

A large, leafy green tree stands in the foreground of a residential street. The tree's branches spread across the upper half of the frame. In the background, a white car is parked on the side of the road, and other trees and buildings are visible under a clear blue sky. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

2021

**Urban
Nature Strip**
Guidelines



Mildura Rural City Council

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What is an Urban Nature Strip?

A nature strip is an area of public land between the property boundary and the kerb. It does not include the footpath, kerb or driveway. The nature strip adjoining your home or business provides an opportunity for greening our public spaces and streetscapes improving the amenity and liveability of our urban environment.

We have developed these guidelines to help and support you in the creation of your own safe and successful nature strip area.

Nature strips often contain essential services and an area for waste collection services. They allow easy pedestrian access to the road and footpath and are important for maintain safe visibility for road users.

The community and environmental benefits of nature strips include:

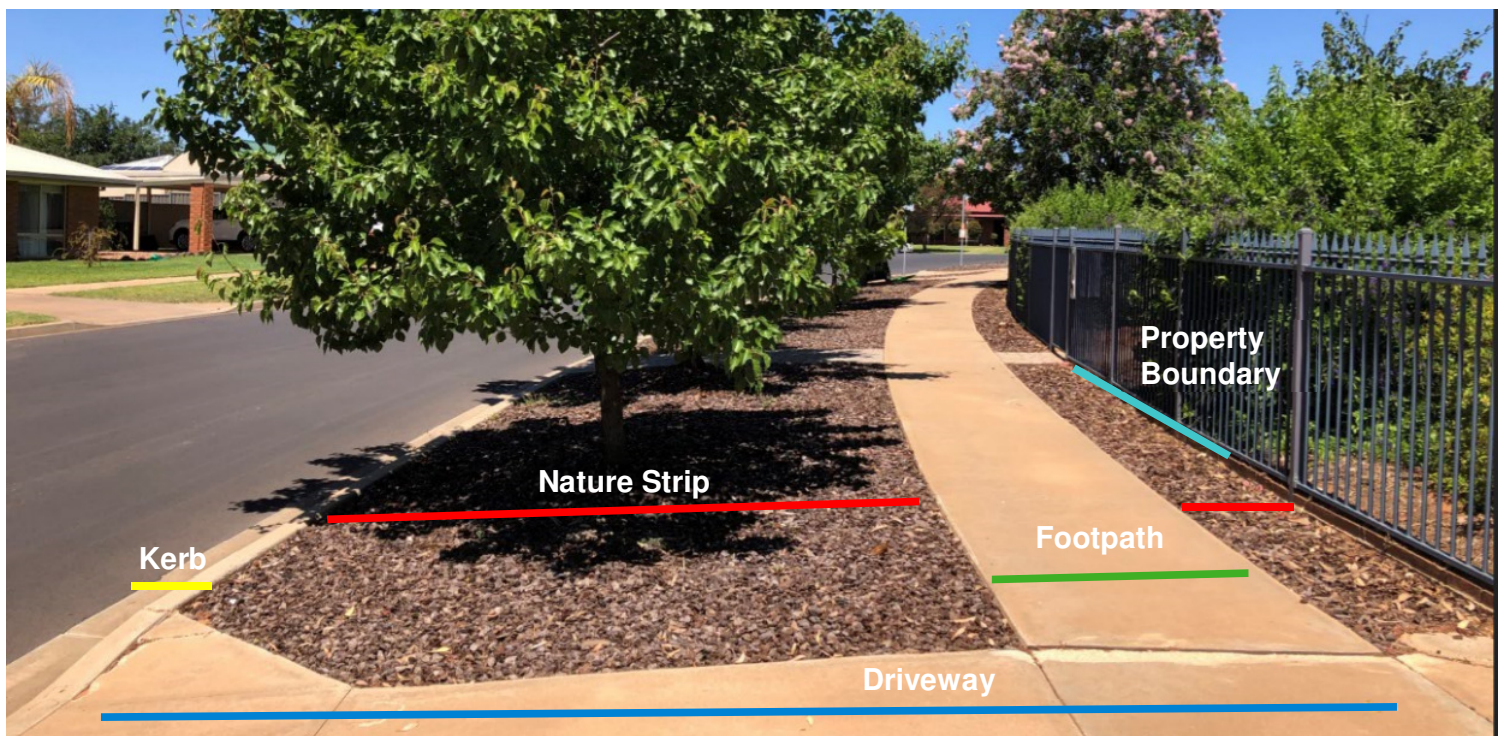
- Rainwater absorption, which improves soil health and reduces stormwater runoff.
- Creating a cooler urban environment in warm months.
- Providing shelter and shade for people and wildlife, especially on hot days.
- Providing green corridors for native wildlife including birds and insects.
- Contributing to the amenity and walkability of the street which benefits residents and businesses.

Nature strips help create a safer, more attractive and healthier environment for people to live and work in.

Who is Responsible for Maintaining Nature Strips?

The adjoining resident is responsible for maintaining the nature strip, including any irrigation system within the nature strip. Council recognises and encourages the contribution of residents and the important role they play in caring for and maintaining their nature strips adjoining homes or business.

Council plants, prunes and maintains all street trees. Residents are encouraged to help support the health of street trees by watering the tree(s) on their nature strips, especially in dry conditions.



Guidelines for creating your Nature Strip

To ensure your nature strip garden is a success here are some simple general guidelines to follow.



Chat to your neighbours

- Discuss your plans with neighbours before commencing work on your nature strip – the nature strip is a public space. Neighbours may be interested in planning complementary treatment on their nature strip.



Have Fun – but stay safe

When undertaking work always consider your safety and the safety of others

- Wear sturdy enclosed shoes, gloves and don't forget to wear sun protection.
- Always avoid working on the road when planting your nature strip
- Always maintain safe access for pedestrians – especially during the creation of your nature strip



Check for services

- Nature strips often contain above and below-ground services including lighting, power lines and poles, service access pits, water sewerage, stormwater, gas, telephone and optic fibre cables.
- If damage is caused to public utility service due to nature strip gardening activities, you must report the damage immediately to the appropriate authority.
- It is important to leave access around power poles and service pits if they are located within your nature strip
- Always obtain a **Dial before you Dig** report before you commence any digging or excavation work.

Dial before you dig is a free referral service to get information relating to underground infrastructure.

Website: www.1100.com.au



Care for your street tree

- Any treatment should support the ongoing health of your street tree (for example, maintaining organic mulch around the tree can help maintain soil moisture). Minimise soil disturbance within the tree's root zone by using hand tools rather than machinery if planting groundcovers and small shrubs.
- Street trees form an important part of the urban landscape providing a range of benefits including shade, biodiversity, amenity and habitat. Council is responsible for street trees and any enquiries regarding the care, establishment, maintenance and removal of street trees must be referred to Council. Please ring customer service on (03) 5018 8100 for assistance or to request a street tree.

What options are recommended for Nature Strips?

Council recommends two options as primary treatments for urban nature strips:

Option 1: Landscaping and gardens with low growing drought tolerant plants.

Option 2: Grass - hardy, drought tolerant native varieties such as Weeping Grass or Wallaby Grass.

Option 1: Landscaping and gardens

This generally involves the nature strip area being planted with low growing hardy, drought tolerant plants. There can be separate defined landscaped areas, including areas of native grass, within the nature strip. The information below provides guidelines for landscaping your nature strip.

Mulch



- A great low maintenance option that helps retain water in the soil and support plant growth.
- Use organic material such as wood chips or gravel/stones to a diameter of 20mm.
- Mulched areas must be flush with adjoining surfaces including footpath, kerb and driveways.
- Mulch may not be suitable in locations where there is a high risk of mulch being displaced during flooding and entering the stormwater system. Please consider if this is a possibility this when deciding on using mulch on your nature strip.



Garden edging

Garden edging including concrete, wood or steel and separate different areas of landscaped nature strip.

Choose suitable plants



- Choose hardy, drought tolerant plants – see the Nature Strip Plant list in these guidelines.
- It is important to ensure that your nature strip does not impact on lines of sight for traffic, including vehicles entering and exiting driveways. Choose plants that do not exceed 600 mm in height.
- Plant edible herbs and vegetables – you must ensure no contamination exists in the soil before proceeding with planting edible plants.
- Avoid using any plants that are known environmental weeds, prickly or spiky, poisonous or can be a common cause of allergies.



Irrigation System

A suitable irrigation systems for landscaped and gardens areas can be installed.



Ensure you maintain safe access for pedestrians

It is important that pedestrians can still access the nature strip without being blocked by gardens

Your nature strip must have a 600mm clearance from the edge of the kerb so people can open car doors, ground covers are recommended.

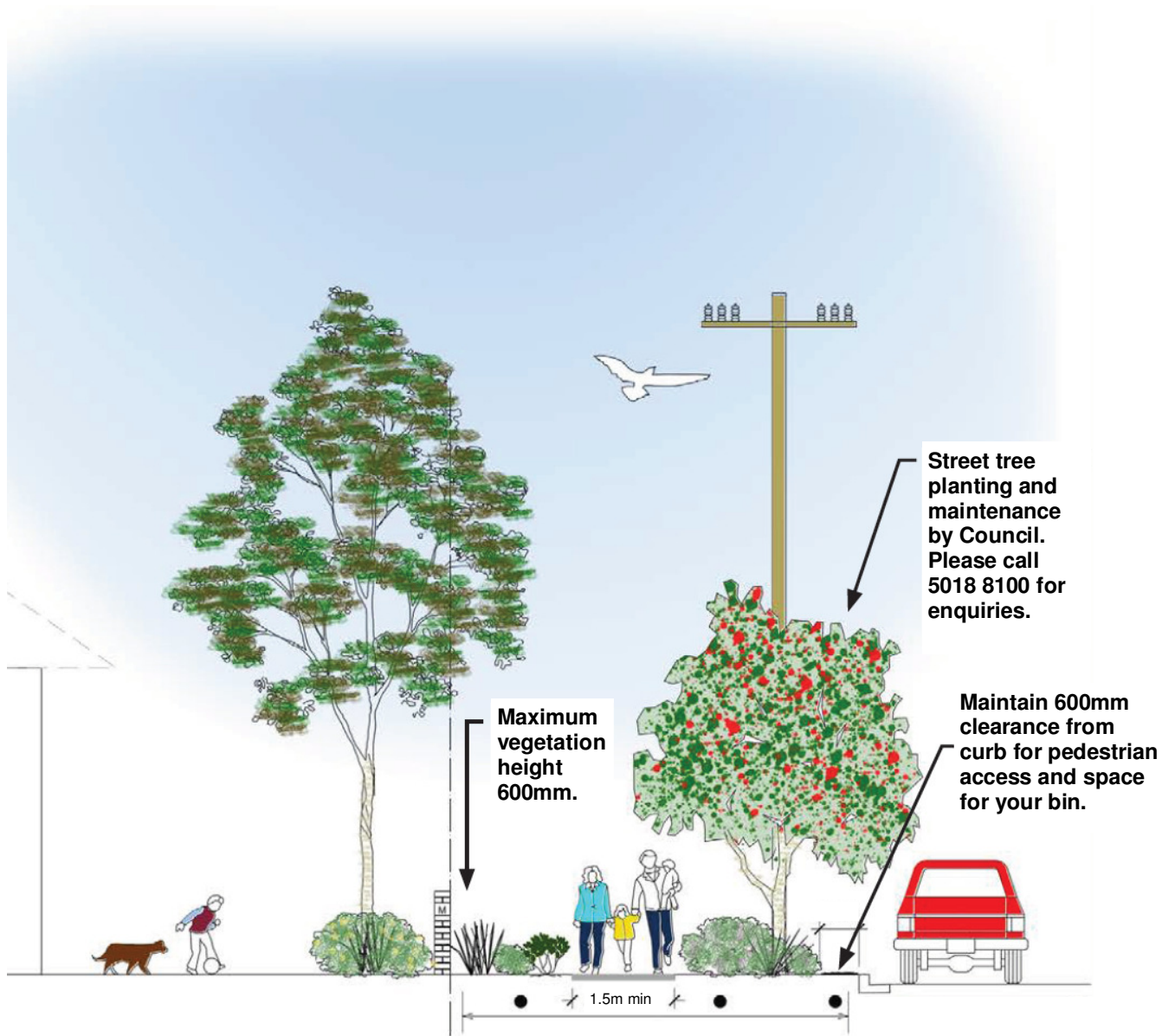


Diagram 1: Landscaped nature strip plan including vegetation height and kerb clearance requirements.



Examples of low water use landscaping treatments

Option 2 – Grass

Traditionally, grassed nature strips are the most common form of treatment in Mildura. Council recommends the use of native grass varieties as they are hardy, drought tolerant and a low maintenance, low cost option.

Grassed nature strips considerations:



Choose a suitable grass variety

Sustainable water use and the ability for the grass to withstand Mildura's harsh weather conditions is an important consideration when choosing a grass variety. Use a native grass variety such as Weeping Grass or Wallaby Grass. If you would prefer a more traditional lawn variety choose one that is hardy and drought tolerant such as buffalo, kikuyu and couch.



Irrigation System

A suitable irrigation system to maintain the grass can be installed.



Ensure you maintain safe access for pedestrians

It is important that pedestrians can access the nature strip safely. The grassed areas must be level and free of any tripping hazards.



Consider a tree bay for your Street Tree

Maintaining a mulched or small garden area around your street tree can help maintain soil moisture and make it easier to maintain the grass edge. Edging including concrete, wood or steel can be used to create a tree bay for your street tree.



Nature Strip Programs

Council runs two urban nature strip programs - the Low Water Use Nature Strip Program and the Street Tree Replacement Program.

Low Water Use Nature Strip Program

This program provides support to residents in urban areas wanting to convert a traditional grassed nature strip to native, hardy, drought tolerant plantings. Council supplies the plants and mulch for the nature strip at no cost to the resident. The resident is required to remove the grass and prepare the site, undertake the planting, mulching and ongoing maintenance. The program is available for up to residents 20 residents per year. Please call 5018 8100 for further information on this program.

Low Water Use Nature Strip Examples

This program has been in place for several years and enables water saving by conversion of grassed nature strips to low water use and low maintenance gardens.



Street Tree Replacement Program

This program involves the planting of semi-established trees of the same variety on nature strips throughout the street. For this program Council generally targets streets without existing trees in the nature strips. The residents are involved in the process by selecting tree variety (from a list) and helping out with the planting. The benefits of the program include improved amenity, reduced summer heat, improved neighbourhood walkability, supporting of property value and an increase in urban biodiversity. If you would like your street to be involved in this program please contact Council on 5018 8100.

Toorak Avenue, Mildura

Toorak Avenue, Mildura was part of the Street Tree Replacement Program over 20 years ago. The residents decided to participate in the program and approached Council to revitalise their street. They were involved in the selection of the trees and the planting process. The street is now a great example of the program and the benefits it can provide.



“Toorak Avenue is the vision of its residence creating a beautiful, leafy green, cool feeling boulevard...it has done much more than that, it has connected us as a community”.

Toorak Ave resident



Nature Strip Plants

Residents are encouraged to get creative and plant nature strips to suit your taste. Council recommends the use of local native species where possible. The following plants are drought tolerant and contribute to urban biodiversity and amenity.



Creeping Boobialla (*Myoporum parvifolium*)
Ground cover, green to purple foliage, small white flower.



Kalbarri Carpet (*Eremophila glabra*)
Ground cover, grey foliage, yellow flower



Pig Face (*Sarcocolla* sp.)
Ground cover, fleshy green foliage, pink to purple flowers



Muntries (*Kunzea pomifera*)
Ground cover, fleshy green foliage, fluffy white flowers, eatable native berries



Tanika (*Lomandra longifolia*)
Grass, compact habit, fine green foliage



Little Rev (*Dianella revoluta*)
Grass, upright habit, grey green foliage



Creeping Saltbush (*Rhagodia sp.*)
Shrub, grey foliage



Sea Spray (*Gravillia sp.*)
Shrub, grey foliage, red flower



Small Leaf Emu Bush (*eremophila weldii*)
Shrub, green foliage, purple flower



Morning Iris (*orthrosanthus multiflorus*)
Clumping grass habit, green foliage, purple flower



Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia geniculata*)
Native grass used to create a native grass lawn



Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*)
Native grass used to create a native grass lawn

What is not an option?

The following treatments are generally not permitted on nature strips. There may be exceptional circumstance where these treatments are permitted. Council permission, via the Land Managers Consent process, is required for any of these treatments.



Hard Surfaces

Do not install any hard surfaces such as concrete, pebble create or compacted crusher dust. Compacted surfaces do not allow for stormwater infiltration, can increase heat in the urban environment and can impact the amenity of a street.



Structures

Installation of any structures including mail boxes, trellising or retaining walls is not permitted. These can impede access and create a safety issue.



Large rocks, stones, gravel or pebbles

These can create an uneven, unstable or loose surface or a tripping hazard and are not permitted on nature strips. Gravel, stones or pebbles must be <20mm in size.



Artificial Turf

The installation of artificial turf is not permitted. Artificial turf does not allow for stormwater infiltration and can increase heat in the urban environment.