



# Inquiry into the provision of municipal services in Canberra

## Answer to question on notice

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Asked by: Leanne Castley MLA

Addressed to: Tara Cheyne MLA, Minister for City and Government Services

In relation to: Tree Management

Hearing: 19 February 2026

Question Lodgement Date: 20 February 2026

Reference: City Services

Answer Due: 6 March 2026

Can you please provide me with information on how tree management is handled.

1. How are trees identified as dangerous and who makes this decision?
2. The timeframe between identifying a dangerous tree and removing the tree.
3. How many people work in the tree unit?
4. How many complaints about trees have been raised on FMS that are still open?
5. Are there expected response times for tree clean up and removal

**Tara Cheyne MLA:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The City and Environment Directorate (CED) is responsible for the management and maintenance of more than 846,000 trees on public land and streets within urban areas of the ACT and employs a team of suitably skilled staff to carry out this task. Ensuring that public safety is not compromised by the presence of trees within the urban area is a high priority and decisions relating to the management of urban trees are generally based on this objective.

Active assessments of trees on unleased (public) land are undertaken by in house qualified arborists, either due to a public request for maintenance or following a passive assessment by a CED staff member. Assessments are initially undertaken from ground level, with an aerial inspection also completed if necessary. As part of the tree assessment, a VALID tree risk assessment is completed. The VALID tree benefit-risk management strategy provides a framework for how and why the ACT Government manages risk from our trees.

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VALID has applied ISO 31000 - Risk Management and the Tolerability of Risk Framework (ToR) to tree benefit-risk management and assessment. Under VALID, Urban Treescapes arborists assess the risk from Canberra's urban trees and branches falling using four (4) easy-to-understand risk ratings.

**Not Acceptable** risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level

**Not Tolerable** risks will be reduced to an Acceptable level, but with a lower priority than red Not Acceptable risks

**Tolerable** risks are not reduced but may require an increased frequency of assessment than green Acceptable risks

**Acceptable** risks are not required to be reduced

2. Where a tree has been determined to present a risk to the community, it is allocated a priority of either urgent, high or medium. Urgent cases are aimed to be addressed within 48 hours, high priority cases within 90 days and medium cases are undertaken within a program of works.
3. There are currently 121 positions in the Urban Treescapes team undertaking the planting, watering, and follow up maintenance of newly planted trees, the maintenance of established trees, the removal of dead and dying trees, the administration of the *Urban Forest Act 2023*, the assessment of tree related claims, and the provision of technical advice on tree related matters.
4. There are currently 5,848 open requests for maintenance allocated to Urban Treescapes in the Fix my Street system, of which 5,516 are assessed and in progress and 332 yet to be assessed.
5. The expected response timeframes are as follows:

**Urgent cases:** within 48 hours.

**High priority cases:** within 90 days.

**Low/Medium priority cases:** (typically jobs involving deadwood or minor pruning) are packaged into planned urban tree maintenance program of work for efficiency. Typical delivery timeframes for this class of work vary depending on peaks in demand in the higher priority categories resulting from adverse weather events.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Transport and City Services

Signature: 

By the Minister for City and Government Services, Tara Cheyne MLA

Date: 17/3/26