

## 7.4 MANAGEMENT OF VERGES

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### OBJECTIVE

This Policy is intended to ensure the management of verges within the Shire of Gingin.

### POLICY

#### Scope

The verge is the area of land between the kerb and the property boundary. The purpose of the verge is to provide an area where public utilities/services such as power, gas and telecommunications can be located. The verge is also a public open space recognised and valued for its street trees and streetscape environment.

Officers, residents/owners, builders, developers, contractors, representatives, and event organisations are all required to comply with this Policy.

#### Policy Statement

1. The Shire is responsible for public safety in the road reserve and has authority to instruct the adjacent property owner to make the verge safe.
2. Property owners are responsible for the care and maintenance of the verge adjacent to their property.
3. Pedestrians have right of access to the verge.
4. Public Utilities, such as Telstra, NBN, Water Corporation, Alinta and Western Power require access to their services in the verge area. If they need to repair their services, then they are not legally required to reinstate the verge development to their original condition. As a minimum, verges will be levelled.
5. Rural roads: Shire will undertake verge slashing/maintenance minimum of two point 5 (2.5) metres and up to five (5) metres on either side of the road.

The Shire is committed to creating a visually appealing, safe and sustainable environment. The Shire appreciates the contribution that residents make regarding the landscaping and maintenance of verges adjacent to their properties. The Shire is of the view that property owners should take responsibility for the landscaping, irrigation and maintenance of street verges adjacent to their property.

#### No Spray Sign

Property owners may apply for a No Spray sign to be installed on their verge, subject to the following conditions:

1. Signs purchased at the applicant's cost as per the Shire's fees and charges schedule.
2. Signs to be installed by the Shire of Gingin.

3. The property owner giving a commitment to maintaining their verges and keep them free of noxious weeds.
4. The property owner agreeing to keep the area free of hazards and nuisances. Failure to comply may result in removal of the treatment by the Shire at the property owner's expense.

### **Shrubs and Groundcovers**

1. Subject to keeping the verge clear for the first 3.5m width from kerb or seal a dry garden style of small vegetation, shrubs and ground covers (to a height of 40cm including mulch).
2. Groundcovers or shrubs shall be planted greater than 2m away from a path, driveway, public utilities or any other structural element within the verge.
3. Local native plant species that require minimal water, fertiliser and on-going maintenance are preferred.
4. Whenever possible, planting, even with irrigation, should be undertaken during the months May to September.
5. All plantings should be mulched to reduce water evaporation.
6. Property owners are to be mindful of plants that may be poisonous and toxic.

### **Grass**

1. Pennisetum clandestinum (kikuyu) is recommended for its drought tolerance.

### **Organic Mulch**

1. Mulch shall be placed to a minimum recommended settled depth of 75mm.
2. Suitable mulch includes pinebark, shredded green waste older than 15 months or similar. To reduce the risk of spreading Phytophthora Dieback, mulch should be sourced from reputable suppliers.
3. Peat moss should not be used in any mulch application.

### **Irrigation**

1. Dial 1100 for Dial before You Dig or go online prior to any works commencing on site.
2. Waterwise design principles must be incorporated into irrigation designs for planted and grassed areas.
3. Water usage shall be in accordance with Department of Water legislation, with respect to watering times and hours.
4. Where in-ground irrigation is installed to grassed areas, no part is to protrude above ground level except for pop-up sprinklers during operation.

5. The location and type of spray outlets must be selected to avoid water spray onto roads, crossovers, paths and other paved areas.
6. Irrigation controllers and valves shall be installed within the private property boundary.
7. The Shire of Gingin takes no responsibility for any damaged irrigation.

### **Other Permissible Verge Treatments**

The use of hardstand treatments other than for paths and crossovers is not normally encouraged within the Shire for safety, drainage, environmental and aesthetic reasons. The following treatments are allowed but require written permission from the Shire:

1. Paving;
2. Synthetic turf; and
3. Compact aggregate – ferrocement, cracker dust or road base.

For these treatments to be considered on any portion of the verge, an Application to Alter Verge Form must be submitted to the Shire. If you are considering installing a vehicle crossover, refer to the Crossover information and Specification for the Construction of Vehicle Crossovers.

### **Paving, Synthetic Turf and Compact Aggregate**

The Applicant is responsible for:

1. Installing the paving, synthetic turf or compact aggregate as per the detailed plan submitted with the Application to Alter Verge Form and approved by the Shire.
2. Maintaining the paving, synthetic turf or compact aggregate in a safe and sound condition.
3. Reinstating the paving, synthetic turf or compact aggregate at the Applicant's cost in the event that any Shire or government utilities have reason to disturb the treatment to work on their infrastructure.
4. Paving, synthetic turf or compact aggregate must be installed with the finished levels, where possible, collecting the water and where possible, directing water flow into the tree well(s) or garden beds.

### **What isn't allowed on the Verge?**

Verges provide a buffer between the road and private property where essential services and public infrastructure may be located. As access to these services may be required some hardstand treatments are not permissible in the Shire of Gingin.

The following cannot be installed on the verge:

- Nuisance trees (anything with thorns);
- Asphalt;
- Bitumen;
- Concrete;
- Edible gardens;

- All structures including walls, planter boxes and seats;
- Loose aggregate – pea gravel, blue metal, crushed brick or stone aggregate;
- Large rocks; and
- Water features.

## Weed Control

The Shire of Gingin’s Pest Plants Local Law 2015 places an additional requirement on Shire of Gingin landholders to control further pest plants identified in the First Schedule of the Local Law.

In addition to the Shire’s obligations to also control the above Declared Plants and Pest Plants on Shire managed land, the Shire will conduct annual roadside verge management activities addressing weeds and vegetation within the road shoulder, drains and batters (generally covering 305m from the trafficable edge or the road).

## Verge Development Approval Process

All proposals for landscape treatment of the verge require approval from the Shire of Gingin. In order for applications to install landscape treatments on the verge to be assessed, property owners are required to submit in writing an outline of the landscape proposal which includes a diagram to illustrate the proposed work including plant species and the layout of any proposed reticulation system(s).

The Shire will then inspect the location and notify the owner in writing whether the Shire supports or does not support the proposed landscape development.

On completion of any approved works an inspection will be undertaken by the Shire. Where works are not carried out in accordance with approvals, the applicant will be required to address any instances of non-compliance at their cost.

The Shire will maintain a register of applications and approved verge treatments.

## Non-compliant Verges

The Shire of Gingin reserves the right to remove any verge treatment without liability for compensation.

## GOVERNANCE REFERENCES

<b>Statutory Compliance</b>	Shire of Gingin <i>Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places and Trading Local Law 2004</i> – Div 3 Verge Treatments
<b>Industry Compliance</b>	Nil
<b>Organisational Compliance</b>	Nil

## POLICY ADMINISTRATION

<b>Review Cycle</b>	2 years	<b>Next Review</b>	2024
<b>Department</b>	Operations & Assets		

Version	Decision Reference	Synopsis
1.	OM16/08/2022 – Item 14.1	Policy adopted, replacing previous Policy 7.4 Road Verge Development Criteria – Urban Areas