

Verges

Council Policy

1. Purpose

This policy explains how verges are managed in the City of Holdfast Bay, to achieve our aim of keeping our streets safe, attractive, and environmentally healthy. It sets out guidelines for property owners who wish to change or landscape the verge outside their property

2. Scope

This policy applies to all verges within the City of Holdfast Bay. It specifically addresses the area situated between the property boundary and the kerb (or, where no kerb exists, the edge of the roadway).

This policy excludes kerbing protuberances, which are Council's responsibility to maintain, as well as footpaths and trees, which are addressed in the Footpaths Policy and Trees Policy, respectively.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Council Members	As members of the governing body, to provide clear guidance on the management of verges.
Property owner	<p>Property owners must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- seek approval from Council prior to making any changes to the verge- must meet Council's conditions in modifying the verge- not damage (including via pruning) any Council, significant and/or regulated trees in the process of modifying the verge without approval, and- maintain any verge modifications. <p>Failure to comply may result in Council removing verge modifications, at the property owner's expense.</p>
Assets and Delivery staff	Ensuring compliance with this policy.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1. Council recognises that the appearance of a verge is important to property owners/occupiers, and that a landscaped verge can provide amenity value and add character whilst providing a range of environmental, social and economic benefits.

- 4.2. Verges are Council land but property owners may improve them, subject to approval. Pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1999*, property owners must obtain authorisation from Council prior to undertaking any alternations to a public road. The definition of a public road includes the verge. Therefore, property owners must seek Council's approval to undertake any landscaping work on their verge which must generally be received by Council at least seven (7) working days prior to the commencement of works, via a Section 221 Application. If a hoarding permit is required, it should be lodged at the same time (refer to Council's Hoarding Policy).
- 4.3. Property owners are generally responsible for all costs associated with verge modifications, including undertaking initial approved works, ongoing maintenance and future removal (if required or desired).
- 4.3.1. Property owners are also responsible for any damage to footpaths, utilities or other infrastructure caused by their modifications, either at the time of installation or subsequently.
- 4.3.2. Any cost incurred by the Council in reinstating the verge as a result of the property owner not complying with this policy, will be recovered from the property owner pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1999*.
- 4.3.3. Property owners are not authorised to undertake street tree pruning without specific written approval from Council, but are welcome to provide supplementary watering (refer to Council's Tree Policy).
- 4.4. Responsibility for ongoing verge maintenance extends to future owners of properties. If a subsequent owner does not wish to maintain existing verge modifications, they may apply to Council to make changes per this policy.
- 4.5. Regardless of any modifications approved and made, Council retains its rights of access to the verge for the purpose of any activities relating to:
- Stormwater drainage systems
 - Road
 - Footpath (pavements)
 - Kerbing
 - Council infrastructure (including but not limited to street furniture, signage, bus shelters)
 - Street trees
 - Other Council-managed vegetation

Applications to modify a verge

- 4.6. There is no charge for an application to modify a verge.
- 4.7. Applications can only be made by property owners, and only in relation to verges directly bordering their property.
- 4.7.1. For properties under Community Title or Strata Title the application must be supported by all relevant parties.
- 4.7.2. Tenants wishing to undertake verge modifications must have property owners submit an application on their behalf.
- 4.8. Applicants may be granted permission to modify the verge, which will usually be subject to the following general conditions, and any specific conditions included in the permit:
- a. Pedestrian access – a safe pedestrian route must be maintained at all times, regardless of whether there is a footpath in place.
- b. Traffic sight lines – vegetation, structures, or any other installations (including temporary works) must not block traffic sight lines, unless separately approved under a hoarding permit.

- c. Ground levels – the existing ground level of the verge must be preserved.
- d. Access to infrastructure – unimpeded access must be provided for Council and Service Authorities to install, inspect, maintain, and repair underground and above-ground infrastructure.
- e. Street trees –street trees must be protected during any works, and permeable materials used around them to ensure water can soak in.
- f. Surface materials – permeable surfaces are strongly preferred and will generally be approved. Non-permeable materials (for example, compacted quarry sand) are discouraged and may only be considered if permeable options are clearly unsuitable, with reasons provided in the application.
- g. Ongoing maintenance – the property owner is responsible for maintaining any approved alterations, including lawn mowing. Council does not undertake lawn mowing on verges or vegetation management, other than the maintenance of street trees. Council may require alterations to be removed if they are not maintained or become non-compliant.
- h. Changes to approved plans – if your verge works differ from the originally approved plan, you must obtain amended approval before proceeding.
- 1. Utilities – applicants must confirm the location of all underground services before starting works.

Permitted and prohibited verge treatments

4.9. Verge treatments must generally:

- a. be safe
- b. comply with the provisions of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* concerning access
- c. prevent surface water runoff into the Council's drainage network
- d. allow for safe and unrestricted vehicular access to and from properties where on-street parking is permitted, and
- e. allow adequate space for the placement and collection of waste bins.

4.10. Any alteration to a verge that does not currently have a footpath must generally be undertaken in a manner that allows for the future construction of a footpath by the Council without requiring significant modification.

4.11. The following verge treatments are generally permitted, subject to application and approval:

- 4.11.1. Mulch
 - Must be stable and contained so it does not blow or wash away.
- 4.11.2. Low-growing plants
 - Must be species that can be kept under 500 mm in height and width.
 - Plants must not encroach on paths, roads, or sightlines.
 - Species must be safe (no thorns, spikes, or irritant plants).
 - Indigenous and drought-tolerant species are encouraged.
- 4.11.3. Natural lawn
 - Must be maintained in a neat, healthy condition and under 100mm in height.
 - Drought-tolerant turf varieties are encouraged.

- Edges must be kept tidy and not spread into footpaths, kerbs, or the road.
- A buffer between street trees and lawn is strongly recommended for ease of maintenance and reduce the risk of damage to trees during lawn maintenance activities.

4.11.4. Permeable paving

- Must allow water to infiltrate into the soil.
- Surfaces must be even, stable, and non-slip.

4.11.5. Below-ground irrigation

- Systems must be designed to prevent overspray, water pooling, and damage to infrastructure.
- Property owners are responsible for ongoing maintenance and repairs.

4.11.6. Bin pads

- Not exceeding a reasonable size to accommodate the placement of Council-supplied bins.

4.12. In accordance with section 221 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, before Council authorises the erection or installation of a structure on a verge Council must give consideration to whether the structure will unduly obstruct the use of the road, unduly interfere with the construction of the road, or have an adverse effect on road safety.

4.13. Under section 232 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, before Council authorises or permits or permits the planting of vegetation, on a road, Council will, in addition to the other relevant matters set out in this Policy, give consideration to whether the vegetation is, on balance, appropriate to the proposed site taking into account environmental and aesthetic issues, the use and construction of the road (including the potential for interference with the construction of the road or with structures (including pipes, wires, cables, fixtures, fittings or other objects) in the road and road safety matters.

4.14. Under section 232 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, consultation in accordance with Council's Public Consultation Policy will be required before Council authorises or permits the planting of vegetation on a verge, if Council considers the vegetation proposed to be installed may have a significant impact on residents, the proprietors of nearby businesses or advertisers in the area. Consultation will also be required under section 221 of the *Local Government Act 1999* in respect of any proposal that would result in any part of a road being fenced, enclosed or partitioned so as to impede the passage of traffic to a material degree, however as set out below fencing will generally not be permitted.

4.15. The following verge treatments will not be permitted:

- 4.15.1. Any items or vegetation that obstruct footpaths (pavements), pedestrian movement, or vehicles
- 4.15.2. Raised or sharp edges or materials that may pose a risk of injury to pedestrians or animals
- 4.15.3. Plants that cannot be reasonably maintained within the specified height and width restrictions
- 4.15.4. Plants with spines, thorns, or other potentially harmful features, including thorny roses or prickly cacti
- 4.15.5. Plants officially classified as pest plants under the *Landscape SA Act 2019*
- 4.15.6. Concrete or non-permeable paving, except for Council-approved driveway crossovers, access paths, and bin pads
- 4.15.7. Loose stones, pebbles, decorative stones, gravel, or scoria,
- 4.15.8. Fences or any other form of permanent or semi-permanent boundary demarcation
- 4.15.9. Letterboxes (these must be located within the property boundary)

- 4.15.10. Synthetic lawn or artificial turf
- 4.15.11. Weed control matting (unless fully concealed beneath an approved permeable surface).
- 4.15.12. Statues and similar decorations.

Compacted Quarry Sand

- 4.16. Compacted quarry sand is not Council's preferred treatment, however, Council recognises that some property owners require a low-maintenance verge.
- 4.17. While strongly encouraging green verges, Council will:
 - a. consider applications for the installation of compacted quarry sand by property owners, at their own cost and subject to all the other conditions of this policy and any permit issued, and
 - b. top up existing quarry sand to match into existing surfaces following its own maintenance or construction works.
- 4.18. Like any other verge modification, property owners are responsible for the ongoing maintenance of compacted quarry sand to keep the surface in good condition, and free of hazards.

Management of existing verge modifications

- 4.19. Amendments to existing verge modifications require an application and permit, as outlined in this policy.
- 4.20. If an existing verge alteration is deemed by the Council to constitute a hazard, an obstruction, or is otherwise non-compliant with a condition of approval, the property owner will be formally notified in accordance with relevant *Local Government Act 1999* provisions and must modify the alteration to meet the requirements within a specified timeframe, unless the Council determines otherwise, in writing. Failure to comply with such any formal notice issued may result in the Council undertaking the necessary works at the property owner's expense.
- 4.21. Existing artificial turf installed prior to August 2019 may be permitted to remain at Council's discretion, provided it is maintained in good condition and does not adversely impact amenity or safety. However, the replacement of existing artificial turf is prohibited, and any existing artificial turf should be removed at the end of its serviceable life and replaced with an approved treatment.
- 4.22. Where Council undertakes works that necessitate the alternation of a verge that has been modified by a property owner, the affected area will be reinstated with:
 - a. topsoil (if previously vegetated), or
 - b. compacted quarry sand (if previously not vegetated).

Council's weed spraying program

- 4.23. Council operates a weed-spraying program on verges, to supplement property owner's maintenance activities.
- 4.24. Council will not intentionally spray areas that are clearly established as lawns or gardens or areas that are visibly being maintained by property owners, nor areas where a valid hoarding permit is in place and the hoarding structure is present.
- 4.25. Property owners who prefer to manage weed control on their verge themselves can register for the Council's "No Spray Register." If areas on the No Spray Register are subsequently not maintained to a satisfactory standard (free of excessive weeds and overgrowth), Council reserves the right to remove all vegetation from the area and include it in

the standard weed-spraying programme without further notice. This will not apply to the footprint of a permitted hoarding during the permit's validity

- 4.26. Property owners who do not wish to maintain their verge lawn may formally request that the Council include their verge in the weed spraying program, however, subsequent removal and replacement of the lawn is the responsibility of the property owner, following application and approval of a permit to undertake the modifications.

Liability

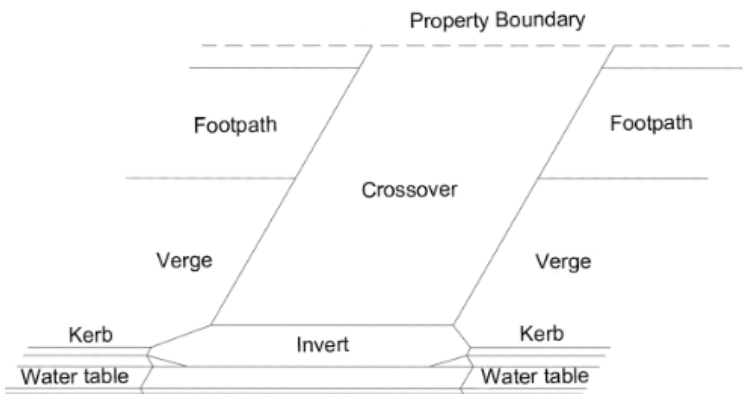
- 4.27. Authorisations granted by Council will generally include provisions setting out that Council is not liable for any injury to persons, damage to property, or financial or other loss that results directly or indirectly from:
- the granting of verge development permits, or
 - activities, or the presence of any equipment or materials related to the approved verge development on the road, Council land, or any adjacent land.

Service Authorities

- 4.28. Service Authorities retain their rights of access to their services located within the verge. The verge may contain, but is not limited to:
- Electricity infrastructure
 - Telecommunications infrastructure
 - Gas mains
 - Water mains and connections
 - Sewer mains and connections
 - Survey markers
- 4.29. Council is not responsible for the reinstatement of any verge modifications that are altered or removed by Service Authorities (or their contractor).
- 4.30. If a property owner (or their contractor) damages any infrastructure belonging to a Service Authority, all matters relating to repairs (including costs) are between the property owner and the Service Authority.

5. Definitions

Key term or acronym	Definition
Compacted quarry sand	Dolomite and similar products
Driveway Crossover	The section of the driveway connecting the property boundary to the road, providing vehicle access between the property and public roadway.

	 <p>The diagram illustrates a cross-section of a road and its adjacent properties. At the top, a dashed line represents the 'Property Boundary'. Below this, on either side of the road, are 'Footpath' areas. The 'Verge' is the area between the footpath and the 'Kerb'. The 'Crossover' is the central road area. The 'Invert' is the lowest point of the road surface. The 'Water table' is shown as a horizontal line below the road surface, with a slight dip under the crossover. The 'Kerb' is the edge of the road surface.</p>
Footpath	A path designed for pedestrian use, located within the verge area.
Road reserve	The total area of land dedicated for road purposes, which includes the road itself, and associated areas such as the verge
Service authority	Any utility service provider responsible for the care and/or control of utility services including water, sewerage telecommunications, natural gas and electricity, which may own infrastructure in the vicinity of the public road
Section 221 Application	Under Section 221 of the Local Government Act 1999, property owners must receive authorisation from council to make an alteration to a road, which includes the verge
Verge	The area of land situated between the property boundary and the kerb (or, where no kerb exists, the edge of the roadway).

6. Administration Use Only

Reference Number:	Document Set ID 5274513	
Strategic Alignment:	Council's strategic sustainability objectives include increasing tree canopy, and ensuring community wellbeing by prioritizing active transport and improving walkability to support healthy ageing. Verges provide an opportunity to green and beautify the city, as well as ensure safe routes for active transport, such as walking and cycling.	
Strategic Risk:	SC02 Poor or ineffective planning systems and processes	
Responsible Officer(s):	Manager Field Services	
Approval Date and Council Resolution Number:	9 September 2025 C090925/9151	
Approval History (Council), including GM approval:	<u>Council</u> 9/09/25	<u>General Manager</u> 28/08/25
Review Cycle:	Three years	
Applicable Legislation:	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> <i>Electricity Act 1996</i> <i>Environment Protection Act 1993</i> <i>Gas Act 1997</i> <i>Landscape South Australia Act 2019</i> <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> <i>Native Vegetation Act 1991</i> <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i> <i>Road Traffic Act 1961</i> <i>Telecommunications Act 1997</i> <i>Water Industry Act 2012</i>	
Related Policies:	Trees Policy Footpaths Policy Driveways Policy Climate Change Policy	
Other Reference Documents:		