

# Benchmarking Australian Nature Strip Guidelines

- Benchmarking was undertaken against the NSG of these 39 LGAs across Australia,
  - Victoria: Melbourne, Yarra, Glen Eira, Bayside, Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Moreland, Darebin, Boroondara, Greater Dandenong, Maroondah, Knox
  - NSW: Sydney, Randwick
  - Western Australia: Perth, Fremantle, Canning, South Perth, Subiaco, Vincent, Victoria Park, Nedlands, East Fremantle, Cottesloe, Claremont, Cambridge, Cockburn, Belmont
  - South Australia: Adelaide, Burnside, Norwood Payneham and St Peters, West Torrens, Charles Sturt, Unley, Holdfast Bay, Marion
  - Others: Canberra, Brisbane, Morton Bay
- Detailed results of this benchmarking are on the next two pages.



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<b>Tree health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28 require residents to not undertake any activities that would compromise the health of street trees</li> <li>• 8 stipulate a minimum distance for all planting of between 0.5 and 2m from trees</li> <li>• 4 do not permit any activity within the dripline of a tree</li> <li>• 3 apply AS4970 that do not permit activities to encroach more than 10% in the tree protection zone</li> <li>• Several councils prohibit planting in tree pits, plots, grates and WSUD gardens</li> </ul>
<b>Plant heights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 34 have plant height restrictions</li> <li>• 14 require plants to be maintained to 0.5m high</li> <li>• 13 allow slightly more height to 0.6-0.75m high</li> <li>• 2 state clear sightlines must be maintained and the remainder include height limits of 1-1.1m.</li> </ul>
<b>Setback of plants from kerbs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 include kerb setbacks to allow people to access cars safely</li> <li>• 8 require more than 0.9m</li> <li>• 9 require between 0.3 and 0.6m</li> <li>• 4 councils require a setback of 0.5m</li> <li>• Several Councils allow low groundcover planting in the offset area.</li> </ul>
<b>Setback of plants from footpaths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most common planting offsets from footpaths are 0.5m and 0.3m</li> <li>• Many Perth and Adelaide Councils require a setback of 1.5m or 2m for pedestrian access where there is no footpath</li> <li>• Brisbane requires a pedestrian way with a minimum width of 1.2m</li> <li>• Sydney and Melbourne (CBD) require clear footpath areas of 2-3m.</li> </ul>
<b>Setback of plants from driveways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 require setbacks to maintain sightlines around driveways</li> <li>• 6 require less than 1m</li> <li>• 6 require more than 1m and up to 2.5m</li> <li>• 1 has scaled plant heights depending on the setback from the driveway</li> <li>• 4 state that sightlines must not be obstructed.</li> </ul>
<b>Setbacks from corners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 have setback distances ranging between 6m and 50m</li> <li>• Several state that sightlines must not be obstructed.</li> </ul>
<b>Setbacks from utilities and service pits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most Councils advise residents utilise Dial Before You Dig and caution when digging in relation to utilities as residents will be financially responsible for any damage. Most require a clear space around services with several requiring a 1.5m setback. Many Councils advise residents that utility providers have a right to dig up nature strips to access services and that any rectification will be up to the resident.</li> </ul>
<b>Bus stops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 require areas around bus stops to be kept clear of planting for 10-15m.</li> </ul>

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<b>Raised planter boxes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 allow raised planter boxes (8 require permits to be issued)</li> <li>• All Councils have stringent requirements for height, placement and setbacks to ensure pathways remain safe and accessible.</li> </ul>
<b>Raised edges/garden edging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 include guidelines for garden edging</li> <li>• 11 prohibit edging of any kind</li> <li>• 3 require edging to be flush with the adjacent surfaces to prevent trip hazards</li> <li>• 1 does not permit raised edging specifically due to the number of trees which have been compromised</li> <li>• 1 allows edging up to 150mm with rules about installation around trees</li> <li>• 3 require approval to be granted before edging is installed.</li> </ul>
<b>Edible plants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 provide warnings about likely soil contamination</li> <li>• 3 of these recommend a low cost soil testing service available through Macquarie University.</li> <li>• 2 do not recommend edible plants</li> <li>• 1 allows herbs to be planted into planter boxes.</li> </ul>
<b>Prohibited items</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most prohibit synthetic turf, spiky and/or poisonous plants, weed species, any objects (rocks, logs, pavers, play equipment, swings, irrigation, ornaments, walls, bollards, letterboxes, signs, hard surfaces, garden stakes, lighting, fencing, loose materials like pebbles, seats,), herbicides to continuously defoliate, letterboxes.</li> <li>• 1 frames prohibited items in terms of the outcomes desired: Materials or structures which are unsafe, block sight lines, are loose or slippery, present a hazard, are impermeable, are weeds, are sharp or prickly will considered to be an unacceptable material.</li> </ul>
<b>Permitted items (not plants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several allow irrigation.</li> <li>• 2 allow various objects as features with approval provided the installation provides clear access to footpaths and services and in the City's opinion do not affect the health or structural integrity of the tree.</li> </ul>
<b>Gardening information</b>	Most provide recommended plant species lists or other gardening information, for example, waterwise gardening or basic design considerations.
<b>Gardening resources</b>	Some provide officer time and advice, self-serve or delivery for mulch, information sessions/webinars, limited one-off gardening assistance in special circumstances, plant subsidy/voucher schemes, low cost compost, garden competitions/awards, adopt a verge programs, rebate schemes, incentive programs including landscape works for excavation/soil/spreading.