

# NATURE STRIP GARDEN GUIDELINES AND SELF-ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

## Nature Strip Garden Guidelines

**RESIDENTS CANNOT PLANT TREES ON ANY COUNCIL CONTROLLED LAND.** Residents can contact Council to request tree planting on the nature strip and the request will be considered as part of Council's capital tree planting program

Fraser Coast Regional Council supports the greening and beautification of nature strips as long as they remain safe, and functional.

These guidelines are designed to ensure:

- Public Safety
  - everyone can safely travel on the nature strip
  - people driving can see people walking and cycling
  - the street environment has good surveillance, light and access
  - people can get out of a car parked on the street
  - workers can safely access utility pits, pillars and poles
- Liveability and Amenity
  - there is space for bin collection
  - public trees are not disturbed
  - habitat for native wildlife is enhanced through choosing native plants.
- Property owners are aware that they are responsible for ongoing maintenance of the nature strip garden and that Council may remove the garden at any time if it is not safe, or not maintained to Council's satisfaction.

Council has developed self-assessable criteria to support residents and businesses who want to plant a nature strip garden.

**You cannot plant a garden on a nature strip that is less than 3 metres wide, as measured from the property boundary to the back of the kerb.**

The self-assessable criteria allows residents and businesses to use the nature strip for planting a garden, while retaining access for pedestrians, utilities and trees.

You do not need Council approval to create a nature strip garden that meets the self-assessable criteria.

You must complete the criteria checklist at the end of this guideline and submit it to Council before you begin work on your nature strip garden.

The nature strip garden must satisfy all criteria at all times. Criteria may be subject to change.

The Fraser Coast Greening Guide (<https://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/4714/fraser-coast-greening-guide>) provides handy advice on choosing and growing native plants, including for nature strips.

## Steps to getting started

1. Read and understand these Guidelines
2. Plan your nature strip garden
3. Discuss your plan with your neighbours
4. Complete the checklist and send it to Council
5. Get gardening, safely.

### Step 1: Read and understand these guidelines

The nature strip refers to the area of public land between the kerb and the front property boundary, or where no kerb exists, between the table-drain and the front property boundary and is controlled and managed by Council.

The nature strip provides a suitable space for:

- Pedestrians
- Footpaths
- Services such as electricity, fire hydrants, gas, light poles, postal, power, sewerage, telecommunications and water, and
- Essential services such as bus stops.

By reading and complying with these guidelines, you can help ensure that your nature strip garden beautifies your street while remaining functional.

### Step 2: Plan your nature strip garden

#### What can I do?

Provided that the proposed garden meets these guidelines, the owner/occupier of a property may plant a garden on the nature strip immediately fronting their property, between the property boundary and the formed road.

It is the owner/occupier's responsibility to maintain nature strip gardens and to preserve a safe nature strip environment for pedestrians and road users. Council has a duty of care to ensure the nature strips are compliant with the relevant legislation, policies and guidelines.

All planting must be carried out by hand with no excavation deeper than 0.3m. Mechanised tools and equipment must not be used.

If you are not the owner of the property, your application must include the owner's or body corporate's written consent to plant a garden on the nature strip.

The checklist at the end of these guidelines provides minimum criteria that must be met relating to access and clearance requirements, and plant height and types.

#### Healthy waterways and biodiversity

To support healthy waterways and local biodiversity, minimise or avoid using synthetic fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides.

## Vegetable gardens

Vegetable gardens are permitted if the vegetation does not exceed 0.75 metres in height, the ground is not raised and remains reasonably level, and stakes, fences and edging materials are not used. Root vegetables and herbs are particularly suitable for vegetable gardens.

Hazardous plants, such as chillies, are not permitted.

## What about trees?

Council plants, prunes and maintains all street trees in accordance with its tree management policies.

You must not plant any trees on your nature strip, or prune, damage or interfere with any existing trees, or tree roots. Requests for nature strip tree planting can be made to Council and will be considered for inclusion in the capital tree planting program

Your nature strip garden should support the ongoing health of any street trees. Minimise soil disturbance within the tree's root zone by using hand tools rather than machinery and observe the minimum clearance requirements detailed in the checklist.

## Roads that are not suitable for nature strip gardens

For safety, nature strip gardens can only be constructed on Council managed roads with a speed limit of 50kph or less, or roads where kerbside parking is permitted.

You will need to contact the Department of Transport and Main Roads for advice on planting on State-controlled roads.

Council can provide advice on whether a road is suitable for development of a nature strip garden, if required.

## What is not allowed on my nature strip?

For the safety and protection of Council assets and the community, you **cannot**:

- install artificial turf, barriers, bollards, community libraries, concrete/paved paths, fencing, furniture, garden edging, garden ornaments, garden stakes, irrigation, letterboxes, lights, logs, planter boxes, pavers/stepping stones, play equipment including swings or tree houses, retaining walls, or rocks
- grow plants that are prickly, spiky, or poisonous, or are a common cause or allergies, or are recognised weeds
- dispose of or use lawn clippings as mulch on a nature strip
- connect anything to trees, including signs, bird houses, swings or treehouses
- trim, prune, disturb or remove a street tree or its roots, or plant a tree. Requests for nature strip tree planting can be made to Council and will be considered for inclusion in the capital tree planting program
- remove a council asset including seats, signs or garden beds
- include anything that will obstruct the safe flow and vision of people walking or riding bikes and people driving
- plant in drainage reserves, natural environments, the median strip (grass/treed area in the middle of a road) or a round-about.

**Did you know?** Using lawn clippings as mulch

Fine mulch, such as lawn clippings, will hold a lot of water that plant and tree roots won't ever benefit from. If such mulches stay very wet for a long time, they can rot and introduce disease. They also reduce air flow.

Also, the bacteria that breaks the grass clippings down will draw nitrogen out of the surrounding soil surface, meaning your tree may go hungry.

The best thing to do with grass clippings is to compost them or use them as a thinly layered mulch on your property (i.e. not on the nature strip). Otherwise, you can take green waste to a Fraser Coast Council waste facility.

Good quality, chunky mulch around trees should be 5-10cm deep after settling, and kept 10cm from the base of young trees, and 30cm from the base of older trees.

### Step 3: Discuss your plan with your neighbours

Nature strip gardens should be visually pleasing and aim to promote local harmony and acceptance by neighbours.

You should ensure that your neighbours (left, right and opposite) support your plan before you move forward. This could include checking for known allergies to particular plants, and coordinating the types of plants you will use if they also intend to construct a nature strip garden.

### Step 4: Complete the checklist and submit it to Council

If the answer to all of the questions in the checklist is 'yes', then you can begin planting on your nature strip after you have submitted the checklist.

If you can't answer 'yes' or 'NA' to all the questions in the checklist, talk to one of our officers about your project and they can offer advice on how to make it work.

Once completed, send your checklist (and written approval from the landowner / body corporate, if applicable) to Council by:

Email: [Enquiry@frasercoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:Enquiry@frasercoast.qld.gov.au)

Post: PO Box 1943 Hervey Bay QLD 4655

In person: at one of Council's Customer Service Centres

Phone: To speak to someone about your project call 1300 79 49 29

### Step 5: Get gardening, safely

Thank you for completing the checklist and submitting it to Council.

While you are working on your nature strip, you (or your contractor) are responsible for your safety and that of others. While the garden works are in progress the site should be signed and barricaded to ensure public safety.

The footpath must remain open to pedestrian traffic.

Remember, you are responsible for ongoing maintenance of the nature strip garden and must ensure that it remains compliant with these guidelines.

## Compliance and Maintenance

Nature strip gardens are on Council controlled land and need to be maintained by residents in a safe and presentable manner.

This includes:

- watering to suit the plants' requirements
- mulching, to reduce evaporative water loss from the soil and to reduce water consumption
- use of compost or other organic fertiliser to stimulate healthy growth
  - mulch and compost must be used in a way that prevents it being washed into our waterways
- monitoring and treatment of plant pests and/or diseases
  - the use of native plants is the best way to minimise pest and disease infestation in your garden
  - to support healthy waterways and local biodiversity, minimise or avoid using pesticides and herbicides on your nature strip garden
- pruning to prevent foliage overhang on pedestrian access.

If your nature strip garden is not maintained, or poses a safety hazard, Fraser Coast Regional Council will issue a notice for you to maintain your nature strip garden.

If you do not take action within four weeks, Council will remove the nature strip garden.

If the garden is causing a safety hazard, Council may take immediate action to make the area safe without notifying the resident.

## Frequently asked questions

### **What happens if I move?**

If you are moving house, you can invite the next home owner to take care of the nature strip garden. If they do not wish to take care of it, you must reinstate the nature strip to natural turf before you leave the property.

### **What if I become the owner of a house that already has a nature strip garden?**

If you move into a home with an established nature strip garden and you wish to retain the garden, you must complete and submit to Council a copy of the checklist at Attachment A, and ensure the garden continues to comply with these guidelines.

Alternatively, you can remove the garden and reinstate the nature strip to natural turf.

### **What if a utility company needs access?**

Where a utility company requires access to the nature strip, they will often cause damage to the surface area or surrounding infrastructure and usually re-establish the area with turf. They do not normally cover costs to reinstate additional beautification.

### **What plant species can I plant?**

Council's first preference is to use local native plant species as they are best suited to the local climate and soil.

Native plants provide nectar, food and habitat for native birds, insects and other creatures that are important to our environment.

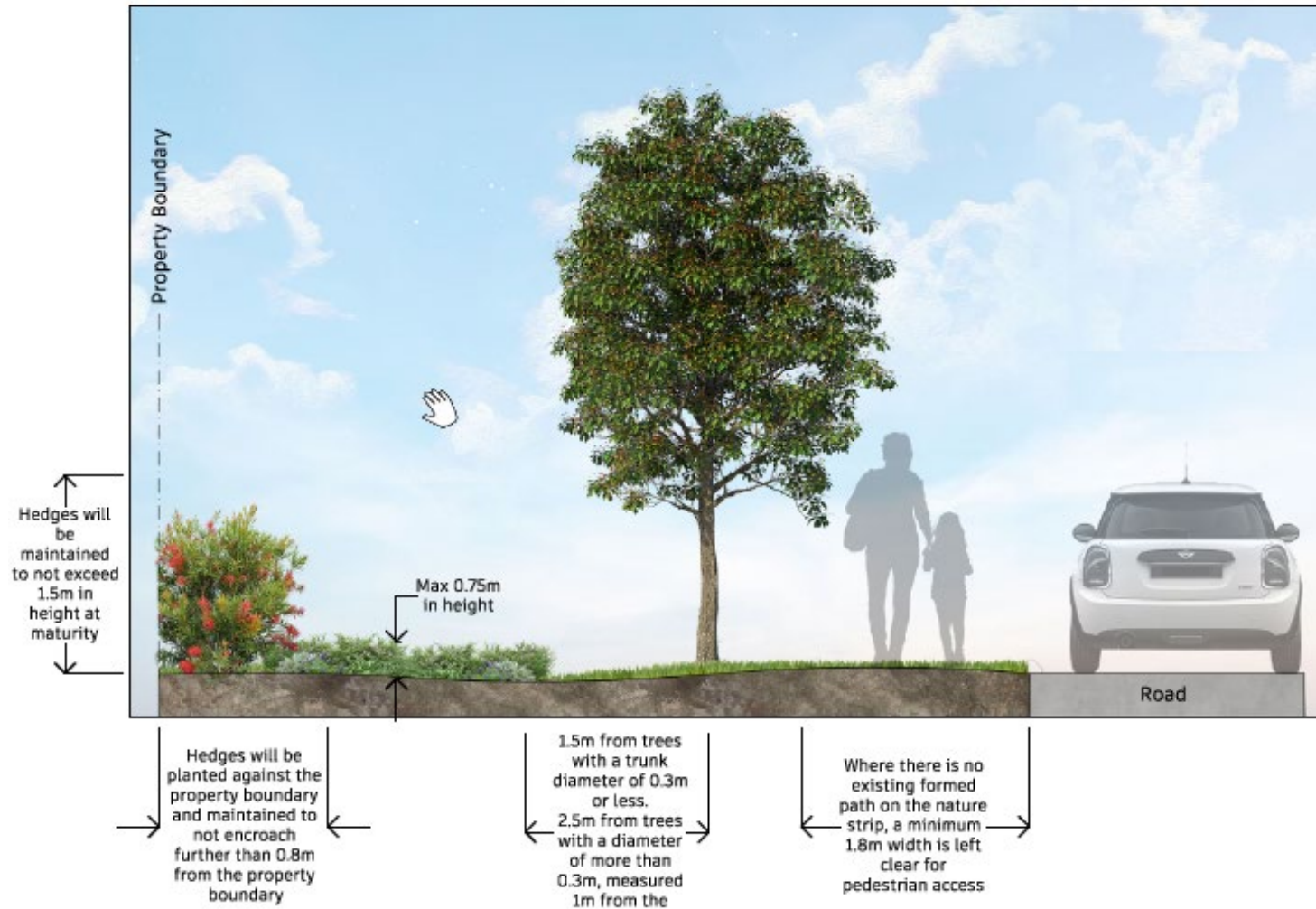
The Fraser Coast Greening Guide provides advice on choosing native plants.

If you do not prefer native plants, you should choose drought tolerant plants from local nurseries. Plants should not be vigorous-growing or weedy and must not be prohibited or restricted species in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 2014.

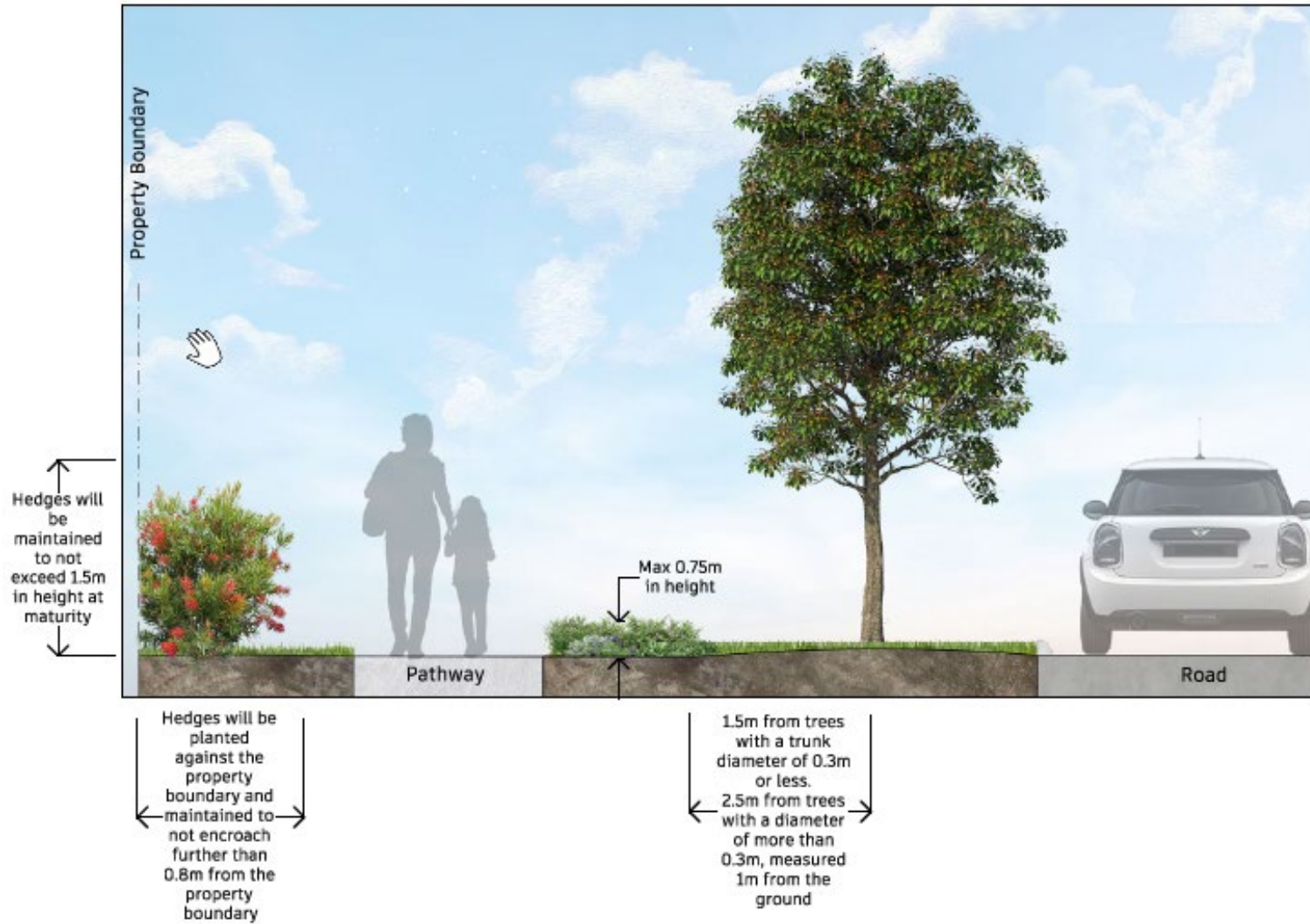
Annual plants should not generally be used unless you are committed to maintaining these on a regular basis.

## Nature strip garden design examples

### Example 1

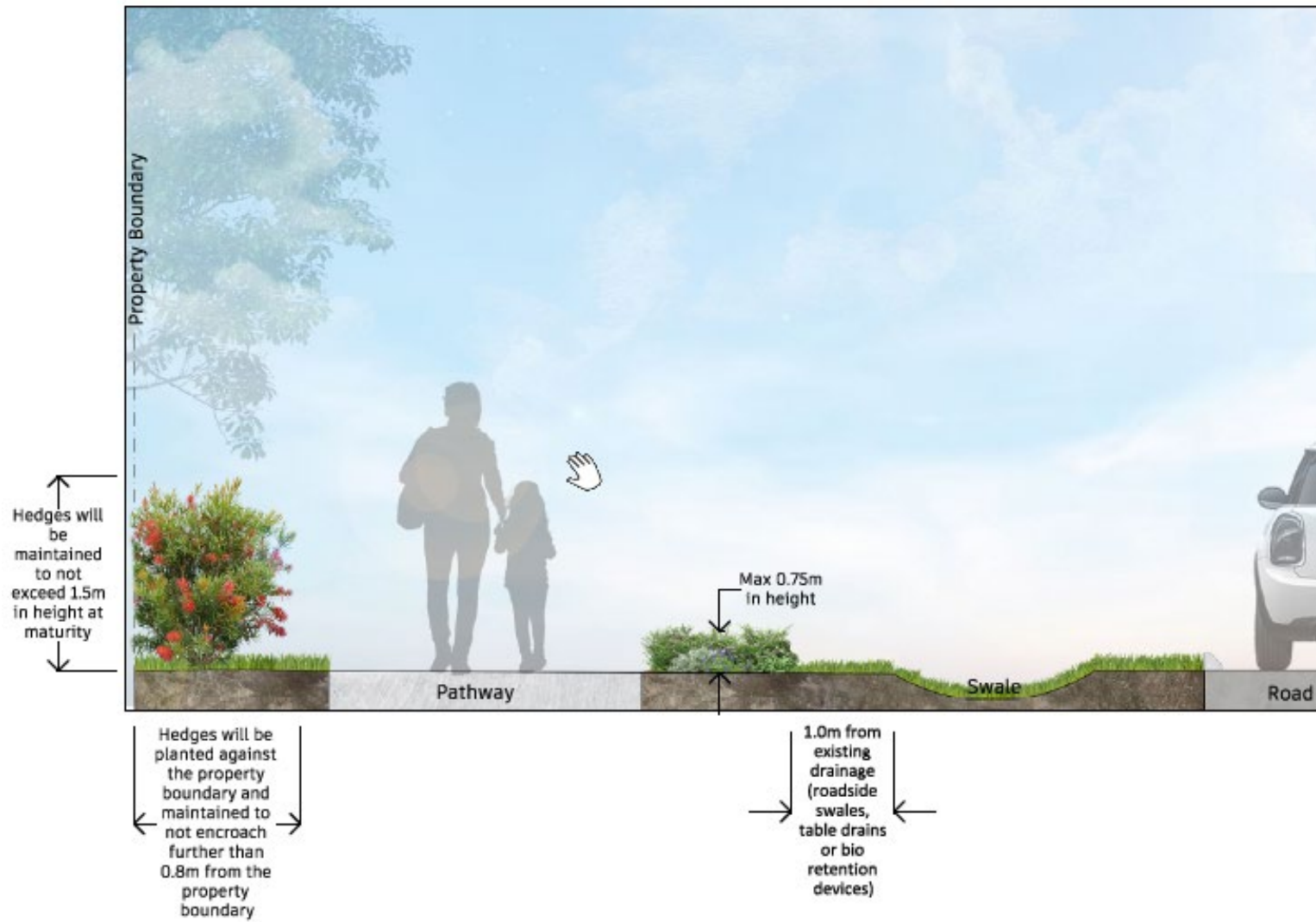


Example 2

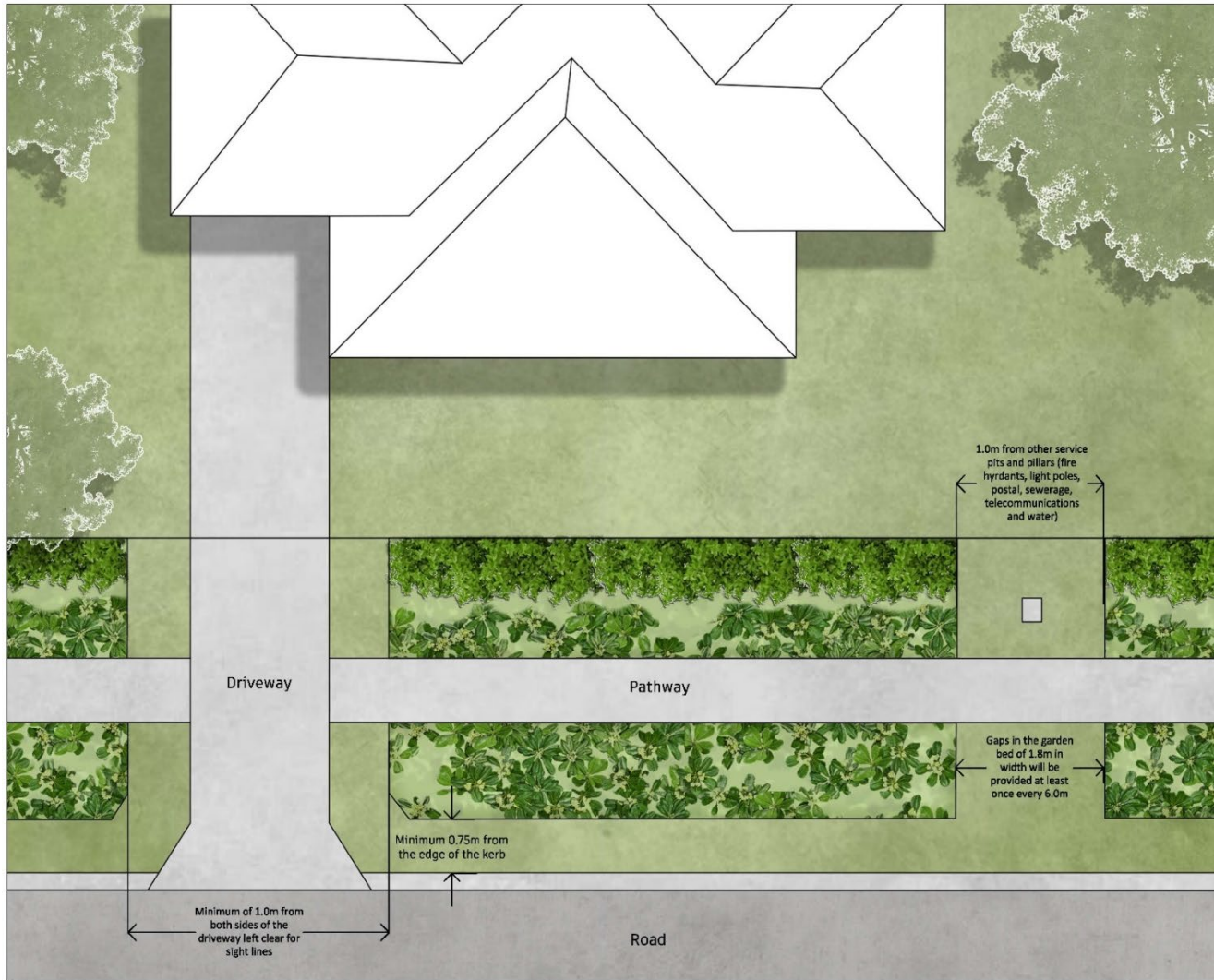




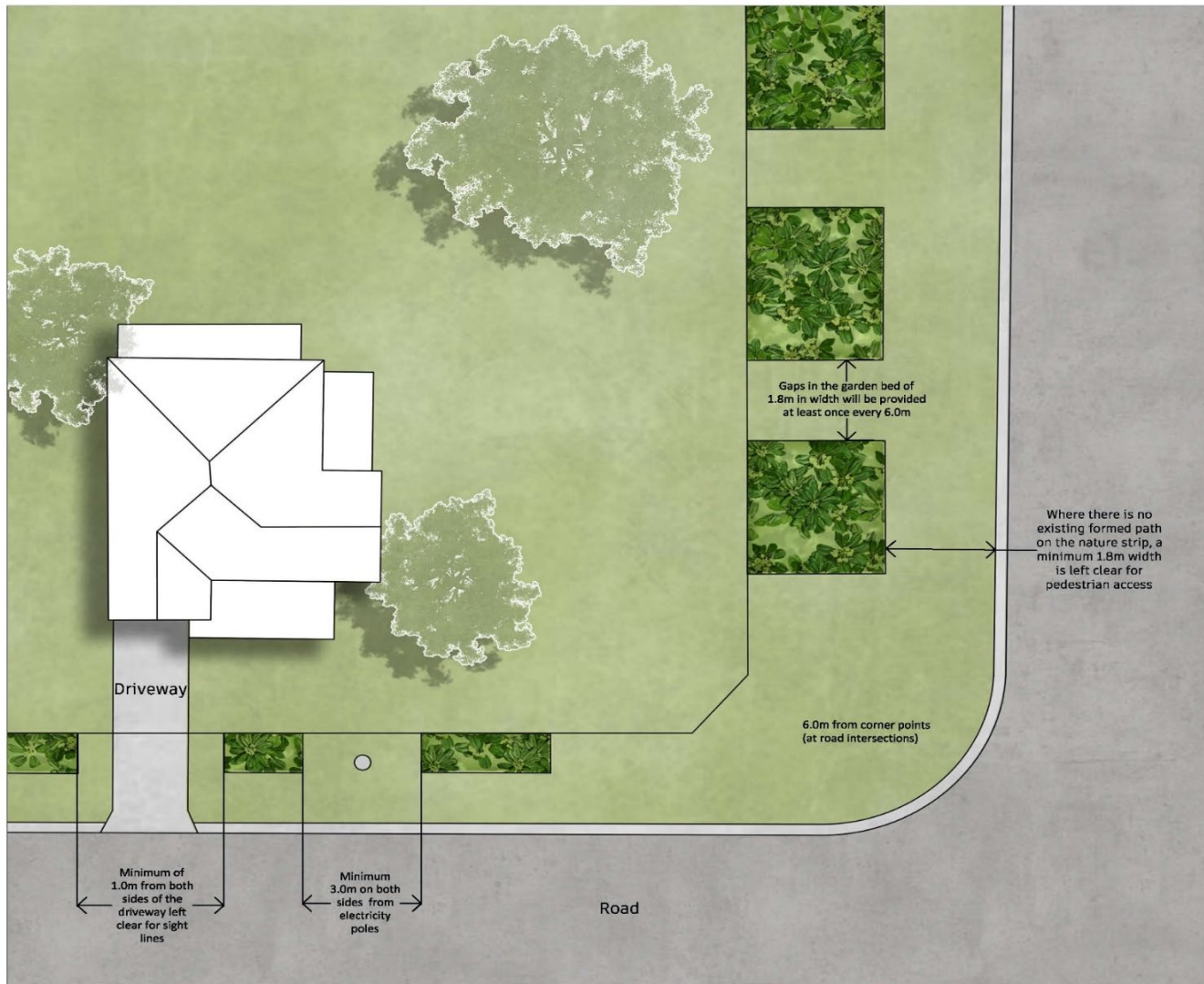
Example 3



Example 4



Example 5



## ATTACHMENT A

### SELF-ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR PLANTING A NATURE STRIP GARDEN

**Purpose of Form:** This form will be used to assess your compliance with Council's Nature Strip Gardening Guidelines

Requirements for Nature Strip Gardens	N/A	Yes	No
<b>Before You Begin</b>			
I have contacted Before You Dig Australia (byda.com.au) and located any underground services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have spoken to neighbours (next door and across the road) and they have agreed to the gardening plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The property owner / owners' corporation of my strata scheme has provided written agreement to the nature strip garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will submit a completed copy of this checklist to Council		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My nature strip garden will be constructed and maintained in accordance with these Guidelines for Planting a Nature Strip Garden		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>General Conditions</b>			
The nature strip, measured from my property boundary to the road, is at least 3 metres wide		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The nature strip is between my property boundary and a formed road		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The garden is located along a road with a traffic speed limit up to, and including, 50 kilometres per hour (roads with a speed limit greater than 50km/h are not suitable for nature strip gardens) or the garden is located along a road that permits kerbside parking (roads that do not permit kerbside parking are not suitable for nature strip gardens).		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All planting will be carried out by hand with no excavation deeper than 0.3m. Mechanised tools and equipment will not be used, and care will be taken around drainpipes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Street trees will be preserved, and no trees will be planted, pruned or removed		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Only bio-degradable mulches such as woodchip, leaves and compost will be used.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Run-off will be contained, including materials such as water, soil, mulch or debris onto the footpath, road or into drains		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stakes, guide wires or protrusions which may cause a hazard to users of the footpath and road will not be used.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structures or solid materials will not be used, including concrete or solid edging, star pickets, fencing, guide wires, or loose materials such as rocks, paving, pebbles or stones		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Artificial turf will not be used		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An irrigation system will not be used		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snail baits will not be used		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The use of herbicides and pesticides will be minimised, and only used in accordance with label directions		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The nature strip garden will be maintained to ensure it is safe, tidy, and attractive.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Privacy Notice:** In using this form, you are providing personal information such as name and contact details. This information will be used only for the purpose stated above and will only be accessed by persons who have been authorised to do so. Your personal information is handled in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009.

Requirements for Nature Strip Gardens	N/A	Yes	No
<b>Choosing Plants</b>			
I will not use plants that are prickly, spiky, or poisonous, or are a common cause of allergies, or are recognised weeds		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plant species are listed within “The Fraser Coast Greening Guide” and/or are sourced from suppliers local to the Fraser Coast		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will maintain plants to not exceed 0.75m in height at maturity, and not encroach on accessibility, circulation, and sightlines.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Hedges</b>			
Will be planted against the property boundary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will be maintained to not exceed 1.5m in height at maturity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will be maintained to not encroach further than 0.8m from the property boundary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will have a minimum of 1.0m from both sides of the driveway left clear for sight lines (refer to diagrams)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Vegetation Clear Zones and Planting Locations</b>			
Minimum clearances apply for nature strip gardens. (refer to diagrams) Plants and foliage must be kept a minimum of:			
• 0.75m from the edge of the kerb	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• 3.0m from electricity poles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• 2.0m from gas services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• 1.0m from other service pits and pillars (fire hydrants, light poles (unless the light is on an electricity pole – see above) postal, sewerage, telecommunications and water)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• 1.0m from existing drainage (roadside swales, table drains or bio retention devices)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• 1.5m from trees with a trunk diameter of 0.3m or less, measured 1m from the ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• 2.5m from trees with a diameter of more than 0.3m, measured 1m from the ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• 6.0m from corner points (at road intersections)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaps in the garden bed of 1.8m in width will be provided at least once every 6.0m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where there is no existing formed path on the nature strip, a minimum 1.8m width is left clear for pedestrian access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sightlines will be maintained, including for pedestrian, bicycle or vehicular traffic when using the road, and entering or exiting a driveway		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**RESIDENTS CANNOT PLANT TREES ON ANY COUNCIL CONTROLLED LAND.** Residents can contact Council to request tree planting on the nature strip and the request will be considered as part of Council's capital tree planting program

## Declaration

I agree to the following:

- I have completed the checklist accurately and honestly and confirm that the proposed nature strip garden meets these Guidelines.
- I will notify Council if any of the details change.
- I will ensure that works within the nature strip will not create a public risk.
- I will ensure that the nature strip garden does not cause sight-line issues for vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians.
- I will pay all costs associated with the reinstatement of any damage caused to Council infrastructure or other public utilities as a result of the proposed activities associated with these works, including all work carried out on my behalf by any agent, sub-contractor or others engaged to deliver remove or carry out any part of the proposed work.
- I acknowledge that should future placement of Council or essential service infrastructure require the plantings to be removed, no compensation will be due for the removal or disturbance of my garden bed.
- I will maintain the nature strip garden in accordance with these Guidelines and acknowledge that Council may remove the garden at any time if Council is satisfied that it no longer complies with these Guidelines.
- I am aware that it is an offence to knowingly provide false or misleading information.

Name	
Address	
Phone	
Email	
Date	
Signature	

<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	
<b>Customer Service</b>	
CSO initial	Date
<b>Open Space and Environment</b>	
Date	Time
Name	