



Tara Cheyne MLA
Manager of Government Business
Attorney-General
Minister for Human Rights
Minister for City and Government Services
Minister for the Night-Time Economy
Member for Ginninderra

Our ref: 25/399

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

23 September 2025

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 24 June 2025 concerning petition E-PET 011-25, lodged by Mr Mark Parton regarding the ACT's tree removal guidelines.

The ACT Government appreciates the opportunity to provide information about the review of tree protection requirements under the *Urban Forest Act 2023* (the Act) and clarify the existing risk management framework applied under the Act.

The Act is ambitious, ensuring our tree canopy is sufficient now and into the future is a responsibility for the ACT Government, Industry and the Community. The Act introduced significant changes and the ACT Government made an election commitment to bring forward the review of the Act which is currently underway.

The review of the Act is based on feedback from community and industry and seeks to improve the application process and the operation of the Act. The ACT Government is committed to ensuring that the Act is responsive to the Community's concerns about dangerous trees while ensuring that it does not get in the way of delivering other Government priorities (such as minor construction works). While these issues need to be addressed, they need to be balanced carefully to ensure that the objects of the legislation continue to be met.

The ACT Government acknowledges that the community is concerned that the Government gives more weight to the health of the tree than the safety to people and property and this feedback will be considered as the review progresses.

The ACT Government employs qualified arborists who apply robust and internationally recognised methods to assess tree-related risks when assessing trees that are the subject of a removal application under the Act.

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In alignment with ISO 31000 standards, arborists evaluate the likelihood and consequences of tree failure when assessing against the established [Urban Forest \(Approval Criteria\) Determination 2025 \(No 1\) | Disallowable instruments](#) (approval criteria). This assessment process seeks to ensure that risks to public safety and property are minimised as far as reasonably practicable.

Applications for tree removal are assessed against the approval criteria. Among other things, protected trees may be approved for removal if they:

- represent an unacceptable risk to public or private safety; or
- are causing or threatening substantial damage to substantial buildings, structures, or services; and
- where all other reasonable remedial treatments and risk mitigation measures have been determined to be ineffective.

The approval criteria was updated on 7 March 2025 in response to similar concerns from the Community. The updates were discussed in the Legislative Assembly on 8 May 2025 and Mr Mark Parton MLA described them as common-sense changes.

From January to June 2025, 63% of applications citing these criteria were approved. In addition to these criteria, the legislation allows for expedited applications in urgent circumstances or for minor works which can be made orally or in writing and are often approved immediately. The review will consider how applications for minor works or urgent circumstances assess dangerous trees moving forward.

I look forward to sharing the outcomes of the review of the Act, including any updates to the approval criteria, in due course.

Thank you for bringing the petition to my attention. I trust the information provided is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Tara Cheyne MLA
Minister for City and Government Services