



Do I need to lodge an application for the removal of vegetation on my property?

Explanatory note

City Plan, in very specific circumstances, permits damage to vegetation without making application to the City of Gold Coast. These instances are known as accepted development subject to requirements. The Vegetation management code within City Plan outlines the required outcomes.

Explanation of terms that you will see through this checklist

Damage means: The destruction of assessable vegetation or interference with its natural growth including, but not limited to, ring-barking, cutting down, topping, removing, poisoning, interfering with the trunk or severely reducing its height or trimming its branches so severely it's likely to die.

Accepted development subject to requirements means: A development application is not required to the City if you meet the required outcomes.

Checklist

The checklist provides guidance where vegetation damage will be considered accepted development which can be undertaken without the City's approval and does not require an application for Operational Works (Vegetation Clearing), or in other words an application to remove or damage the vegetation.

For further technical information, reference should be made to the City's website: [City Plan](#)

Residents must note that any vegetation clearing must not result in harm to native wildlife. Where native wildlife is present in vegetation to be removed, it is recommended that a licensed spotter catcher be employed to oversee the removal works.

1. Previously approved Landscape Plan over your property

Residents are not permitted to remove vegetation that has previously been required/conditioned by an approved landscape plan without approval. Approved landscape plans, are typically applicable over land managed by a body corporate or within a community management scheme. If the vegetation is managed or contained within an approved landscape plan, an application for Operational Works (Vegetation Clearing) will be required.

2. Damage/removal of vegetation along an existing property boundary fence, or a proposed new fence.

- Residents are permitted to remove vegetation along an existing property boundary fence and for the construction of a new property boundary fence, when the location of the vegetation meets the required outcomes and is not located on land managed by a body corporate or within a community management scheme.
- Vegetation proposed to be removed is measured from the centre of the diameter of the tree's trunk at ground level to the nearest edge of the fence foundations. In the case of a fence not yet built, the proposed fence is to be constructed within 21 days of the vegetation clearing.

*Damage can occur to identified vegetation if it is within the following distances of a property boundary fence.

What is your Lot Size?	Distance to property boundary fence	Yes
On lots less than 4000m ²	Within 1.5 metres of the boundary	
On lots between 4000m ² to 7999m ²	Within 3 metres of the boundary	
On lots 8000m ² and greater	Within 6 metres of the boundary	

*If you have answered **yes** to any one of the boxes above, **no further action is required of you and/or the City and the works proposed are considered as accepted subject to requirements.***

3. Damage/removal of vegetation that is close to a building?

- Residents are permitted to remove vegetation that is in close proximity to an existing approved building when the location of the vegetation meets the required outcomes and is not located on land managed by a body corporate or within a community management scheme.
- Vegetation proposed to be removed is measured from the centre of the diameter of the tree's trunk at ground level to the nearest edge of the building foundations.

*Damage can occur to identified vegetation if it is within the following distances of an approved building such as house, shed, garage and or carport.

What is your Lot Size?	Distance to approved building	Yes
On lots less than 8000m ²	Within 3 metres of the approved building	
On lots 8000m ² and greater	Within 10 metres of the approved building	

*If you have answered **yes** to any one of the boxes above, **no further action is required of you and/or the City and the works proposed are considered accepted subject to requirements.***

4. Damage/Removal of vegetation that is close to my pool fence?

- Residents are permitted to remove vegetation that is in close proximity to an existing pool fence, when the location of the vegetation meets the required outcomes.
- The vegetation proposed to be removed is measured from the centre of the diameter of the tree's trunk at ground level to the nearest edge of the pool fence.

*Damage can occur to identified vegetation if it is within the following distance from an approved pool fence.

Distance to pool fence	Yes
Within 1.5 metres of pool fence	

*If you have answered **yes**, **no further action is required of you and/or the City and the works proposed are considered accepted subject to requirements.***

5. Removal/damage of vegetation that is part of the native under storey?

- Residents are permitted to remove/damage vegetation that is native under storey, when the area of the lot in which the vegetation is located meets the the required outcomes.
- Native under storey includes native herbs, grasses, mosses, lichens and small trees that occupy the vegetation layers below the canopy of taller trees.

*Damage can occur to identified vegetation that is native under storey

Is the vegetation one of the following?

Yes

Is the lot size less than 1000m ² in area?	
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*If you have answered **yes**, no further action is required of you and/or the City and the works are considered accepted.*

6. Does the vegetation require removal because it is interfering with the lawful operation of an established agricultural business or animal husbandry business?

- Residents are permitted to remove vegetation that is interfering with the lawful operation of an established agricultural business or animal husbandry business, where certain requirements are met, and the damage/removal of vegetation meets the required outcomes.
- A lawful established business is one that has approval from the City or other relevant state authority for undertaking the business. The business is required to be established and operating for these provisions to be considered as accepted development.

If further information is required please contact City's Environmental Planners to discuss.

Is the vegetation one of the following?

Yes

Is the identified vegetation located outside the 60 metres of a high bank** of a major waterway? <i>Wetlands and Watercourses</i>	
Is the identified vegetation located outside the 30 metre of a high bank** of all other waterways as identified on Environmental signification – wetlands and watercourse overlay map? <i>Wetlands and Watercourses</i>	
Is the identified vegetation located on land that has a slope less than of 25%?	

**Where no definable high bank is present, the buffer width is measured from the Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT) of tidal waterways of the normal water level of freshwater waterways.

*If you have answered **yes**, no further action is required of you and/or the City and the works are considered accepted.*

7. Is the tree hazardous and/or dangerous?

- Residents are permitted to damage/remove vegetation if it is deemed dangerous and falls into one of the categories below.

*Damage can occur to threatening vegetation if it is deemed dangerous which can only be determined by a City authorised AQF Level 5 Arborist.

Is the vegetation one of the following?

Potentially dangerous as a result of being dead, dying, diseased, structurally unsound or having a growth form or habitat which is hazardous?
A threat to the safety of persons, property or the environment integrity?
Does it pose a threat to the dwelling on the site?

If the vegetation falls into one of the categories above, an Application will need to be submitted to the City for assessment.

★ Storm Event – Where a storm event has occurred which has resulted in trees being damaged, becoming dangerous; poses a threat to the safety of persons; and or property, the City advises an External AQF Level 5 Arborist can be engaged to make the area safe.

The External AQF Level 5 Arborist must provide the City with photographic evidence (within 72 hours of receiving the request) of the dangerous or threatening vegetation prior to removal and or remedial works undertaken, the City will save this information against the property file.

8. Does the vegetation fit within the Pest Species definition?

- Residents are permitted to damage/remove vegetation if it is one of the following species and which has been determined by an AQF Level 3 Arborist.

Is the vegetation one of the following?

Yes

Cocos Palm, also known as Queen Palm (<i>Syagrus romanzoffiana</i>)	
Coral Tree, (<i>Erythrina indica/E.crista galli and Erythrina x sykesii</i>)	
Cadaghi, (<i>Corymbia torelliana</i>)	
Slash Pine, (<i>Pinus elliotii</i>)	
Umbrella Tree, (<i>Schefflera actinophylla</i>)	

*If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and **have had the species of the vegetation checked by an AQF Level 3 Arborist you may proceed with damage/removal of the vegetation.***

9. Removal/damage of vegetation around a dwelling that is a potential bush fire hazard?

- Residents are permitted to remove/damage vegetation that is a potential bushfire hazard around an approved dwelling, when the location of the vegetation is contained within the City Plan Bushfire Hazard Map, when no bushfire management plan is approved for the site, and when further required outcomes of the code are met.

*Damage can occur to identified vegetation in order to reduce the potential bushfire hazard around a dwelling house.

*What does it mean if a Bushfire Management Plan exists?

If a Bushfire Management Plan exists, the clearing must be undertaken in accordance with the approved Bush Fire Management Plan. Any other works outside the plan that do not meet required outcomes will require an application to the City.

A. Is the vegetation one of the following?

Yes

Is the site located in a Bushfire Hazard area identified on Bushfire Hazard Overlay Map <i>City Plan Bush Fire Overlay</i> and a Bushfire Management Plan* does not exist for the site?	
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*If you have answered **yes to the above question, you must also tick yes to one question in the table below, for the vegetation clearing to be considered accepted development.***

B. Is the vegetation one of the following?

Yes

Is the vegetation within 10 metres of the dwelling house (inner zone)?	
Is the native understorey vegetation (including any branches less than 2 metres above ground level) for a further 10 metres (outer zone)?	
Is the vegetation located on a sloping site, if this is the case, the outer zone can be increased by a maximum of 1 metre for every degree of down slope of the dwelling house?	
Is the vegetation located up slope from the dwelling house, if this is the case, a maximum half a metre for every degree of slope of the outer zone is extended?	

*If you have answered **yes to both A and B, no further action is required of you and or the City and the works are considered accepted development.***

What happens if I have answered 'No' to any of the preceding questions? It is likely your vegetation is Assessable requiring the City's involvement.

Assessable vegetation means, vegetation throughout the city that is:

Assessable vegetation	Yes
Is the vegetation greater than 4 metres in height; or	
Is the vegetation equal to, or in excess of 40 centimetres in girth (circumference) measured at 1.4 metres above the ground level; or	
Is the vegetation remnant vegetation and its native under-storey as identified on the Vegetation Management Overlay Map; or	
Is the vegetation disturbed/re-growth/wetland vegetation and its native under-storey as identified on the Vegetation Management Overlay Map	

*If you have answered **yes to any one of the boxes above, the appropriate application will be required to be submitted to the City for assessment.***

Assessable vegetation

Where it has been identified that the vegetation is assessable you will be required to submit an application to the City for assessment.

There are three different types of operational works (vegetation clearing) applications:

- standard tree works not associated with a Building or Development Approval
- tree works associated with a building approval and approved secondary dwelling
- tree works associated with a Development Approval.

Each of these applications require a different fee and supporting information to be provided.

For further information

P 07 5667 5978

W cityofgoldcoast.com.au/trees