



# **Verge Development Protocol**

*(Landscaping your Verge)*

## **Commercial Property**

(Updated February 2004 – supersedes all other editions)

## **Introduction:**

Verges (nature strips) remain the property and responsibility of the Alice Springs Town Council.

Prior to any works being commenced on any verge (nature strip) WRITTEN APPROVAL IS REQUIRED from Council.

The Verge Development Protocol is a “living” document. This means that the requirements of the protocol will evolve over time as our understanding of the issues involved with the design, construction and maintenance of sustainable verges in Alice Springs grows. This document will be updated again in approximately 12 months time.

Submission of an application for “Verge Development – landscaping your verge” is required for all “landscaping” on verges within Alice Springs.

***For other works on verges including vehicle access (driveways/crossovers), stormwater discharge, kerb works and other minor construction works please use the Permit Application for Road Reserve (fence to fence) available from the front counter at the Civic Centre in Todd Street.***

This document outlines the general procedures for the preparation, submission and assessment of landscaping plans for work on Council verges in Alice Springs.

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## **1. Town Council and NT Government Roads:**

This Protocol refers specifically to those roads, verges and lanes controlled by Alice Springs Town Council. Council controls all roads in the municipality except those listed below.

The following roads in Alice Springs are controlled by the Northern Territory Government:

- North Stuart Highway
- Telegraph Terrace
- South Stuart Highway
- Larapinta Drive
- Stott Terrace
- Sadadeen Road
- Undoolya Road (Grevillea roundabout to Undoolya boundary)
- South Terrace (Stephens Rd causeway to South Stuart Highway)
- Stephens Road
- Ross Highway
- Santa Theresa Road

If you live on any of the above roads and plan on landscaping or working on your verge (any works, planting or storage of objects or materials) **WRITTEN APPROVAL IS REQUIRED** from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, prior to any works being commenced. The application form and department requirements are available from DIPE on 8951 5211 or can be collected from the Greatorex Building in Parsons St.

## **2. Landscaping Your Verge**

Alice Springs Town Council does not promote the installation of lawns due to their high water usage in what is essentially an arid landscape.

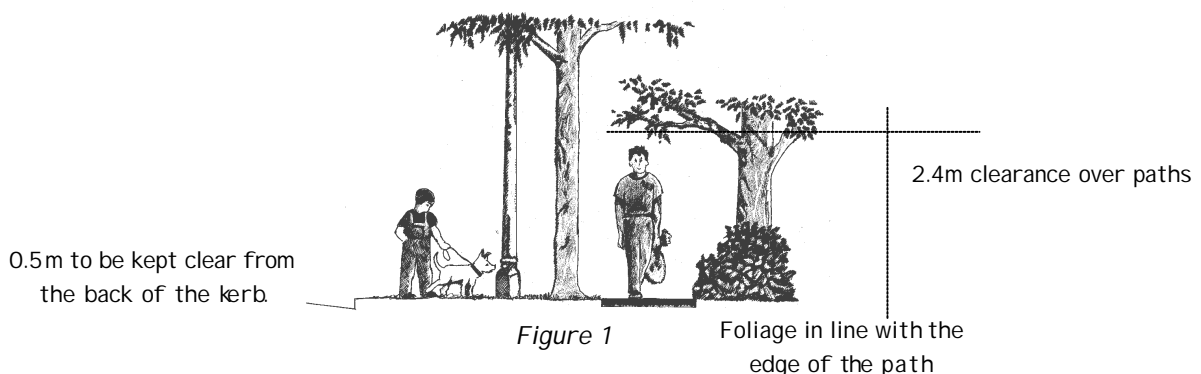
***If you plan on landscaping your verge WRITTEN APPROVAL IS REQUIRED from the Alice Springs Town Council, prior to any works being commenced. The application form and Council requirements are contained within this protocol.***

### **Materials:**

- Non organic mulch materials (gravel, crushed sandstone etc) should have a maximum particle size of 12mm in diameter. Organic mulch materials should also contain smaller rather than larger particles. Larger sized mulch such as river rubble can be used as missiles and may become dangerous if spilled onto footpaths or roadways.
- Approved organic and/or non-organic mulch or similar ground treatments must be stable and properly contained. Road drains empty into the Todd River without treatment. Care must be taken to ensure that the road, drains and footpaths are protected from such matter for environmental and safety purposes.

### **Plants:**

- Alice Springs Town Council has a Policy (*146 Verge Policy*) of using endemic (plants from the local area) and /or Australian native plants in preference to exotics in our own landscaping works. Council actively promotes the arid zone landscape character of the town and supports the use of techniques most applicable to enhancing that character. Please refer to the support document "Preferred Plant Species for Landscaping in Alice Springs" (in preparation 20/2/04).
- You must take into account the mature size of all plants, to ensure that they will not cause an obstruction for pedestrians, not grow too close to overhead lines or cause line of sight problems for pedestrians and/or motorists.



- Foliage which is on the verge (nature strip), or growing on your block and overhangs the footpath, must be pruned to maintain a minimum height of 2.4 metres clear above footpaths and pruned back in line with the inside edge of the footpath (including hedges and ground covers) below this height. For safety purposes, pedestrians must have access to the entire width of the footpath.

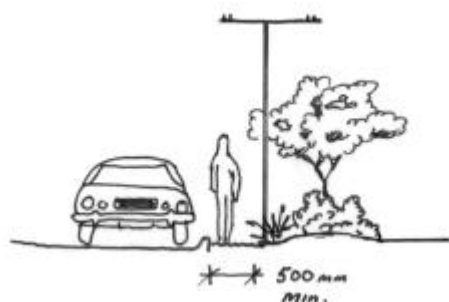


Figure 2

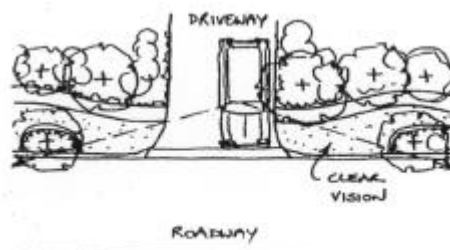


Figure 3

- A strip of low vegetation and/or an even, stable surface must be maintained a minimum of 0.5 metres wide from the back of the kerb for pedestrian access from the roadway and from cars parked at the kerb, even if a formed footpath is adjacent your property boundary (figure 2).
- Foliage, materials or structures are not to cause a line of sight problem for vehicles or pedestrians when using, entering or exiting an intersection, driveway or footpath.
- Vegetation should not exceed 0.6 metre in height within 3 metres of any driveway, to ensure that a clear line of sight is maintained when entering or exiting your property (figure 3).
- Alice Springs Town Council guidelines and Power Water Corporation regulations require that:
  - Maximum planting height of any plants is 2.4m within the 5m wide corridor under the powerlines (2.5m either side of the power poles) (figure 4).
  - Use the 45 degree angle from the base of the power pole to work out where it is safe to plant tall trees on the verge or in your yard (e: a 10m tree can be planted a distance of 10m from the power line).

#### **Rocks, bollards & fencing:**

- Bollards – vertical posts (no less than 150 mm in diameter) and landscape rocks are permitted on the verge. Bollards are to extend a minimum of 800mm in height above the ground and not less than 600mm in the ground. A row of bollards can be erected at right angles to the road, but must not restrict pedestrian access.
- Rocks – no less than 500mm X 500mm X 300mm and no larger than 1.5m X 1m X 500mm are permitted on the verge.
- Bollards and landscape rocks are to be positioned a minimum of 0.5 metres from the back of the kerb, driveways or footpaths. They are to be erected with a minimum gap of 1.2 metres between each bollard or rock. Treated timber bollards are recommended. Clear line of sight must be maintained, so larger rocks (over .6m high) must be at least 3m from any driveway.
- Reflectors may be used on the bollards or rocks to protect against possible collision.
- Temporary protective fencing is permitted (with prior approval), if constructed and maintained in a safe condition and clearly visible at night, in areas where new landscaping requires protection.
- Permanent fencing of any kind is not permitted within the verge area.

#### **Storage of materials:**

- Materials can be temporarily stored on the verge area, but YOU MUST OBTAIN WRITTEN APPROVAL from the Council Rangers prior to doing so. Conditions are attached to approvals for the temporary storage of building materials or other objects on verges.

### **3. Recommended Planting & Irrigation Techniques:**

The type of mulch used in verges must consider pedestrian and cycle traffic. In areas which have or may have high levels of pedestrian and/or cycle traffic, and where there is no formed footpath; the landscape design must include an even, stable and safe right of way for pedestrians.

Mulching of planted areas conserves water by retaining soil moisture, maintains a more even soil temperature, reduces erosion and compaction, reduces weed growth and helps to ensure deep root development.

Gravel mulches are available in different colours and textures that can be used to enhance the design. Gravels of a maximum particle size of approximately 12mm are preferred to minimise the potential use of the material as missiles. The use of uncompacted coarse river sand and red sands as both a mulch material and/or a design feature is only recommended where pedestrian access is minimal.

Organic mulch should be pasteurised or partially composted to reduce the possibility that it contains weed seeds & diseases. A more finely ground material is preferred to minimise the potential use of the material as missiles and to reduce possible wind distribution. Do not place the mulch directly in contact with the trunk of the plants as this can encourage collar rot and other disease.

Watering regimes in Alice Springs are critical. The harsh climate affects the establishment of trees and shrubs due to increased transpiration and desiccation during the hot periods and the action of frost in winter. Poorly planned irrigation layout and/or timing may lead to increased soil salinity due to the rapid evaporation of water. Insufficient depth of watering will also encourage shallow root growth that will be unable to support the plant if irrigation is discontinued and may lead to trees being uprooted in windy conditions. Well designed drip irrigation and appropriate mulching will help to overcome these challenges. When installing poly irrigation pipe under concrete footpaths and/or driveways, it is advisable to sleeve the irrigation pipe within a PVC conduit with a slightly larger diameter.

Automated irrigation systems are labour saving devices but must be programmed correctly for the time of year, the type & age of planting and must be installed and maintained correctly.

Contingent on the age of the plant, long deep watering one or two times a week is more successful than short daily watering.

Water harvesting techniques similar to those implemented at the airport and the Araluen Arts Centre landscapes can prove successful for long term sustainability of plant communities. This involves the formation of mounds and hollows. Excess rainfall or irrigation collects in the hollows and can be reabsorbed into the mounds when required. This technique is not appropriate on narrow verges (less than 2m not including footpath area) and in all cases the excavated area should be no more than 50mm below the normal ground level. Batter slopes (edges) must not exceed a gradient of more than 1 in 20.

#### **4. Street Trees**

Alice Springs Town Council periodically checks and carries out any necessary pruning and/or removal of street trees. If you wish to prune or remove any trees from your verge, you must OBTAIN WRITTEN APPROVAL from Council.

Alice Springs Town Council guidelines and Power Water Corporation regulations require that:

- Maximum planting height of any plants is 2.4m within the 5m wide corridor under the powerlines - 2.5m either side of the power poles (*figure 4*).
- Use the 45 degree angle from the base of the power pole to work out where it is safe to plant tall trees on the verge or in your yard – ie: a 10m tree can be planted 10m from the power line.
- It is imperative that care is taken when choosing and planting street trees. Plant trees no closer to the kerb than 1.2 metres. This will reduce possible damage to the kerb and roadway from tree roots.

Adequate protection of street trees is required. This can be achieved by:

- Not placing building materials or vehicles within the root zone of the tree (drip zone plus 2m);
- No unapproved excavation within the drip line of trees
- No excavation for services within 3m of the tree trunk
- Ensure that the ground level around street trees is not altered and that materials are not built-up around the base of any trees

If any of the street trees are causing you concern or which may be considered a hazard, report it to Alice Springs Council Depot (89526225) and they will assess the tree and rectify any problems.

***REMEMBER, most trees grow tall. When planting under overhead service lines please ensure that the mature height of any plant will be less than 2.6 metres. No trees or shrubs with a mature height greater than 2.6m to be planted within the 5 meter wide corridor under the power lines.***

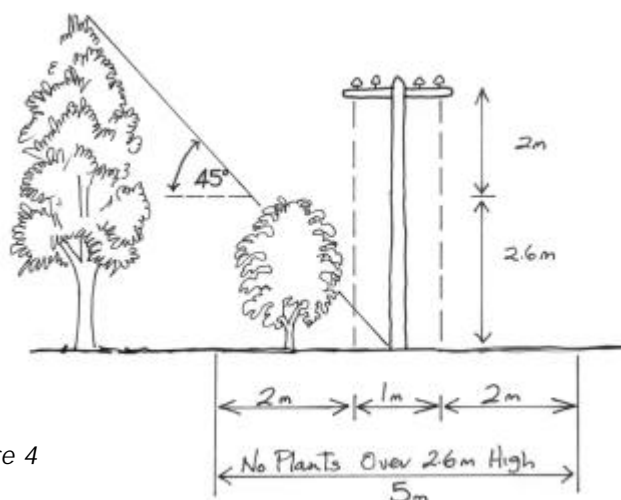


Figure 4

Alice Springs Town Council policy (146 Verge Policy) prioritises the planting of endemic and/or Australian native plants. However in areas of significant cultural and / or heritage value, replacement or planting of non-native trees may occur with WRITTEN APPROVAL.

**Once your application to landscape your verge has been approved – Council will provide a discount voucher towards a number of appropriate native plants from any of the local nurseries. This can be used to purchase appropriate street trees or other native plants for your verge landscape.**

#### **5. Species Not Recommended for Verge Planting:**

Athel Pine	Tamarisk parviflora
White Cedar	Melia azederach
Himalayan Rain Tree	Dalbergia sissoo
Peppercorn Tree	Schinus areira
Albizia Sp.	Albizia
Palms	all species except the date palm in some areas.
Cacti / succulents with spines	
Giant Sunflower	Helianthus annuus
Kapok Bush	Aerva javanica
Umbrella Sedge	Cyperus involucreatus
Purple Verbena	Verbena tenuisecta

#### **6. You Must Not:**

- Conduct any works on any verge without WRITTEN APPROVAL from Council.
- Substantially raise the level of the verge in any way above a nominal line drawn between the top of the kerb and the ground level at the base of the fence line at the front of your property or between the top of the kerb and the outside edge of a formed footpath (concrete, bitumen, compacted gravel etc in good order)
- Install any structure / object that may impede or disrupt pedestrian / vehicular traffic and / or which poses a potential threat to public safety.
- Plant any plant that is considered a weed or which has the recognised potential to become a weed
- Plant any plant that is deemed by Council to pose a risk to the public or which may cause damage to existing or future infrastructure
- Undertake any works and/or install any material on the verge that is deemed by Council to be inappropriate
- Store or place any substance, material or thing on the verge without WRITTEN APPROVAL from the Council.
- Prune or remove any street trees or shrubs without WRITTEN APPROVAL.
- Allow any foliage to obstruct pedestrian access to footpaths or the area of the verge 0.5 metres from the kerb (see figure 1).
- Park or store any type of vehicle or trailer on a verge other than your own WITHOUT WRITTEN APPROVAL.

## **7. Your Application For Residential Verge Development:**

Please submit your application to the Environment Officer, Alice Springs Town Council, PO Box 1071, ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871.

Your application must contain two (2) copies of the Landscape Plan. **Plans must be to scale** at 1:100; 1:50 or 1:20. [1cm = 100cm (1m); 1cm = 50cm (.5m); 1cm = 20cm (.2m)]

All applications to carry out landscape works on the verge should contain the following:

### **Completed Verge Development Application Form containing:**

- a. Name of owner / resident
- b. Lot number
- c. Property address / postal address
- d. Contact phone numbers

### **Completed (signed) services approval sheet**

**A plan of the lot (property) boundary and all adjoining verge areas (fence to kerb) at 1:100; 1:50 or 1:20 (plans must be to scale and must specify scale used).**

**The plan(s) will specify the following:**

- a. location, size and species of existing plants (if any).
- b. trees or plants proposed to be removed (if any).
- c. proposed finished surface levels (approximate heights above/below the kerb).
- d. details of all underground and overhead services (power, water, gas, telephone etc)
- e. all existing verge infrastructure (footpaths, streetlights, signs, hydrants, phone booths etc)
- f. type of paving, its thickness and method of construction (substrate, material & reinforcing)
- g. position, height and depth of bollards and/or rocks
- h. proposed infrastructure and/or furniture
- i. if water harvesting – details of site storm water overflow system (for heavy rainfall events)
- j. planting schedule including botanical and common names of plant species, number of plants of each species to be used, details of the minimum size at planting, spacing of plants and estimated tree canopy spread.
- k. areas to be mulched (organic & non-organic) – include type of mulch and maximum particle size
- l. areas of turf (if any)
- m. Irrigation system, layout and proposed watering schedule
- n. the finished surface levels

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**Verge Development Permit (landscaping your verge) – Application Form**

***‘Commercial Property’***

Lot #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own the property?

Do you rent the property?

Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone:                      BH: \_\_\_\_\_

AH: \_\_\_\_\_

Mob: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please attach a scale plan (at 1:100; 1:50 or 1:20) of the above Lot boundary and all adjoining verge area, detailing all requirements as per the Verge Development Protocol for Residential Properties. Please check to make sure that your application contains all required information.*

***Incomplete applications will NOT be considered.***

## Verge Development Permit – Services Approval

**Note:** All applications require the approval of the understated, incomplete applications will NOT be considered. Please include this “completed” (signed) form with your application.

**PAWA – Approval (Power)**  
 (Sadadeen Valley Main Office)  
 (Patrick Smith – 89517312)

**PAWA – Approval (water)**  
 (Sadadeen Valley Main Office)  
 (Patrick Smith – 89517312)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Date

**Telstra – Approval**  
 (17 Price Street A/S)  
 (Mark Weeks -0417844430)

**Origin Gas – Approval**  
 (Smith Street A/S)  
 (Garry Burns – 89526577)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Date

**Note:**

- All proposed verge landscapes will meet the requirements contained within the Verge Development Protocols, these guidelines may be revised by Council at any time, without notice.
- Failure to comply with this Agreement and / or the Verge Development Protocols may result in Council removing the ‘illegal works’ and seeking to recover the costs of the removal from the owner.
- Where new works or infrastructure / services maintenance by Council cause damage or disruption to approved verge landscapes, Council will return said landscapes to prior condition with no cost to the owner.

Office Use Only				
Checked by EO	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amended
Checked by MIO	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amended
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Changes Required – Request Resubmit	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Approval Sent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments:				
_____				
_____				
_____				



## **Perpetual Maintenance Agreement – Landscaped Verge**

### ***'Commercial Property'***

This contract between Alice Springs Town Council &

Signed this day \_\_\_\_\_ month \_\_\_\_\_ year \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Owners signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Council signature*

Establishes the following agreement:

1. Alice Springs Town Council agree to the establishment by the signatory of a landscaped verge (in line with advice provided in the Verge Development Protocol & by Council staff), from property line to kerb of Lot # \_\_\_\_\_ in the following manner:
  - All landscaping & verge treatments will be approved by Council prior to construction
  - Council will accept no future responsibility for the maintenance and / or management of this area.
  - An annual rate rebate of \$0.50c per square metre of appropriate and agreed landscaping treatment will be granted to the signatory by ASTC.
  - This rebate will cease to be in effect if the maintenance and/or management of this area fall below the standard required by Council.
  - Properties where the rebate has been forfeited (see above) will be billed the equivalent amount (pro rata) in the rate period following.
2. The owner / occupier agrees to be solely responsible for all costs incurred towards these agreed landscaping works.
3. The owner / occupier agrees to undertake the sole responsibility for the perpetual maintenance & management, to the standards required by Council, of this verge (see plan).