

FORESHORE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES



1.

MANAGING FORESHORE VEGETATION FOR OUR FUTURE

The overarching aim of foreshore vegetation management is to ensure the long-term health, biodiversity, and resilience of Kingston’s coastal and marine ecosystems, which are increasingly threatened by human activity and climate change impacts.

Foreshore vegetation management also plays an essential role in maintaining human health and wellbeing, through connection to nature, an experience increasingly valued by the Kingston community and evidenced through Council’s commitment to prioritise the natural environment in our Community Vision.

Whilst these guidelines set out the current practice of foreshore vegetation management, it should be noted management practices in ecological restoration are ever-evolving and therefore these guidelines may be adapted as new information becomes available, new policies are developed or strategic priorities change.

2.

OVERVIEW OF GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Foreshore vegetation management within Kingston is guided by:

- A regulatory framework, which includes federal and state legislation:
 - Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999,
 - Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
 - Planning and Environment Act 1987
 - Marine and Coastal Act 2018
- Council Plans, Strategies and Policies
 - Climate and Ecological Emergency Response Plan 2021
 - Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2023
 - Biodiversity Strategy 2018-2023 (next strategy in development)
 - Kingston Planning Scheme.
- A set of industry best-practice guidelines, known as the ‘National standards for the practice of ecological restoration in Australia’, developed by the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia, in consultation with industry experts and partner agencies; and



REGULATION

To support the implementation of the aforementioned documents, DEECA have produced guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

These guidelines “set out and describe the application of Victoria’s state-wide policy in relation to assessing and compensating for the removal of native vegetation” (DEECA 2017). Consistent with the guidelines and council’s planning policy, Kingston’s management of vegetation in conservation areas aims to:

1. Avoid the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation,
2. Minimise impacts from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation that cannot be avoided, and
3. Provide an offset to compensate for the biodiversity impact from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

As Committee of Management of the foreshore reserve, Council must also adhere to DEECA’s consent requirements, set out in the Marine and Coastal Act 2018. Under this Act “All use, development or works on marine and coastal Crown land by any party, including committees of management and local government, requires consent”.

Actions permitted under the provision of general consent

There are several vegetation management actions that are permitted under the provision of ‘general consent’ in the **Marine and Coastal Act 2018**, i.e. these actions may be undertaken without an application to DEECA. These actions include: “Vegetation management to improve ecological health or to maintain existing paths, roads and fire access tracks, existing buildings and structures, signs, and overhead services.” Examples of vegetation management works undertaken under the general consent guidelines in Kingston include revegetation, weed control, 1 metre clearances off property boundaries (when requested) and ‘track clearing’ (pruning vegetation off public access paths).

Actions not permitted under the provision of general consent

Actions which are not permitted under general consent require consent under the Marine and Coastal Act 2018.

In the case of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation, this process may also require a planning permit from Council, unless an exemption applies through the planning scheme.





4.

VEGETATION QUALITY ASSESSMENTS & ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) have also produced several guidance documents and processes to assist in the identification and management of native vegetation.

The Vegetation Quality Assessment (also known as habitat hectare assessment), a standard approach to assessing vegetation quality in Victoria; and

Ecological Vegetation Classes. Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) are a “standard unit for classifying vegetation types in Victoria. EVCs are described through a combination of floristics, lifeforms and ecological characteristics, and through an inferred fidelity to particular environmental attributes” (DEECA 2023).

DEECA provide regional-scale EVC mapping data for both pre-European settlement and the year 2005. Current, local-scale mapping is undertaken by accredited ecologists following the Vegetation Quality Assessment method.

Once an EVC is identified and mapped, land managers may utilise available reference material to guide management activities applicable to that EVC. This includes lists of plant species typically found in the

EVC which may be used for revegetation purposes, and/or to guide methods of improving species and structural diversity (i.e. ground cover, shrub and tree canopy) within the EVC.

DEECA has produced EVC benchmarks documents which contain a subset of ‘typical’ but not comprehensive lists of species for each EVC in a bioregion (Kingston is within the Gippsland Plain bioregion).

Kingston engaged the services of ecological consultants Biosis in 2012 and Practical Ecology in 2022 to undertake Vegetation Quality Assessments within Council’s bushland and foreshore reserves, resulting in detailed local-scale mapping of the EVC extents in these locations. EVCs identified along Kingston’s foreshore are identified in Appendix A.

Building on these, Council has developed comprehensive species lists through a combination of on-ground surveys and expert ecological advice. Should it be necessary to supplement natural regeneration (the preferred method of ecological restoration) with revegetation, species lists guide plant selection for the appropriate EVC (see Appendix B & C).

FORESHORE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT IN KINGSTON

Kingston's Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2023, endorsed by DEECA and developed in consultation with our community and industry stakeholders, contain several actions pertaining to vegetation management on the foreshore which guide foreshore vegetation management, including:

Action 2A

Continue vegetation management and habitat enhancement, integrating best practice methods into current approaches. This includes consideration of ecological vegetation classes (EVCs), sensitive/rare species, indigenous species, and diversity along with definition of clear performance indicators (i.e. weed/pest control, native cover, number/presence of species).

Action 2B

Protect and enhance our dunes through minimising dune disturbance and establishing and maintaining structurally diverse native vegetation.

Action 3B

Review land use management, planning schemes, zoning and decision making to incorporate latest State policy, regional coastal hazards outcomes and Victoria's adaptation approach.

Action 5C

Strengthen partnerships and advocacy with other stakeholders to raise awareness, promote and support shared care for coastal and marine areas.

Action 5D

Strengthen understanding and communication regarding obtaining approvals and consents (processes, requirements, considerations) for works and activities within marine and coastal zones.

Management of Kingston's foreshore vegetation generally occurs under three scenarios:

5.1

Business as Usual (BAU) Approach:

Kingston manages foreshore vegetation by protecting and enhancing indigenous ecological communities. Indigenous vegetation is culturally significant to Traditional Owners and is critical in supporting native fauna communities and for its intrinsic biodiversity value.

This is done by using integrated invasive flora and fauna management, focussing on encouraging natural regeneration, facilitated regeneration, reintroduction/revegetation, and reconstruction of natural ecological systems.

Consistent with regulatory requirements and the national standards, vegetation is only pruned under the BAU scenario to "improve ecological health or to maintain existing paths, roads and fire access tracks, existing buildings and structures, signs, and overhead services (DEECA 2023)." An example of these BAU works is pruning vegetation away from public access paths to improve accessibility and improving sight-lines for lifesaving club operations (noting DEECA consent and/or a planning permit may be required in some circumstances)

When revegetation works are required, plant selection will be consistent with the applicable EVC as mapped through the Vegetation Quality Assessment process and associated EVC comprehensive species list (examples in Appendix).

Due to the history of disturbance along the Kingston coastline, many of the pre-European EVC are either greatly reduced or no longer in existence. In these circumstances, the dominant EVC may not be the most suitable reference EVC should removal of vegetation and/or planting of vegetation or trees be proposed. In many instances across the Kingston foreshore, smaller EVC patches may be surrounded by more dominant EVC patches. Industry best-practice in these circumstances is to protect and enhance the less-dominant EVC to ensure significant flora survives and thrives, which may include reducing competition species from the more dominant EVC.

FORESHORE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT IN KINGSTON

5.2

Pruning and/or removal to facilitate Council works:

Pruning or removal of vegetation is often required to facilitate the provision of services and amenities along the foreshore, such as buildings, fencing, paths, boardwalks and recreation space. In these instances, the community will be consulted prior to works being undertaken to ensure there's opportunity to provide feedback, and to ensure the impact to vegetation, and the plans for replacement planting (if any) is communicated transparently. Notification of the vegetation impact will be given via on-site signage and letter drops to abutting residents, with relevant information posted to Council's website. Council will endeavour to place species in locations where they have the least impact on visual amenity of the foreshore for the community as much as practicable.

Planting in these instances will be carried out in accordance with either the applicable planning permit or DEECA consent stipulations for the works, or if no such permits are required, consistent with the applicable EVC in the area where the works are being carried out, or as close as possible to where vegetation is to be removed. This includes adherence to the recommended species, densities and canopy cover as set out in Kingston's flora lists and DEECA's EVC benchmark documents available on the respective websites.

Any planting of trees required under this scenario must comply with the planning permit or DEECA requirements and this guideline should not pre-empt this process. When tree planting is required, in terms of foreshore and biodiversity management, planting on a 1:1 ratio is considered reasonable and ecological advice could be sought on the impact to the EVC should a deviation be required.

5.3

'Other' Scenarios:

From time to time, other scenarios may arise where pruning or removal of foreshore vegetation may be required. Examples include proactive works to improve sight-lines for safety purposes (such as from car parks) or to improve visual amenity for the general community, such as from public gathering spaces. The general principles to be considered in these scenarios before undertaking removal or pruning of vegetation include:

- Benefit to the broader community
- Enhancing community safety; and
- Minimal impact to foreshore ecology and biodiversity.

Whilst scenarios may generally meet the requirements of these principles, it is important to note they may still require DEECA consent under the Marine and Coastal Act 2018 and council planning permits, hence why they are not BAU.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council’s 2023 Media and External Communications Strategy has the purpose of helping to build an inclusive, welcoming place our community feels proud of. A place where our community feels represented, engaged, well informed and armed with the tools they need to participate on issues they care about.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has a consultation framework which is used by Kingston.

The following engagement approaches will be applied for various vegetation management practices within Kingston:

	IAP2 level of engagement	Method of communication	Engagement timeframe
BAU	Inform	On site signage	During works
Council Works	Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none">On site signageBulletin via letter box dropsWebsite	Minimum 7 days prior
Other	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">On site signageConsultation with directly affected stakeholder	Minimum 7 days prior



APPENDICES

Appendix A.

FORESHORE EVC LOCATION TABLE

LOCATION	Coastal Headland Scrub	Coastal Dune Grassland	Berm Grassy Shrubland	Sand Heathland	Coastal Dune Scrub	Coastal Tussock Grassland	Coastal Banksi Woodland
Charman Road – Mundy Street (top of Cliff)	•						
Charman Road – Mundy Street (embankment/beach)	•	•	•				
Mundy Street – Naples Road	•		•			•	•
Naples Road – Antibes Street Car Park	•	•	•	•		•	•
Antibes Street Car Park – Parkers Road	•		•			•	
Parkers Road – Mordialloc Creek	•	•	•		•		•
Mordialloc Creek – Gnotuk Ave Car Park		•	•		•		•
Gnotuk Car Park – Alexandra Avenue		•			•		•
Alexandra Avenue – The Esplanade		•	•		•		•
The Esplanade – Bristol Avenue		•			•		•
Bristol Avenue – The Strand		•	•		•		•
The Strand – Harding Avenue		•			•		•
Harding Avenue – Monica Avenue		•			•		•
Monica Avenue – The Glade		•			•		•
The Glade – Osprey Lane		•	•		•		•

* Further information on EVC species lists and mapping extents is available on council's website.

Appendix B.

BERM GRASSY SHRUBLAND

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) are the standard unit for classifying vegetation types in Victoria.

EVC:311 Berm Grassy Shrubland

Kingston Status: Vulnerable

Low shrubland occurring in sheltered coastal areas where sand deposits have formed as a result of low energy wave action. Contains a number of halophytic species over a ground layer of grasses and herbs.

KINGSTON SPECIES LIST		
Common Name	Scientific	Life Form
Coast Saltbush	Coast Saltbush	Shrub
Long-hair Plume-grass	Dichelachne crinita	Grass
Australian Salt-grass	Distichlis distichophylla	Grass
Coast Tussock-grass	Poa poiformis var. poiformis	Grass
Salt Couch	Sporobolus virginicus	Grass
Dune Thistle	Actites megalocarpus	Ground cover
Rounded Noon-flower	Disphyma crassifolium ssp. clavellatum	Ground cover
Southern Sea-heath	Frankenia pauciflora var. gunnii	Ground cover
Nodding Club-sedge	Isolepis cernua var. cernua	Ground cover
Seaberry Saltbush	Rhagodia candolleana ssp. candolleana	Ground cover







Appendix C.

EVC MAP EXAMPLE





City of
KINGSTON

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-  PO Box 1000, Mentone 3194
-  1300 653 356
-  TIS 131 450
-  info@kingston.vic.gov.au
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