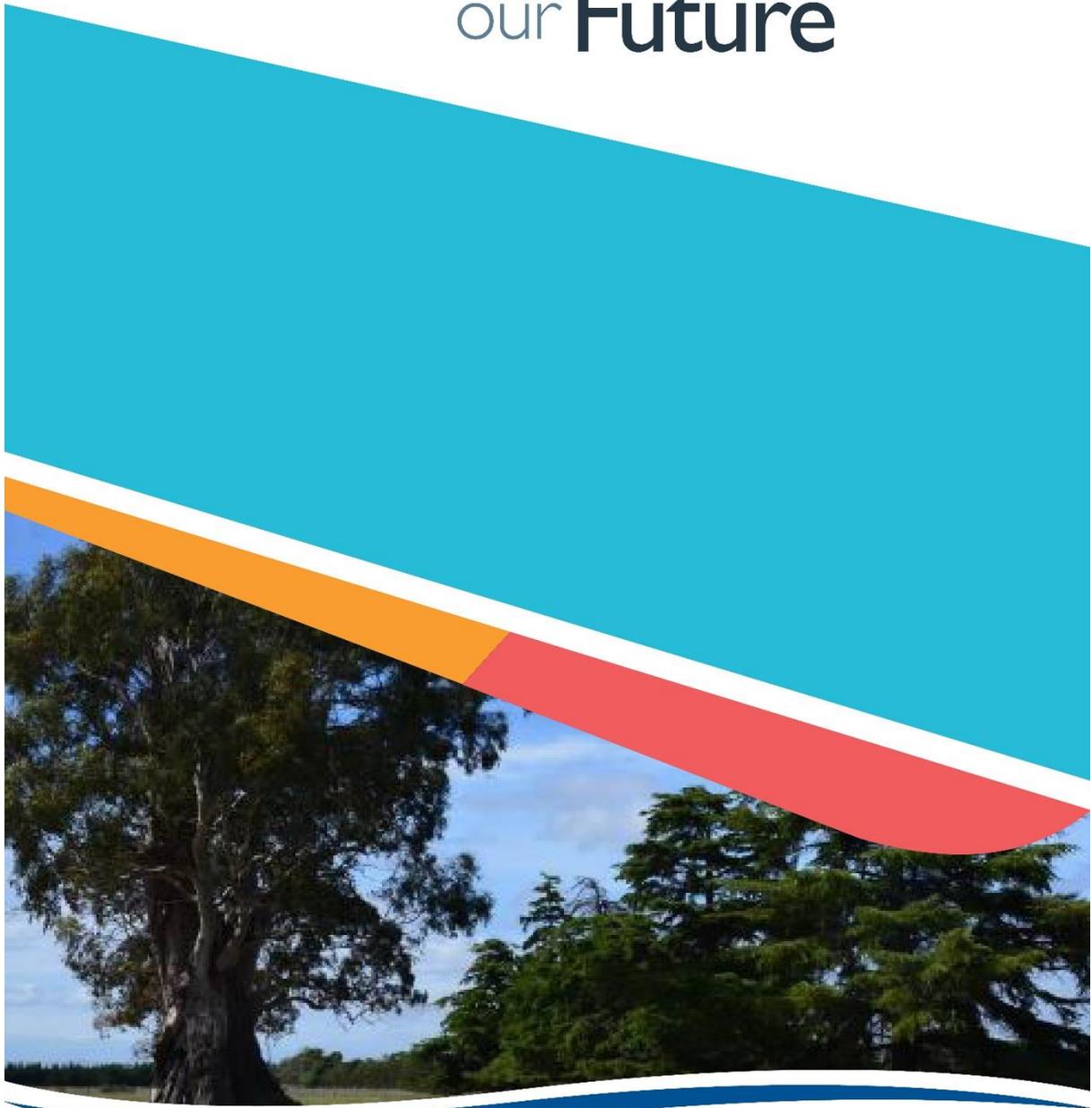




our **Roads** for **Future**



Department of State Growth



Pioneer Avenue – Management Guidelines

Background

The Pioneer Avenue is a series of roadside plantings that began in the 1930s, extending between Launceston and Hobart. It was originally intended to be a memorial to early pioneers of Tasmania, and evolved into a carefully planned series of plantings along the Midland Highway to beautify the countryside and encourage tourism.

Approximately 6,000 trees were planted between Hobart and Launceston in various formations along the roadside in avenues, atop hills in groups, with the motoring public's interest one of the key considerations for the original scheme along with maximising the natural visual landscape. The Pioneer Avenue has been nominated for inclusion on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, and this nomination is currently being assessed.

The Tasmanian and Australian Governments have committed \$500 million to improve safety on the Midland Highway over the next 10 years. The investment will make the entire length of the Midland Highway safer, delivering the maximum safety benefit to the maximum number of people.

Works under the Program aim to significantly reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes. As part of making the Midland Highway safer, road side trees have been identified as a significant safety hazard, as they can increase the severity of crashes. Where practical, removal of trees from the road reserve is an important part of improving road safety.

With the planned upgrades to the Midland Highway, some Pioneer Avenue plantings will be impacted by upgrade works. For example, many locations along the Highway have plantings on both sides, which means that impacts associated with upgrade works will be unavoidable.

The Department of State Growth is committed to ensuring that the Pioneer Avenue is retained into the future, and ensuring that Pioneer Avenue trees will be replaced, where it is both practical and feasible. These Guidelines outline how the Department will consider the Pioneer Avenue plantings through the design and construction of the upgrades under the Midland Highway Action Plan.

Key Outcomes

- Maintain the heritage and landscape integrity of the Pioneer Avenue, at achieve, at worst, no net loss of plantings;
- Replanting new trees outside the road reservation to maintain the safety of the Midland Highway; and
- Establishment and management of new plantings must be cost-effective, meet community expectations and maintain the integrity of the Pioneer Avenue.

Management guidelines

In order to achieve the above outcomes, the Department of State Growth will adopt the below hierarchy of actions:

- Avoid – avoid impacting plantings where this is practical and feasible;
- Minimise – where possible, manage impact on significant plantings; and
- Mitigate – where impact cannot be avoided, consider in-situ and/or ex-situ plantings.

Project planning

As part of project planning, the Department undertakes heritage investigations for all projects under the Midland Highway Action Plan, including mapping and identifying Pioneer Avenue trees.

During road design, direct and indirect impact to Pioneer Avenue trees will be avoided, where practical and feasible. The Midland Highway Action Plan aims to improve safety along the Highway, and a key design consideration is whether the trees are a safety hazard.

Where impact can be avoided, works will be designed to minimise the impact on Pioneer Avenue trees. The Department will consider the nature of proposed works, construction methodology and significance of plantings in determining whether trees can be retained longer-term. This may involve tree-specific assessments by a qualified arborist, where appropriate.

For example, in some cases, retention of Pioneer Avenue trees will be technically feasible, but the impact of construction works on the root zone and/or the proximity of the upgraded road to plantings will mean that trees are less likely to survive long-term.

Construction

As part of construction works, the Department will implement a range of actions to ensure that all retained Pioneer Avenue trees are not impacted. These actions may include:

- exclusion zones around Pioneer Avenue trees;
- ensuring that the root zone of trees is not impacted by construction activity; and
- ensuring that tree management (e.g. pruning) are consistent with long-term management of the Pioneer Avenue.

Post-construction

Where it has been necessary to remove Pioneer Avenue trees, the Department will pursue two different re-planting strategies:

- in-situ plantings, on private land adjacent to the existing Highway; and
- ex-situ plantings, on private land along bypassed sections of the Highway.

Under both of these strategies, relationships with landholders will be key to re-establishing Pioneer Avenue trees. The Department will not establish any new Pioneer Avenue trees within the road reserve, as maintaining plantings in the road reserve is contrary to the safety outcomes under the Midland Highway Action Plan. Additionally, all re-plantings will occur outside the potential envelope for a four-lane alignment, to ensure that new plantings are not impacted by future works (beyond the Midland Highway Action Plan).

In all cases, plantings will be consistent with the heritage values of the Pioneer Avenue, and be undertaken in close consultation with landholders. The Department has undertaken significant research on the Pioneer Avenue, and this information will be used to inform the types of plantings used. Additionally, to help maintain the provenance of Pioneer Avenue trees, the Department has taken cuttings from existing trees, which are being propagated to grow replacement trees.

For ex-situ plantings, these can only occur on a couple of specific properties, predominantly between Bagdad and Oatlands. The Department will work with these landowners and other relevant stakeholders to determine appropriate locations for such plantings.

The key advantages of ex-situ plantings is that they would be in areas clear of the current highway alignment, and improve visual amenity along the Highway, by accentuating the old alignment and blending into the broader heritage landscapes along the Midlands.