

# Greening and Cooling our Streets

Incentives, Guidelines  
and Requirements to  
support planting in the  
verge and roundabouts



# Background

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Council Resolution Tuesday 28 September 2021:

2 parts

In order to help mitigate the heating effects of climate change, Council encourage residents to landscape Council owned verges with plantings by:

1. where proposed works adhere to Council policy, the application lodgement fee solely for landscaping on verges be removed immediately
2. the new installation of artificial turf on verges be banned immediately

Additionally, that Council investigate:

3. the feasibility of removing the requirement to lodge an application for landscaping on Council verges where proposed works adhere to Council policy
4. the cost and feasibility of landscaping roundabouts
5. a plan to phase out existing artificial turf on verges over time
6. ways of encouraging and/or helping residents to landscape their Council owned verges

# Overview

- Background
- Work completed to date
- Further investigations
- Overview and Next Steps
- Your Feedback – Next Steps

# Completed to date

1. *Where proposed works adhere to council policy, the application lodgment fee solely for landscaping on verges be removed immediately*

## What the costs are

There is a non-refundable application lodgement fee of \$52.50 which must be paid upon submission of your application. If an alteration to a Council trees is approved, additional fees may apply. **This fee no longer applies to Landscaping on the Council Verge.**

## What you need to apply

- A copy of the original application form, with all relevant information completed, including a site plan with dimensions.
- Traffic Management Plan
- An application fee of \$52.50 must be paid when lodging the application. **The fee does not apply to landscaping a Council verge.**

[Works on a Public Road Application Form](#)

Image: City of Mitcham website 2023

# Completed to date

2. *The new installation of artificial turf on verges be banned immediately*

**What materials can't be used for landscaping on the Council verge?** There are a number of materials that can be a possible hazard for road users and pedestrians including rocks, pebbles, bricks, garden edging, retaining walls and logs. These materials are not permitted to be used on Council verges. To mitigate the heating effects of climate change, the use of artificial turf is no longer allowed.

Image: City of Mitcham website 2023

# Further investigations

Additionally, Council resolved to investigate:

1. The feasibility of removing the requirement to lodge an application for landscaping on council verges where proposed works adhere to council policy
2. The cost and feasibility of landscaping roundabouts
3. A plan to phase out existing artificial turf on verges over time
4. Ways of encouraging and/or helping residents to landscape their council owned verges

# 1. Remove Application to Landscape Council Verge



# Remove Application

A form of 'authorisation' required

Include a detailed self-assessment checklist into a verge greening guide.

Checklist would acknowledge Council requirements and document works done by resident.

Recommend application process still apply – albeit streamlined

Checklist would include:

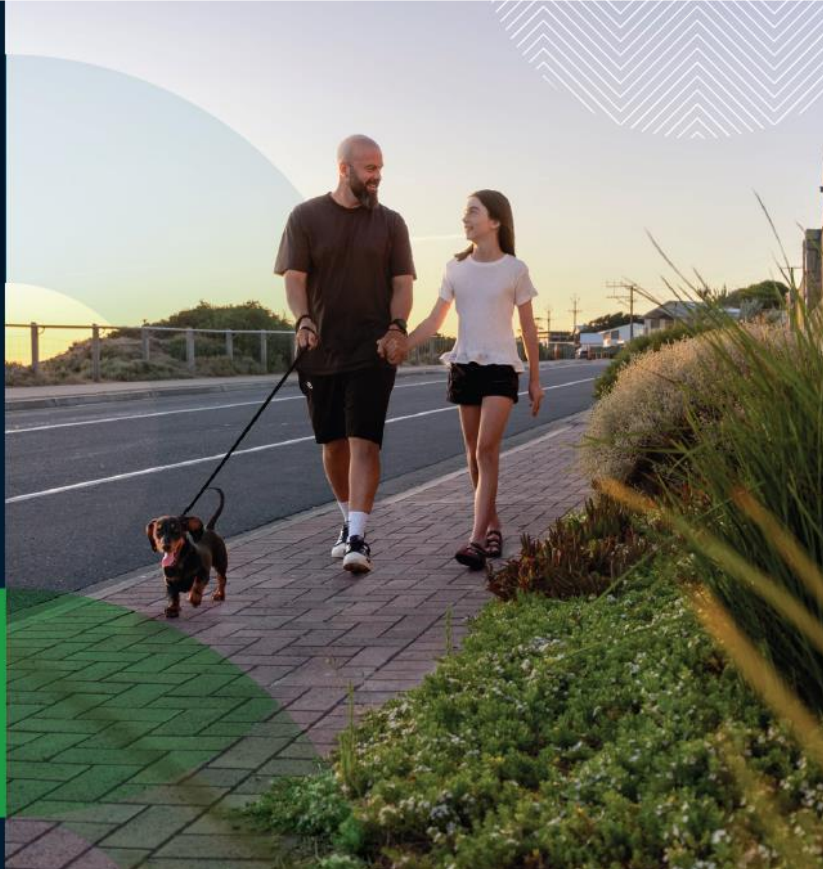
- WHS requirements
- Approved vegetation list
- Relevant policies
- Verge design requirements  
(e.g. accessibility, waste collection requirements, vegetation height limits)



# Verge Greening Guide



## Verge planting guide



Before you landscape or plant on the verge, you should know what you can, should, must and can't do.

### Before you start

#### Can do

If you plan on simply planting on your verge in-line with these guidelines, you do not need council approval.

If you would prefer to not have weed-killing chemicals on the verge in front of your house, you can request to be added to our Spray Free Register - visit [onkaparingacity.com](http://onkaparingacity.com)

#### Should do

Contact Before You Dig Australia to avoid damaging underground pipes and cables - it's a free service. Visit [byda.com.au](http://byda.com.au)

#### Must do

If you plan on installing pavers, retaining walls or rocks, you must seek council approval before you start.

#### Can't do

- Plant trees on the verge – only the council can do this.
- Use synthetic turf – this has no cooling or biodiversity benefits.
- Use declared plants – these are weeds that significantly threaten the natural environment, public safety or primary production. To see a list of declared weeds, visit [pir.sa.gov.au/weeds](http://pir.sa.gov.au/weeds)
- Modify council infrastructure such as the footpath or kerbside.
- Letterboxes should be placed on the property boundary and not on the verge. This makes it easier for larger trucks to access the kerb without damaging your letterbox.
- Remove trees or native vegetation from your verge.

Image: City of Onkaparinga Verge Greening Guide

## Tips and guidelines

### Street trees

Only the council can plant trees on the verge. You can apply to have a tree planted on your verge through our Adopt a Tree program.

Please protect the existing trees on your verge: do not cut or damage tree roots and, when landscaping, consider how you can preserve trees' vital root systems.

### Trees are awesome

They provide shelter and food for birds and other wildlife, beautify our neighbourhoods, and cool our streets and planet.

That's why we have a target to plant 100,000 new trees on street verges and in waterways and parks by 2037.

### Water and soil retention

Verge gardens are a great way to get more moisture into the soil and reduce stormwater runoff.

You can form a swale in verge gardens, i.e. shape the soil to have a small depression in the middle of the verge. This limits the loss of mulch and soil, reduces water loss, and collects water when it rains.

Mulch can retain moisture and reduce weeds. There are a range of different organic mulches (leaf litter, bark chip and straw) and inorganic (pebbles, screening and gravel). Aim for 50-100mm depth of mulch, with no more than 50mm around the base of trees.

### Hard landscapes

If you are installing hard landscapes such as paving, retaining walls or rocks, you will need approval from us. To apply to alter a public road, visit [onkaparingacity.com/permits](http://onkaparingacity.com/permits)

Make sure pavers or other hard surfaces are not tripping hazards. You could consider professional installation.

### Pedestrians

Paths should be kept clear and, where there are no paths, 1.5 metres should be left for pedestrian access. Your garden design should leave space for car parking in front of the verge.

Make sure any shaping and mounding of the verge is very gradual to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

Concrete garden borders or retaining walls on or near the footpath are not recommended as they can create tripping hazards for pedestrians. You can use lawn, mulch, compacted crushed rock or professionally installed pavers (permit required).

### Kerbside bins

Don't forget to leave space for your kerbside bins when planning your landscaping.

For more information check out the bin FAQs at [onkaparingacity.com/waste](http://onkaparingacity.com/waste)

### Debris and pollution

Build a small depression in verge gardens to reduce debris on the footpath and in the drains.

Sweep up materials such as soil or mulch from footpaths and gutters to prevent stormwater pollution.

### Safe work

Always keep tools and other items off the road and footpath for the safety of yourself and others.

If permitted, you may want to park your car in front of the verge when you're working there, to act as a buffer from the traffic on the road.

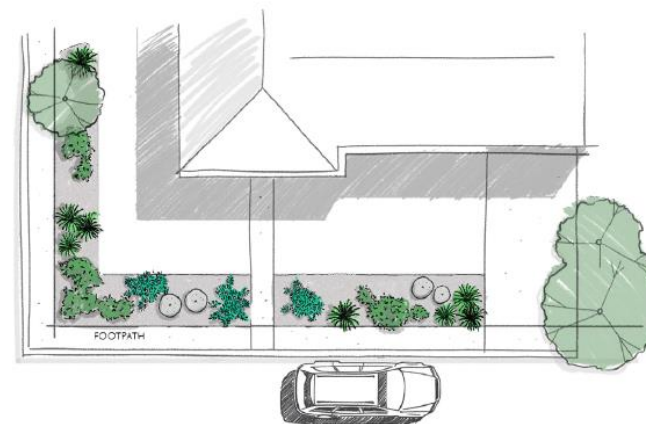
### Maintenance

If you modify the verge, it is your responsibility to maintain it and replenish the materials.

Keep the verge looking good by cutting the grass, pruning plants and hedges, weeding, and tidying up mulch and crushed rock.

### Letterboxes

Letterboxes should be placed on the property boundary and not on the verge.



## Natural coastal garden

This design has a natural and relaxed feel, suited to the coast.

The plants are spaced and grouped randomly to give that real coastal feel and the plant foliage is varied in texture, colour and shape.

Sand or gravel mulch contrasts with the foliage and highlights the bright flowers of the pigface.

The natural garden can be designed to be low maintenance using local native plant species best suited to the soils and climate of this region. Once established, it will require less fertiliser and watering.



Pig Face / Karkalla  
*Carpobrotus rossii*



Sea Berry Saltbush  
*Rhagodia candolleana*



Coast Flax Lilly  
*Dianella brevicaulis*



Cushion Bush (compact)  
*Leucophyta brownii* 'Silver Nugget'

Images: City of Onkaparinga Verge Greening Guide

# Remove Application

Considerations to progress:

- Develop a Verge Greening Guide for the City of Mitcham

Subsequent alternative considerations:

1. Streamlined application process – detailed self-assessment checklist used to document and apply for proposed verge landscaping works. Works need approval before commencing.
2. Provide detailed self-assessment checklist – require resident to send checklist to Council 1 - 2 weeks prior to works to allow property to be added to "no spray list"



## 2. Landscape Council Roundabouts



# City of Mitcham Roundabouts

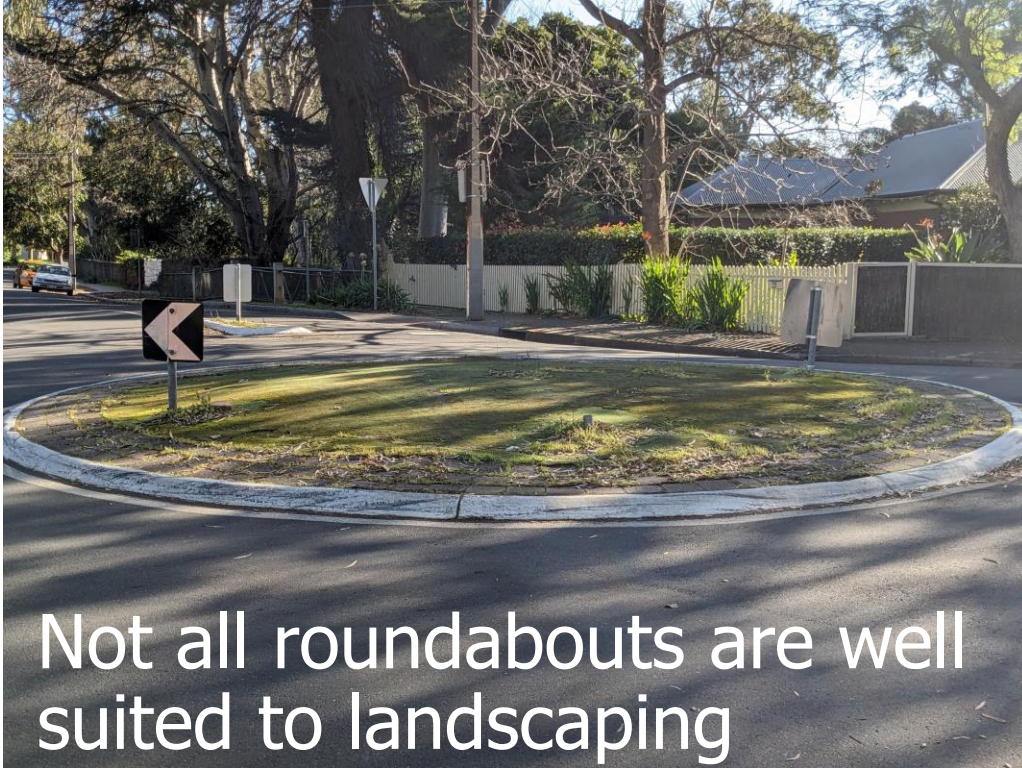
## Existing Roundabouts:

- 49 roundabouts of various size
- 19 landscaped roundabouts including two owned by DIT
- Various sized roundabouts, garden areas, materials and maintenance needs
- Artificial turf on 9 existing roundabouts



Pictured: Ayr Ave / Princes Rd irrigated roundabout protected by recycled bollards and caged meter box

# Landscaped Roundabouts



For plant health and viability, a landscaped roundabout needs to be:

- In a sunny position (fully shaded roundabouts do not allow vegetation to establish well)
- Irrigated (external watering is possible but more complex due to WHS requirements)
- Accessible for maintenance
- Planted with low maintenance plants
- Traffic friendly (if vehicles are likely to drive over the roundabout the garden will fail)

# Constraints



Roundabouts must maintain traffic sightlines, so vegetation height must be controlled through maintenance



Trees on roundabouts are feasible depending on the size of the roundabout and sightlines, but regular maintenance is required for traffic safety, especially with young trees. Regularly auditing of sightlines is also recommended.



WHS - maintenance on roundabouts requires work zone traffic management. Additionally, staged maintenance requirements (i.e. spraying, then planting later) can make maintenance on roundabouts resource intensive



Damage to roundabouts is common due to their presence in the road corridor. Vehicles may drive over roundabouts reducing the asset life and requiring increased frequency of maintenance for garden beds.



Non-irrigated roundabouts require water trucks to regularly water the plants on landscaped roundabouts. Alternatively, provision of irrigation infrastructure is feasible, but increases the potential for asset damage from vehicles and increases upfront costs for landscaping.

# Landscaping Roundabouts

## Potential Next Steps:

1. Landscape all roundabouts including irrigation infrastructure (49 roundabouts, 19 currently vegetated) – approximately \$1.4 million plus ongoing costs
2. Uplift 'selected' landscaped roundabouts - approximately \$50,000 plus ongoing costs
3. Audit all roundabouts for landscaping potential or uplift including feasibility of irrigation and maintenance and costs for each, and bring back to Council for consideration – audit cost \$30,000
4. Remove all existing artificial turf from nine roundabouts – approx. \$20,000



# 3. Phase out of Artificial Turf on Council Verges



# Phase out artificial turf on verges



Verge Greening Guide provides information to residents on:

- Council policy on artificial turf
- Phase out / removal of existing artificial turf
- Alternative options to artificial turf on the verge

Further engagement and possible removal and incentive options to be discussed

# Phase out artificial turf on Council verges



Audit existing artificial turf on verges - expected cost approximately \$16,000 if resourced by staff.



Educate and encourage removal of artificial turf



Enforce compliance – legal and administrative requirements to be investigated



Incentivise removal through partial reimbursement of costs



Council program removal of artificial turf

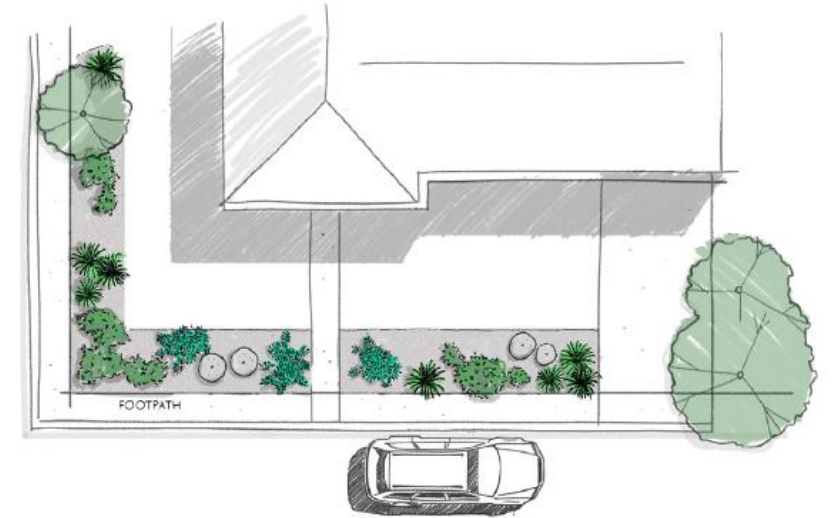
# 4. Encouraging Residents to Landscape Council Verges



# Incentives to Green Verges

Develop a Verge Planting Guide to support residents with verge greening ideas and advice on:

- Species selection
- Layout options
- Access and maintenance considerations
- Council requirements for the verge



Pig Face / Karkalla  
*Carpobrotus rossii*



Sea Berry Saltbush  
*Rhagodia candolleana*



Coast Flax Lilly  
*Dianella brevicaulis*

Verge Planting Guide

Image: City of Onkaparinga Verge Greening Guide

# Incentives to Green Verges



Other possible incentives:

1. Nursery voucher giveaway event/s including advice and education
2. Council managed verge preparation through contractors (allotment scale or street scale)  
– Residents plant verge
3. Verge Greening Incentive Fund  
– Capped reimbursement model with application

# Overview and Next Steps

1.

**Remove  
Application to  
Landscape  
Council Verge**



 CITY OF MITCHAM

2.

**Landscape  
Council  
Roundabouts**



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3.

**Phase out of  
Artificial Turf  
on Council  
Verges**



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4.

**Encouraging  
Residents to  
Landscape  
Council  
Verges**



 CITY OF MITCHAM

**What would  
you like us  
to take  
forward?**







# Remove Application

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Subsequent alternative considerations:

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Council program removal of artificial turf

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