



Department
of Transport
and Planning

Amendment VC315 Tree Canopy & other changes

Information session

SEPTEMBER 2026



Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Lands we are meeting on today and pay respects to their Elders past, present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.



Changes to Clause 55 – Summary

- **Changes to the Tree Canopy Standard**

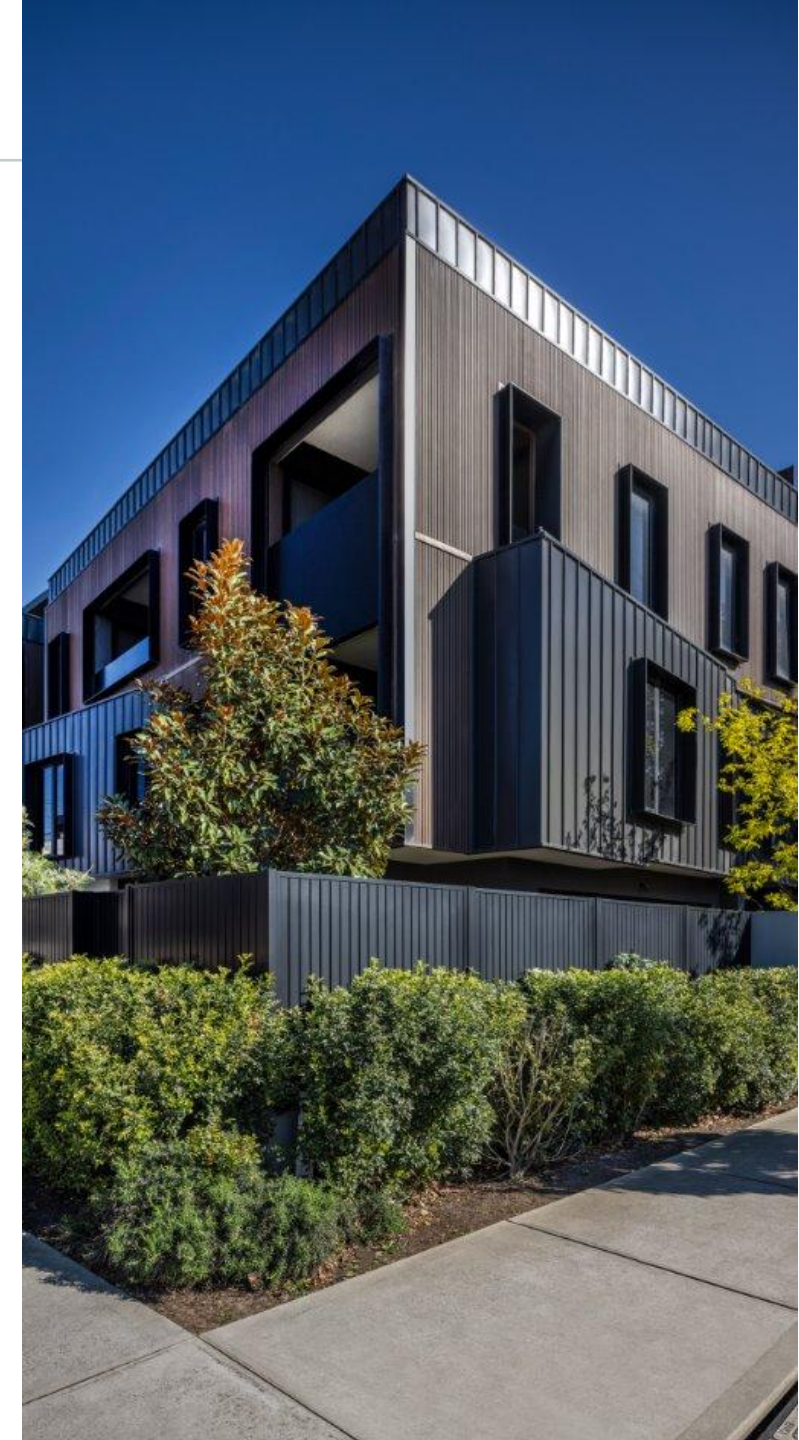
- Insert new definitions: *average canopy diameter, canopy cover, existing canopy tree, new canopy tree, and deep soil*
- Introduce a new lot size category between 1000sqm and 2000sqm for 15% canopy cover
- Remove Tree types A, B and C and replace with a minimum size
- Allow canopy cover beyond site boundaries for existing and new canopy trees in prescribed circumstances
- Remove requirement for planting in rear setback.
- Provide graduated deep soil and planter area and plan dimension requirements according to tree size
- Allow reduced deep soil area when trees are clustered
- Allow impervious surfaces, unroofed decking and eaves to encroach into deep soil area
- New decision guideline to consider suitability of deep soil for tree planting in easements
- Move 'satisfaction to the RA' matters from the Standard to the Design Response
- Transitional provisions included

- **Reinstate consideration of 173 Agreements**

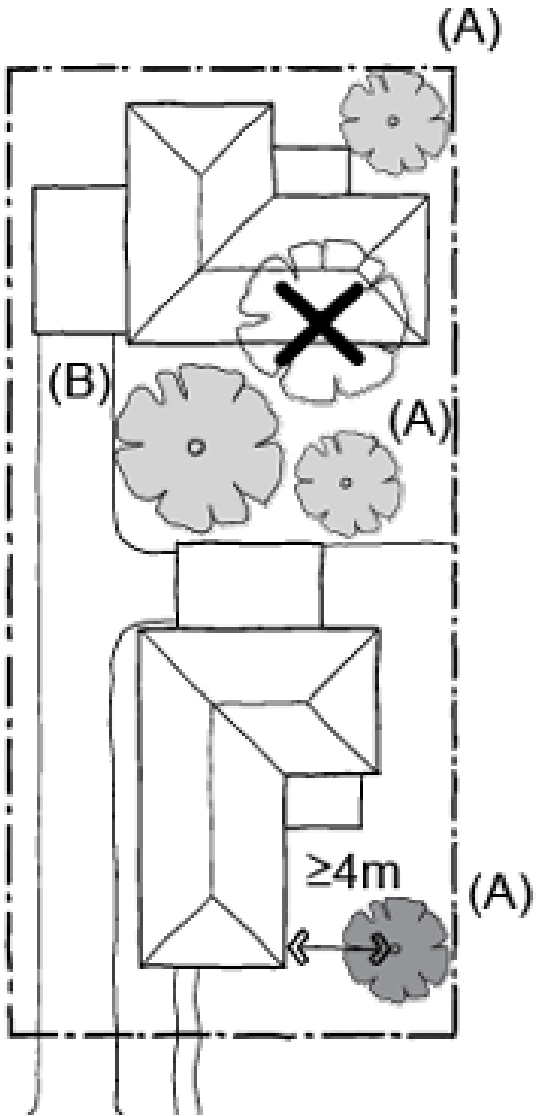
- **Sustainability standard amended to refer to Blue Factor tool and additional decision guideline**

- **Other changes**

- Clarify when a standard applies to 'new' works.
- Clause 52.37 exemptions to include PSP and distinguish between noxious and environmental weeds
- Align all tree canopy requirements across provisions (clauses 54, 55, 57 & 52.37)



VC315 – Clause 55 review – Tree canopy standard



Stakeholder feedback

- Too complex for deemed to comply
- Calculating canopy cover, tree types and size ranges too broad, deep soil definition, front and rear setback unclear
- Requirement for lots over 1000sqm disproportionate, and discourages lot consolidation
- Encourage greater retention of existing canopy trees

Clause 55.01 Application Requirements – Design Response

Requires landscape plan to detail species that respond to the location

This was previously in the standard and has been relocated to design response to not interfere with deemed to comply operation

Design response

The design response must explain how the proposed design:

- Responds to the future urban development of the area.
- Derives from and responds to the site description.
- Specifies suitable materials and finish for the external walls.

The design response must include correctly proportioned street elevations or photographs showing the development in the context of adjacent buildings.

The design response must include a landscape plan that details the proposed:

- Retention and planting of canopy trees.
- Planting of other vegetation including location, species, number and size at maturity of vegetation.
- Where required, areas of deep soil and root barriers.
- Irrigation system to support existing and planted vegetation including details of any alternative water supply sources.

- Selection of ~~vegetation~~ canopy trees and vegetation, including species, that responds to ~~the site's environment and geographic factors,~~ the site's environment, location and geographic factors.
- ~~A plan showing the location of site services, clothes drying and storage.~~ Location of site services, clothes drying and storage.

If in the opinion of the responsible authority a design response requirement is not relevant to the evaluation of an application, it may waive or reduce the requirement.

Clause 55.02-7 Tree canopy - Objectives

No changes to objectives

55.02-7

31/03/2025
VC267

Tree canopy objectives

To provide tree canopy that responds to the neighbourhood character of the area and reduces the visual impact of buildings on the streetscape.

To preserve existing canopy cover and support the provision of new canopy cover.

To ensure new canopy trees are climate responsive, support biodiversity, wellbeing and amenity, and help reduce urban heat.

Standard B2-7

Provide a minimum canopy cover as specified in Table B2-7.1.

Updated clause 55.02-7 Tree canopy – Definitions and New lot size category

New definitions removing uncertainty

Tree types A, B and C removed to avoid confusion about whether these were the only size trees that could be planted.

Greater design flexibility for the applicant to select an appropriate tree size and species to suit the development proposal.

New lot size category between 1000sqm and 2000sqm for 15% canopy cover to provide greater graduation and proportionality

Standard B2-7

In this standard:

- *average canopy diameter* means the average of the measurements of the distance between the widest points of a tree’s drip line (the outer edge of foliage) in two perpendicular directions;
- *canopy cover* means the area of a tree’s canopy;
- *existing canopy tree* means a tree that has:
 - a height of at least 5 metres above ground level; and
 - an average canopy diameter of at least 4 metres; and
 - a trunk that is located at least 4 metres from existing and proposed buildings.
- *new canopy tree* means a tree proposed to be planted that is of a species and type that at maturity is expected to have:
 - a height of at least 6 metres above ground level; and
 - a canopy diameter of at least 4 metres.

Table B2-7.1 Canopy cover

Column 1	Column 2
Site area	Canopy cover
1000 square metres or less	10 per cent of site area
More than 1000 square metres to 1500 square metres	15 per cent of site area
More than 1500 square metres	20 per cent of site area

Clause 73.01 – Deep Soil Definition

New Deep Soil definition inserted into General Terms (73.01) to provide clarity around what is included as part of deep soil.



GENERAL TERMS

The following table lists general terms which may be used in this planning scheme. A term listed in the first column, under the heading "General term", has the meaning set out beside that term in the second column, under the heading "Definition".

General term	Definition
Deep soil	Soil at ground level that supports plant growth and is not encroached by a building above or below ground level. Grass, lawn, turf, shrubs, trees and the like may be growing or planted in the soil.

Updated clause 55.02-7 Tree canopy – Canopy cover

Clarify what canopy cover can be included in the canopy cover calculation.



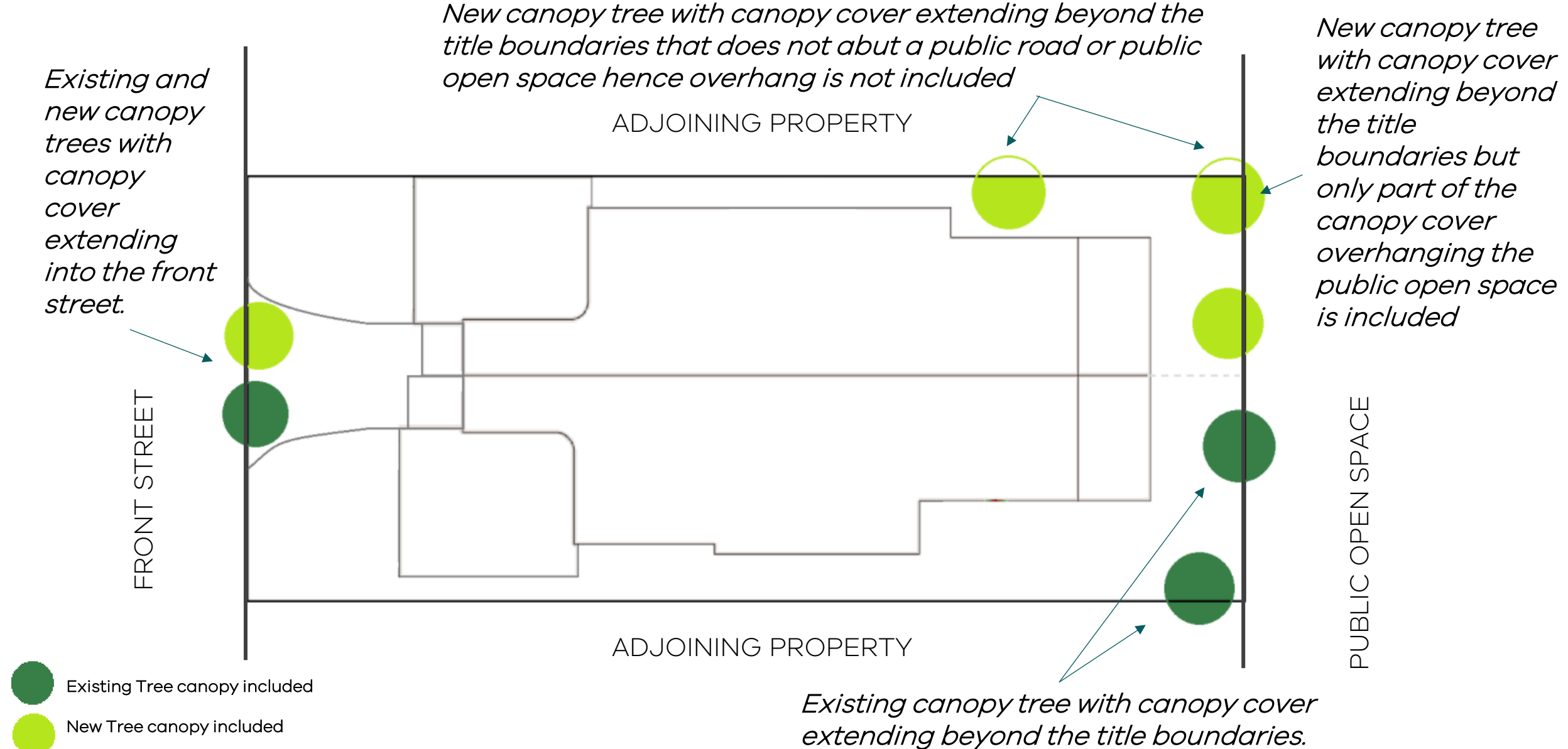
Greater siting and design flexibility

The canopy cover requirement can only be met by retaining an existing canopy tree, planting a new canopy tree or a combination of both, within the site.

The total canopy cover required by Table B2-7.1 includes:

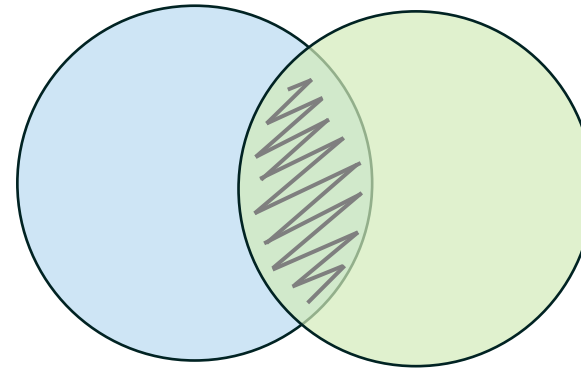
- The total canopy cover of an existing canopy tree, whether or not the canopy cover is wholly contained within the boundaries of the site.
- The canopy cover within the boundaries of the site of a new canopy tree and any part of the canopy cover overhanging land in a public road or public open space.
- The canopy cover of an existing canopy tree and a new canopy tree that extends below, or overhangs, an existing or proposed building located on the site.
- Any overlapping canopy cover of an existing canopy tree or a new canopy tree provided that the overlapping canopy cover is only counted once.

VC315 – Tree Canopy standard: Canopy Cover Allowances



VC315 – Tree Canopy standard: Overlapping Canopy Cover

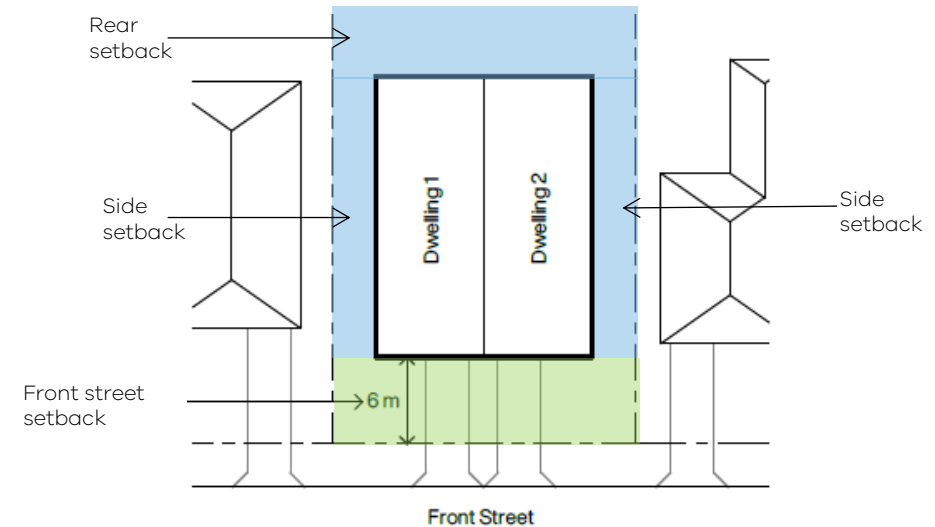
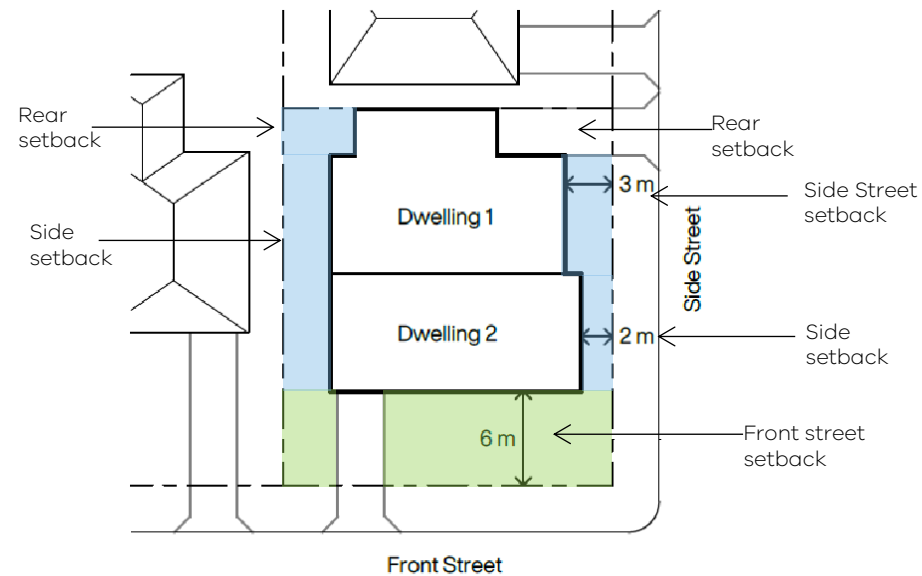
Overlapping canopy cover of an existing and new canopy tree. The overlapping canopy cover is only counted once.



Include the overlap as part of one tree not both

Updated clause 55.02-7 Tree canopy – Tree planting location

At least one existing canopy tree or new canopy tree is to be located within the front setback. This does not apply if it is proposed to retain one existing canopy tree that meets the minimum total canopy cover requirement and that tree is not located in the front setback.



-  Any subsequent tree
-  At least one tree

Updated clause 55.02-7 Tree canopy – Deep soil and planter requirements

Detailed table included in the standard for clarity.

Proportionately increasing the deep soil and planter requirements ensures optimal tree growth and clarifies area and plan dimension for different tree sizes.

Each new canopy tree is planted in either deep soil or a planter that meets the following requirements:

- Deep soil must be at least the area and plan dimension specified in Columns 2 and 5, respectively, of Table B2-7.2 corresponding to the tree’s expected canopy diameter at maturity specified in Column 1.
- A planter must be at least the soil volume, soil depth, and plan dimension, specified in Columns 3, 4 and 5 of Table B2-7.2 corresponding to the tree’s expected canopy diameter at maturity specified in Column 1.

Table B2-7.2 Deep soil and planter requirements

Column 1 Expected canopy diameter at maturity	Column 2 Minimum deep soil area	Column 3 Minimum tree in planter soil volume	Column 4 Minimum tree in planter soil depth	Column 5 Minimum deep soil or tree in planter plan dimension
4 metres and less than 5 metres	12 square metres	8 cubic metres	0.8 metres	2.5 metres
5 metres and less than 6 metres	16 square metres	12 cubic metres	0.8 metres	3 metres
6 metres and less than 7 metres	25 square metres	17 cubic metres	0.8 metres	3.5 metres
7 metres and less than 8 metres	36 square metres	23 cubic metres	0.8 metres	4 metres
8 metres and less than 9 metres	49 square metres	30 cubic metres	1.0 metres	4.5 metres
9 metres and less than 10 metres	64 square metres	38 cubic metres	1.0 metres	5 metres
10 metres and less than 11 metres	81 square metres	47 cubic metres	1.0 metres	5.5 metres
11 metres and less than 12 metres	100 square metres	57 cubic metres	1.0 metres	6 metres
12 metres and less than 13 metres	121 square metres	68 cubic metres	1.5 metres	6.5 metres
13 metres and less than 14 metres	136 square metres	80 cubic metres	1.5 metres	7 metres
14 metres and greater	144 square metres	92 cubic metres	1.5 metres	7.5 metres



Updated clause 55.02-7 Tree canopy – Reduced deep soil area

- If two or more new canopy trees are to be planted in the same area of deep soil, the required area of deep soil can be reduced by the percentage specified in Column 2 of Table B2-7.3 corresponding to the number of trees specified in Column 1.

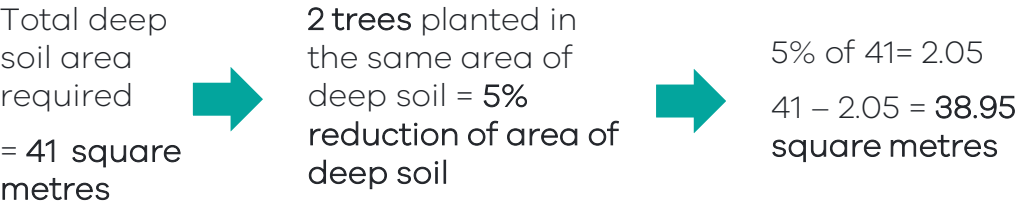
Table B2-7.3 Reduced deep soil area

Column 1	Column 2
Number of new canopy trees to be planted in same area of deep soil	Percentage reduction of area of deep soil
2	5 per cent
3	10 per cent
4	15 per cent
5	20 per cent
6 or more	25 per cent

Reduced deep soil area that supports planting of trees. →

Example: 38.95 square metres instead of 41 square metres →

	Expected canopy diameter at maturity	Minimum deep soil area	Minimum deep soil plan dimension
Tree 1	5.4m	16 square metres	3 metres
Tree 2	6.5m	25 square metres	3.5 metres



Updated clause 55.02-7 Tree canopy – Deep soil encroachment

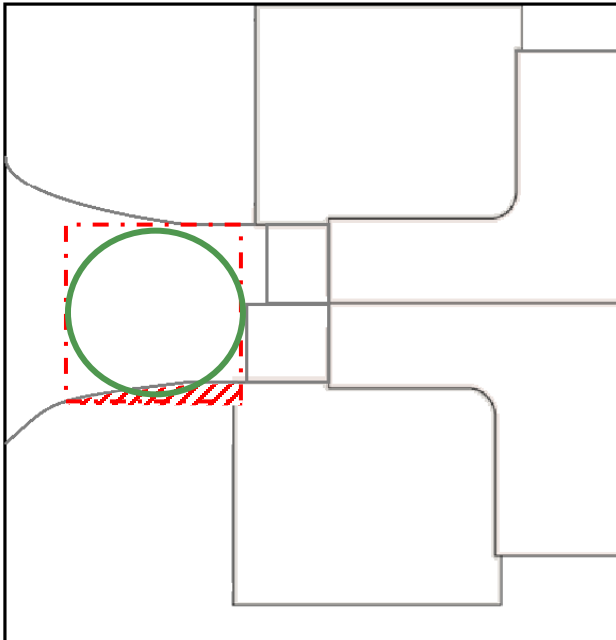
Allowing impervious surfaces, unroofed decking and eaves to encroach into deep soil area provides greater flexibility and improves design functionality for constrained residential sites.



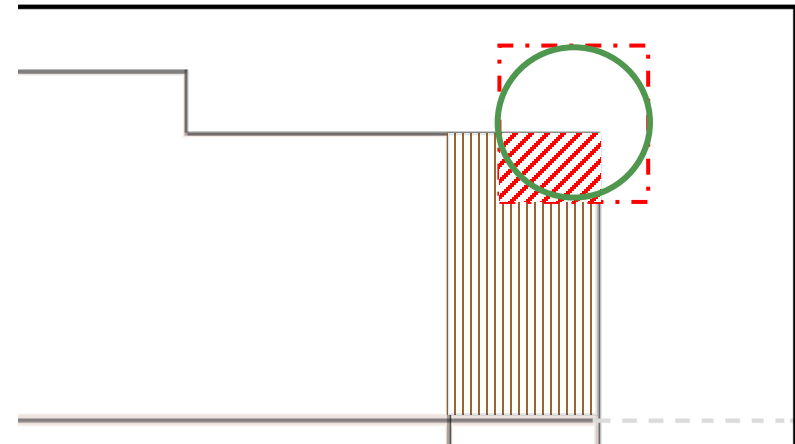
The following can encroach into the total area of deep soil:

- Impervious surfaces by no more than 10 per cent.
- Unroofed decking by no more than 50 per cent, provided the gap between the decking boards is at least:
 - 4 millimetres for decking boards not more than 90 millimetres wide.
 - 5 millimetres for decking boards more than 90 millimetres wide.
 - 8 millimetres if the deck is less than 400 millimetres above ground level.
- An eave not exceeding a width of 600 millimetres.

Example: Impervious surface (driveway) encroachment



Example: Decking encroachment



Updated clause 55.02-7 Tree canopy – New decision guideline

New decision guideline to consider suitability of deep soil in easements to facilitate tree planting where appropriate

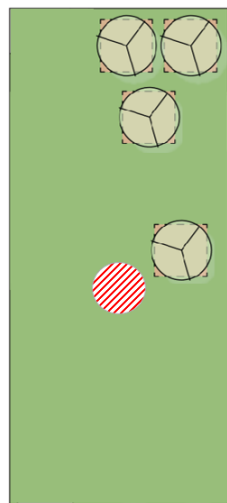
Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, the responsible authority must consider:

- Any relevant neighbourhood character objective, policy or statement set out in this scheme.
- The site context and design response.
- The extent to which the existing and proposed canopy trees contribute to a greener environment and reduce urban heat.
- Whether the growth characteristics of existing trees and proposed canopy trees will provide the required canopy cover.
- The suitability of the planting location, deep soil areas and planter soil volume for proposed canopy trees.
- Whether the species of canopy tree is suited to the soil conditions of the site.
- The suitability of providing deep soil area within an easement on the subject land.

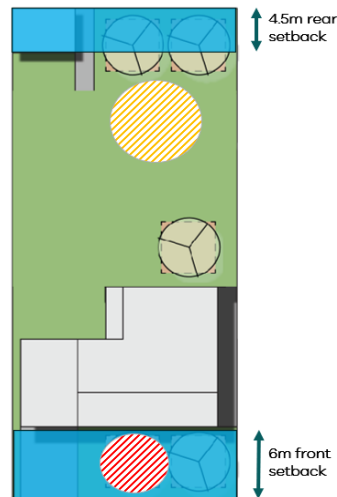
Clause 52.37 Canopy trees – interaction with the tree canopy standard

No buildings and works triggered



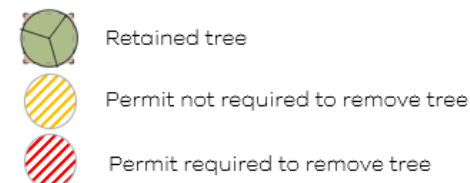
Vacant lot

- Permit required to remove a canopy tree **anywhere** on the lot.
- Also applies to a new dwelling that does not require a permit i.e building permit



Existing single dwelling

- Permit required to remove a canopy tree **in the front or rear setback**
- Applies to a dwelling extension that does or does not require a permit



Buildings and works triggered (clauses 54 and 55)



New Single dwelling

Where a planning permit is required for development

- Permit required to remove a canopy tree **in the front or rear setback**
- Applies to a new dwelling and a dwelling extension that requires a permit



Two or more dwellings

Where a planning permit is also required for development

- Permit required to remove a canopy tree **in the front or rear setback**

Clause 55 - Reinstate consideration of 173 Agreements

Clause 55 has been amended to reinstate consideration of section 173 Agreements.

Section 60 (1A) (i) of the Act

- (i) any agreement made pursuant to section 173 affecting the land the subject of the application; and

Section 84B (2) (h) of the Act

- (h) must (where appropriate) have regard to any agreement made pursuant to section 173 affecting the land the subject of the application for review;

Exemptions

Despite any other provision of this planning scheme, in determining applications to which this clause applies, the responsible authority is exempt from and is not required to consider:

- The Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework, unless an applicable decision guideline specifies otherwise.
- The purpose or decision guidelines of the relevant zone, unless an applicable decision guideline specifies otherwise.
- The decision guidelines in Clause 65, unless an applicable decision guideline specifies otherwise.

If there is any inconsistency between the requirements of this clause and another provision of this planning scheme, this clause prevails.

An application to which this clause applies is exempt from the requirements of:

- Section 60(1)(b), ~~(1)(e)~~, ~~(1)(f)~~, ~~(1A)(b) to (h)~~, ~~(1A)(j)~~ and (1B) of the Act; ~~and~~ and
- Section 84B(2)(b) to (g) and ~~(2)(i)~~ to (jb) of the Act.

Clause 55.05-1 – Blue Factor tool and Stormwater Management offsets

- Melbourne Water has replaced Stormwater Treatment Objective – Relative Measurement (STORM) assessment with the new Blue Factor tool.
- Clause 55.05-1 standard has been updated to remove reference to the old STORM stormwater assessment tool and replace with Blue Factor tool.
- Clause 55.05-1 Decision guidelines has been updated to reinstate consideration of a stormwater management offset.

Standard B5-1

Note:

~~A certificate generated from a stormwater assessment tool including Stormwater Treatment Objective – Relative Measurement (STORM), Model for Urban Stormwater Improvement Conceptualisation (MUSIC) or an equivalent product accepted by the responsible authority may be used to demonstrate the performance objectives for stormwater quality are met.~~

Note:

A certificate generated from a stormwater assessment tool demonstrating a minimum 100 per cent Blue Factor tool score, or documentation from Model for Urban Stormwater Improvement Conceptualisation (MUSIC) or an equivalent product accepted by the responsible authority showing the performance objectives for stormwater quality are met.

Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application, the responsible authority must consider:

- The design response.
- The capacity of the site to incorporate stormwater retention and reuse.
- The existing site coverage and any constraints imposed by existing development.
- The capacity of the drainage network to accommodate additional stormwater.
- Whether the owner has entered into an agreement to contribute to off-site stormwater management in lieu of providing an on-site stormwater management system.

Other Changes – Clarifying application of standard to "new" works

Street setback

Standard B2-1

Walls of new buildings are set back from streets:

- At least the distance specified in a schedule to the zone if the distance specified in the schedule is less than the distance specified in Table B2-1; or
- If no distance is specified in a schedule to the zone, the distance specified in Table B2-1.

Building height

Standard B2-2

The maximum building height of a new building does not exceed the maximum height specified in the zone, schedule to the zone or an overlay that applies to the land.

If no maximum height is specified in the zone, schedule to the zone or an overlay, the maximum building height of a new building does not exceed 9 metres, unless the slope of the natural ground level at any cross section wider than 8 metres of the site of the building is 2.5 degrees or more, in which case the maximum building height does not exceed 10 metres.

To clarify whether or not these standards apply to existing or proposed works thereby ensuring more certainty within the deemed to comply framework

Other Changes – Clarifying new or extension of existing fence

55.02-8 Front fences objective

31/03/2025
VC267 Proposed VC315 To encourage front fence design that responds to the existing or preferred neighbourhood character.

~~Standard B2-8~~ Standard B2-8

~~A front fence within 3 metres of a street is~~ Either the development:-

- ~~The maximum height specified in a schedule to the zone, does not include a new, or an extension to an existing, front fence within three metres of a street; or-~~
- includes a new, or extension to an existing, front fence within 3 metres of a street if the height of the fence does not exceed:

~~If no maximum height is specified in a schedule to the zone, the maximum height specified in Table B2-8.-~~

- The maximum height specified in a schedule to the zone, or
- If no maximum height is specified in a schedule to the zone, the maximum height specified in Table B2-8.

Thank you



Department
of Transport
and Planning