

**Combined Residents of Whitehorse  
Action Group (CROWAG) Incorporated.**

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**VicSmart – Unintended Consequences – Multiple Single Tree Removal Applications via  
VicSmart resulting in ‘Moonscaping’ (i.e. the excessive clearing of residential blocks).**

The Hon Richard Wynne MP

Minister for Planning  
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street  
East Melbourne  
Victoria, 3002

[richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Background.**

VicSmart aims to streamline the planning process to lead to better outcomes for the community and developers. Where trees on private property provide amenity and habitat values, they are recognised in the planning scheme and should be assessed for their amenity value.

Councils have adopted significant landscape overlays in residential areas to recognise where individual trees, the broader tree canopy and vegetation have a high amenity value. On public land trees are recognised as important for amenity and other values.

VicSmart in its implementation considered the importance of trees and in its streamlined approach allows applications for a single tree removal. (relevant VicSmart extracts are highlighted below)

In some cases developers and residents are submitting multiple single applications to circumvent the intended checks that would be required for a normal planning application that would be assessed by council planners via council Planning Schemes.

**Conclusion.**

CROWAG Inc. advocates that you exert your powers to amend the VicSmart process to prevent multiple single tree removal applications that are contrary to the spirit and provisions of council Planning Schemes.

Yours sincerely



David Morrison  
President CROWAG.

Date: 8 December 2018

## i What is VicSmart?

VicSmart is a simple and fast planning permit assessment process for straight forward planning applications in Victoria. It covers specific types of planning applications to be assessed by councils within 10 days, provided applications are complete and meet certain criteria. Unlike more complex planning applications, these applications are often done by individuals and small businesses, rather than town planners.

Checklist	Types of VicSmart planning application	VicSmart application fees
1	Realign a boundary between two lots	\$195.10 (+ \$164.50 for certification)
2	Subdivide land into lots each containing an existing building or car parking space	\$195.10 (+ \$164.50 for certification)
3	Subdivide land with an approved development into two lots	\$195.10 (+ \$164.50 for certification)
4	Construct a front fence in a residential zone	\$195.10 if the cost of development is less than \$10,000; \$419.10 if more
5	Construct a building or works in a zone other than rural	\$195.10 if the cost of development is less than \$10,000; \$419.10 if more
6	Construct buildings and works in an overlay	\$195.10 if the cost of development is less than \$10,000; \$419.10 if more
7	Remove, destroy or lop one tree	\$195.10 if the cost of development is less than \$10,000; \$419.10 if more

## VicSmart Application FAQs

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### **i** How are trees significant to an area?

Significant trees enhance the character and amenity of an area and represent important cultural and ecological value in an urban context.

Trees can be identified as significant because of their horticultural value, location or context, are rare or have localised distribution, are particularly old, are of an outstanding size, provide aesthetic value or are of curious growth form, are outstanding examples of their species or are of cultural or historical significance. Tree removal, destroying or lopping should minimise affects in these areas.

Significant trees are protected by being listed in either a 'Significant Tree Register' or 'Significant Tree Study' managed by your council, or through one of the following overlays:

- Environmental Significance Overlay
- Neighbourhood Character Overlay
- Significant Landscape Overlay
- Vegetation Protection Overlay

If the tree is identified in the schedule to an overlay, you will need to provide a report prepared by an arborist.

## VicSmart Application FAQs

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### **👍** View an example of how tree removal or lopping will impact of the area

In responding to the impact your tree removal, destroying or lopping will have on the significance to the area, try to demonstrate that:

- The overall impact of the vegetation removal on the surrounding landscape and ecology of the area is minimal
- It is clear that tree/vegetation removal has been minimised, with good quality vegetation and significant, healthy trees being successfully retained
- You and are willing to work with us on developing a revegetation plan to provide replacement planting that achieves a long term environmental gain. This can be done through our biodiversity offsets program