



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

REVEGETATION POLICY 2015

DRAFT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. Purpose	4
1.2. Scope	4
1.3. Aims	4
1.4. Definitions	4
1.5. References	4
2. POLICY PRINCIPLES	4
2.1. Policy Objectives	4
2.2. Areas of Responsibility	5
3. REVEGETATION AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES (2015)	5
3.1. Introduction	5
3.2. Biodiversity Mapping	5
3.2.1. <i>Warrnambool's Biodiversity</i>	5
3.2.2. <i>Prioritisation of sites for restoration or revegetation</i>	5
3.3. Revegetation And Rehabilitation Considerations	6
3.3.1. <i>Open Space</i>	6
3.3.2. <i>Site Preparation</i>	6
3.3.3. <i>Site Plan</i>	7
3.3.4. <i>Species selection, acquisition and installation</i>	7
3.3.5. <i>Minimum Standards for Planting</i>	7
3.3.6. <i>Maintenance</i>	7
3.3.7. <i>Monitoring</i>	8
3.3.8. <i>Cost Estimate</i>	8
3.4. Risk Management	8
3.5. Revegetation And Rehabilitation Proposals	8
3.6. Glossary	8
4. GOVERNANCE	9
4.1. Owner	9
4.2. Review	9
4.3. Compliance Responsibility	9
4.3.1. <i>Management Executive Group (Chief Executive and Directors)</i>	9
4.3.2. <i>Managers and Supervisors</i>	9
4.3.3. <i>All Employees</i>	9
4.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance	9
5. APPENDICES	9

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a consistent approach to the planning and management of revegetation and rehabilitation sites. Good planning and appropriate maintenance is vital for environmental and ecological benefits to the community.

This policy is to be implemented through the Revegetation and Maintenance Guidelines (2015) which provide a framework for ensuring structured, consistent and environmentally sound management decisions are made in relation to all revegetation and rehabilitation works on Council owned or managed land.

1.2. Scope

This policy is applicable to Council in all its operations and functions relating to native vegetation management, including revegetation and rehabilitation works.

1.3. Aims

The aims of the Revegetation Policy are to:

- Maintain and enhance existing biodiversity values on Council owned and managed land.
- Ensure management practices maximise ecological values within remnant vegetation.
- To maximise the coordination, efficiency and benefits of revegetation plantings.
- Ensure revegetation works take place at the most appropriate locations.

1.4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Rehabilitation	The re-establishment of a cover of vegetation suited to the location. This usually means a cover of local native plants and involves regeneration, direct seeding, and/or planting methods.
Revegetation	The improvement of the habitat value of existing remnant/native vegetation. This may occur through actions such as weed control, grazing exclusion, or reintroduction of missing vegetation elements.
Regeneration	Natural regrowth of indigenous vegetation, using existing seed bank in the soil or from nearby vegetation sources
Direct seeding	The sowing of seeds, either by hand or machine, directly to a revegetation area
Hand planting	Using seedlings that have been raised in small nursery tubes are planted by hand at the prepared site.

1.5. References

- Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan, 2014
- Warrnambool Coast Vegetation Management Plan, 2013
- Warrnambool Open Space Strategy, 2014
- Warrnambool Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2008
- A Strategy for Conserving Biodiversity in the Warrnambool Plain Bioregion, Victoria, 2002

2. POLICY PRINCIPLES

This policy ensures a consistent approach to the planning and management of revegetation and rehabilitation projects.

2.1. Policy Objectives

The objectives of the Revegetation Policy are to:

- Identify areas within the Municipality suitable for revegetation with indigenous species.

- Prioritise sites for revegetation and re
- habilitation works.
- To establish a consistent approach to indigenous vegetation maintenance and management
- To recognise the importance of site preparation and ongoing maintenance of revegetation sites.

2.2. Areas of Responsibility

Council is responsible for the management of vegetation on Council owned and managed land.

3. REVEGETATION AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES (2015)

3.1. Introduction

Council encourages and supports revegetation on Council managed land. When planned and implemented appropriately, these works can provide a range of environmental and social benefits. However, there are also risks associated with this work such as inappropriate siting and design, plant mortality and insufficient maintenance.

To address this issue, Council has developed the Revegetation Policy 2015 and the Revegetation and Maintenance Guidelines (2015). The Guidelines are designed to provide clear direction about the Council's requirements regarding the planning and implementation of rehabilitation and revegetation activities on Council owned and managed land. This guidance will ensure the provision of consistent and successful rehabilitation and revegetation projects.

3.2. Biodiversity Mapping

3.2.1. Warrnambool's Biodiversity

The Warrnambool region has been subject to extensive native vegetation removal and modification for a number of years, with less than 10% of native vegetation remaining. Many of these areas provide necessary habitat for the regions threatened species.

The open space network plays an important role in protecting these remaining areas of native vegetation. The network extends over 1025 hectares, with about half of this (465 hectares) available for recreation without restriction. The remainder includes sports reserves and reserves for conservation or drainage. Whilst revegetation is possible on some of these sites, some are of higher biodiversity importance than others. To identify areas most appropriate for revegetation works, the following process was undertaken.

3.2.2. Prioritisation of sites for restoration or revegetation

All open spaces in Warrnambool City Council have been prioritised for revegetation and restoration based on a biodiversity benefit principle.

This outcome was achieved through a collaborative process between local agency and community experts, an ecological consultant and Council staff. The end result is a reliable representation of current remnant vegetation and biodiversity assets in a GIS format.

The prioritisation tool was developed using concepts applied in the state-based Biodiversity Action Planning program. The results were then validated by comparing them against the State Government NaturePrint results, which is a biodiversity prioritisation tool at a coarser scale.

Prioritisation criteria were selected based on the following principles:

- Remnant vegetation is likely to provide the best habitat for native flora and fauna.
- The more endangered a vegetation community or species present is, the higher the priority it is.
- Existing remnant vegetation can be improved by increasing the area of indigenous vegetation, and the closer to the remnant, the greater the benefit.
- The larger the patch of remnant vegetation, the higher the habitat value for a range of species.
- Sites adjoining waterways, wetlands or the coast provide additional benefits to wildlife; and.

- Presence of threatened species listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* or the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

Resulting scores were prioritised into the following categories:

- very high
- high
- medium
- low
- not a priority.

From this process, the Revegetation and Rehabilitation Priority Map (RRPM) was produced. This document forms Attachment 1 of this document. All revegetation or rehabilitation proposals must be within the areas that are either 'high' or 'very high'.

Plantings for amenity or landscape purposes are treated separate to the policy. Advice on these proposals is provided on a case by case basis by Council's Parks, Gardens and Environment Team.

3.3. Revegetation And Rehabilitation Considerations

3.3.1. Open Space

Any proposed revegetation must take into account other considerations for a site, such as its values as public open space for passive recreation purposes.

Specifically the following must be addressed:

- Is the planting in line with a Council endorsed master plan, or similar document, for the site.
- Will the planting have any unrealistic negative consequences (e.g. increase fire risk, leaves creating a hazard for adjoining sports fields etc.)
- Will the planting impede passive surveillance into an open space, particularly along boundaries and walking trails
- Impacts to infrastructure (e.g. roots lifting footpaths).

3.3.2. Site Preparation

It is essential that the site is well prepared and maintained, as it will minimise losses and encourage healthy and vibrant plant growth. Poor site preparation usually results in high losses, wasting the time, money and effort involved in propagating and planting.

Sites must be prepared by one or a combination of the following methods:

- **Ripping**
Ripping soil helps root development as it improves aeration and infiltration of rain water. This can allow for a deeper penetration and faster growth of plant roots.
- **Chemical control**
If spraying a site a minimum of two sprays must be undertaken. Spraying must be undertaken by someone with the correct qualifications and be conducted in line with current legislation. Contractors must be fully aware of relevant State and Federal legislation with regard to protected species, environmental harm, pollution and other issues pertinent to the carrying out of chemical weed control in natural areas.

All chemical agents are to be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and in accordance with licencing provisions for that chemical.

- **Weed matting**
Weed mats are an effective way of suppressing weed growth, particularly in areas where herbicides are undesired or inappropriate. They also have the advantage as acting as mulch, improving moisture content in the soil. If used, weed matting must be pinned down appropriately with one peg in each corner.

3.3.3. *Site Plan*

A detailed site plan which indicates existing conditions as well as the desired outcome for the site must be included. This can be done utilising aerial maps or can be hand drawn.

This site plan should identify:

- Relative condition of the existing vegetation (poor to good);
- Relative condition of the existing topsoil (poor to good);
- Area to be revegetated – and stages in which this will be undertaken (if relevant);
- Weed infestation species and extent; and
- Key areas for access.

3.3.4. *Species selection, acquisition and installation*

Plants to be established must generally be in line with the Ecological Vegetation Class identified for the area. This will assist to inform the following considerations:

- Species to be planted;
- Planting densities and/or spacing;
- Direct seeding mix proportions and installation detail if using direct seeding;
- Whether or not tree guards or similar will be installed to reduce predation;
- Whether or not mulch will be installed to suppress weed growth and assist in soil moisture retention; and
- Schedule and timelines/dates for planting.

Species to be planted must be of local provenance.

As a guide, a planting density of no less than two plants per square metre is to be achieved. A ratio of trees, shrubs and ground covers, based on the evaluation of existing, adjacent or reference vegetation assemblages, is to be provided to guide installation. Densities for sedge plantings will be greater than for other plantings.

Areas of rehabilitation and revegetation will not be irrigated.

The use of “brushing” in revegetation or rehabilitation sites to protect soil will be supported where appropriate.

3.3.5. *Minimum Standards for Planting*

All planting contractors and personnel must be made aware of the following minimum standards before starting work:

- on-ground work must follow details provided in the approved Revegetation or Rehabilitation Plan
- sub-standard stock must not be installed;
- hand-watering may be considered;
- tubestock should be nominally planted with the top of the roots 5cm below ground level; in sandy soils, where there is little risk of collar rot it may be advantageous to plant deeper than this; it is critical to ensure that the root ball is covered with soil;
- greenstock must be well heeled in, planted firmly enough that they cannot be lifted out by the foliage; and
- all people undertaking planting are to be made aware of different vegetation assemblage zones and the need to ensure relatively random installations to achieve a more natural outcome.

3.3.6. *Maintenance*

All proposed planting must consider the following maintenance requirements:

- The maintenance schedule will nominate key personnel who will be contactable should there be a need for queries to be made on the maintenance of the site.
- The individual or group undertaking the revegetation will be required to undertake maintenance of the site for up to a minimum of three and up to a five-year period from the date of the completion planting. The time frame will depend on the size and scale of the project.
- Further in-fill planting may be required which may include follow-up plantings to achieve required vegetation diversity and density. The objective of in-fill planting is to ensure the achievement of prescribed vegetation diversity and density. Council allow for anticipated mortalities of approximately 30%.

- Appropriate contingencies should be provided to address an unexpectedly higher mortality rate and monitoring should identify issues such as these.

3.3.7. Monitoring

The following monitoring aspects need to be assessed as part of the project success:

- survival of plantings and/or germination of seed;
- success of the weed management program; and
- weed management issues.

Monitoring results will be communicated to Council for information and advice on an annual basis, unless otherwise agreed.

3.3.8. Cost Estimate

An estimated cost of the works being proposed will be calculated, including:

- Preparation costs;
- Capital costs; and
- Annual maintenance costs.

3.4. Risk Management

The Warrambool City Council considers risk management to be central to any revegetation or rehabilitation works that takes place on Council owned or managed land.

When approval to undertake works on Council managed land has been granted, it is subject to the following conditions being met by the applicant:

- *You and your subcontractors are required to have Public Liability Insurance for a minimum \$20,000,000. You must ensure these insurances policies are valid for the duration of the works. Council reserves the right to request evidence/copies to be supplied. Prior to the works commencing you are required to undertake a risk assessment of the proposed works in accordance with ISO31000 and have in place a risk management plan for the works.*
- *If you have Public Liability Insurance for a less than the required \$20,000,000, you are **still eligible** to apply to undertake works under these Guidelines. Council's Natural Environment Working Group and Risk Unit are required to undertake a risk assessment of the proposed works in accordance with ISO31000 and develop a risk management plan to implement as part of the project.*

3.5. Revegetation And Rehabilitation Proposals

Any Revegetation or Rehabilitation proposal must be submitted to Council to be approved by the Natural Environment Working Group (NEWG). The proposal must be in the format of the template in Attachment 2 and cover the following:

- Open Space considerations
- Site preparation
- Species selection, acquisition and installation
- Site Plan
- Maintenance
- Monitoring
- Cost Estimate

3.6. Glossary

- Rehabilitation - The improvement of the habitat value of existing remnant/native vegetation. This may occur through actions such as weed control, grazing exclusion, or reintroduction of missing vegetation elements.
- Revegetation - The re-establishment of a cover of vegetation suited to the location. This usually means a cover of local native plants and involves regeneration, direct seeding, and/or planting methods.

- Regeneration - Natural regrowth of indigenous vegetation, using existing seed bank in the soil or from nearby vegetation sources
- Direct seeding - The sowing of seeds, either by hand or machine, directly to a revegetation area
- Hand planting – Using seedlings that have been raised in small nursery tubes are planted by hand at the prepared site.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1. Owner

The management of this Policy sits with the Coordinator City Sustainability.

4.2. Review

The Coordinator City Sustainability will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than three years after its formulation or after the last review.

4.3. Compliance Responsibility

4.3.1. Management Executive Group (Chief Executive and Directors)

- Demonstrate Warrnambool City Council values through being positive role models for this policy

4.3.2. Managers and Supervisors

- Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees under their direct control comply with actions detailed in this policy (and related guidelines).

4.3.3. All Employees

- Demonstrate Warrnambool City Council values through being positive role models for fellow employees, contractors and volunteers by ensuring compliance with this policy (and related guidelines).

4.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

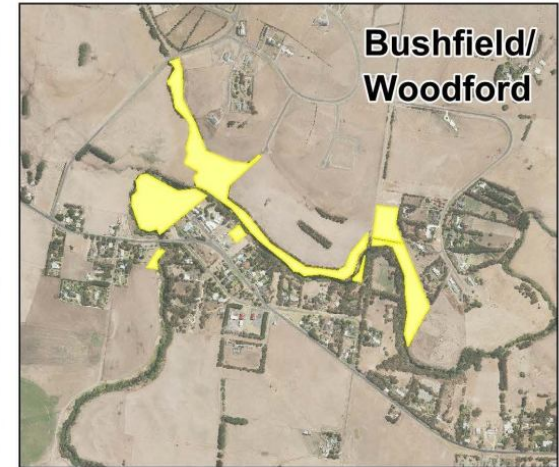
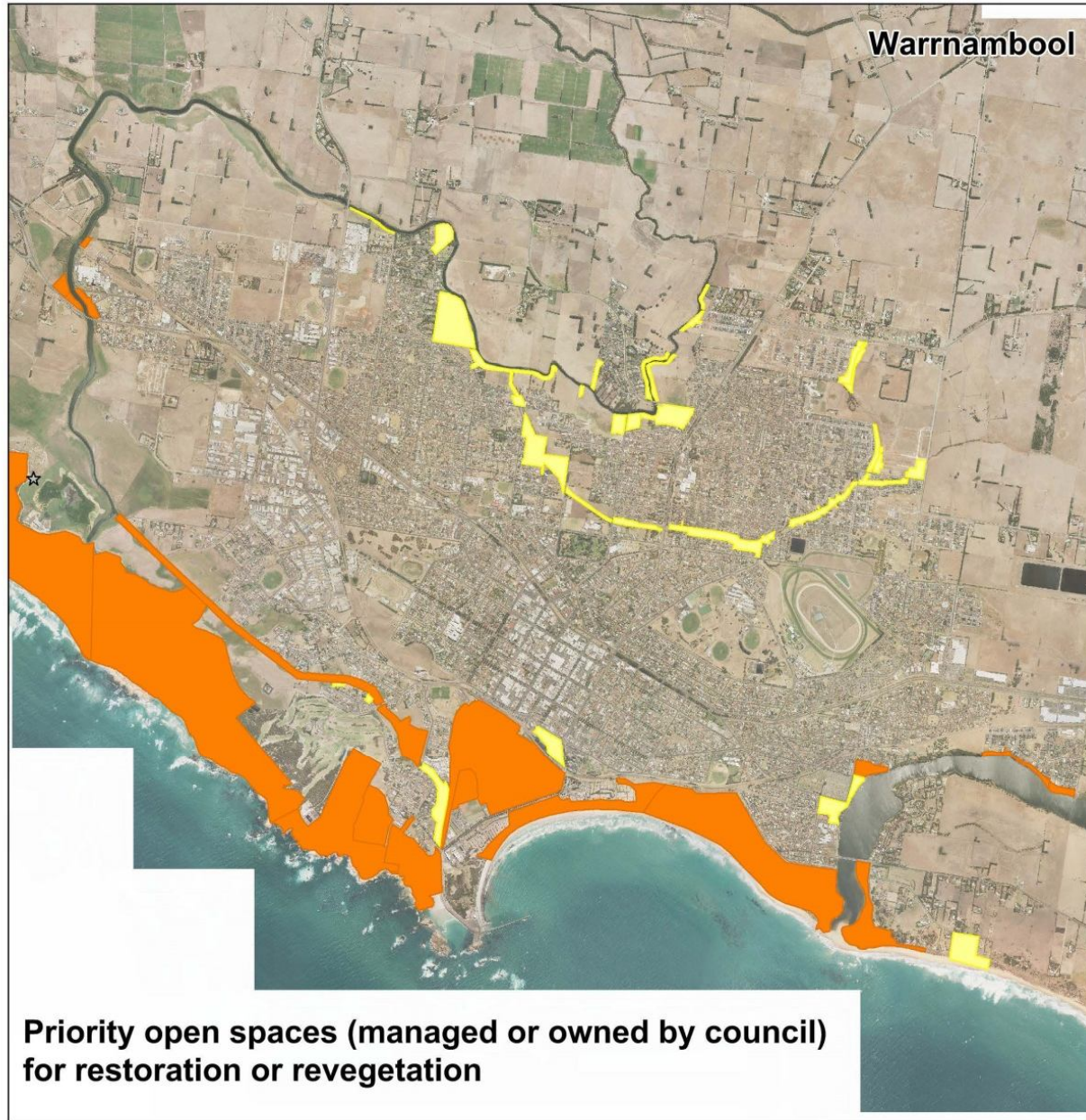
It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.


5. APPENDICES

- 5.1. APPENDIX 1: PRIORITY OPEN SPACES FOR RESTORATION OR REVEGETATION
- 5.2. APPENDIX 2: REVEGETATION PLAN TEMPLATE
- 5.3. APPENDIX 3: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

5.1. APPENDIX 1: PRIORITY OPEN SPACES FOR RESTORATION OR REVEGETATION



Priority open space sites
For restoration or revegetation (based on on biodiversity value)

	Very high
	High

5.2 APPENDIX 2: REVEGETATION PLAN TEMPLATE

Name of your group

Contact Details

What is the primary aim of your group in regards to improvement of native vegetation?

Please provide a brief description of your group's mission statement or primary objectives

What are the aims of your project?

For example:

- *Seeking to address a particular environmental problem*
- *Enhancing quality of existing vegetation*
- *Increasing the quantity of native vegetation in Warrnambool*
- *Health of our river systems*



Site Plan

- *This can be done on an aerial map, or hand drawn.*
- *Highlight existing conditions.*
- *Proposed outcomes.*

Please provide a detailed description of your project.

This section should include information on:

- *Number of people involved*
- *Key Dates*
- *What type of work you are proposing (revegetation, weed removal)*
- *If your project involves revegetation, what EVC is it and what tree species will be planted.*

Preparation Schedule

- *Timing*
- *Methods*

Maintenance Schedule

- *How will the site be maintained*
- *Who will maintain the site*
- *For how long will the site be maintained*

Estimated Cost

What will the project cost:

- *To set up*
- *To implement*
- *Maintenance (over 2-3 years)*
- *Monitoring*

5.3 APPENDIX 3: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Memorandum of Understanding

Warrnambool City Council

and

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets for the terms and understanding between the Warrnambool City Council (WCC) and the _____ for revegetation and restoration works planned for land under the management of the WCC.

Background

Council encourages and supports revegetation on Council managed land. When planned and implemented appropriately, these works can provide a range of environmental and social benefits. However, there are also risks associated with this work such as inappropriate siting and design, plant mortality and insufficient maintenance.

To address this issue, Council has developed the Revegetation Policy 2015 and the Revegetation and Maintenance Guidelines (2015). Under the policy, a Revegetation Plan Proposal (Proposal) must be submitted to Council for assessment and implementation.

Purpose

This MOU is to confirm that _____ will carry out all required works and tasks outlined in the Revegetation Plan (attached) including, but not limited to the following.

- Undertaking and implementing a risk assessment
- Hold a current Public Liability insurance policy with a value of \$20 million
- Complete all necessary preparation works
- Maintenance of the site a minimum period of five years from the date of this MoU.

Duration

This MOU is at-will and may be modified or ended by mutual consent. Otherwise it will end five years from the date that it was signed by both parties.

Signatures

_____ Date:
 Name Signature
 Warrnambool City Council

_____ Date:
 Name Signature
