

Purpose

This policy aims to provide a practical and balanced approach to coconut management that addresses issues concerning risk mitigation, financial responsibility, conservation, plant maintenance and health. Coconut palms can grow in a range of environments and can be used as a tropical landscaping theme. Coconut trees can become a valuable landscaping asset for coastal locations and can add to the amenity of a location.

Whilst the presence of coconut palms can improve the amenity in the right location, the nuts and fronds can in some circumstances pose a safety risk to the General Public. Coconuts can weigh up to 4.5 kilograms and a coconut palm can hold up to forty coconuts at one time. Coconut palms usually bear fruit once a year but in tropical areas and under maintenance, two loads can be produced per year. Coconut trees can grow to more than 20 metres high.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- determine the criteria for the retention, maintenance and health of coconut palms in public areas;
- determine criteria to enable the removal and/or replacement of coconut palms; and
- develop a coconut maintenance and management regime which enables council to manage maintenance costs over time.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all public open spaces, including road reserves, in the Whitsunday Regional Council area.

Policy Statement

General

1.1 Due to the large number of coconut palms managed by Whitsunday Regional Council, it is important that coconut palms are assessed and maintained for:

- Minimising risk to cause harm or damage to the General Public.
- Ease of maintenance.
- Cost effectiveness
- Customer request management

Risk Management

1.2 There is a risk with falling nut and fronds, all coconut palms are to be retained and maintained on a twice-yearly basis through removal of deceased coconut palms, dying fronds and removal of developing nuts.

1.3 If the coconut palms are found to have structural defects or any signs of disease it will be removed.

1.4 If coconut palms have grown too tall for machinery to maintain or is unsafe to staff or contractors, it will be removed.

Establishment

- 1.5 Tree assessments will be conducted by Whitsunday Regional Council qualified staff or qualified independent assessor.
- 1.6 Planting of other species of palms will be assessed for the replacement of the coconut palm determining location and classification of the park or surrounding area.
- 1.7 Coconut palms may not be planted on public land without express written approval from Council.

Maintenance

- 1.8 In selected areas it may be determined to erect signage informing General Public of the potential risk for falling nuts or selectively remove coconut palm.
- 1.9 The removal of nuts and fronds will be completed by using EWP and not by the spiking method.
- 1.10 Council shall retain and maintain coconut palms as listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Coconut palm management actions based on park classification

Park Class	Park Category	Risk to Pedestrians	Actions
1	High Profile Regional Park/Facility	High	Retain and maintain
2	High Profile District Park/Cemetery	High	Retain and maintain
3	Medium Profile Open Space/Local Park	Moderate	Retain and maintain
4	Road reserve/streetscape	Moderate	Retain and maintain
5	Low Profile Open Space	Low-Moderate	Retain and maintain
6	Sport & Recreation Facility	Low-Moderate	Retain and maintain
7	Bushland reserve	Low	Retain

Applicable Legislation

Local Government Act 2009

Whitsunday Regional Council Local Laws

Development Act and Regulations

Australian Standards (Pruning of Amenity Trees 4373-2007)

Coconut Tree Management Policy

Infrastructure Services - Parks and Gardens

INFR_03

Definitions

CEO refers to the Chief Executive Officer of the Whitsunday Regional Council appointed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*.

Council refers to the Whitsunday Regional Council

Employee refers to any employee, contractor, volunteer etc. of the Council

Coconut palms shall mean palms with the scientific name *Cocos nucifera*.

Public land includes land owner or controlled by the Whitsunday Regional Council.

Related Documents

N/A

Human Rights Compatibility Statement

This Policy has been assessed as compatible with the Human Rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

COUNCIL POLICY			
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