays

In addition to the new tree protection rules at Clause 52.37, some trees and vegetation within Knox are protected by overlays. These overlays protect significant vegetation and landscapes. These include:

- Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO)
- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)
- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)

It's a good idea to talk to us before commencing any construction works or vegetation removal due to the complexity of these planning controls. You should confirm the permit requirements with us.

Large sites over 4000m²

Clause 52.17 of the Knox Planning Scheme protects native vegetation on large sites over 4000m² in area, regardless of the zoning of the land.

A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead vegetation. Some exemptions do apply – this is complex, and it's best to contact us for advice.

Previous development

Trees and plants on land with previous development are protected through the plans that were approved at the time. For example:

- dual occupancy development
- multi-unit development
- This includes landscape plans

In this case, Council must give you written approval or you'll need to amend the plans. Contact our Planning Services team before you start.

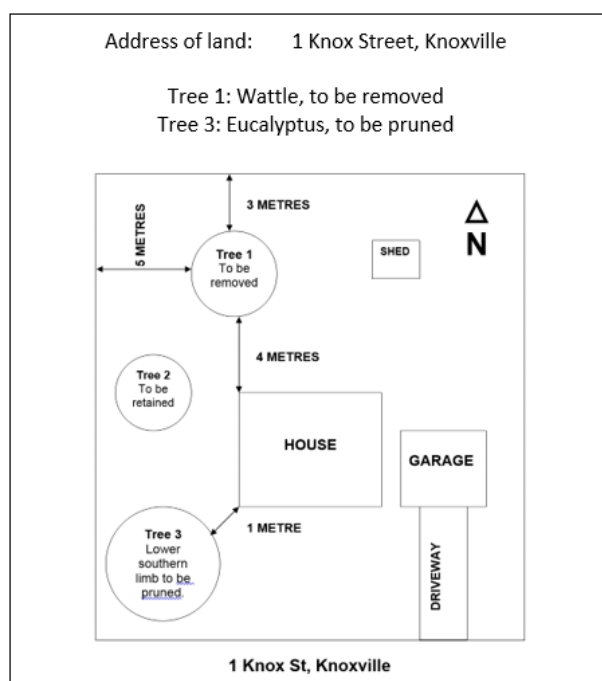
Replacement Planting

If Council decides to issue a planning permit, there will be a requirement for replacement planting.

What information do I need to submit with my application?

- ☐ A covering letter describing why the vegetation is to be removed OR pruned, e.g. diseased, too close to dwelling
- ☐ A written statement prepared by a suitably qualified person – such as an arborist, identifying the species, height and health of the tree if it is proposed to be removed or lopped due to its health or stability
- ☐ Photographs of the tree/s or vegetation to be removed or pruned
- ☐ Completed application form (not required if lodging online)
- ☐ Permit application fee
- ☐ Copy of title, title plan and any encumbrances searched within 3 months
- ☐ A site plan (example below) that shows:
 - The location of all canopy trees and other vegetation on the site.
 - The canopy trees proposed to be removed, destroyed or lopped. If you know the species, height and canopy diameter – please include this information
 - The location and details of existing and new canopy trees, including species, type, expected height and expected canopy diameter at maturity, soil conditions and proposed irrigation
- ☐ Details of any proposed buildings or works, including plans of the development, if the canopy tree is proposed to be removed, destroyed or lopped to enable construction

Example of Site Plan



Advertising fees

If the proposed tree removal is likely to affect a neighbouring property or the character of the neighbourhood, Council may require the application be advertised. In these instances, advertising fees will apply.

Lodging your application

You can submit your planning application electronically through Council's Online Services portal. This will save you time and money, as you won't need to print out any plans and documents and you can pay your application fees online. [You will need to Register to use this service.](#)

Rest assured, we continue to support residents and businesses preferring to submit their applications in hard copy.

Contact

If you have any questions regarding preparing your planning application, please contact Planning Services on 9298 8125.