

## **Tree Protection on Private Property Local Law 2019**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Question: Why is this Local Law required?**

**Answer:**

This Local Law is aimed at protecting and enhancing the urban character of the City of Darebin by regulating tree removal and the pruning of trees on private property. It also introduces the requirement for replacement planting when a tree is removed, using species that are suitable to the local vegetation character of the area and site constraints.

With the increasing density of urban development occurring in Darebin we are seeing a reduction in the number of large trees on private land, therefore Council believes that the health and sustainability of our remaining trees is becoming increasingly important.

**Question: Does the Local Law apply to all trees?**

**Answer:**

No. It only applies to trees that are protected under the Tree Protection Local Law that meet the criteria.

The only trees exempt are the ones that are proclaimed noxious weeds and trees smaller than 8m in height or the combined trunk circumference is less than 100 centimetres when measured at 1.5 metres above ground level.

**Question: How do I know which trees are protected?**

**Answer:**

A protected tree has a single or combined trunk circumference greater than 100 centimetres when measured at 1.5 metres above ground level and the tree is taller than 8 metres high.

**Question: Why does it matter if tree numbers are decreasing?**

**Answer:**

Darebin City Council is committed to protecting and enhancing our overall tree canopy cover. We see this as being integral to the municipality's identity and the underlying land values in our area.

Darebin's trees make an important contribution to our local amenity, sense of place, neighbourhood character, landscape values and cultural heritage. Trees improve the local climatic conditions by providing shade, wind protection and relief from the urban heat island effect. In some locations, our trees also contribute to native fauna habitat and local biodiversity.

**Question: What will the Local Law require me to do?**

**Answer:**

You will require a permit from Council if you want to do any of the following:

- Remove a protected tree
- Prune a protected tree
- Do anything that could result in you damaging or destroying a protected tree if that tree has a single or combined trunk circumference greater than 100 centimetres when measured at 1.5 metres above ground level and the tree is taller than 8 metres high.

**Question: Is Darebin the only council that requires land owners to obtain a permit to remove or prune protected trees?**

**Answer:**

No. Most councils in the metropolitan area have Local Laws that require land owners to obtain a permit prior to removing or pruning trees of a certain size or type. These councils include Bayside, Boroondara, Frankston, Hobsons Bay, Kingston, Port Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra.

Other councils require planning permits for tree pruning/removal and some councils require both a Local Law permit and planning permit.

**Question: What are the penalties for not obtaining a permit?**

**Answer:**

If you breach the proposed Local Law, you would most likely receive a summons to attend court, where if found guilty, you could be fined up to \$2,000, plus be ordered to pay Council's legal costs in prosecuting the matter. Additionally, the court may also order that a conviction is recorded against you.

**Question: How much does the permit cost?**

**Answer:**

\$200

A 50% discount for permit cost is available to concession card holders

**Question: Will there be more than one permit required? For example, will there be separate permits for tree removal and pruning?**

**Answer:**

No, only one permit is required.

**Question: Is a permit always required for pruning?**

**Answer:**

A permit is only required for pruning a protected tree i.e. when the tree has a single or combined trunk circumference greater than 100 centimetres when measured at 1.5 metres above ground level and the tree is taller than 8 metres high.

A permit is NOT required in the following cases:

- Where pruning is carried out by a qualified arborist in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard (AS4373:2007), who certifies their work, both before and after work.
- In an emergency where any part of a tree that is an immediate threat to life and/or property may be removed.
- The removal of dead fronds from a palm tree.
- For pruning of non-structural branches 75mm in diameter or less. Residents are advised to contact Council's Planning Arborist for advice.

**Question: How do I apply for a permit?**

**Answer:**

You can apply for a permit by completing the application form available from Council's website or customer service.

**Question: Who can I contact to enforce the local law?**

**Answer:**

You can contact local laws during business hours by calling Darebin Council on 8470 8888 or after hours on 8470 8889.