



Urban Treescapes' Tree Protection Unit Tree Assessment Policy and Standard Operating Procedure

1.0 Document Information

TITLE	Tree Assessment Policy and Standard Operating Procedure
OWNER	Tree Protection Unit, Urban Treescapes

1.1 Policy

The *Urban Forest Act 2023* (the Act) provides the legislative framework for the protection of trees in Canberra. Under the Act, for a person to undertake a tree damaging activity on a protected tree, it must be assessed and deemed to meet the approval criteria (the criteria).

1.2 Purpose

This policy and procedure provides direction for assessing tree damaging activities on protected trees under the Act. Tree Protection Officers (TPO) are responsible for carrying out Tree Assessment Reports (TAR), in response to a Tree Activity Application (TAA), or assessing trees against a tree damaging activity outlined in a Development Application (DA). This SOP provides guidance as to the application of the criteria under the Act and how each should be addressed when completing a TAR.

1.3 Scope

This SOP is to guide the assessment portion of a TAA process, completing a TAR on site when inspecting tree(s).

This SOP does not include the use of Salesforce, please see [TPU - Salesforce - Urban Forest Management System Manuals](#) for operating instructions and quick reference guide.

This SOP does not include the process for scheduling inspections or contacting occupants.

This SOP does not include instructions against generic, self-explanatory tick boxes in the TAR, for example: *Applicant/Occupant present?* Y N.

1.4 Risk Assessment

When attending a site you must complete a general take 5 risk assessment upon arrival. This can be completed using the booklet or undertaken cognitively.

The TPO must confirm on the TAR that a risk assessment/take-5 has been conducted on site.

For sites with Dog's - see [Appendix A](#)

1.5 Records Management

Record requirements are identified throughout the procedure.

Procedure

2.0 Tree Assessment Report (TAR)

All mandatory fields on the TAR must be completed before submitting for Delegate approval.

2.1 Assessing an Activity that was not applied for

If the applicant has applied for an activity, and when attending site, the TPO notes that either:

- a) this activity would not be approved, but an alternative activity with similar outcomes for the applicant would meet criteria; or
- b) the activity applied for would not be sufficient to remedy the issue, and an alternate activity on the tree would meet the criteria.

The TPO should select the additional activity under the "Activity Recommended by TPO" on the TAR.

2.1.1 Obtaining consent from the Applicant for additional activities

If the applicant is on-site at the time of inspection, or the TPO has phoned to discuss, and they have agreed to the activity being added to their TAA, a follow up email should be sent from Salesforce, confirming their agreement was provided on site.

If the applicant is not on-site at the time of inspection, nor able to be contacted via phone call, the TPO must email the applicant seeking a response to **confirm their agreement to the activity** before finalising the TAR.

Obtaining the above agreement may be exempt in the case of urgent circumstance.

2.2 Measuring the Tree

It is expected that at least **one** measurement is taken for any tree with a TAA, to provide for record keeping on its regulation status. Where measuring is not feasible, i.e. due to inaccessibility, written documentation of an estimation must be provided.

The definition of a tree is defined on our website as any of the following:

- a woody perennial plant (excluding bamboo)
- a plant resembling a tree in form and size
- any other plant prescribed by legislation (such as a palm tree).

Hedge plants will be classified as trees under the Act if they are unmaintained hedges that have grown into trees that meet regulated size requirements.

Hedge plants will not be classified as trees under the Act if the original intent of the planting was for the purpose of a hedge and the plantings are maintained as a hedge.

2.2.1 Measuring for Removal

If the TAA is for tree removal, the tree's size **must** be recorded on the TAR. Accuracy in measurements is important for removals, to ensure a Canopy Contribution Agreement (CCA) can be appropriately generated.

Mandatory Measurements for Removals: Height and Canopy Width

Mandatory Measurements for Dead native tree removals: Circumference at 1.4m above ground level

2.2.2 Measuring to confirm regulation size

For TAAs **excluding removal** - if it is clear the tree is of regulation size (height, canopy width and/or DBH) the 'regulated' box may be selected with only one regulation size measurement recorded.

Canopy Measurements

To be taken using a measuring tape along the ground, across the widest point of the canopy, or via step measurements if confident. If the widest point is not accessible, a recent [ACTMapi](#) aerial measurement may be used.

Height Measurements

To be recorded using a clinometer. TPOs should refer to the guide associated with their assigned clinometer to ensure accurate use and measurements.

Trunk measurements

Single trunk trees can be measured using a diameter tape at 1.4m from ground level. If the trunk has a circumference of $\geq 1000\text{mm}$ or a diameter of $\geq 318\text{mm}$, the tree is regulated.

For multi-trunk measurements, where the tree does not meet height or canopy regulation size but may be regulated based on trunk size:

Each trunk should be measured 1.4m above ground level to calculate the average circumference. Measurements are to be entered into Salesforce for an automatic calculation of the average.

For a multi-trunked tree to be regulated it must have at least one trunk that is 1m or more in circumference (per single trunk regulation); or

- an average circumference of the trunks of $\geq 625\text{mm}$ **and**
- the sum of all trunk circumference measurements is $\geq 1\text{m}$; **or** the sum of the diameters is $\geq 318\text{mm}$.

Dead native Trees

Dead native trees can be measured using a DBH tape at 1.4m from ground level. If the trunk has a circumference of $1880\text{mm} <$ or a diameter of $600\text{mm} <$.

2.1 Dead Native Trees

Assessments of Dead Native Trees should be undertaken in conjunction with the [Dead Tree Assessment Check List](#).

All other regulated tree assessment continued below.

2.2 Powerline and Structure Proximity

2.2.1 Powerline Clearance

[EvoEnergy](#) states that trees must be kept a minimum of 1.5m from exposed low voltage lines and 1m from insulated low voltage lines and service lines. High voltage lines require a minimum 2m clearance.

Approval is not required if you are carrying out a pruning direction issued by a utility company, provided that any conditions in the direction (such as how the tree is to be pruned) are followed.

2.2.2 Structural Clearance

The general applied tolerance for clearance is $\geq 2\text{m}$ [from trunk] clear of substantial buildings, structures or services. This is a general tolerance and not a blanket rule.

There may be situations where tolerance is greater or lesser than 2m. Officers are expected to apply subject matter knowledge of considerations such as growth habit of the tree species when conducting clearance assessments.

2.2.3 Recording Proximity Measurements

The proximity of powerlines and/or structures is not a mandatory requirement for the completion of a TAR. The TPO may make a discretionary call as to whether the distance should be recorded. For example, where the applicant has referred to this in their TAA, or where the tree is within (or close to) the intolerable range.

If measurements are guessed, this must be clear on the TAR, e.g. *approx. 3m*.

If measurements are taken and recorded, this can be recorded as the measurement and should be to the closest 100mm/10cm, e.g. *2500mm*.

2.3 Aesthetic value or prominence

When assigning aesthetic value in *Tree Details* the below factors/considerations may be applied to assigning a value between 1 and 5.

Rating	Factors/Considerations
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative or no visual character Growth severely restricted by above or below ground influences/amenity/assets Provides minimal canopy cover to the site/surrounding area
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low visual character Partially visible from surrounding properties Provides little canopy cover to the site/surrounding area
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair to medium visual character Visible but not prominently located Provides medium level of canopy cover to the site/surrounding area

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually prominent • Provides contribution to the visual character of the area • Provides valuable canopy contribution to the site/surrounding area
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent and visible from considerable range from multiple directions • Provides positive contribution to local amenity and visual character • Provides high value canopy contribution to the site/surrounding area

2.4 Inspection Assessment

2.4.1 Stability

Visual assessment for features and Y/N response. If Y response, comments must be provided on the identified features.

2.4.2 Previously Lopped

Visual assessment and Y/N response. If Y response, comments must be provided.

2.4.3 Root Damage

Visual assessment and Y/N response. If Y response, comments must be provided.

2.4.4 Trunk Damage

Visual assessment and Y/N response. If Y response, comments must be provided.

2.4.5 Evidence of Borers or Termites

Visual assessment and Y/N response. Y includes evidence of prior activity that is not currently active. If Y response, comments must be

2.4.6 Evidence of Fungal Infestation

Visual assessment and Y/N response. If Y response, comments must be provided.

2.4.7 Evidence of weak branch unions

Visual assessment and Y/N response. If Y response, comments must be provided.

2.4.8 Evidence of Stress Fractures

Visual assessment and Y/N response. If Y response, comments must be provided.

2.4.9 TPZ disturbance

Visual assessment and Y/N response. If Y response, comments must be provided. Includes: compaction, digging, construction, additional fill.

2.4.10 Epicormic growth – major/minor/none

Visual assessment and Major/Minor/None response. If major or minor is selected – note detail as necessary.

2.4.11 Foliage Insects – major/minor/none

Visual assessment and Major/Minor/None response. If major or minor is selected – note detail as necessary.

2.4.12 Deadwood - major/minor/none

Visual assessment and Major/Minor/None response. If major or minor is selected – note detail as necessary.

2.4.13 Previously Pruned major/minor/none

Visual assessment and Major/Minor/None response. If major or minor is selected – note detail as necessary.

2.4.14 Causing Drain Blockages – yes/no/not evident

‘Yes’ should not be selected unless supporting evidence is provided (such as a plumbing report with images).

If a report has been provided – provide comment on what evidence was provided and the assessment outcome regarding the tree roots.

‘Not evident’ is to be used when no report has been supplied.

Comments

Additional comments may include, but are not limited to, reference of:

- Included union/unions.
- Bifurcations/multileader trunk arrangement
- Poor branch length/girth ratios
- Over extended limbs
- Storm damage that pruning will not alleviate.

2.4.15 General Health

Healthy	Appears in good health, no major branch mortality (<10%), 0-10% crown dieback
Light to moderate decline	Branch or twig mortality less than 50%, 11-50% crown dieback
Severe decline	Branch or twig mortality greater than 50%, 50% or greater crown dieback
Dead (biotic)	Tree is dead. No evidence of human cause.
Dead (abiotic)	Tree is dead, evidence of poisoning, ringbarking or other abiotic interference.

2.4.16 Growth Stage

- Juvenile
- Mature
- Over Mature
- in Decline

2.4.17 Other special features

Free text field to add any special features evident at the time of inspection, that the TPO deems relevant or important to reference on the TAR file. These will assist decision makers.

2.5 Criteria Assessment

Before proceeding with an assessment to undertake a tree damaging activity, it must be established that all other reasonable remedial treatments and/or risk mitigation measures have been determined to be ineffective.

The criteria are labelled in accordance with their letter assignment in the instrument [DI2025-16](#), valid as of 28 February 2025.

When undertaking VALID Assessments, a recorded detailed assessment is not always necessary. If a Basic Assessment has determined the risk rating as Acceptable or Tolerable, this should be recorded as “Basic – Acceptable” on the TAR. If the Basic Assessment results in a Not Acceptable or Not Tolerable assessment outcome, a Detailed assessment must be undertaken on the VALID App and saved onto the TAR for reference.

Refer to the [VALID Tree Benefit-Risk Assessment Procedure](#) for further information.

2.5.1 Excessive Shading Assessment

Excessive Shading is only to be assessed where the applicant has applied under this criterion and has provided Solar Diagrams to support their TAA.

Solar Access is defined in the [Definition of Excessive Shading Policy](#).

2.5.2 Removal, Major Pruning or Lopping

If Removal is applied for – all criteria must be assessed.

Criteria	Considerations that may result in a YES
1(a) Life expectancy is short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If health status is severe decline (per 2.4.15) • If growth stage was ‘in decline’ (per 2.4.15)
1(b) Unacceptable risk to public or private safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VALID Assessment Result to be recorded. If result is Not Acceptable or Not Tolerable, detailed assessment is required. • Removal of unsuitable or hazardous trees subject to replacement plantings being undertaken where necessary • Is this urgent? Process under Urgent Circumstance
1(c) Causing / threatening to cause substantial damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VALID Assessment Result to be recorded. If result is Not Acceptable or Not Tolerable, detailed assessment is required. • Is this urgent? Process under Urgent Circumstance • If there is a claim of roots causing damage to structure or plumbing, an associated engineers or plumbers report must be provided to be considered (per 2.4.1).

<p>1(d) Inappropriate location (excluding remnant eucalypts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are powerline or structural distances not within tolerance (per 2.2) and pruning to obtain clearances is not a viable option • Has the tree reached its mature size
<p>1(e) Tree is substantially affecting solar access to the lessee’s residence, or neighbouring residence, during winter between the hours of 9am to 3pm and minor pruning is not sufficient to remedy this (excluding remnant eucalypts).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar access diagrams provided (per 2.5.1) • Excessive Shading evident in diagrams, per excessive shading policy definition • NA should be selected in all cases where diagrams are not provided
<p>1(f) Poor form/low vigour <u>and</u> low amenity/ecological value or canopy cover</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structural defects; • supressed growth; • decay or damage; or • other growth or vitality issues. <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low value in the landscape – ie. does not contribute significantly to the surrounding landscape based on its overall form, structure, vigour & aesthetic value; • low or no habitat value; or • limited canopy cover.
<p>1(g) Part of close planting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of the tree will allow other trees in close range to develop. <p>If deemed part of a close planting, a canopy contribution is not required.</p>

Canopy Contribution

Where an applicant applies for removal and the removal is approved, they must enter a Canopy Contribution Agreement, unless an exemption applies. Applicants will include their planned replanting locations (and number of trees) as part of their TAA or indicate their inability to replant on site.

When assessing trees for removal, the TPO must also assess the ability to replant on-site.

On-site canopy contributions must include, for each removed tree:

- 2x trees of the same mature height as the removed tree; OR
- An alternative combination to replace the lost canopy of the removed tree.

If the site does not permit for either of the above, the applicant may be required to pay a financial contribution of up to \$1200 for each tree that is approved for removal.

Record recommendations for replanting in the ‘Room to replant?’ section of the TAR and in the TPO Replant Recommendations section on the individual application section. For example, the applicant has marked two replacement trees under the powerlines, to replace a removed 15m tree.

A recommendation may include: *it is recommended that the on-site canopy contributions are planted on the Eastern side of the block, away from the overhead powerlines. Alternatively, 4x small trees (insert potential species recommendation) may be planted in the proposed location, to enable sufficient powerline clearance to be maintained as they mature.*

2.5.3 Major Pruning or Lopping – additional criteria

- Has a pruning plan been provided so pruning can be appropriately assessed against the criteria?
- For Lopping: Is the retention of the tree considered necessary? If so, it must also meet a criterion in table 2.5.2 above.

Criteria	Considerations
Is it a remedial treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has it been damaged, and will this activity prolong it's life expectancy?
In the general interests of the health of the tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will pruning enhance biomechanical structure and biological functions, or correct issues that arise in its culture?
Reduce an unacceptable risk to public or private safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a VALID assessment – is the assessment result Not Acceptable or Not Tolerable?
Reduce the risk of damage or prevent further damage to a substantial building, structure or service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the canopy overhanging/in general vicinity of substantial structure have defects or indicators of potential failure? • Size of any overhanging canopy
Tree is substantially affecting solar access to the lessee's residence, or neighbouring residence, during winter between the hours of 9am to 3pm and minor pruning is not sufficient to remedy this (excluding remnant eucalypts).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar access diagrams provided – see 2.5.1 • Excessive Shading evident in diagrams, per excessive shading policy definition

2.5.4 Prohibited Groundwork

- A Tree Management Plan or Site Plan must be provided to accompany the Application (whether TAA or DA). Site plans may be sufficient in cases of very minor works, where the applicant can demonstrate no impact to the tree will be incurred, without the need for a technical TMP.

Criteria	Considerations
Works will have minimal impact on the tree, if the conditions of the approval are complied with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has this been demonstrated in the TMP? • Does the TMP comply with the guidelines? • If there is a protected Dead Native Tree, or significantly reduced (canopy) living tree, consider whether the TPZ needs to be increased to encompass the SRZ that is not captured by the reduced 'canopy' +2m

2.5.5 Minor or Major Pruning of a Registered Tree

Criteria	Considerations
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For Major or Minor pruning of Registered trees	
To maintain the health and safety of the tree.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will pruning enhance biomechanical structure and biological functions, or correct issues that arise in its culture?
To maintain clearance from services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are powerline or structural distances not within tolerance (per 2.2).
As a remedial treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has it been damaged, and will this activity prolong it's life expectancy?
When assessing Major pruning, the activity must also not:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantially alter the tree's shape or form; • Cause the tree to become unsafe; or • Result in the decline or death of the tree; or • Necessitate the removal or destruction of the tree. 	

2.6 Dead Native Trees

Assessments of Dead Native Trees should be undertaken in conjunction with the [Dead Tree Assessment Check List](#).

2.7 Exceptional Circumstance

There are times where an assessment may take place and the outcome is determined in opposition to the professional opinion of the TPO. If this occurs, the following circumstances may be considered before a recommendation is made to the delegate.

- any exceptional circumstances that have been raised by the applicant, taking into account advice from the Tree Advisory Panel and the approval criteria. *E.g. extreme applicant distress*
- the importance of the tree in the surrounding landscape
- if the tree is a species listed in schedule 2, whether the tree has ecological importance to the local environment.

3.0 Urgent Circumstance and Minor Works

Urgent Circumstance approvals may be provided verbally to applicants, via phone or in person. When providing verbal approvals, a TPO must remind the applicant of their obligation to submit a written TAA after the fact.

Deciding on an urgent circumstance (or minor works) approval, as at the discretion of the TPO in line with the provisions provided for in the *Urban Forest Act 2023*.

When completing the formal TAR, following receipt of the written TAA, it is preferable that a VALID report is completed and attached to the TAR record, where possible. If a tree was actively failing at the time of approval, a VALID report is not required.

Minor works approvals are most commonly assigned a 2-year validity period from the date of approval; however this is at the discretion of the TPO on a case by case basis and may be less than 2 years if deemed applicable.

Minor works may be approved for an activity that is, or may be, prohibited groundwork in the protection zone for a protected tree if the decision-maker is satisfied the activity will have little or no adverse impact on the health or stability of the tree. The notice of a decision may be given orally or in writing, but the decision-maker must make a written record of any notice given orally as soon as practicable after giving it.

Groundworks that are not defined as prohibited groundwork means excavation to a depth of less than 10cm over an area of 4m² or raises the soil level by less than 10cm above the natural soil level over an area 4m² or larger.

4.0 Tree Management Plans and Development Applications

4.1 Canopy Contribution Table

Prior to assessment, if any trees are proposed for removal as part of a Development Application, the TPO must sight a completed Canopy Contribution Table as part of the Tree Management Plan associated with the Development Application. If this has not been completed the TPO should revert back to the applicant to seek this.

Regulated	Public	Total	
TAS identifier	TAS identifier		
Number of protected tree removals proposed			
Number of retained protected trees			
Proposed number of replants, assuming all removals are approved			
Type of replant proposed (for <u>non-homeowners</u>[^])	Identifier on landscape plans	Identifier on landscape plans	
Conifer			
Introduced under 10m			
Introduced 10-15m			
Introduced 15m+			
Native under 10m			
Native 10-15m			
Native 15m+			

* this table is only required if there are proposed protected tree removals.

[^] Not required for homeowners. See the [Tree Calculator](#) for further information.

4.2 Assessing for removal under the *Urban Forest Act 2023*

Refer to Section 2.5 of this procedure to complete the assessment against the criteria. A full TAR is not a requirement for a DA assessment but may be completed at officer discretion. If the tree meets criteria, approval is granted. If the tree does not meet criteria, an assessment must be made under section 4.4 of this procedure.

4.3 Measuring Trees as part of a Development Application

If an assessment under Section 2.5 has not been undertaken, as it is evident that that the trees under application would not meet criteria for **removal**, tree measurements must be recorded in order to inform any potential Canopy Contribution Agreement.

Measurements are only required for trees proposed for **removal**. See Section 2.1.1.

4.4 Tree retention value - rating for removal on design grounds

When a tree does not meet removal criteria under the Act, a rating must be assigned to the tree to provide guidance to the Landscape Review Panel when determining whether the tree may be approved for removal on *design grounds*.

TPOs may apply professional knowledge and discretion when assigning values to trees under development, with the below methodology to be used as a guideline on an as needed basis to ensure consistency across decision making.

The tree retention value system has been developed using a combination of industry approaches, including the Sustainable Retention Value Index (SRIV) developed by the Institute of Australian Consulting Arboriculturists.

VALID Assessment	Environmental and/or Amenity Value						
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Dead Native Tree*	High		Medium		Low		
Acceptable	High		Medium		Low		
Tolerable	High		Medium		Low		
Not Tolerable**	Medium		Low				

*Dead non-native trees, or trees with a Not Acceptable VALID risk rating are not factored into this assessment, as they would meet the criteria for removal under the Act.

** Where risk mitigation is possible, tree retention may be argued for moderate value trees

Plus "registerable quality" on top of High

4.4.1 Amenity and Environmental Values

Example factors to consider when determining an amenity and/or environmental value assigned to the tree. To assign a value, the tree should *ideally* meet 3 or more criteria in a rating range. For Dead Native Trees, 1 or more criteria* should be met to assign a rating.

	Very High (6-7)	High (5)	Medium (3-4)	Low (1-2)
Crown Size	Very Large (200m ² <, 14m wide Canopy)	Large (100-200m ² , 10-14m wide canopy)	Medium (50-100m ² 7-10m wide canopy)	Small (40m ² >, less than 7m wide canopy)
Canopy Density (in full leaf)	Dense – 90-100% foliage cover	Normal – 70-90% foliage cover	Thinning – 50-70% foliage cover	Sparse – less than 50% foliage cover

Visual Prominence or Impact*	Located in a visually prominent position in the landscape. A landmark or visible from a considerable distance.	Visible from surrounding properties, the street or other thoroughfares	Visible from surrounding properties.	Not visible from surrounding properties (obscured by other trees or built forms).
Form and habit	Very good form and branching habit, excellent specimen, aesthetically distinctive and/or an excellent representation of the species.	Good form and habit, minor distortion or suppression, a good representation of the species.	Fair form and habit, a fair representation of the species.	Poor form and habit and/or an atypical or poor representation of the species.
Environmental Significance	Listed on Schedule 2, threatened or key species in the community; or is a Remnant tree.	Endemic species & representative of the original vegetation of the area.	Planted or self-sown exotic or non-local native tree.	-
Botanical importance	Rare or few in the region. The only example of its type, a species endemic to ACT.	Uncommon in cultivation.	Common in cultivation.	Very common in cultivation, widely represented in the area.
Habitat Value*	Provides important habitat (nesting/foraging/food source/shelter) for threatened fauna species.	Provides habitat for native wildlife. Located within a wildlife corridor. Evidence of nesting hollows, known food sources, and/or other visible evidence of wildlife (markings, nests etc)	Beneficial for native wildlife.	Little or no value to native wildlife

Amenity and Ecological Value assignment guidance table

TPOs may assign values outside of the above guidance table, at their discretion, provided that details of their decision are noted on the case prior to submitting the response to Planning. Values assigned outside of the above may include, but are not limited to:

- Retention priority – where removal or retention may result in disproportionate impact to the surrounding area.
- Professional opinion – where something exceptional (or the opposing) is observed that is not accounted for in the guidance table.

4.5 Providing comments to EPSDD (planning)

When providing comments back to EPSDD (via the Conservator), the response must include the following:

1. **Criteria Assessment** - Provide the assessment outcome against the criteria in the *Urban Forest Act 2023*. Do the trees proposed for removal meet the criteria under the Act or not?
2. **Tree Retention Value** - When trees proposed for removal do not meet the criteria – assign a tree retention value. Using the guidance in section 4.3 provide a rating of Registrable quality, High, Medium or Low.
3. **Canopy Contribution Agreement** - If there are proposed removals (even if they do not meet the criteria) a reference to the requirement to enter a CCA, should a removal be approved, must be included in the email.
4. **Approving Removals** - If you approve any removals under the criteria – a CCA relating to these trees must be attached to the email. The CCA can be prepared by emailing urbanforest@act.gov.au and providing the information on the approved removals including:
 - tree canopy width(s)
 - whether the applicant is a home owner or non-home owner
 - if they have indicated they intend to replant or are paying a financial contribution in the Canopy Contribution Table (see 4.1).

When preparing a response for Planning, it is expected the following is considered when drafting feedback:

- **Avoid additional comments.** The Tree Protection Unit is responsible for providing an assessment under the *Urban Forest Act 2023* and a retention value for EPSDD to consider under design grounds. Comments indicating whether planning may approve it, or the conservator would object in an LRP meeting, is not the role of the Tree Protection Unit.
- **Clear language.** Avoid using jargon or technical terminology without an accompanying definition.

4.5.1 Template Emails

The full response template must be used and can be found at [4.7](#). For the avoidance of doubt, below are some example excerpts of the **comment section**, aligning with the requirements in 4.4.

Example 1. Supported - Proposed removals that meet UFA Criteria

Conditions/Comments/Advice:

The development application (DA) is supported as the tree is poor quality and showing signs of decline. The tree meets criterion 1(1)(a) the tree is in decline and its life expectancy is short in the *Urban Forest (Approval Criteria) Determination 2023 (No 1)*.

A Canopy Contribution Agreement has been prepared and is attached to this advice.

Example 2. TMP only, supported, no proposed removals.

Conditions/Comments/Advice:

The development application (DA) is supported on the condition that all works proceed in accordance with the following plan/s and condition/s.

Plan/s:

1. Drawing title: Demolition Plan, Project No: 22215, drawing no: DA02, issue no: B, dated 08/16/2023.
2. Drawing title: Site Plan, Project No: 22215, drawing no: da01, issue no: b, dated 16/08/2023.
3. Drawing title: Tree Management Plan, Dwg. No. 4661-G201 C, Sheet No. 2.1, dated 16/06/2023 and the Tree Protection notes listed on this plan.

Example 3. DA not supported, trees to not meet UFA criteria.

Conditions/Comments/Advice:

The development application (DA) is not supported as trees 1 to 5 (as referenced in the attached TMP) are medium quality trees. This is consistent/inconsistent with the supplied TMP/Arborist report. These trees do not meet criteria for removal under the *Urban Forest (Approval Criteria) Determination 2023 (No 1)*.

Additionally, the Canopy Contribution Table is missing from the Tree Management Plan (TMP). A link to a template for TMPs in line with the TMP Guidelines is available [Tree Management Plan template](#). Please also see the below note regarding Canopy Contributions.

Example 4. TMP only, not supported.

Conditions/Comments/Advice:

The development application (DA) is not supported due to insufficient information provided in the Tree Management Plan (TMP). The TMP provided provides inadequate detail to determine the effects of the proposed groundworks. The Tree Protection Unit will require a TMP compliant with the *Urban Forest (Tree Management Plans) Guidelines 2023 (No 1)* prior to supporting this DA.

A link to a template for TMPs in line with the TMP Guidelines is available [Tree Management Plan template](#).

4.6 For large scale DA's with existing arboricultural reports

Where a TMP, attached to a DA, has been prepared by a consulting arborist (or equivalent) and includes a larger number of trees, TPOs may:

- Undertake spot checks to confirm measurements and assigned retention values to trees in the provided TMP; and
- Accept the TMP contents without a full audit, if spot checks find no inconsistencies between provided TMP and TPO assessment.

If the TPO finds inconsistencies when conducting the spot check, a full audit may be conducted or alternatively the TPO can advise the proponent that a revised TMP is required, as the submitted document is not a true reflection of the trees on site.

4.7 Template Email

DA No: 202642100

Description: - PROPOSAL FOR MULTI UNIT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEASE VARIATION ...

BLOCK:	SECTION:	DIVISION:
10	48	Holder

The Tree Protection Unit has undertaken a site inspection and reviewed the attached Development Application and can provide the following advice in accordance with **section 107** of *Urban Forest Act 2023*:

No regulated tree/s on the site (nor on neighbouring block/s)	
Supported with Conditions	X
Advice for the Applicant	X
Not Supported	
Further Information/Amendments Required	

Conditions/Comments/Advice:

The development application (DA) is supported on the condition that all works proceed in accordance with the following plan/s and condition/s.

Plan/s:

1. Drawing title: Demolition Plan, Project No: 22215, drawing no: DA02, issue no: B, dated 08/16/2023.
2. Drawing title: Site Plan, Project No: 22215, drawing no: da01, issue no: b, dated 16/08/2023.
3. Drawing title: Tree Management Plan, Dwg. No. 4661-G201 C, Sheet No. 2.1, dated 16/06/2023 and the Tree Protection notes listed on this plan.

Please Note:

A Canopy Contribution Agreement (CCA) is required to remove a protected tree. If a tree is approved for removal, the applicant is required to enter an agreement with the Decision-Maker.

Environment, Planning, and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) has obligation to notify the Tree Protection Unit when approval to remove a protected tree is granted under planning process, so a Canopy Contribution Agreement can be prepared and issued to the applicant of the Development Application.

I provide this advice as a delegate of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna | TPO NAME | Tree Protection Officer (PN 01001) | Urban Treescapes

5.0 Human Rights compatibility

The Human Rights Act guides us as public servants in how to take human rights into account in the decision that we make. The Urban Forest Act engages the following sections of the Human Rights Act 2004:

- section 9 – Right to Life (promoted)
- section 27 – Cultural and Other Rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Other Minorities (promoted)
- section 27C – Right to a healthy environment (promoted)
- section 21 – Right to a Fair Trial and Hearing (limited)
- section 12 – Right to Privacy and Reputation (limited)
- section 8 – Right to Recognition and Equality before the Law (limited)
- section 17 – Right Take Part in Public Life (limited)

For more information on this engagement visit the compatibility statement on the legislation register at https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/View/es/db_66450/20220803-79329/html/db_66450.html

Appendix A – Domestic Animal Services advice

Advice from session run by Domestic Animal Services (DAS) for the Tree Protection unit on the 15 February 2024.

All dogs are different, and we don't know their background also not all owners are responsible dog owners.

Points to remember when encountering a dog either in a yard or on the street.

Dogs usually only bite out of fear. If a dog appears confident, for example barking at the gate or behaving aggressively, they may bite. A wagging tail doesn't always mean a happy dog – a wiggle soft body is usually happy; a scorpion tail or low wag is bad.

Signs of aggression include seeing the white of the eye, licking their lips, tail tucked under, growling (not barking), ears back and showing their teeth. When a dog licks its lips or is constantly yawning it means it is uncomfortable.

Triggers for dogs can be hi-vis, sunglasses and hats. Screaming and/or a high voice can escalate a dog's aggressive behaviour.

If you are unsure and don't feel safe – **DON'T GO IN**. Back away slowly and maintain sight with the dog, but do not make direct eye contact. Never turn your back on them. Present side on body language and don't stare at them.

Baggy clothes and uniform pants and long-sleeved shirts can help as the dog may latch onto these and not skin.

Talk calmly –do not raise the pitch of your voice or scream. If dogs haven't been listened to their whole lives, they will skip signs of friendliness and go straight to a bite.

If a dog attacks or you think they may attack, put anything you can between you and the dog as they do not like barriers. This may include clipboards, sunglasses, tape measure etc. It is rare for dogs to latch and hold, they usually only nip. If they latch and hold, a choke hold is the best thing to do – you can use a rope or a lead or tape measure around their throat to stop the airway so they let go.

You have the right to protect yourself, however it is best to assess the dog before entering - if you decided to enter the property that may be an issue in an investigation if the dog attacks or you injure the dog protecting yourself.

If you are bitten, report it immediately to Access Canberra after you have applied first aid. DAS will attend within 1 hour if a bite occurs.

If you come across a roaming dog or dogs call Access Canberra to report them so the DAS officers can attend.

In Summary

1. If you don't feel safe, don't go in
2. If the job is urgent, call Access Canberra and DAS can deal with the dog while you assess the tree – but only if it is urgent.
3. If you are bitten, report it, especially if it is a stray dog as they may bite again.
4. Report all stray dogs to Access Canberra.