

Maintenance

Master Specification

M15 Vegetation Maintenance Controls

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M15 Vegetation Maintenance Controls

1 General

- 1.1 This Part specifies:
- a) the requirements for tree pruning, tree removal, and stump removal – including the pruning and removal of vegetation for maintenance purposes; and
 - b) the requirements for herbaceous and woody weed control, and the herbicide control of roadside vegetation for maintenance purposes.
- 1.2 This Part references the following documents:
- a) AS 4373 Pruning of Amenity Trees
 - b) Native Vegetation Act 1991
 - c) Planning Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (in particular for Tree Damaging Activities)
 - d) Native Vegetation Council Guideline: Native Vegetation Information Sheet Number 20 available from: <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/about-us/boards-and-committees/native-vegetation-council>
 - e) DIT Vegetation Impact Assessment Guideline
 - f) DIT Restricted Clearance Roads List
 - g) DIT Rail and Roadside Significant Sites Environmental Instruction
 - h) DIT Environmental Weeds List
 - i) DIT Phytophthora (Dieback) Control Environmental Instruction
 - j) Agricultural and Veterinary Products (Control of Use) Act 2002
 - k) Controlled Substances Act 1984
 - l) Dangerous Substances Act 1979
 - m) Environmental Protection Act 1993
 - n) Landscape South Australia Act 2019.
- 1.3 DIT publications are available from: <https://dit.sa.gov.au/standards>
- 1.4 The definition of “tree” in the DIT Vegetation Impact Assessment Guideline applies to this Part.
- 1.5 Environmental weed species are listed in the DIT Weeds List.
- 1.6 Roadside Significant Sites include sites that are of natural and cultural significance and are marked on the roadside by white and blue signs affixed to star droppers. Works within a Roadside Significant Site must be undertaken in accordance with DIT Supporting Doc – Rail and Roadside Significant Sites Environmental Instruction.

2 Principles of Vegetation Control

- 2.1 The Contractor must ensure that all approvals required in accordance with relevant legislation such as the Natural Resources Management Act 2004 and Native Vegetation Act 1991, and the DIT Vegetation Impact Assessment Guideline have been obtained prior to commencing vegetation control work.
- 2.2 The Contractor must not prune or remove any tree other than those specified and must avoid impacting all non-target vegetation.
- 2.3 Vegetation maintenance activities must be carried out by Staff who are trained / qualified to the appropriate level for the type of work being performed and have a full appreciation of the principles, techniques, hazards, and safety procedures involved.

- 2.4 All equipment used must comply with any applicable standard (including noise and spark arrestor requirements), be properly maintained and in good working order, and be appropriate for the type of works being undertaken.
- 2.5 The Contractor must carry out the Works in a manner which minimises disturbance to soil and watercourses; and does not spread weeds, Phytophthora, or other soil-borne pathogens.

3 Damage and Nuisance

- 3.1 If the Contractor impacts vegetation without the required approvals, the Contractor will be liable to pay the offset amount in accordance with the Native Vegetation Act 1991 for native vegetation, the Planning Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 for regulated and significant trees, or the DIT Vegetation Impact Assessment Guideline for amenity vegetation.
- 3.2 The Contractor shall ensure that the work is carried out with minimal disruption and nuisance to the public.
- 3.3 The Contractor shall comply with any reasonable direction from the Superintendent to minimise disruption and nuisance at its own expense.
- 3.4 The Contractor shall repair or reinstate any damage caused by the Contractor's activities to existing vegetation and infrastructure assets (including roadside furniture) at its own expense.

4 Fauna Protection and Habitat

- 4.1 The Contractor must:
 - a) implement all reasonably practicable measures to minimise disturbance to fauna and to prevent injury to fauna;
 - b) contact Fauna Rescue SA, the RSPCA, or a veterinarian for advice if any injured fauna is found on a worksite;
 - c) under the supervision of a suitably qualified person, relocate any native fauna to a similar habitat if that fauna's habitat will be destroyed by the Contractor's work; and
 - d) notify the Superintendent if any injured or dead native fauna is found on a worksite.
- 4.2 Removal or pruning of trees, particularly in rural or remote areas, may result in removal of tree hollows which provide important habitat for native fauna species.
- 4.3 The Contractor must:
 - a) relocate hollows that have been removed from a tree where material of between 400 mm and 1000 mm in length that contains hollows greater than 50 mm in diameter or hollow apertures greater than 40% of the trunk diameter is removed from a tree; and
 - b) place these hollows on the ground amongst existing vegetation in a location where they do not smother native vegetation or present a hazard to persons or property.

5 Disposal of Cut Material

Material Containing Weeds

- 5.1 All plant material containing environmental weed / woody weed species declared under the Landscape South Australia Act 2019 must be removed from the site and disposed of at a licensed waste depot.
- 5.2 To facilitate effective control, removal off site may be undertaken at a time subsequent to the original treatment.
- 5.3 The Contractor must obtain all required permits for transportation of declared weed species from the relevant authority, for example, the regional Landscape Board.

Phytophthora

- 5.4 The Contractor must operate in accordance with the DIT's Phytophthora (Dieback) Control Environmental Instruction. Prior to commencing Works, the Contractor must undertake a Phytophthora risk assessment to determine the required hygiene procedures and disposal requirements for the Works.

Other Material

- 5.5 Unless specified otherwise, all plant material that will not propagate must be chipped and be spread on site.
- 5.6 The chippings must:
- a) not pose an unacceptable risk to public safety or property;
 - b) not be spread on pedestrian / multiple use paths, vehicle access tracks, or the road shoulder;
 - c) be evenly spread at a depth not exceeding 100 mm;
 - d) not obstruct drainage infrastructure such as swales, culverts, and open drains;
 - e) not significantly increase the current fuel load;
 - f) avoid native and amenity vegetation, including but not limited to indigenous grasses and ground covers; and
 - g) not be spread or disposed of within any Roadside Significant Site.
- 5.7 If there is excess cut material, the Contractor must remove that excess cut material from the Site.

6 Prevention of Suckering and Regrowth

- 6.1 The Contractor is responsible for determining the most suitable method of preventing suckering and regrowth.
- 6.2 The Contractor must ensure that suckering or regrowth of a removed tree or poisoned vegetation does not occur within 12 months of the treatment.

7 Stump Removal

- 7.1 Where the stump location is unpaved or unsealed, the Contractor must cut the stump to existing ground level, ensuring no trip hazards remain.
- 7.2 Where the stump location is paved or sealed, the Contractor must grind the stump to at least 300 mm below the underside of the pavement level and backfill so that the surface is not hazardous.
- 7.3 The Contractor must not undertake stump removal of a tree utilising a method that will affect the health or stability of surrounding trees that are to be retained.

8 Tree Pruning and Removal

General

- 8.1 All pruning, including an onsite assessment of tree(s) prior to pruning, must be undertaken in accordance with AS 4373.
- 8.2 If the Contractor recommends removal of a tree specified for pruning because they have assessed that it poses an unacceptable risk to persons or property, or it will retain no habitat or amenity value following pruning, the Contractor must notify the Superintendent. The Contractor must seek approval to remove the tree and subsequently remove the tree if directed by the Superintendent.
- 8.3 If the Contractor identifies a whole tree requiring removal from the Maintenance Clearance Envelope, the Contractor must notify the Superintendent. The Contractor must seek approval to remove the tree, and subsequently remove the tree if directed. Where trees of high environmental, aesthetic, or

social significance are identified, exceptions may be applied by the Superintendent to enable these trees to be retained within the Clearance Envelope.

Tree Pruning / Removal Methods

- 8.4 The Contractor is responsible for determining the most suitable method of tree pruning / removal.
- 8.5 Equipment that wounds the bark or conductive tissues (e.g. spurs, spikes, hooks) must not be used on sections of the tree to be retained. All cutting tools must be sharp, and branches must be undercut to prevent splitting or tearing of the branch collar or trunk.
- 8.6 Clear felling may only be used for tree removal where there is sufficient area in all directions for the tree to be felled safely, without damage to persons, property, or existing vegetation.
- 8.7 If tree climbers or an elevated platform is used, cut material may only be dropped to the ground if the Contractor ensures that there is no risk to any person, property, or existing vegetation.
- 8.8 Where vegetation pruning or removal is undertaken to maintain sight distance, a low impact method of clearance must be undertaken to ensure selective clearance of tall growing species.

Control of Bees and Wasps

- 8.9 The Contractor is responsible for the control of any bees and wasps to enable the tree work to be undertaken safely.

Coastal Wattle Removal

- 8.10 Coastal Wattle (*Acacia longifolia*) may be pruned up to an additional 2 metres beyond the defined Clearance Envelope.
- 8.11 Within the Limestone Coast landscape management region, clearance of Coastal Wattle to the property boundary can be undertaken in accordance with Native Vegetation Council Guideline: Native Vegetation Information Sheet Number 20.
- 8.12 Where the removal of Coastal Wattle is required, the Contractor must cut the vegetation to ground level and poison the stump to prevent regrowth. Provided that it is not within a Roadside Significant Site, cut material may be left where it falls, ensuring that it is not left on the road shoulder or road verge.

Chainsaw/Polesaw

- 8.13 Where a chainsaw or polesaw is used, pruning must conform to AS 4373. This may require pruning beyond the defined Clearance Envelope, but must be limited to the minimum amount of pruning required to achieve the Clearance Envelope.

Side Trimming

- 8.14 The use of flail mowers is not permitted. The use of other types of side trimming machines is permitted.
- 8.15 Side trimming machines may be used on areas identified as Roadside Significant Sites if side trimming does not have any adverse effect on the vegetation beyond the Clearance Envelope.
- 8.16 Side trimming machines are not to be used within built up areas.
- 8.17 The Contractor must minimise damage to vegetation (including ripping or tearing of limbs) by:
 - a) ensuring blades are sharp;
 - b) driving at a speed that enables branches to be cut cleanly; and
 - c) undertaking follow-up pruning by hand / chainsaw / polesaw (in accordance with AS 4373) on all branches over 50 mm diameter and any torn or ripped branches, within 1 week of side trimming.
- 8.18 If excessive ripping or tearing of limbs occurs, the Contractor must cease work and modify work practices to ensure that this does not reoccur.

9 Weed and Vegetation Control

Weed and Vegetation Control Methods

- 9.1 The Contractor is responsible for determining the most suitable method(s) of weed and vegetation control.
- 9.2 Control must occur at the optimum time applicable to minimising weed spread (e.g. before seed set) or as agreed by the Superintendent.
- 9.3 The Contractor shall use the following methods of herbaceous weed and vegetation control:
- a) Slash only;
 - b) Slash and spray;
 - c) Boom spray;
 - d) Spot spray; or
 - e) Hand pull.
- 9.4 The Contractor shall use the following methods of woody weed and vegetation control:
- a) Cut only;
 - b) Cut and swab;
 - c) Spot spray;
 - d) Stem injection;
 - e) Basal bark spray; or
 - f) Hand pull.

Herbicide Use

- 9.5 Herbicide use must meet the requirements of relevant legislation including the Agricultural and Veterinary Products (Control of Use) Act 2002, Controlled Substances Act 1984, Dangerous Substances Act 1979, and Environmental Protection Act 1993. Refer to Primary Industries and Regions SA, Biosecurity SA Division, Rural Chemicals webpage http://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/rural_chemicals for further information.
- 9.6 Herbicide control must be undertaken in accordance with DIT Herbicide Resistance Environmental Instruction, which describes herbicide types, locations for allowable use, and rotation requirements.
- 9.7 All chemicals must be used according to the registered label requirements and / or permit conditions. This includes the appropriate selection of chemicals for use in the vicinity of waterbodies.
- 9.8 The application of any herbicide must avoid impacting non-target vegetation and prevent spillage of herbicide on the soil.
- 9.9 The Contractor shall ensure that all staff involved in chemical weed control have a relevant Pest Management Technician's Licence and are operating under a relevant Pest Controller's Licence. The Contractor shall provide evidence of the licences specified above prior to commencement of a spraying program.
- 9.10 Provision of the documentation above shall constitute a **Hold Point**.
- 9.11 The Contractor must advise the Superintendent of any requests for changes to restricted herbicide use areas.

10 Records and Reporting

- 10.1 The Contractor must keep daily records of herbicide applications. A copy of the records must be provided whenever requested by the Superintendent.
- 10.2 The records must indicate:

- a) contractor and operator(s);
- b) date, spray start time and finish time;
- c) weather conditions including temperature, wind speed, wind direction, and rainfall (relative humidity and Delta T may also be recorded);
- d) locations;
- e) details of application method including equipment type, nozzle type and flow rate, spray pressure, spray volume, and travel speed;
- f) details of chemicals used including product and adjuvant names (e.g. herbicide / surfactant / dye), application rate, area treated, and situation including weed species controlled; and
- g) any supporting notes, e.g. weed growth stage / plant condition, water source, reasons, and length of any delays.

11 Hold Points

11.1 The following is a summary of Hold Points, vide PC-QA1 "Quality Management Requirements", referenced in this Part:

Document Ref.	Hold Point	Response Time
9.10	Submission of herbicide use documentation	5 Working Days