

Policy Matters - 27 August 2019

ITEM 6.1 Nature Strip Mowing Policy

AUTHOR Operations

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Nature Strip Mowing Policy for the purposes of public exhibition in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW).

ISSUE

The purpose of the Nature Strip Mowing Policy is to provide clarity on the provision of Council's nature strip mowing service across the City. Currently, the process of having a nature strip mown differs between the Canterbury and Bankstown Areas. This has created a disparity in terms of the number of sites mown, the types of sites mown, the frequency at which the sites are mown and the different eligibility criteria used to determine inclusion of nature strips on the nature strip mowing service.

This policy will therefore align the nature strip mowing service across the City in order to effectively and fairly allocate resources. This process will enable service provisions to be adequately addressed and consistently distributed across the Canterbury-Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA).

RECOMMENDATION That -

1. Council endorse the Nature Strip Mowing Policy and the policy to be placed on public exhibition in accordance with the legislative requirements outlined in the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW).
2. A further report be submitted to Council following public exhibition.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. DRAFT- Nature Strip Mowing Policy

POLICY IMPACT

The adoption of the Nature Strip Mowing Policy ensures consistency across the City through the alignment of the nature strip mowing service provisions. The current approach to nature strip mowing across the City is unsustainable and not equitable. The policy will bring together the Canterbury and Bankstown areas under one policy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Providing an aligned City wide policy will minimise the financial impact on Council. Maintaining the current approach does not address the inequitable distribution of the service across the City. Adopting the previous Canterbury Council policy will see an expected increase in nature strip requests by approximately 3,000 in Bankstown. Further, an additional 10-15 staff will be required, as well as plant and equipment to provide the nature strip mowing service. The costs to Council would be up to an additional \$2million per year to maintain this service across the City.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Nature Strip Mowing Policy will ensure equitable service provisions for residents across the City. The service will be provided to residents who demonstrate a genuine need and meet the eligibility criteria noted in the policy.

DETAILED INFORMATION

Currently, over three times as many residential nature strips are mown in the Canterbury Area (2,400 sites) when compared to the Bankstown Area (760 sites). This disparity in the number of nature strips mown across the City highlights both the inequity in this service provision and high costs involved in maintaining the current level of service.

The attached draft policy aligns the provision of nature strip mowing services across the City by providing a one policy approach to service Canterbury Bankstown residents. It addresses the need to provide a service to only those who genuinely require it by providing eligibility criteria that residents must meet in order to apply for the service. This includes being a permanent resident of the Canterbury Bankstown LGA and either be the recipient of or assessed as eligible to receive services under the Commonwealth Home Support Program or the recipient of a disability support pension. This criteria highlights Council's careful consideration in ensuring only those residents in genuine need can apply for the nature strip mowing service. It also demonstrates Council's commitment to and responsibilities under the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), to ensure persons with a disability are appropriately addressed in Council policies.

The recommendation will address the evident disparity in the service provision of nature strip mowing services across the City, and provide an equitable service based on resident genuine needs. The recommendation will also allow Council to redirect resources and provide improved litter collection service in parks, target unmaintained traffic and road assets, and address the maintenance of gateway locations and other areas of public significance including main roads and thoroughfares.