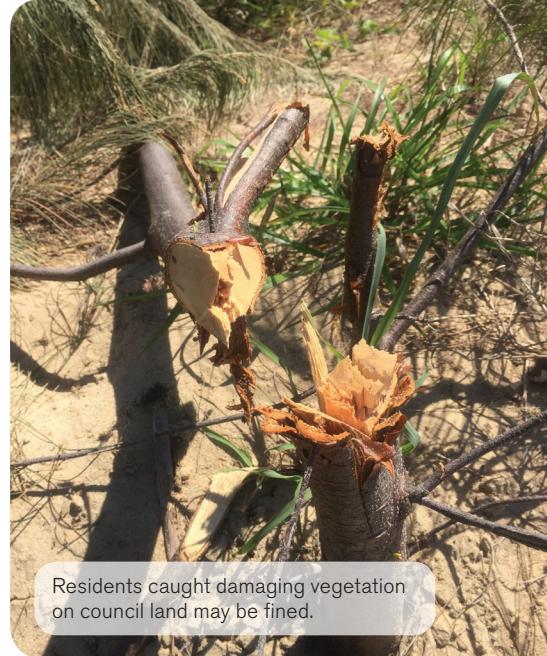


# Protecting our region's vegetation



## What is vegetation damage?

Vegetation damage is defined as the unlawful destruction, damage or injury to trees and vegetation on community and private land. Examples include poisoning, mowing, pruning, removal, and ringbarking.

## Where and when does vegetation damage happen?

Vegetation damage can happen anywhere but it more likely in coastal areas where deliberate damage is usually related to maintaining or gaining a 'view'. Trees are often vandalised after dark, so unless hearing sawing or a chainsaw, detection of illegal activity (such as poisoning) may not be apparent until after a few days or even weeks. Vegetation damage can occur at any time and immediate reporting is ideal.

## Trees being killed to enhance views

Every case of tree vandalism costs the community. Depending on the severity of the case, the cost can be from a minimum of \$1000 (street tree) and increase to over \$50,000 (coastal vegetation) for investigation, signage, replacement and remediation. In some cases council will install a vegetation damage sign near the affected area to alert the public to a major act of vegetation vandalism and to help deter offenders from causing further damage. Signs may stay in the area until the vegetation has been re-established.

## Why are trees valuable?

Trees are valuable for a number of reasons including:

- Shade provided by trees lowers

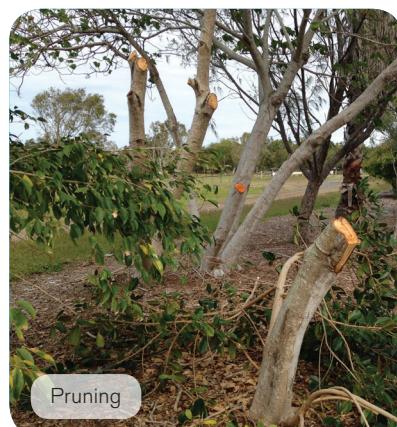
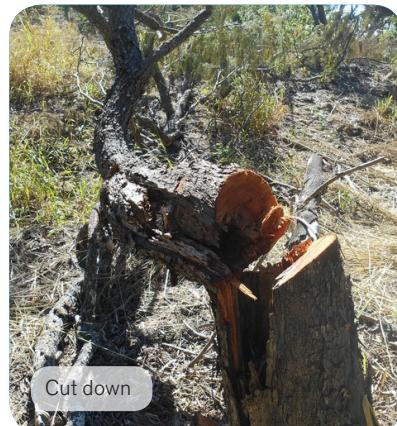
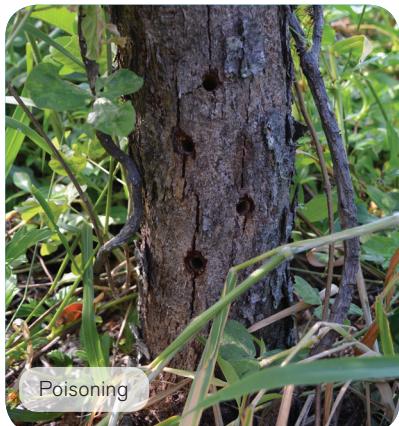
local temperatures on hard surfaces by 3-5 degrees, also reducing evaporation from the soil

- Reduce erosion and help stabilise foreshores
- Improves air quality by producing oxygen
- Enhance liveability – trees create wind breaks along foreshore and urban areas
- Reduce air pollution – trees intercept and filter harmful gas and airborne particle pollution
- Improve water quality – by slowing and filtering runoff before it enters drains and the rivers
- Absorb carbon dioxide – taking away some of the excessive amounts contributing to climate change
- Provide vital habitat for insects, birds and other native wildlife

These benefits are incrementally reduced with every healthy tree killed.

# Protecting our region's vegetation

## What does vegetation damage look like?



## Report vegetation damage and suspicious activity

### Step 1 – Record information:

- Location
- Date
- Time
- Address
- Photos of the person
- Vehicle details and registration

### Step 2 – Report information:

To report street tree or coastal vegetation damage contact Mackay Regional Council on 1300 MACKAY (622529).

Reporting vegetation damage is treated confidentially and will be acted on quickly. Local Law infringements can range from \$2669 to \$6677 depending on the location and severity of the vegetation damage.

If you believe a council tree is either dangerous and/or sick, contact council on 1300 MACKAY (622 529) for a trained arborist to come out and inspect it. At no point should these trees be touched by members of the public.