



# **VERGE DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

**“LANDSCAPING VERGES”**

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# **ALICE SPRINGS TOWN COUNCIL**

## **1. VERGE POLICY STATEMENT**

### **AIM:**

To provide and maintain safe, environmentally responsible and visually attractive roadside environments for the Alice Springs community

### **POLICY OBJECTIVES:**

1. To develop the suburban road corridors and verges in a responsible manner which demonstrates Community and ASTC pride in the town and confidence in a regional identity.
2. To enhance the unique elements of Alice Springs natural, cultural and townscape elements.
3. To establish a benchmark in landscape planning, design, implementation and maintenance that adopts best practice and the principals of environmental responsibility.
4. To establish and maintain a high level of community involvement and ownership in the development and maintenance of suburban verges.
5. To establish and maintain quality and timely maintenance of all verges and roadsides within the municipality
6. To provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists
7. To establish safe access and regress from properties

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

Alice Springs Town Council recognises that the landscape character of any region is a combination of aesthetic, physical, cultural and social qualities that create a distinctive and identifiable “Sense of Pride”. Recognition and retention of the cultural and natural values of a place is important to preserve local identity within the wider national context and to demonstrate community and local government pride in the town.

To ensure that future streetscape project retain this identity and to enhance the townscape of Alice Springs, it is necessary to establish strategic principals to provide a framework for future design and implementation.

## 2. Introduction:

This document outlines the general procedures for the preparation, submission and assessment of landscaping plans for work on verges within Alice Springs. This Policy is not retrospective and commences on 01/06/2009.

Verges (nature strips) remain the property and the responsibility of the Alice Springs Town Council and ASTC reserves the right to complete work on verges. An **Approved Verge Development Permit** from the ASTC must be obtained prior to any works being commenced on any verge (nature strips). The Verge Development Policy is a “living” document. This means that the requirements of the protocol will evolve over time as our understanding of the issues involved with design, construction and maintenance of sustainable verges in Alice Springs grows.

Submission of an application for “Verge Development – Landscaping Your Verge” is required for all “landscaping” on verges within Alice Springs. Attached to the application must be a traffic management plan if pedestrian or vehicular access is impeded by the landscaping works.

For other works on verges including vehicle access (driveways / crossovers), stormwater discharge, kerb works and other minor construction works, please use the “The Appropriate Permit Application Form” available from the front counter at the Civic Centre in Todd Street. All relevant Dial Before You Dig information (Power, Water, Telstra, Gas) must be attached to the application form.

## 3. Alice Springs Town Council Verge Responsibilities

This policy incorporates all verges and roads under control of the ASTC. ASTC promotes and maintains a bare earth management strategy. ASTC maintenance on verges includes weeds eradication combined with mowing and brush cutting during the year. Rural roads are slashed. ASTC Tree Policy endeavours to provide 1 tree per residential allotment

This policy greatly reduces risk in regards to pedestrian, vehicle, property damage and ASTC workers safety. ASTC is endeavouring to eradicate all weeds on verges to give the town a natural desert landscape. ASTC encourages maintenance of verges in front of homes by residents by way of mowing brush cutting and litter control.

ASTC has the responsibility and authority to enforce the guidelines within this policy. This could include directions to remove certain non-conformances with the ASTC Verge Development Policy. Failure to complete directions may result in ASTC removing the policy non-conformances and recovering associated costs.

Responsibilities of ASTC include:

- Mowing of Verges on lawns established by ASTC
- Tree Planting
- Tree Maintenance
- Tree Safety
- Tree Removals
- Tree Preservation
- Tree Diagnosis and Pest Treatment
- Stump Removal and Stump Grinding
- Weed Eradication
- Policy Enforcement

#### **4. Ownership of Roads within Alice Springs:**

This Verge Development Protocol refers specifically to those roads, verges and lanes controlled by ASTC. ASTC controls all roads within the municipality except those listed below. The following roads in Alice Springs are controlled by the Northern Territory Government:

- North Stuart Highway
- Telegraph Terrace
- South Stuart Highway
- Larapinta Drive
- Stott Terrace
- Sadadeen Road
- Undoolya Road (Grevillea Roundabout to Undoolya Boundary)
- South Terrace (Stephens Roads Causeway to South Stuart Highway)
- Ross Highway
- Stephens Road
- Rogervale Road
- Santa Teresa Road

For all landscaping or work on Northern Territory controlled verges (any works, planting or storage of objects or materials), **APPROVAL IS REQUIRED** from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) prior to any works being commenced. The application form and department requirements are available from DPI on 0889 515 211 or Vivienne Brown on 0889 515 280 or can be collected from the Greatorex Building in Parsons Street, Alice Springs.

All other roads and verges within the municipality are the responsibility of ASTC. Applications can be collected from the front counter of the Alice Springs Town Council Offices on Todd Street, Alice Springs.

#### **5. Verge Requirements:**

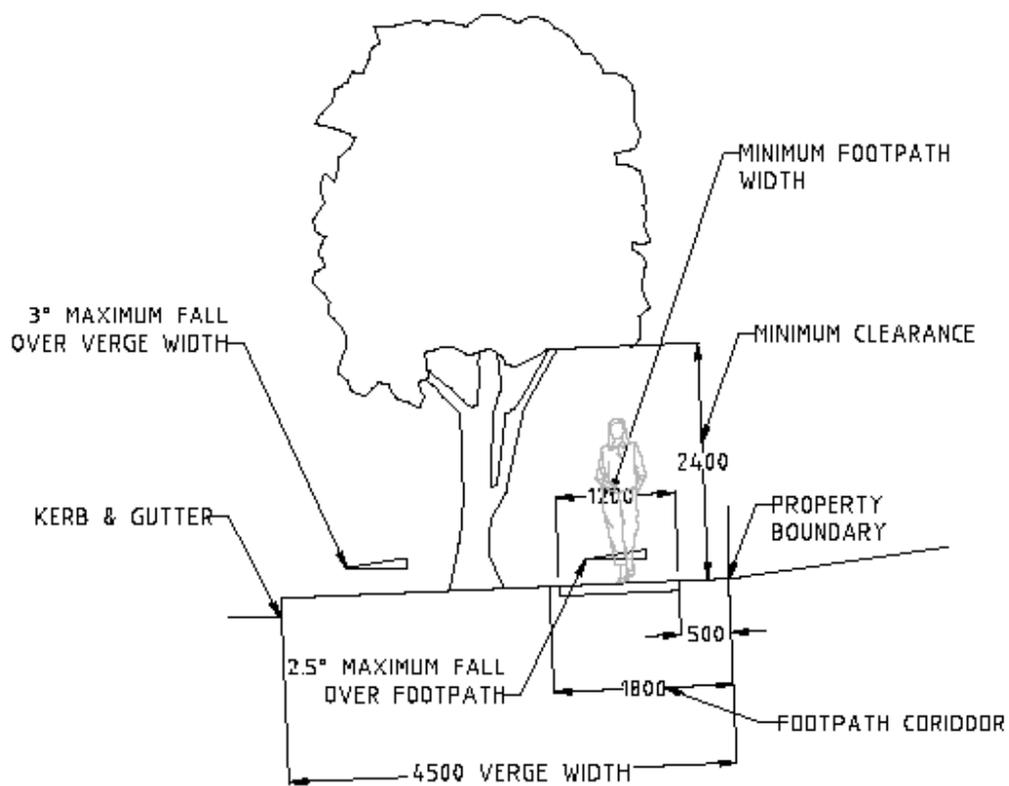
An **Approved Verge Development Permit** from the ASTC must be obtained prior to any works being commenced on any verge (nature strips). The application form and ASTC requirements are contained in this protocol. There is to be no works within 1800mm footpath corridor. This is to ensure pedestrian safe access onto the verge. The Verge Development Policy covers items such as:

- Materials
- Plants
- Rocks & Fencing
- Storage of Materials
- Mulch
- Driveways
- Watering

If pedestrian or vehicular access is impeded in any way, a traffic management plan must accompany the application. The traffic management plan will explain in detail all measures that will be undertaken to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety for the duration of the project. All material is to be retained within the landscaping works to restrict material spilling onto footpaths or roadways causing a hazard to pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

An application must be submitted with ASTC for verge developments. The 1800mm directly from your lot boundary is the footpath corridor. Included in the application must be the type of material that will be used, plant selection, rocks or fences, storage of materials, irrigation, the quantities used and barriers used to stop material spilling onto verge and roadway.

**Diagram 1:**



**a) Materials:**

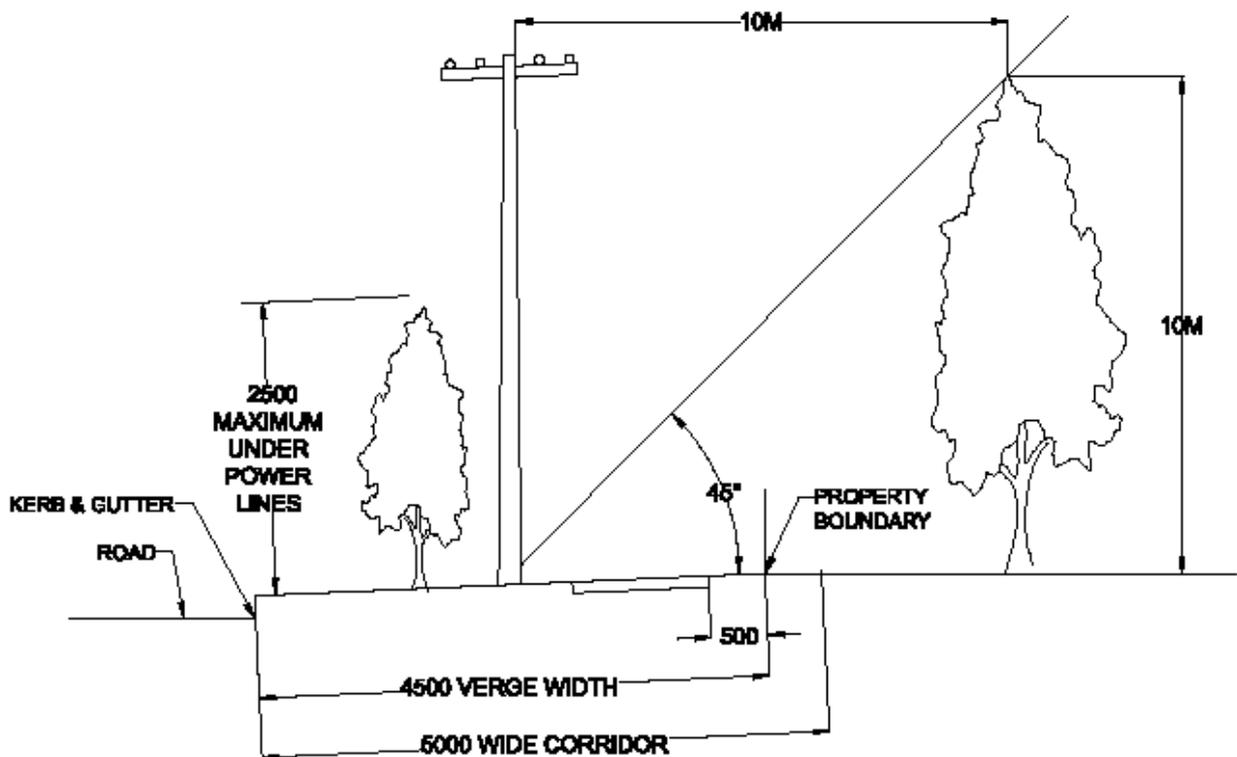
- Non organic mulch material (gravels, crushed sandstone) should have a maximum particle size of 12mm in diameter. Organic mulch materials should also contain smaller rather than larger particles. Larger sized materials such as river rubble can be used as missiles and may become dangerous if spilled onto footpath or roadways.
- Approved organic and/or non-organic mulch or similar ground treatments must be stable and properly contained. Roads drains empty into the Todd River without treatment. Care must be taken to ensure that the road, drains and footpath are protected for such matter for environmental and safety purposes.

**b) Plants:**

- The use of endemic (native plants from the local area) and/or Australian native plants in preference to exotic plants. ASTC actively promotes the arid zone landscape character of the town and supports the use of techniques most applicable to enhancing that character. Please refer to the support document “Preferred Plant Species for Landscaping in Alice Springs”.
- Special consideration must be given to tree selection. Two tree species list have been coordinated into two separate lists:
  - Tree Species List (Non Powerlines Side of Verge) – Trees in this selection list have been chosen because of there ability to survive in the Central Australian climate
  - Tree Species List (Under Powerlines) – Tree in this selection list have been chosen because of there ability to survive in the Central Australian climate and do not grow tall enough to encroach into powerlines.
- Areas of consideration in regards to tree species selection must include the mature size of all plants, ensure the plants do not cause an obstruction for pedestrians, not to grow into overhead powerlines or cause line of sight problems for pedestrians and/or motorists.
- Foliage which is on the verge (nature strip), or growing on your block and overhangs the footpath, must be pruned to maintain a minimum height of 2.4 metres clear above footpaths and pruned back in line with the inside edge of the footpath (including hedges and ground covers) below this height. For safety purposes, pedestrians must have access to the entire width of the footpath.  
(See Diagram 1)
- The no work zone and a strip of low vegetation and/or an even, stable surface must be maintained to a minimum of 1800mm within the footpath corridor for pedestrian access from the roadway and from cars parked at the kerb, even if a formed footpath is adjacent to your property boundary.  
(See Diagram 1)
- Foliage, materials or structures are not to cause a line of sight problem for vehicles or pedestrians when using, entering or exiting an intersection, driveway or footpath.
- Vegetation should not exceed 600mm in height within 3 metres of any driveway, to ensure that a clear line of sight is maintained when entering or exiting property.

- ASTC guidelines and Power Water Corporations regulations require that:
  - Maximum planting height of any plants as per tree species list for trees on powerlines side of the verge within the 5 metre wide corridor under the powerlines (2.5 metres either side of the power poles) (See Diagram 2)
  - Use the 45° angle from the base of the power pole to work out where it is safe to plant tall trees in private property (a 10 metre tree can be planted a distance of 10 metres from the power line) (See Diagram 1)
  - Plant trees from the ASTC recommended trees species lists

**Diagram 2:**



**c) Rocks and Fencing:**

- Rocks – not less than 500mm X 500mm X 300mm and no larger than 1500mm X 1000mm X 500mm are permitted on the verge.
- Landscape rocks are to be positioned a minimum of 1800mm wide from the front of the lot boundary, driveways or footpaths and are not to protrude into the footpath corridor. They are to be installed with a minimum gap of 1500mm between each rock. Clear line of sight must be maintained, so larger rocks (over 600mm high) must be at least 3 metres from any driveway.
- Temporary protective fencing is permitted (with prior approval), if constructed and maintained in a safe condition and clearly visible at night, in areas where new landscaping requires protection. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic must not be disrupted during the works. If pedestrian and vehicular access is impeded, a traffic management plan must be attached to direct pedestrians and vehicles safely up to, through and past the work zone. Work must

be completed within 12 weeks. If the duration of works extends past the 12 week deadline, an extension application may be applied for.

- Permanent fencing of any kind is not permitted within the verge area.

**d) Storage of Materials:**

- Materials can be temporarily stored on the verge area, however an **Approved Permit** from the ASTC must be obtained prior to any storage of materials on any verge (nature strips). This can be arranged through the ASTC Rangers Department. Conditions are attached to approvals for the temporary storage of building materials or other objects on verges. No materials shall be stored within the 1800mm footpath corridor. Materials shall only be stored for 12 weeks on the verge.

**e) Mulch:**

- a. The type of mulch used in verges must consider pedestrian and cycle traffic. In areas which have or may have high levels of pedestrians and/or cycle traffic, and where there is no formed footpath; the landscape design must include an even, stable and safe right of way for pedestrians.
- b. Mulching of planted areas conserves water by retaining soil moisture, maintains a more even soil temperature, reduces erosion and compaction, reduces weed growth and helps to ensure deep root development.
- c. Gravel mulches are available in different colours and textures that can be used to enhance the design. Gravels of a maximum particle size of 12mm are preferred to minimise the potential use as missiles. The use of uncompacted coarse river sand and red sands as both a mulch and material and/or design feature is only recommended where pedestrian access is minimal
- d. Organic mulch should be pasteurised or partially composted to reduce the possibility that it contains weed seeds and diseases. Do not place the mulch in directly in contact with the trunks of the plants as this can encourage collar rot and other diseases.
- e. The type of mulch used in verges must not be too fine as it has the potential to become a dust issue.

**f) Watering:**

- The harsh climate affects the establishment of trees and shrubs due to increased transpiration and desiccation during the hot periods and the action of frosts during winter. Poorly planned irrigation layout and/or timing may lead to increased soil salinity due to the rapid evaporation of water.
- Insufficient depth of watering will also encourage shallow root growth that will be unable to sustain the plant if irrigation is discontinued which will ultimately lead to trees being uprooted during windy conditions. Well designed and maintained drip irrigation systems and appropriate mulching will help overcome these challenges.
- When installing poly irrigation pipe under concrete footpaths and driveways, it is advisable to sleeve the pipe within a PVC conduit with a slightly larger diameter.
- Automated irrigation systems are labour saving devices but must be programmed correctly for the time of the year, the type of plant, age of the plant and must be installed, monitored and maintained correctly and regularly.
- Deep infrequent watering is strongly encouraged as opposed to light, frequent watering.

## 8. Street Trees:

ASTC has adopted two separate tree species lists. One list for verges with powerlines on the verge side and one list for non-powerlines side of the verge. ASTC periodically checks and carries out any necessary pruning and/or removal of street trees. If you wish to prune or remove any trees from the verge, **WRITTEN APPROVAL MUST BE OBTAINED** from ASTC.

ASTC is not responsible for the maintenance of any completed verge landscaping work that has been approved by ASTC. ASTC is not responsible for the upgrade of verges throughout the municipality. A minimum standard of 1 tree per property frontage is the responsibility of ASTC.

ASTC guidelines and Power Water Corporations regulations require that:

- Maximum planting height of any plants as per tree species list for trees on powerlines side of the verge within the 5 metre wide corridor under the powerlines (2.5 metres either side of the power poles) (See Diagram 2)
- Use the 45° angle from the base of the power pole to work out where it is safe to plant tall trees in private property (a 10 metre tree can be planted a distance of 10 metres from the power line) (See Diagram 2)
- Plant trees from the ASTC recommended trees species lists

Adequate protection of street trees is required. This can be achieved by:

- Not placing building materials or vehicles within the root zone of the tree (drip zone plus 2 metres)
- No unapproved excavation within the drip zone of the trees
- No excavation for services within 3 metres of the tree trunk
- Ensure that the ground level around street trees is not altered and that materials are not built-up around the base of any trees

If any of the street trees are causing concern or may be considered as hazardous, report it to the ASTC Depot (08) 89 500 583 and staff will access the issue and rectify problems. Concerns over:

- Termites
- Hollowing of trees
- Safety concerns - Line of sight on roadways, pedestrian access, hanging branches
- Tree ownership

ASTC is not responsible for trees that are encroaching into or over powerlines. The PowerWater corporation is responsible for these trees and can be contacted on 1800 245 092.

**REMEMBER: Ensure that the ASTC Tree Species List is consulted for all tree plantings within the municipality. It is imperative to gain APPROVAL to plant trees in areas of significant cultural importance and/or heritage value, replacement or planting of non-native trees.**

## 9. Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) – This authority has the responsibility of ensuring the preservation of all sacred sites and significant areas. AAPA authority certificates are required for any works on or near significant trees and sacred sites. AAPA must be consulted on establishing the heritage and cultural significance of trees and sites.

**AAPA phone number is 0889 526 366.**

## 10. You Must Not:

- An **Approved Verge Development Permit** from the ASTC must be obtained prior to any works being commenced on any verge (nature strips).
- Substantially raise the level of the verge in any way above the normal line drawn between the top of the kerb and the ground level at the base of the fence line at the front of the property or between the top of the kerb and the outside edge of a formed footpath (concrete, bitumen, compacted gravel)
- Install any structure/object that may impede or disrupt pedestrian/vehicular traffic and/or which poses a potential threat to public safety
- Plant any plant that is considered a noxious weed
- Plant any plant that is deemed by ASTC to pose a risk to the public or which may cause damage to existing or future infrastructure
- Undertake any works and/or install any material on the verge that is deemed by ASTC to be inappropriate
- Store or place any substance, material or thing on the verge without **WRITTEN APPROVAL** from ASTC
- Excavate on the verge without **Approved Permit** from the ASTC and Dial Before You Dig information sheets attached to the verge application
- Prune or remove any street trees or shrubs without **Approved Permit** from the ASTC
- Allow any foliage to obstruct pedestrian access to footpaths or the area of the verge 0.5 metres from the kerb
- Park or store any type of vehicle or trailer on a verge (registered or un-registered or parts there-of) **Approved Permit** from the ASTC

## **9. Your Application for Verge Development Permit**

Please submit your application to the Alice Springs Town Council, PO Box 1071, ALICE SPRINGS,  
NT 0871.

Your application must contain 2 copies of the Landscape Plan. Plans must be to scale at 1:100; 1:50; or 1:20 [1cm = 100cm (1m), 1cm = 50cm (0.5m), 1cm = 20cm (0.2m)]

All applications to carry out landscape works on the verge to contain the following:

### **Completed Verge Development Application Form containing:**

- a. Name of Owner/Resident
- b. Lot Number
- c. Property Address/Postal Address
- d. Contact Phone Numbers

### **Completed (signed) Services Approval Form containing:**

- a. Location, size and species of existing plants (if any)
- b. Trees or plants proposed to be removed (if any)
- c. Proposed finished surface levels (approximate heights above/below the kerb)
- d. Details of all underground and overhead services (power, water, gas, telephone, fibre optics, etc) Dial Before You Dig information sheets
- e. All existing verge infrastructure (footpaths, streetlights, signs, hydrants, phone booths, etc)
- f. Type of paving, its thickness and method of construction (substrate, material & reinforcing)
- g. Position, height and depth of rocks
- h. Proposed infrastructure and/or furniture
- i. If watering harvesting – details of site storm water overflow system (for heavy rainfall events)
- j. Planting schedule including botanical and common names of plant species, number of plants of each species used, details of the minimum size at planting, spacing of plants and estimated tree canopy spread
- k. Areas to be mulched (organic and non-organic) – include type of mulch and maximum particle size
- l. Areas of turf (if any)
- m. Irrigation system, layout and proposed watering schedule
- n. The finished surface levels
- o. Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority Certificate

## 10. Landscape Zones

The **Natural Approach Zone** surrounds the township of Alice Springs. It is characterised by rugged hills and natural vegetation with few built forms visible from the road corridor. The natural vegetation has been affected by clearing, fire and un-controlled vehicular use. Ground covers are generally introduced grasses. **Treatment:** *Re-establishment of indigenous vegetation*

The **Transition Zone** lies between the natural and developed areas of the township and includes sections of the landscape considered as arrival and departure points. It is distinctive in landscape character due to the increasing visibility and density of buildings, exotic residential vegetation, signage and road furniture. It is within this zone that motoring travellers gain their first impression of a destination and where landscape gateways should be implemented. **Treatment:** *Establishment of hardy indigenous/native landmark trees/shrubs/groundcovers*

The **Suburban Zone** is characterised by the higher grade of landscape treatments installed along the roadway such as street lighting, kerbing, footpaths, street signs, dense patterns of vegetation (particularly within private property), higher visibility of houses and other structures, and the increased number of complexity of vehicular and pedestrian movements within road corridors. **Treatment:** *Informal/formal combinations of drip irrigated indigenous/native/ Australian cultivar shade trees, colourful shrubs and groundcovers*

The **Urban Zone** is characterised by a variety of larger buildings fronting the road corridor, a more formal approach to landscape treatments (including street furniture) and a higher intensity of vehicular and pedestrian movement along and across the road corridor, including the provision of street side parking bays. **Treatment:** *Formal combinations of drip irrigated indigenous/native/ Australian cultivar shade trees, colourful shrubs and groundcovers*

The **Riverine Zone** is characterised by a natural edge with vegetation dominated by River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). The physical presence of the river within the landscape is heightened by its linear nature which in sections runs parallel with the road corridor and has a number of crossing points. The river is a key determinant of sections of the Alice Springs road landscape character and its influence should be integrated into the road landscape. **Treatment:** *Use of riparian vegetation dominated by River Red Gums and indigenous vegetation shrubs, groundcovers and grasses*

## 11. Attachments

- Attachment 1: Application for Verge Development
- Attachment 2: Tree Species List (Verge on the Opposite Side of the Powerlines)
- Attachment 3: Tree Species List (Verge on the Side of the Powerlines)
- Attachment 4: Grasses of Alice Springs
- Attachment 5: Planting Guide – Trees and Shrubs in Alice Springs