

# Vegetation Removal

## Vegetation removal – replacement planting and payments

From time to time people apply to Wellington City Council to remove vegetation from road reserve, often to build structures such as garages or retaining walls.

### **It is the Council's preferred choice to keep vegetation where possible.**

But if we allow you to remove vegetation from an area you may be required under the Council's Verges Policy to either carry out replacement planting (mitigation planting) and/or make a payment (mitigation payment).

### Replacement planting

The Council will decide what is to be planted and specify the size, volume of planting, location and maintenance. This planting may not necessarily be at the location from where vegetation was removed. Planting is at applicants cost.

### Payments

The Council requires payments to recover costs associated with maintaining the vegetation as well as compensation to replace the gap/loss in value associated with removing vegetation. Payments are based on an assessment by Council staff.

Payments received by the Council will be used to benefit the community through our specimen tree-planting programme.

### **How is the assessment made?**

The assessment often depends on the scale of works proposed and the significance of the vegetation.

Significant vegetation will be assessed by the Council on a case-by-case basis, and will cover a range of factors:

- trees or vegetation over 2m in height or with a circumference greater than 200mm, measured at 1.45m from ground level
- areas of vegetation covering more than 5m<sup>2</sup> (excluding pest plants as defined by the Wellington City Council Pest Management Plan)
- existing roadside gardens or street trees planted and maintained by Parks & Gardens
- the type of vegetation (species)
- maintenance costs
- health of the plants
- streetscape value and quality
- works proposed
- consent or easement conditions

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- quantity of land to be used
- amenity value
- other residents' concerns.

Council staff will also consider the ecological context, potential lifespan, whether the vegetation is indigenous to the region, its maturity, rarity, health and aesthetic quality.

The Council's decision to allow the removal of vegetation – or not – depends on an overall assessment of a proposal's benefits and detriments. In many cases the Council may have to consider the magnitude of those benefits and detriments and the balance between them.

Replacement planting and payment takes place only when Parks & Gardens has approved the removal of vegetation – it is not to be assumed by the applicant. It is an offence to remove vegetation under the Public Places bylaw. The Council retains the right not to allow planned works to proceed.

**Table One: Guide to Replacement planting and payments**

| <b>Area description</b>                          | <b>Likely Payments and Planting</b>   |
|--|---|
| Area contains no large vegetation                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planting only determined on a site-by-site basis</li> <li>• No payment required</li> </ul>   |
| Work area doesn't allow for replacement planting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planting not possible on site, other location found, payment covers compensation and planting at another location</li> <li>• Payment to be determined on a site-by-site basis</li> </ul> |
| Area contains little significant vegetation      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement planting determined on a site-by-site basis at applicant's cost plus compensation</li> <li>• Payment likely to be \$0–\$200</li> </ul>                                       |
| Area contains some significant vegetation        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement planting determined on a site-by-site basis at applicant's cost plus compensation</li> <li>• Payment likely to be \$200–\$400</li> </ul>                                     |
| Area contains significant vegetation             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement planting determined on a site-by-site basis at applicant's cost plus compensation</li> <li>• Payment likely to be \$400–\$5000</li> </ul>                                    |

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## Exceptions

The Verges Policy does not apply to heritage trees which are listed in the District Plan.

Compensation does not apply to Council works.

## Fines for damage to trees

Where damage occurs to trees during works the following fines apply.

| Tree damage   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Damage  | Cost                         |
| Scuffs, rips or scaring of bark tissue  | \$350 per 300mm <sup>2</sup> |
| Broken branches up to 100mm diameter at trunk   | \$500 each                   |
| Broken branches over 100mm diameter at trunk and major root damage  | \$1000 each                  |
| Major disfiguring of the tree as determined by a Council arborist   | \$2500–\$7500                |
| Removal of a tree or major damage likely to result in its death or decay as determined by a Council arborist, including all costs involved with the tree's removal, stump clearance, tree replacement (a mature specimen of the same species) | \$25,000–\$100,000           |

## And remember

This guideline not only guards the ecological value and liveability of our city – a leafy green tree-lined street adds to the capital value of your home.

For more information on the benefits of trees and vegetation, see the following link:

[treesaregood.com/treecare/tree\\_benefits.aspx](http://treesaregood.com/treecare/tree_benefits.aspx)