



# ARBORICULTURAL REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENTS

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Local Government Authorities request you provide information on trees that may be affected by proposed development. The following information provides guidelines for arboricultural reporting for development sites that are required to be submitted to Local Government Authorities.

## **ARBORICULTURAL REPORTS CONTAIN SIX BASIC ELEMENTS**

Arboricultural reports must contain the following seven elements to meet the professional standard required. These seven elements must be clearly identified in the report:

- 1. Assignment**
- 2. Assessment Methodology**
- 3. Observations**
- 4. Discussion**
- 5. Conclusion(s)**
- 6. Recommendation(s)**
- 7. References, Appendices and Glossary**

The following information **must** be provided within the seven elements of the arboricultural report:

### **1. ASSIGNMENT**

- Author's name, qualifications and experience. Where applicable the author should provide company /business name and contact details.

*Note:* Not everyone has the skill to reliably identify and assess trees. Tree assessment skills require a high level of training, knowledge and experience. These guidelines recommend that arboricultural reports should only be written by a suitably qualified and experienced arborist with a Certificate IV in Arboriculture\* or higher and a minimum of three or more years demonstrated tree assessment and report writing experience. (\*Recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework).

- Client's name and address. Where applicable the client's company /business name and contact details should be provided
- Site address
- A report brief identifying and defining the assignment.

## **2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

- Date(s) of the inspection(s). The assessment must have been undertaken within 6 months of submitting the report
- A description of the inspection process used  
*Note:* e.g. Mattheck. C *Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)*, Matheny and Clark 1998, *Trees and Development*, including the techniques and the tools used e.g. tape measure, *Clinometer®*, digital camera, *Resistograph®*, *Fractometer®*, *Picus Sonic Tomograph®*, etc.
- Limitations of the assessment, which may limit full tree assessments. i.e. weather conditions, site access restrictions

## **3. OBSERVATIONS**

- Tree number for each tree.
- Genus and species accurately identified by botanical and common names
- Height and widest canopy spread of each tree
- Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) (average trunk diameter at breast height i.e. measured 1.4 metres above ground level). A separate measurement for each trunk of multi-stemmed trees is required.  
*Note:* Various local planning schemes and/or local laws specify circumference or diameter measurements on the trunk(s) different to that cited above. The measurements relevant to the local planning scheme and/or the local law must be provided in the report.
- Identify and include an assessment of any trees growing in the naturestrip, road reserve, parks, gardens and neighbouring properties etc. outside the subject site that might be affected by the development.
- Record your observation of the tree, including the presence of any disease, insects, defects, etc. Provide an assessment of the categories for the tree's health, condition, form and structure based on your observations of the tree.
  - Categories for tree health, condition, form, structure, etc. (i.e. good, fair, poor, etc.) must be explained in the report and the descriptors listed in the appendix at the rear of the report.
- A photograph supporting observations and highlighting points of interest.
- Details of the Local Planning Scheme Overlays, neighbourhood character precinct and/or local laws applicable to the property.
- Other relevant tree and site information e.g. soil type, wildlife habitat etc.
- An accurate site plan, including the location and a number for each tree that is consistent with the tree on the site, the tree on the plan and the arboricultural report. Clearly identify the tree(s) that are proposed to be removed or retained on the site plan.
- For each tree, state whether it is remnant, indigenous, native, exotic or weed species
- Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) for each should be in accordance with Australian Standard AS 4970-2009 – Protection of trees on development sites.

- Retention value of trees based on the objectives of the local planning scheme, the neighbourhood character precinct and/or the local law.

As a guide, trees that have:

- High Value – should be retained on site and the design should accommodate the tree's retention on the site. These trees should be marked or coloured green on the plan.
- Medium Value – that the tree could be retained if it does not hamper the design intent. These trees should be marked or coloured orange on the plan.
- Low Value – the tree is unsuitable for retention and can be removed. These trees should be marked or coloured red on the plan.

The rationale behind the retention value that is used must be given in the report appendix.

- Information on the trees to be provided in a table for ease of use.

#### **4. DISCUSSIONS**

- A review of the implications / impacts of the proposed development on all trees on and around the site including the nature strip, road reserve, parks, gardens and neighbouring properties
- A description of the current industry methods and procedures to protect and maintain trees in a healthy and safe condition including pavement, footings, services that might impact on the tree
- Tree Management Plan identifying timelines for the implementation of recommended tree protection works
- Supporting information that is not referenced e.g. experience
- Any above ground pruning requirements.

*Note:* All pruning must be in accordance with AS4373 – 2007

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- The conclusion allows the author to have the final word on the issues raised in the report, to summarise thoughts and to demonstrate the importance of ideas related to the author's opinions

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Recommendation(s) should detail any actions to be undertaken or design amendments to be made. These should be based on the conclusion.

#### **7. REFERENCES, APPENDICES AND GLOSSARY**

- Where required, references, appendices and glossary should be included at the rear of the report.
- A list of publications referenced in the report.

Glossary and references should only be provided where terms used in the report are not standard and where references support the report. They should be compact, succinct and accurate.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Not everyone has the skill to reliably identify and assess trees. Tree assessment skills require a high level of training, knowledge and experience. These guidelines recommend that arboricultural reports should only be written by suitably qualified and experienced arborist with a minimum qualification of Certificate IV in Arboriculture\* and a minimum of three or more years demonstrated tree assessment experience. (\*Recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework).

All reports are to be written from an impartial perspective and not as an advocate of the client.

Arboricultural reports submitted to Local Government Authorities will be used by a variety of people, not all of whom have specialist arboricultural knowledge. Reports must therefore be written in plain English, avoiding jargon as much as possible.