

# Roadside Vegetation Management & Firewood Collection

## Who manages roadside vegetation?

The *Road Management Act 2004*, allocates responsibility for the management and coordination of different parts of a road reserve, including the roadside. Councils and Regional Roads Victoria share responsibility for the management of roadsides in urban areas.

Unless being maintained by Council, property owners are expected to mow, maintain and edge their nature strips and roadside verges. This includes rural roadside verges/reserves which are maintained by Council for fire prevention in accordance with Council's Fire Prevention Plan (or as otherwise instructed by Council's Municipal Fire Prevention Officer). With regard to fire prevention, Council will (in addition to any specific directions given to property owners), carry out its own fire prevention slashing activities.

## Why are roadsides special?

Roadsides provide wildlife corridors that link isolated areas of bushland. They give clues to the type of vegetation that would have grown naturally prior to clearing. They are an important source of seed revegetation activities by Landcare and other groups and, due to past land management practices, roadsides often contain the only remnants of once extensive native grasslands or forests. They also provide habitat for native animals and provide visual amenity for our towns and rural areas.

Landholders often "clean up" the roadside out of concern about fire or snakes but do not realise that their "clean up" by mowing, burning or spraying is illegal and they may be having a detrimental impact on the amenity or habitat value of the roadside. If you are unsure about whether your roadside vegetation is native or not, contact Council's Environment team by emailing [RRE@latrobe.vic.gov.au](mailto:RRE@latrobe.vic.gov.au).

## Can I plant trees or shrubs on my roadside?

Residents or other parties who wish to undertake roadside revegetation/beautification such as planting trees, shrubs or flowers, must first obtain permission from Council. Council may either refuse permission or impose conditions on such consent being granted,

including maintenance responsibilities, species limitations and location limits. By consulting with Council you can avoid planting inappropriate species that may be "weedy" or interfere with traffic, drainage or underground services. In most cases, Council will permit roadside revegetation provided it is with native plants sourced from the local area via a reputable nursery and the plants do not interfere with utility services, impede traffic flow or reduce driver sight distance on bends and intersections.

## I believe my roadside is a fire hazard. Can I "clean it up"?

Council's fire hazard inspection program focuses on protecting your house and outbuildings by providing a fuel reduced area around these assets as per CFA guidelines. Within townships, Council cuts roadsides in the lead up to the fire season, in rural areas, sealed roads and school bus routes get cut to the white posts with the aim of reducing fire ignitions, and the CFA conducts roadside fuel reduction burning in strategic areas to create bushfire fuel reduced zones to help control fires.

Roadsides with remnant vegetation are viewed by many as a fire hazard and they often 'clean up' their roadside to reduce this threat.

You must have permission from Council before removing native vegetation from a roadside.



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## Do I need a Planning Permit to remove, destroy or lop roadside vegetation?

Yes, under Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation in all Victorian Planning Schemes, a planning permit is usually needed to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation.

The terms remove, destroy or lop include grazing of stock, mowing, slashing, spraying with herbicide, pruning, digging out, raking, burning or the removal of timber. There are several exemptions on freehold land within farming and rural activity zones, so it is best to check with Council to determine if your proposed works are exempt from the provisions before commencing works. For further information check *Latrobe City Council Local Law No. 2 (Division 4 – Livestock on Roads)*.

## Can I collect firewood from my roadside?



Collection of timber for firewood from roadside areas is not permitted. Permits to collect firewood from some forest reserves may be obtained from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning by calling 136 186. Removal of firewood does not remove fine fuels which are the main

contributor to fire intensity and spread and therefore removal of firewood contributes very little to reducing the impact of wildfire.

## Can I clear native vegetation to build or maintain my fence?

Council consent must be sought prior to removing vegetation on the road reserve outside your property. Council does not clear vegetation from fence lines for landholders. You may clear native vegetation to the minimum extent necessary to build or maintain your boundary fence without a Planning Permit provided the maximum total width of the clearing is less than 4 metres (this is usually 1 metre on the road reserve and 3 metres inside your property boundary). Clearing native vegetation to construct internal fences on your property requires a Planning Permit. Remember, native vegetation on a roadside is protected so if you are in any doubt as to what you can legally do, contact Council before undertaking any lopping or removal works. You can remove branches or trees that have fallen across your fence line without a permit.

## Can I graze my goat, horse or other stock on a roadside?

Grazing of stock or household animals on a roadside can only be carried out under a permit. Discuss these opportunities with the relevant road manager. Refer to *Latrobe City Council Local Law No. 2* available on line for more details regarding permits for roadside grazing.



## Can I remove or lop native vegetation that is a safety risk?

Dangerous trees that are a risk to traffic or pedestrians within the road reserve should be reported to Council. Vegetation that is an immediate risk of personal injury or damage to property can be removed without a permit. By immediate, it is inferred that the tree or limb is in imminent danger of falling and is a direct threat to personal safety. In some situations a professional arborists report may be required. Check with Council before undertaking any works.

## Where can I find more information about roadside vegetation management?

Detailed information can be found at the [Department for Environment, Land Water and Planning \(DELWP\) website](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au)

The Country Fire Authority has some resources available to assist residents in preparing their homes for fire. Check out their website ([www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)) or contact the CFA Community Education Coordinator at your local CFA Regional Office.

## Contacting Council

If you require any further information, contact the Latrobe City Council Municipal Fire Prevention Officer: 1300 367 700, <https://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Community/Emergencies/Fire>

See Latrobe City Council Information Sheets:

*Vegetation Management - 10/30 and 10/50 Rules Explained*  
*Landowner Bushfire Prevention Obligations*  
*Fire Prevention Notices*  
*Bushfires & Designing Your Garden*