

How to choose a tree service

When a tree legally needs a council permit or an arborist report, how to judge whether the crew is qualified, and what removal should cost

A free buying guide from tasmania.biz · for Tasmania

Anyone with a chainsaw and a ute will offer to take a tree down, and most of the risk sits with you - the neighbour's fence, the powerline, the house, and the law. The two things that separate a real tree service from a cheap one are whether the crew is qualified to work at height and near powerlines, and whether they know what your council requires before a significant tree comes down.

What it should cost

Indicative removal ranges: a small tree (under about 6 metres with easy access) is roughly \$150 to \$600; a medium tree \$600 to \$1,500; a large gum or a difficult removal near a building or powerline \$1,000 to \$3,000, and up to \$5,000 to \$15,000 for very large, technical or dangerous jobs needing a crane or elevated platform. Stump grinding is usually charged separately, commonly \$100 to \$300 for a small stump and more for larger ones.

Pruning, dead-wooding and storm-damage clearance are usually charged hourly or per day and vary widely. A written quote should state the access route, whether the stump is included, whether the debris is chipped and removed or left on site, and whether traffic control or a powerline isolation is needed. A quote far below the others on a big tree is usually a crew without the qualifications, the insurance or the equipment to do it safely.

What the law requires

Tree removal in Tasmania is governed by the planning scheme and your council's overlays - significant tree, biodiversity, landscape and heritage codes - rather than a single statewide rule, so two properties in different council areas face different rules. A genuinely dead or dangerous tree can often be removed without a permit, but that exemption is council-dependent and falls away for registered or heritage trees; a qualified arborist's report with dated photos is the evidence most councils expect.

Working near powerlines is a separate legal world. You cannot legally work within 1 metre of a TasNetworks service line, and only an arborist authorised and accredited by TasNetworks through its vegetation competency program may work close to live lines. Above a service line, or within the restricted distances of a distribution line, the arborist must be an authorised person. That is the reason a real tree service charges more for a tree near the wires.

Red flags

No qualification mentioned for working at height, only "we do it all the time".

A crew willing to cut right up against a powerline with no TasNetworks authorisation.

A price given before anyone has looked at the tree or the access.

No public liability insurance, or an unwillingness to show it.

Debris and stump quietly left out of the quote and added on the day.

Offers to "get it done" without mentioning the council's rules when the tree is large or protected.

What good looks like

Asks about the powerlines and the property boundary before quoting.

Tells you whether a council permit or arborist report is required for your tree.

Holds proper arboriculture qualifications and named TasNetworks authorisation for wire-adjacent work.

Shows insurance certificates for both public liability and workers.

Quotes the stump, the debris and the access as separate, stated items.

What to ask

- "Are your climbers qualified in arboriculture, and to what level?"
- "Is anyone on the crew authorised by TasNetworks to work near powerlines, and how far is the line from this tree?"
- "Does this tree need a council permit, and are you getting the arborist report or am I?"
- "Are you insured for public liability and for your own workers, and can I see the certificates?"
- "Is the stump grinding and the removal of all the debris included in this price?"
- "How will you get the material out without damaging the fence, the lawn or the neighbour's property?"
- "What method are you using, and why is that the right one for this tree?"

tasmania.biz · <https://tasmania.biz> · hello@tasmania.biz

This guide is free and independent. No business paid to be mentioned in it. Costs, licence names and rebate amounts change; the figures here are ranges and should be confirmed before you rely on them. Every business listed on tasmania.biz is compiled from its own published material.

© 2026 tasmania.biz. You are welcome to print this, share it, or send it to someone who needs it.