

Urban Forest Plan

2026–2031

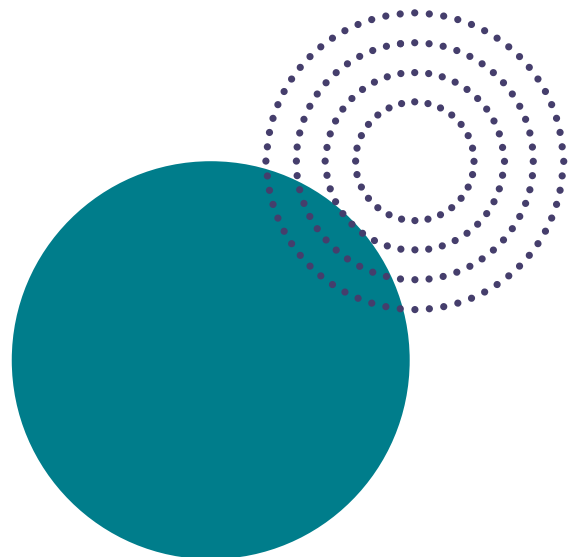


CITY OF
HOLDFAST BAY

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*“Between a human and
a tree is the breath. We
are each other's air.”*

- Margaret Bates

Report Preparation

This report has been developed with the inclusion of staff from the City of Holdfast Bay, from the following areas: Open Space, Environment, Engineering and Asset Management.

The report was prepared in collaboration with AdelaideArb, Edge Impact and Strategic Matters.

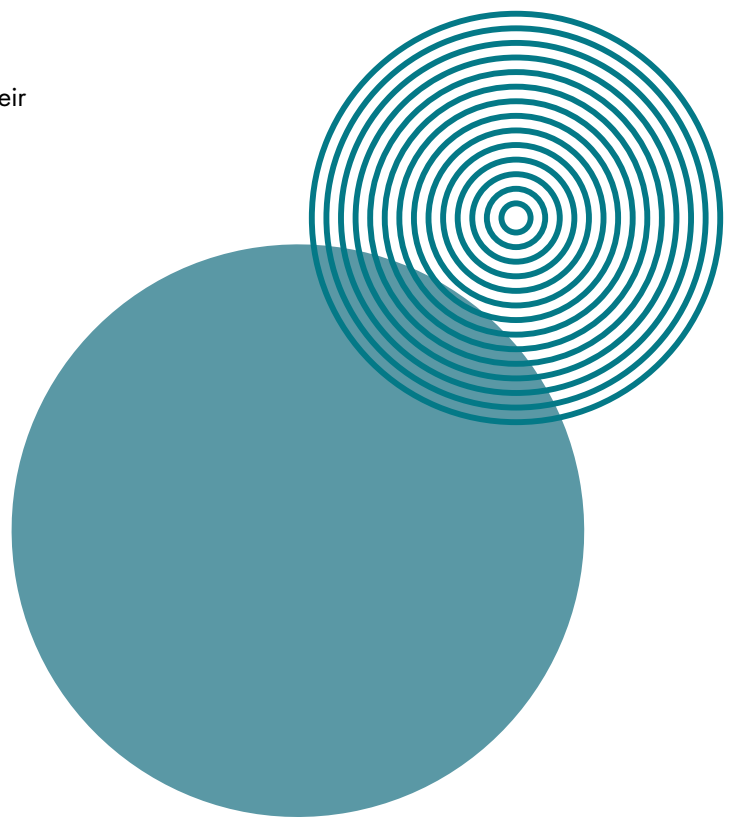
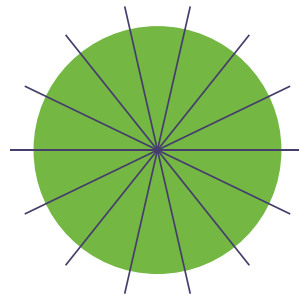


Acknowledgement of Country

Marni ngadlu tampinhi ngadlu
Kurna yartangka inparinhi.

*(We acknowledge that we are on
the land of the Kurna people.)*

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Kurna people, who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. Kurna Yarta (Kurna Country) stretches from Cape Jervis in the south, to Crystal Brook in the north, to the Adelaide Hills in the east, and into Gulf St Vincent in the west. Kurna people have been present on, and cared for, this land for tens of thousands of years. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, to their ancestors, and to their deep, enduring, spiritual connection to Country.



Mayor's Foreword

Kaurna people worked with trees in many different ways – to carve for tools and items such as coolamons, as sacred places for cultural rituals, to mark ceremonial locations, to watch over and provide shelter for births, and as sources of food and medicine. Sometimes, dead wood was burned in the centre of large red gums to create a shelter. Hardwood was used to create spears, clubs, and clapping sticks and bark was used for canoes.

Today, there are many fewer trees. However, we still love them to beautify our streets, to play on, to watch wildlife, to clean the air, to admire flowers, to experience awe, inspire art and find sanctuary for our hearts and minds.

Trees are so important, and there are many, many benefits to having a city packed with trees. In a warming climate, there is nothing more important for a cool and liveable city, and for the wellbeing of our community, than increasing our urban forest and protecting the trees we currently have.

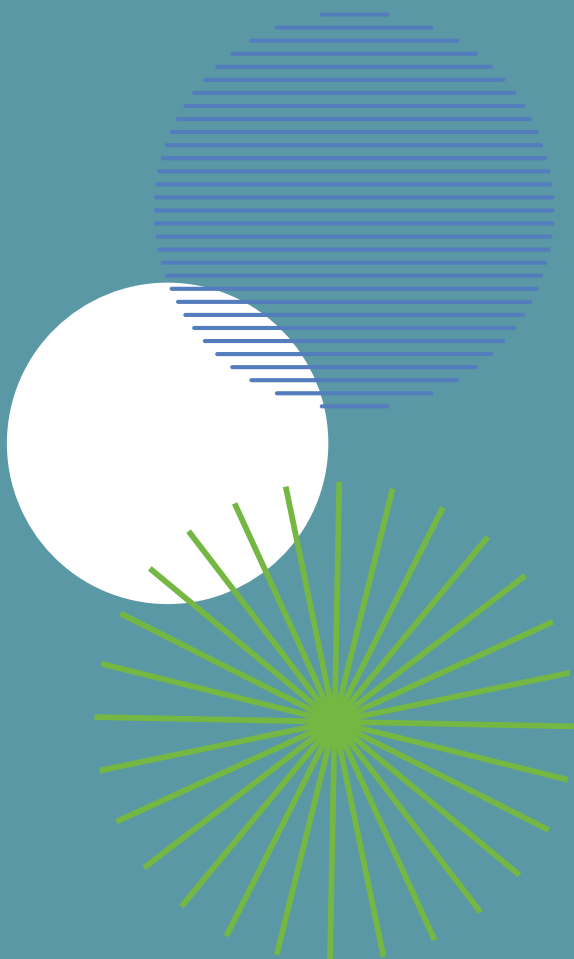
We all have a responsibility to protect and grow our urban forest so future generations can enjoy a liveable city and the benefits of trees.

This plan is a legacy for the future of our city, our community and our children. I commend it to you and hope that you will join us to act now so that the beautiful, liveable future we envision can become reality.



Amanda Wilson
Mayor
City of Holdfast Bay

Introduction



Introduction

*“Trees are sanctuaries.”
- Herman Hesse*

What is an Urban Forest?

Our urban forest is defined as all the trees within the City of Holdfast Bay on public and private land, whether they be on state or local government roads, in parks and reserves, in community gardens, or in private gardens.

This plan does not include understorey or biodiversity. While our trees contribute to biodiversity within the city and some trees can support some native animals, we plan for biodiversity separately. Our most important and diverse sites, such as our dunes and gullies, each have an internal Biodiversity Action Plan, and are managed in a different way for different outcomes.

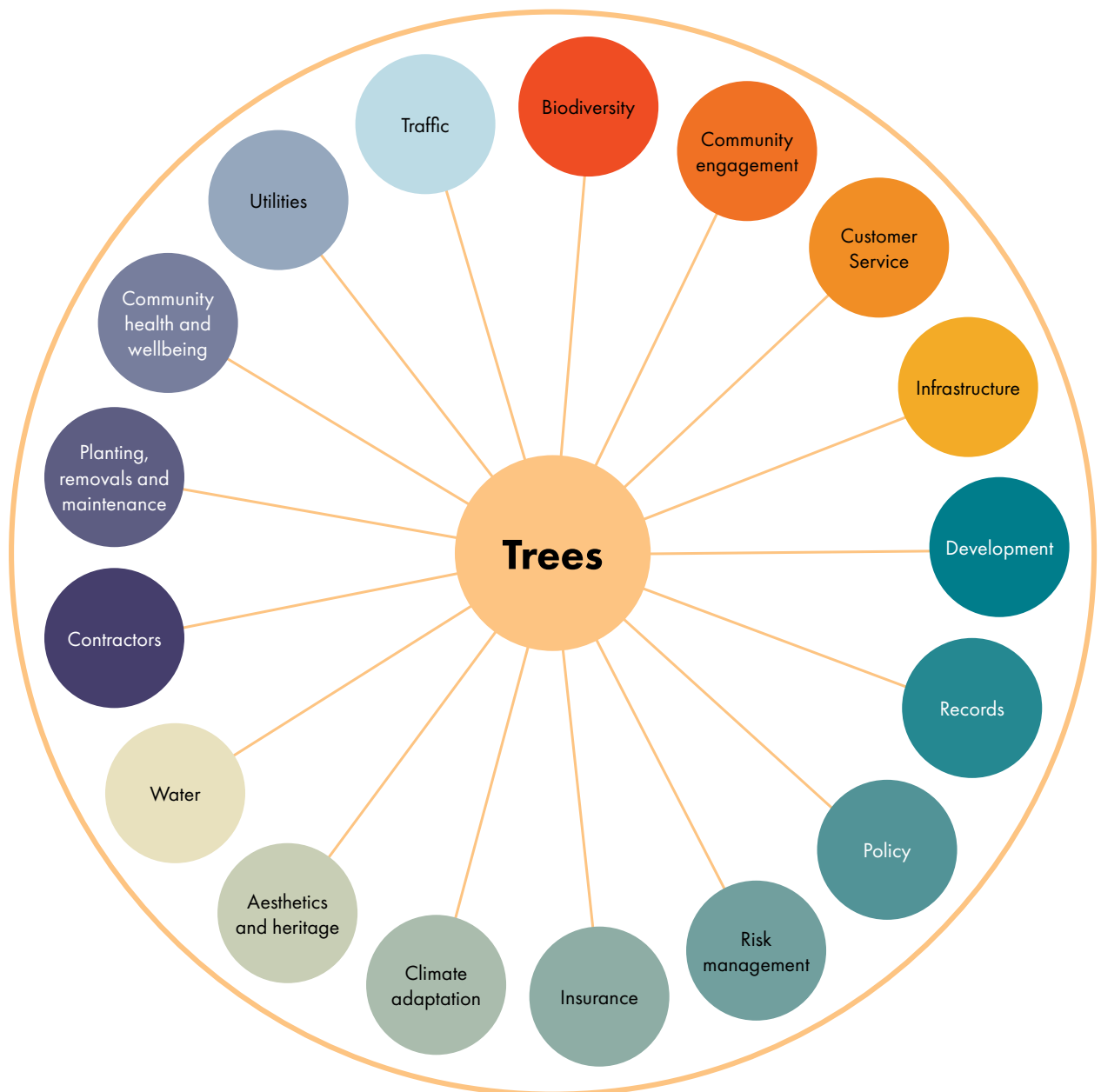
Purpose of the Plan

This plan demonstrates our commitment to our urban forest.

The purpose of this Urban Forest Plan (UFP) is to ensure that the City of Holdfast Bay is beautiful, healthy and cool for future generations. This will be achieved through the retention and expansion of our urban forest.

This plan will:

- › build on years of work to establish and manage our trees
- › guide us in transforming our tree management into best practice urban forest management
- › support our community in celebrating and valuing our trees.



Trees aren't just trees. They intersect multiple areas of both council and community life – as shown above. This creates many complexities in their management. During the development of this plan, we have attempted to take all these issues into account, so that we can improve our urban forest for all.

Benefits of Trees



“Time spent among trees is never wasted time.”

- Katrina Mayer

Trees are not just for woodlands and wilderness – trees are for everyone. They are the most effective and cost-efficient way to make our streetscapes beautiful, healthy, cool and lush. There’s a lot to love about trees.

Urban trees mitigate the increasing heat that we will experience in urban areas as climate change continues. Urban areas contain multiple hard surfaces that make urban heat higher than in regional areas. High heat contributes to greater ill health and higher mortality risk, especially for vulnerable people¹ such as the elderly, babies and those with chronic diseases. Tree canopy shade can reduce the temperatures of the surfaces they shade by between 11 °C and 25 °C, and the air temperature by 1–5 °C² therefore, all the shading, cooling and air purification benefits we can get from our urban forest will be important.

¹ Global Heat Health Information Network: <https://ghhin.org/heat-and-health/#:~:text=Prolonged%20exposure%20to%20extreme%20heat,concerns%2C%20are%20particularly%20at%20risk>.

² United States Environmental Protection Agency: https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/heat-islands/using-trees-and-vegetation-reduce-heat-islands_.html

Benefits of Trees

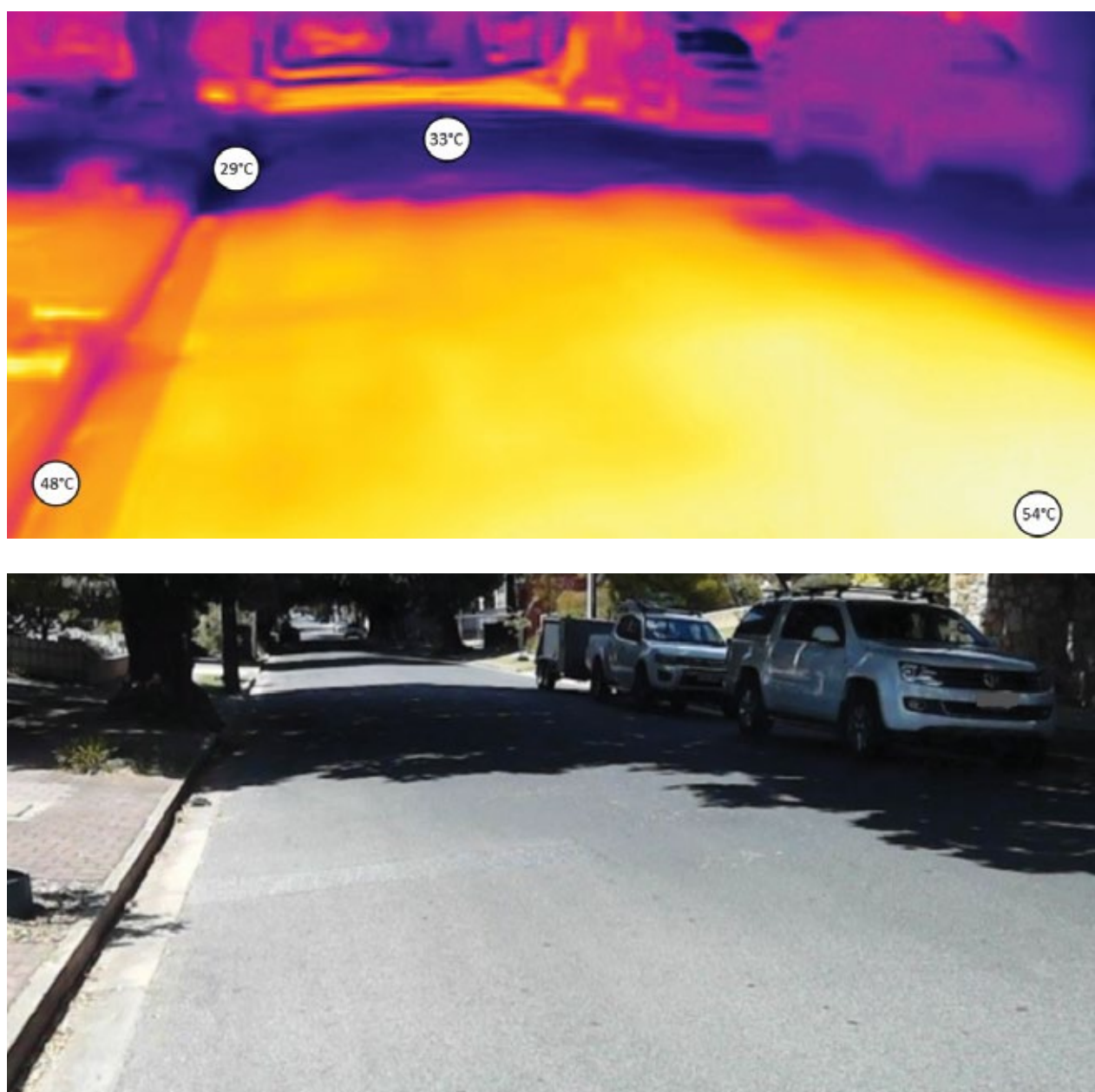


Figure 1. Example of surface temperature differences on Shoreham Road, South Brighton. Spots show surface temperatures in sun and shade on bitumen and concrete. Air temperature at time of images was 37°C. Top: thermal image; bottom: photograph of the same spot.

Urban trees can provide habitat for a range of native animals, including birds, insects and possums. Some urban trees provide significant food sources, some provide perching and traversing habitat, and many provide nesting opportunities.

Trees are important for humans too, with demonstrated benefits to both human physical health (for example, through cleaning the air) and human mental health. In fact, failing to replace trees and expand urban tree canopy carries a significant economic cost in terms of lost ecosystem services and reduced community wellbeing.³

Trees are good for the soul. Over the centuries, writers, poets, philosophers, leaders, artists and others have written about and depicted in art, the value and meaning of trees. To these thinkers and artists, trees are sanctuaries and muses, storing wisdom, providing peace, hope, strength and patience. They are a source of awe, wonder, rejuvenation, relaxation and beauty beyond any human-made art.

Most people have, at some point in their life, had a relationship with a tree that was meaningful to them in some way – from climbing and sitting in a special tree as a child, to seeking solace and shelter as a teenager, observing family events beneath a significant tree, enjoying a tree's colour through its flowers or autumnal leaves, or hearing the sound of birdsong each morning. We cannot underestimate the importance of these gifts.

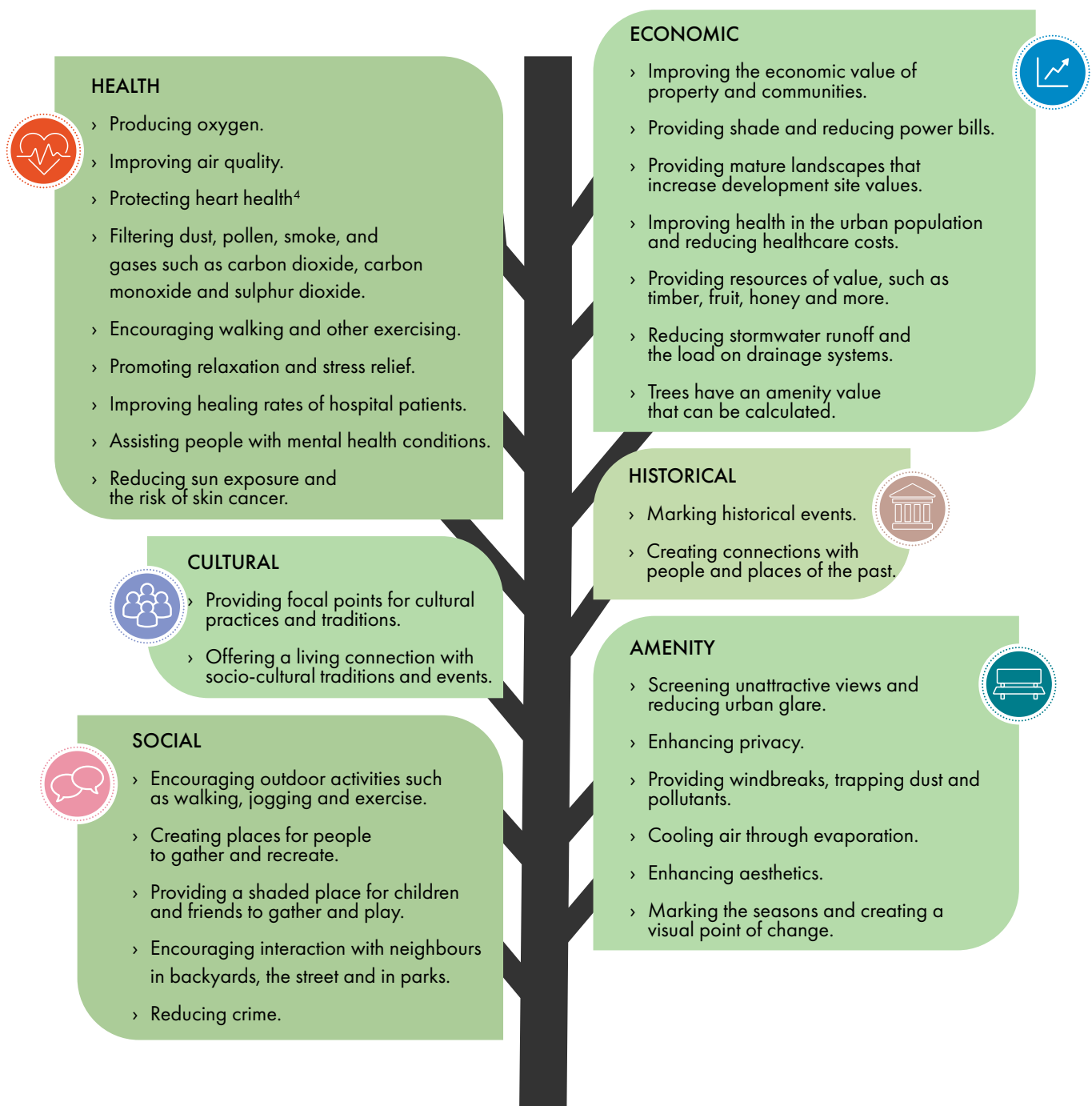
Finally, as well as being essential to our wellbeing, trees can help ease pressure on household budgets. When tree shade cools a house in summer, it reduces the need to use air conditioning and therefore, reduces the amount of energy spent on cooling a home. In addition, street trees can add significantly to property values. In summary, street trees generate more benefits than they cost over their lifetime, with every \$1 invested returning approximately \$1.30 - \$1.50 in economic, environment and community benefits.³



³ Kandulu et al., 2026

Benefits of Trees

Social and Economic Benefits



⁴ Feng, et al., 2023

Environmental and Ecological Benefits



ENVIRONMENTAL

- › Sequestering significant amounts of carbon, thus reducing the greenhouse effect.
- › Shading hard surface areas and reducing heat storage and urban heat islands.
- › Stabilising soil on steep slopes, thereby reducing soil erosion.
- › Reducing stormwater runoff.
- › Moderating windspeed by creating windbreaks.
- › Contributing to biodiversity.
- › Contributing to urban canopy cover.

ECOLOGICAL

- › Attracting birds, insects and other animals.
- › Providing habitat for wildlife to perch, nest, breed, forage, feed and/or shelter within the tree (including the root zone).
- › Creating wildlife corridors, especially via large stands of indigenous trees.



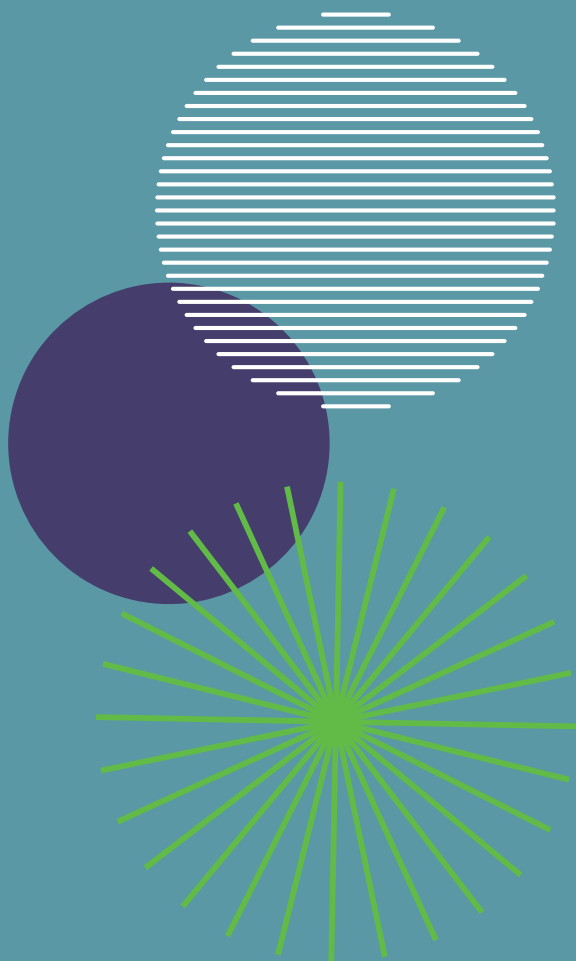
Adapted from MIS506 Tree Valuation

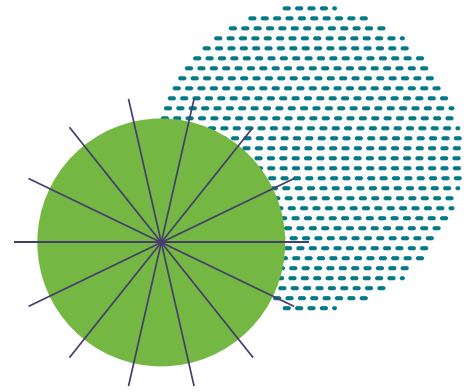
Did you know...?

Large trees can supply a day's worth of oxygen for 4 people.⁵

⁵Arbor Day Foundation: <https://www.arborday.org/value>

Strategic Context





A range of legislation – with which Council must adhere – creates limitations for tree management. These range from Commonwealth legislation, such as the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, to state legislation, such as the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, *Local Government Act 1999* and the *Landscape SA Act 2019*.

This suite of legislation covers topics such as protected trees and tree species, threatened species, weed species, utilities, insurance and development.

There is significant conflict between utilities and trees in the City of Holdfast Bay, and we continue to advocate for trees to be recognised as valued green infrastructure with the same importance as other infrastructure. Legislation regarding gas, water, electricity and telecommunications significantly limits our ability to plant and retain trees and canopy in the public realm. Council has a role to play in advocating for change and innovation around utilities, to enable space for trees.

Council also has its own suite of policies, strategies and plans that relate to trees:

- › our long-term strategic plan, *Our Holdfast 2050+*, is structured around three major themes, one of which is sustainability
- › our *Environment Strategy 2020–2025* includes a Council-endorsed target to increase our tree canopy
- › other relevant strategic documents include the masterplans for our three gullies, and the *Public Realm and Open Space Strategy 2018–2030*.

This Urban Forest Plan has been developed in conjunction with the *Tree Asset Management Plan*.

There are several Council policies that are related to tree management, including:

- › Tree Policy
- › Asset Management Policy
- › Verges Policy
- › Footpaths Policy
- › Driveway Crossovers Policy
- › Fees and Charges Policy
- › Risk Management Policy.

Strategic Context

Greater Adelaide Regional Plan

Adelaide is one of the world's most liveable cities. To guide the long-term growth of Adelaide and its surroundings, the South Australian Government developed the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan⁶.

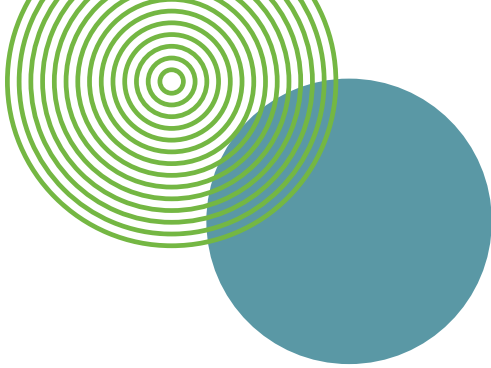
This plan is the main policy influencing tree canopy cover targets in metropolitan councils. It includes several targets, objectives and outcomes that guide and measure progress towards Adelaide's growth:

- › **Target 4:** Achieve 30% tree canopy cover across metropolitan Adelaide by 2055
- › **Outcome 4:** A greener, wilder and more climate-resilient environment
- › **Urban greening and cooling long-term strategic objectives:**
 - › Encourage more trees... in the private and public realms
 - › Prioritise tree canopy along transit corridors, active transport linkages and places with high-pedestrian activity
 - › Enhance Greater Adelaide's tree canopy through the protection of existing trees and planting of new trees on both public and private land
 - › Facilitate investment in urban greening where it is needed most to meet tree canopy targets.

The overall tree canopy cover for Greater Adelaide in 2022 was 16.7%, making this long-term canopy target a genuinely ambitious one. The City of Holdfast Bay faces similar challenges to the broader metropolitan area, particularly regarding the limited space available for new tree planting and the constraints this creates in expanding canopy cover.

Further detail on Council's specific canopy targets and how they will be achieved is provided in the *Our Canopy Target* section of this Plan.

⁶ Government of South Australia - Dept. of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure, 2025

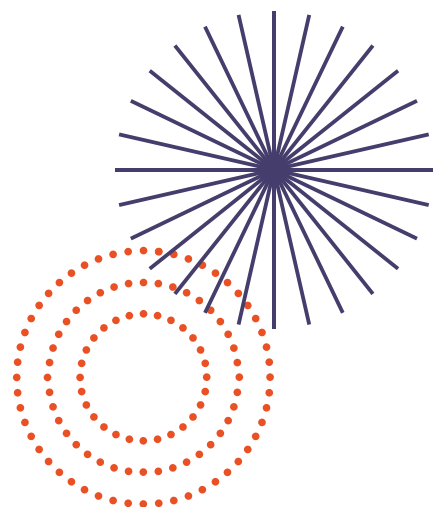
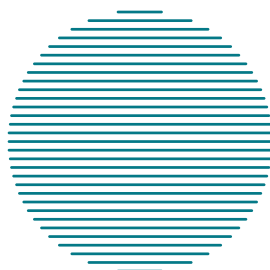


Urban Greening Strategy for Metro Adelaide

Green Adelaide, one of nine landscape boards in South Australia, has released an Urban Greening Strategy for metropolitan Adelaide. This is a practical plan to grow tree canopy, cool the city and boost urban biodiversity. The strategy reinforces the need for all sectors and landowners to play a part in greening our city for a resilient and liveable Adelaide for all. The Urban Greening Strategy has aligned its key canopy target with the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan.

It has the following priority areas:

1. Cooler, greener and healthier development
2. Government leading by example
3. Building nature back in
4. Future-proofing our urban forest
5. Improving greening equity
6. Scaling up impact by working together.



Action Plan



“The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second-best time is now.”

- Chinese proverb

It takes many years for trees to mature. Therefore, action taken today will provide a legacy for future generations through the commitments in this plan. Trees are not planted for us, but for the benefit of our children and their children.

The *Urban Forest Plan*’s timeframe runs to 2050 in-line with Council overarching strategy *Our Holdfast 2050+*. Our actions reflect this timing and will ensure good foundations are in place for the long-term future. The plan combines practical implementation and tracking of progress. Therefore, it has three major goals supported by dedicated objectives, corresponding actions, and indicators of success. These will be used to help monitor progress over time.

OUR VISION: A beautiful, healthy and cool urban forest celebrated by our community for generations to come.

Targets:

1. Increase our total urban forest canopy from 11.7% in 2022 to 16.6% in 2050.
2. Increase the urban forest canopy on local government land from 14.5% in 2022 to 21.0% in 2050.

Goal 1: Grow a Great Urban Forest

Goal 2: Nurture Best Practice Tree Management

Goal 3: Cultivate Community Care for our Urban Forest.

The actions in this strategy are grouped into those that can be delivered using existing resources and those that will require additional investment. Funding for any new or expanded initiatives will be considered through Council’s annual business planning and budget process.

Action Plan

Goal 1: Grow A Great Urban Forest

Actions within existing resources to be delivered over the life of the plan and incorporated into AMP operational budgets.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
Diversity of trees is increased over time and moves towards the 5–10–15 target	1.1. Increase the diversity of tree species: › No more than 5% of one tree species, no more than 10% of one genus, and no more than 15% of any one family by 2050 › Increase the top diversity index (TD50)⁶ from 6 to 10 by 2050	Plant a wide variety of both Australian native and exotic tree species and deprioritise planting of the top six most common tree species⁷ in Holdfast Bay. Develop planting plans that focus on optimal tree varieties accounting for the changing climate. Trial alternative tree species, especially those that may be more climate resilient. Implement strategic procurement that enables advanced ordering of trees (years ahead) to allow tree nurseries to grow new species. Review the use of uniform avenues of tree species, and potentially trial mixed-species streets to improve urban forest resilience in a changing climate.
Number of trees on public land has increased Number of large canopy trees on public land has increased Tree canopy on public and private land has increased	1.2. Increase the number of trees, including large, climate-resilient, shady trees on public and private land	Incorporate large canopy, climate-resilient trees into long-term planting plans. Within exiting capital budgets, opportunistically identify and create plantable spaces that can cater for larger-growing species, including alternative locations such as trees in carriageways. Plant the largest tree (at maturity) for the available space. Prioritise low canopy locations. For new developments, ensure that tree protection requirements are conveyed to development and construction companies before construction begins, and spot checks are carried out during construction.

⁶*Melaleuca viminalis, Lophostemon confertus, Pyrus calleryana, Araucaria heterophylla, Jacaranda mimosifolia, and Cupaniopsis anacardioides* (Caddy-Retalic, et al., 2023)

⁷See page 37



INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

OBJECTIVE

ACTIONS

Tree canopy cover for shade and cooling has increased

Urban heat in hotspots is reduced

Climate change impacts mitigated by trees

Community health and wellbeing has improved

1.3. Improve the liveability and climate resilience of our city through trees, vegetation, and water

Identify impermeable locations that could be converted to permeable, planted areas within existing programs.

Use water-sensitive urban design applications around trees whenever possible within existing budgets and programs.

Design and incorporate trees into new open spaces, transport projects, placemaking and other Council-led projects and developments.

Prioritise planting in high urban heat areas.

Increased retention of trees

Protection for trees has increased

Number of trees that have the potential for protection has increased

Canopy on private land has increased

1.4. Protect and retain trees across the council area on both private and public land

Continue to advocate to the South Australian Government to improve tree protection laws.

Ensure that Council's *Tree Policy* is reviewed regularly and supports the retention of public trees as a priority.

Advocate for, and demonstrate, well-considered and thoughtful design choices that allow existing trees to be retained as part of a development.

Action Plan

Actions prioritised requiring additional resourcing to be consider through future Annual Business Planning processes.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
Number of trees on public land has increased Number of large canopy trees on public land has increased Tree canopy on public and private land has increased	1.2 Increase the number of trees, including large, shady trees on public and private land	Implement tree rebate for tree planting on private land, focusing on species that are climate-resilient and have large, shady canopies.	High
Increased retention of trees Protection for trees has increased Number of trees that have the potential for protection has increased Canopy on private land has increased	1.4. Protect and retain trees across the council area on both private and public land	Scope and implement Tree Maintenance Grants for private landholders to assist with the costs associated with caring for trees.	High

Goal 2: Nurture Best Practice Tree Management

Actions within existing resources to be delivered over the life of the plan and incorporated into AMP operational budgets.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
Development of qualified and appropriately resourced arboricultural team	2.1. Align arboricultural capacity and resources with tree population	Continue to plan arboricultural workforce for changing tree population. Actively participate in, and contribute to, research that underpins long-term planning and adoption of new urban forest management practices.
Tree health and longevity have improved	2.2. Implement best practice arboricultural processes and systems	Implement regular tree assessment cycles to capture regular tree data, e.g. risk status, health, structure, etc.
Higher young tree establishment rates have been achieved		Implement proactive maintenance and pruning cycles.
More efficient tree management has been implemented		Improve tree establishment practices for young and newly planted trees.
Shared tree management decision-making has been implemented		Develop improved tree stock control systems and processes in our nursery.
		Continue to replace trees at the end of their useful life expectancy, with trees that are resilient for the future climate.
		Develop <i>Operational Guidelines</i> to enable contractors to make decisions about work required for individual trees.
Tree growth has accelerated	2.3. Enhance growing conditions for trees	Increase permeability around new and existing trees with relevant water-sensitive urban design applications where applicable.
Tree canopy cover has increased		
Tree health and longevity have improved		Improve soil health through a range of techniques, in locations where trees will benefit.

Action Plan

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
Culturally significant trees are cared for to enhance their health and longevity	2.4. Care for our culturally significant trees	Audit the full list of culturally significant trees in the public realm to determine if they are still present and ensure they are identified in the tree inventory. Ensure relevant stakeholders are consulted when undertaking any work on culturally significant trees.
Ability to easily track and report our progress towards our targets is in place Data are consistent, accurate and current Workflow efficiency has improved Reporting on our urban forest has improved	2.5. Develop a data management/business intelligence system to collect, maintain, track and report on our urban forest tree population, on-ground work and targets	Invest in data systems that collect, interpret and share data to support decision-making, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and can identify and manage tree health and risk. Record and maintain accurate and up-to-date tree data and works in real time. Record and report storm damage work and related expenses in a digital platform. Record tree watering against each individual tree asset in real time in a digital platform. Develop a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework that captures and tracks tree demographics and targets across the city over time.
Stakeholders understand the goals and are moving in a common direction Residents can easily access up-to-date information about tree management actions Incoming tree-related requests to customer services have reduced Efficient and clear allocation of work to contractors is achieved	2.6. Clear, consistent, and effective communication between stakeholders	Utilise efficient systems to create clear, consistent and effective communications between all stakeholders. Share management actions with the community to build understanding, appreciation and motivation. Support improvements to customer experience.

Goal 3: Cultivate Community Care for Our Urban Forest

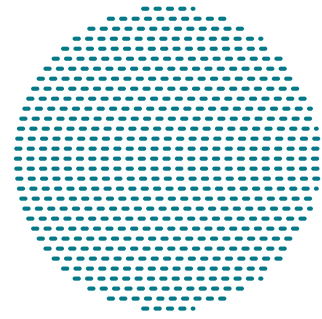
Actions within existing resources to be delivered over the life of the plan and incorporated into AMP operational budgets.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
Kaurna cultural knowledge is incorporated into our tree management practices, where approved and appropriate Kaurna Meyunna support our Urban Forest Plan	3.1. Honour Kaurna heritage	Consult with Kaurna Meyunna about culturally significant trees. Incorporate iconic statement plantings with tree species indigenous to regions within the City of Holdfast Bay area, and reflect Kaurna placenames related to trees. Develop precinct-specific plantings for locations around natural areas to protect the biodiversity of those sites.
An actively engaged community that values trees Increased acceptance of and support for trees across the city Increase in local Tree Ambassadors	3.3. Support the community to connect with and celebrate our urban forest	Continue Adopt-a-Tree and Tree of the Month programs. Highlight our culturally significant trees. Scope, identify and promote 'Tree Ambassadors'.
An informed community that values and takes care of trees	3.4 Support the community to take care of trees	Develop an information and education program providing advice about living with trees in urban areas, including fact sheets, 'How to' information, additional website information and more.

Action Plan

Actions prioritised requiring additional resourcing to be consider through future Annual Business Planning processes.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
Kaurna cultural knowledge is incorporated into our tree management practices, where approved and appropriate Kaurna Meyunna support our Urban Forest Plan	3.1. Honour Kaurna heritage	Work with Kaurna Meyunna to develop interpretive signage to highlight Kaurna cultural significance of trees, if appropriate.	Medium
Tree communications are locally relevant Barriers and opportunities are identified and understood Active Elected Member body conveys consistent and positive messages	3.2. Understand our community perceptions and values about trees; leverage, improve and reinforce positive perceptions and values	Research community values, attitudes and perceptions about public and private trees in our urban forest, e.g. community attitudes to mixed tree species streets. Identify barriers and opportunities to cultivate care for our urban forest. Target and tailor messages for different segments of our community that: › keep the 'early adopters' engaged and energised › reach and activate the 'early majority' and › reach and motivate the 'later majority'	Medium



INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	PRIORITY
An actively engaged community that values trees	3.3. Support the community to connect with and celebrate our urban forest	Deliver messaging to different segments of the community through active tree promotion via a diverse range of media (e.g. tree tags, posters, maps, etc.).	Medium
Increased acceptance of and support for trees across the city		Develop and implement a program of diverse activities for our community that connect, engage and celebrate our urban forest (e.g. 'Talking Trees', tree tours, mini tree festival); including working with our libraries, schools, community gardens, Resilient South and other stakeholders.	Medium
Increase in local Tree Ambassadors			
An informed community that values and takes care of trees	3.4. Support the community to take care of trees	Trial a Tree Clinic for residents seeking advice relating to trees on private land.	High



Our Canopy Target



By 2050, we aim to grow our tree canopy to:

- › 16.6% city-wide (public and private), from 11.7% in 2022
- › 21.0% on council owned and controlled land, from 14.5% in 2022

This may seem like a modest increase, however in a city with limited space and extensive underground services, it is a realistic and achievable goal. To reach our target, tree planting needs to increase, not only on Council land, but across our whole community (see Figure 2).

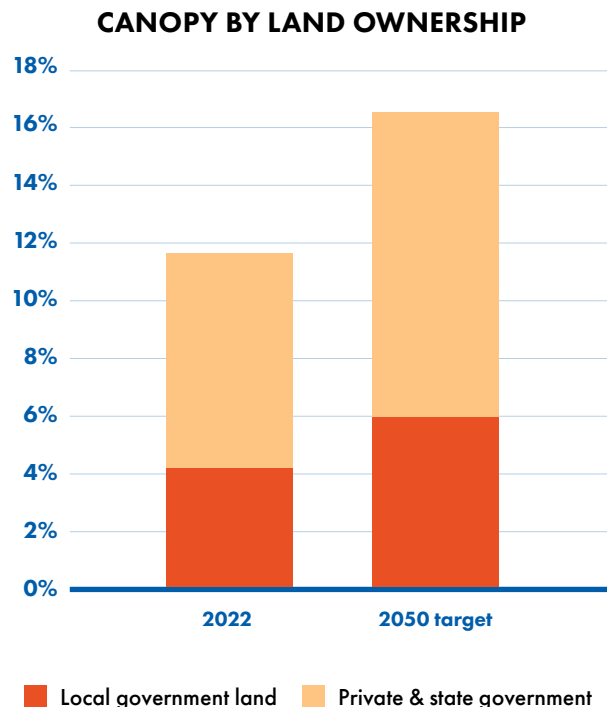


Figure 2: Change in proportions of canopy target by land ownership, required to reach the 2050 target.

Do We Have Enough Space?

To meet our 2050 canopy target, around 14,400 new trees are needed across the city. Council land (and state government roads) make up only 32% of the total land area, and within this space we can only plant an additional 5,800 trees. This means that more than 8,600 trees must be planted on land owned by residents, businesses, schools, and the state government.

On the land we control, Council will prioritise planting the right mix of species with a strong focus on larger canopy trees wherever possible so that every planting site delivers the greatest long-term canopy benefit.

However, because most of the city's land is in private or state government ownership (see Figure 3), increasing canopy cover is only possible through a shared effort. Programs proposed by this plan such as tree rebates, tree maintenance grants, and a tree clinic will make it easier for our community to plant, care for and retain trees in gardens and other private spaces.

If canopy on private land does not increase, even with Council achieving our target on Council owned land of 21%, our total canopy cover will only reach 13.8% by 2050, well short of our city-wide target. This is why strong collaboration is essential, and why private-land planting is a central focus of our Urban Forest Plan.

Our Canopy Target

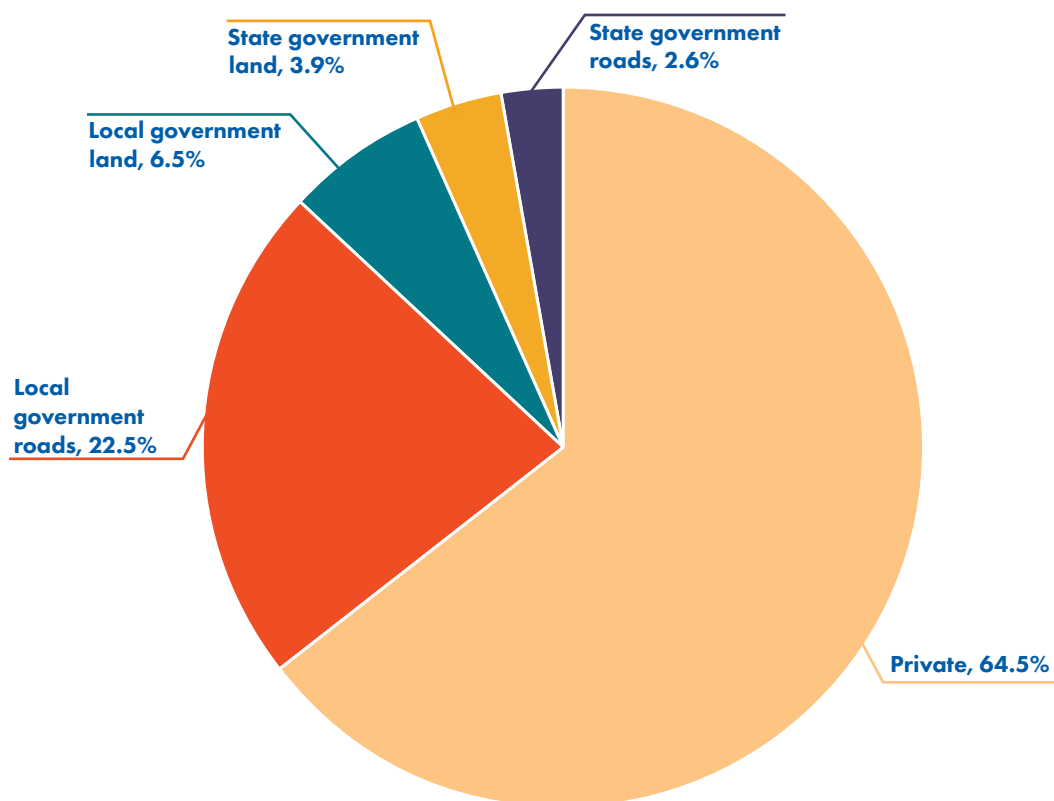


Figure 3: Land ownership in the City of Holdfast Bay as of 2022.

Canopy cover data for metropolitan Adelaide is collected every four years using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). LiDAR is a remote-sensing technology that uses pulses of laser light to capture precise three-dimensional information and create high-resolution maps of the landscape.

This data helps track changes in the urban forest over time. Canopy information can be viewed by different land-use types (council, reserves, roads, residential, businesses, etc) and categorised to show where canopy is new (newly established trees), removed (tree loss), reduced (through pruning), or expanded (from natural growth).

Our Urban Forest



Our Urban Forest

"Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky."
- Khalil Gibran

At a Glance..



Our trees help to combat climate change by absorbing the same amount of CO₂ as removing 374 cars from the roads every year



Our public trees remove more than **8,200kg** of air pollutants every year



Kingston Park

has the lowest number of trees: 707



55.8%

of the tree canopy is on private land



11.73%

of our council area is covered by tree canopy



There are

185

different species in our urban forest



Seacliff

has the highest number of trees: 3,720



Our urban forest includes about

22,675

trees that council actively manages (excluding our gullies)



14%

(3,247) of trees are in our parks; the rest are street trees

Tree Canopy Cover

In 2018, the City of Holdfast Bay area had a total tree canopy cover of 10.17%.

In 2022, this went up to 11.73% – primarily driven by two high rainfall years in this period, which encouraged canopy growth.

Figure 4 below shows the canopy gain and loss for each land-use type between 2018 and 2022. Canopy gain results from tree growth and planting, while canopy loss represents reductions in canopy resulting from tree removal or pruning.

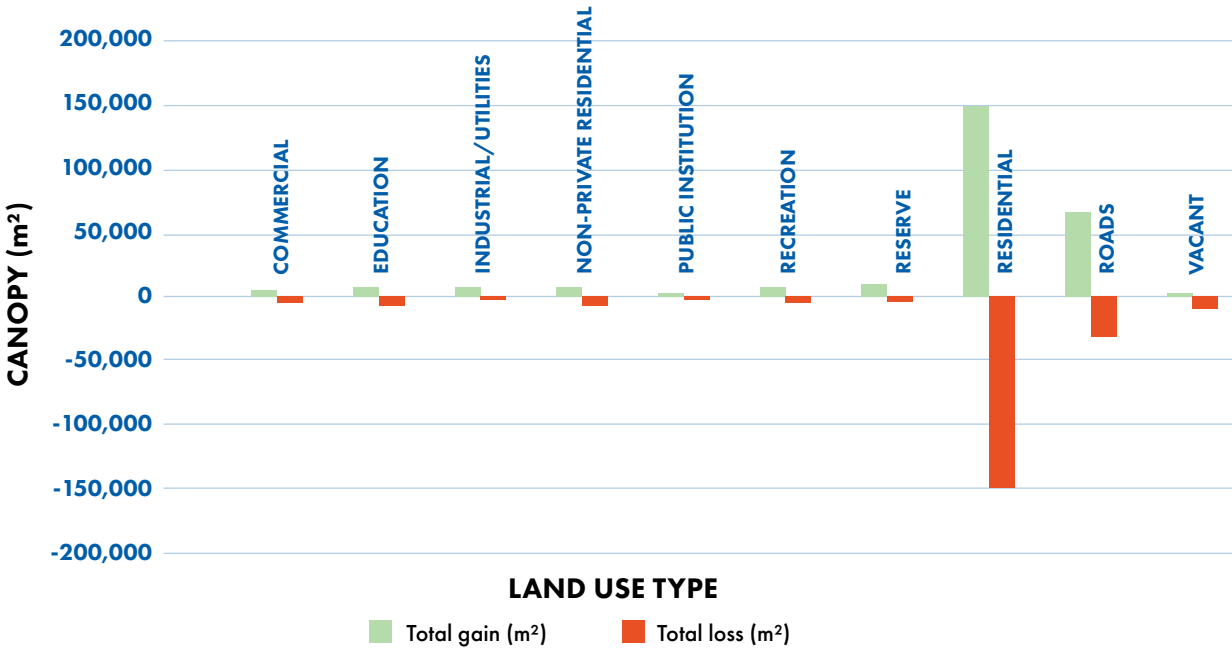


Figure 4: Tree canopy change between 2018 and 2022 by land use types

Our Urban Forest

More than half (55.8%) of the tree canopy is on private land, with 35.9% of the canopy on Council land, and 7.9% on state government land.

The proportion of tree canopy cover in each suburb varies only a little, with the lowest being 9% in Glenelg and the highest 13.8% in Kingston Park (see Figure 5) in 2022.

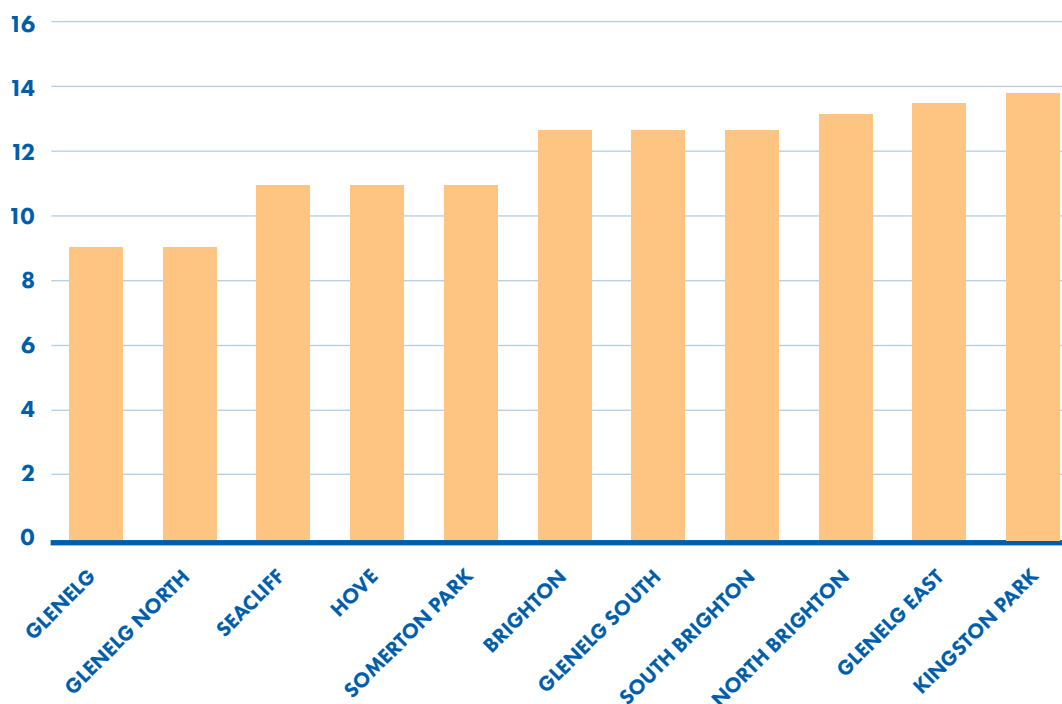


Figure 5: Canopy cover by suburb, as a proportion of each suburb.

Tree Species Diversity

To improve the resilience of an urban forest, a suitable diversity of tree species is essential. This ensures resilience against climate change, and pests and diseases, as well as providing a greater range of habitats and food sources for animals. The City of Holdfast Bay aims to have a species diversity mix of no more than 5% of any one species, no more than 10% of any one genus, and no more than 15% of any one family.

The top diversity index (TD50)⁸, is another measure of diversity. The TD50 represents the minimum number of species that make up 50% of the trees in an area. The University of Adelaide⁹ recommends using this target together with the species diversity mix above.

Currently, the three largest tree families in our urban forest are:

- › Myrtaceae (44%), includes bottlebrushes, paperbarks, eucalypts and Queensland box
- › Rosaceae (7%), includes pears and ornamental plums
- › Araucariaceae (7%), includes Norfolk and Cook pines.

One group – the genus *Melaleuca* – currently exceeds our target of no more than 10% for any one genus. There are also several tree species that exceed, or are approaching, our target of no more than 5% for any one species.

There are a few species that are performing well in the City of Holdfast Bay area, but are approaching their species diversity target, which means there is limited use for them in the future. Other trees are performing well and are also well below the 10% species diversity target, which means they can be used in larger numbers in future.

Several poorly performing species, such as field maples, lemon-scented gums and black locust trees, will require replacement within the coming 10 years, and we will consider more appropriate tree species to replace them within our diversity target.

Trials are currently being conducted to find suitable tree species to increase species diversity while achieving greater climate resilience and a larger canopy for our urban forest.

We also need to diversify the size mix of our tree species to use more large canopy trees in places where it is feasible to do so. This will mainly be in our parks. Trees with larger canopies are more efficient, as they tend to live much longer than smaller species, and for the cost of one large tree, we can get much more canopy than we can for one smaller tree at a similar cost

Tree Age Diversity and Life Expectancy

The distribution of tree age throughout our urban forest is sustainable, with only a small proportion of trees in an 'overmature' state. The useful life expectancy (ULE) of a tree is the number of years a tree can be expected to be useful in its location, with acceptable levels of amenity, health, and risk under the current site conditions.

The distribution of useful life expectancies throughout the urban forest is sustainable, with a small proportion of trees (<3%) showing a useful life expectancy of less than five years. Regular and consistent plantings of smaller groups of trees – along with best practice tree management – is more sustainable than planting larger numbers of trees in an irregular timeframe. This will also extend the useful life expectancy of trees throughout the urban forest.

⁸ Love, et al., 2022

⁹ Caddy-Retalic, et al., 2023

Our Urban Forest

Culturally and Aesthetically Significant Trees

In the City of Holdfast Bay area there are two localities named in Kurna language, based on the kinds of trees that were commonly found in those areas.

Pathawilyangga is the area now known as the Patawalonga Lake. In English, it translates to 'swamp gums and foliage, young branches, brushwood', so this area must have been an important source of these trees and the resources they provided. The area looked vastly different when the Kurna people were caring for their land, with water coming from Warriparri (Sturt Creek) in the south, and the Karrawirra Pari (River Torrens) in the north. Water meandered through reed beds and dunes to the sea.

Witawartingga is the area around Seacliff Park, and was originally covered by a light low woodland. 'Wita' means peppermint gums, which probably relates to peppermint box, a local native Eucalyptus species. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Gilbertson Gully, adjoining Gilbertson Road, may have been a source of fresh water and was used as a campsite by the Kurna people as they moved around the southern plains of Adelaide.

A tree of important shared Kurna and European heritage is Patha Yakuna (Old Gum Tree) in Glenelg North. In 1836, a flotilla of ships from England landed at Glenelg, and it was under this tree that the Proclamation of South Australia was read aloud.



Figure 6: Painting on a postcard, in 1903, of Patha Yakuna (Old Gum Tree) in Glenelg. By Albert H. Fullwood.

The combination of culturally important trees cared for by Australia's First Peoples and trees subsequently planted by European settlers, makes an important contribution to our urban forest. These trees create connections with our past, are important landmarks, and are of botanical interest to our community.

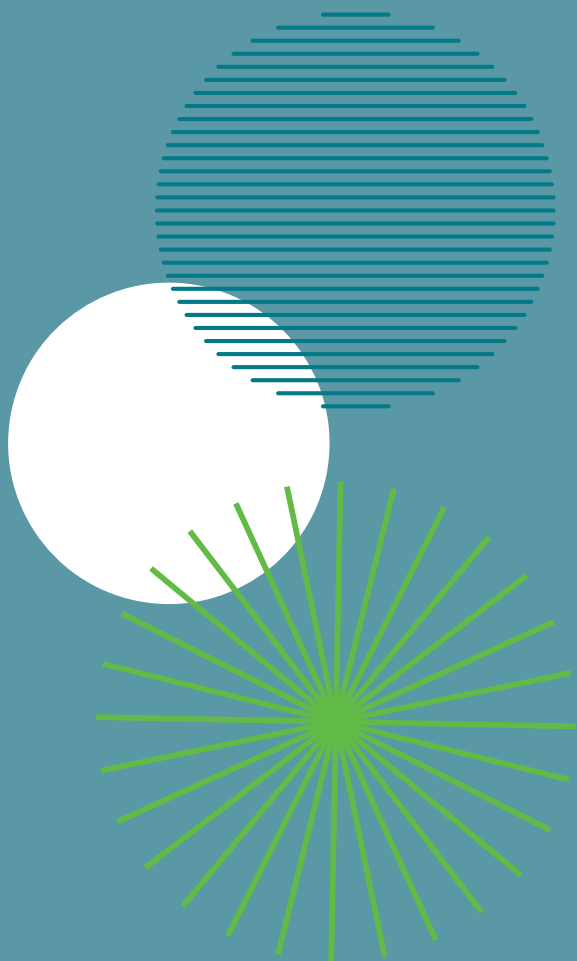
In addition to the retention and protection of such culturally important trees, the City of Holdfast Bay will endeavour to plant new trees that acknowledge the traditional custodians of the area, the Kurna people, with the planting of locally indigenous tree species that grew in the area before European settlement. Such trees reflect the custodianship of the Kurna people, will better ensure the sustainability of locally indigenous tree species, and, in many cases, will be more resilient in a warming climate.

Other culturally important trees after European settlement can be found in various locations within our city (see Appendix B).

The City of Holdfast Bay will consider planting culturally significant replacement trees at key locations throughout the city, as follows:

- › In line with the Open Space and Public Realm Strategy 2018–2030
- › At main entry points into the council area, such as Tapley's Hill Road from the north, Anzac Highway, Oaklands Road/Diagonal Road and Sturt Road from the west and, Brighton Road from the south
- › Along waterways, including Patawalonga River and Sturt Creek
- › Within or adjacent to civic spaces
- › At culturally important sites
- › In natural settings, such as Gilbertson Gully, Barton Gully, Pine Gully, and Kingston Cliff Face.

Living With Trees



Living With Trees

“He that plants trees, loves others besides himself.”

- Thomas Fuller

The City of Holdfast Bay has a diverse population of residents, business owners and employees, and visitors, bringing a wide variety of perspectives, attitudes and values around trees.

Trees are an important element of our cultural heritage, both Kaurana and European, and they are a valued community asset. In 2020, when the City of Holdfast Bay developed its Environment Strategy, trees were the number one topic mentioned in all community engagement and consultation, with most comments supporting more trees. More recently, our popular social media *Tree of the Month* has attracted many positive, loving comments about the nominated trees, while our *Adopt-a-Tree* program has been booked out three years in a row, and is booked up a year in advance. This is over and above the benefits of trees described in chapter 2 of this document.

There are, however, significant drivers of canopy loss – particularly infill development, where one block is turned into two or more smaller blocks. This means that more of the land is built on, including an additional driveway, leaving less space for trees. In addition, developers prefer a ‘clean slate’ when they start work on new buildings, so they tend to remove all unprotected trees to make the build easier.



The two images below show the stark contrast on a large block in Brighton. This parcel of land had a significant amount of canopy cover before most of the trees were removed

(shown by the pale green 'ghost' overlay) to make room for an infill development. All remaining trees were large enough to be protected.



Figure 7: Examples of tree canopy loss for private residential infill development: above at Brighton and below at Glenelg North

Living With Trees

Given that more than half of our tree canopy is on private property, and that 64% of the land in the City of Holdfast Bay is privately owned, community can play a vital role in reversing the declining trend in our tree canopy cover.

Community perspectives, attitudes and values about trees are mixed. Many community members place a high value on trees, as highlighted within recent community surveys and in the *Tree of the Month* engagement; however, *"I love trees, just not the one in front of my house,"* is also a common sentiment.

As well as the numerous benefits that trees bring to our community and visitors, they also come with a range of concerns that are part of living with trees in an urban area. These include:

- › nuisance created by leaf, bark, or fruit debris
- › perceived risk
- › sight obstructions
- › roots causing damage to private property, in turn, causing financial and/or physical burdens.

Best practice tree management systems, including regular inspections, scheduled maintenance, improved species selections and pruning to industry standards, can help to reduce and alleviate these concerns. Suitable repair, modification or design of infrastructure can also help reduce damage to both public and private property, and help trees to continue growing and contributing to our beautiful streetscapes for decades to come.

Opportunities and Challenges



Opportunities and Challenges

“Gold is a luxury. Trees are necessities. Man can live and thrive without gold, but we cannot survive without trees.”

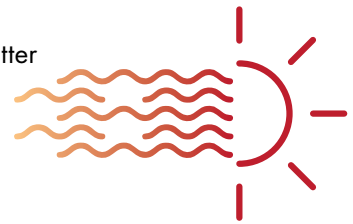
- Paul Bamikole

Warming Climate

Climate change is a major issue affecting our environment and our lifestyle. Urban forests in many cities around the world are being affected, and Holdfast Bay is already experiencing the effects of climate change, which are projected to intensify over the coming decades. This will make it increasingly difficult for our current trees to survive.

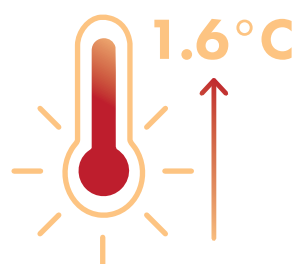
There is already evidence to suggest that the tree species traditionally planted in urban forests may not be well placed to tolerate the changes that the warming climate brings. Adelaide is shifting from a Mediterranean climate to a semi-arid climate, similar to that of Kadina today. Therefore, more appropriate species will need to be included in our tree species palette.

Heatwaves will get hotter and longer, with more hot days and nights.



Rainfall intensity is predicted to increase, but overall rainfall is set to decrease by about 4%¹⁰

Increasing the likelihood of drought between rains and flooding in high-intensity rainfall events¹¹



South Australia will continue to get hotter, with average annual maximum temperatures in the City of Holdfast Bay area projected to increase by up to 1.6°C by 2050, compared to the baseline period of 1986–2005¹⁰

¹⁰ Department for Environment and Water, 2022

¹¹ CSIRO, 2021

Increased high temperatures and prolonged drought events will have detrimental effects on our urban forest. Drought is a compounding issue, where a lack of rainfall both dries the surrounding soil and induces stress within plants. If the drought is prolonged, trees will die, as was seen during the drought conditions from December 2024 to May 2025.

Extreme heat impacts a variety of tree functions, including inhibiting photosynthesis and reducing growth rate. Heat and drought also create embolisms (air bubbles) in stems and branches. Depending on the location and size, this can result in the death of a branch or an entire tree. Urban forest populations are likely to experience these stresses with increasing frequency in the future.

As the climate warms, we will have lower annual rainfall, so water-sensitive urban design features will be needed to help make the urban environment more permeable to rainwater. This will help our trees to be healthier and more resilient. We will also need more drought-tolerant species.

Preparing a diverse species palette for a sustainable urban forest in a warming environment requires foresight. Species selection will be guided by research, arboricultural expertise, and observations of tree species that thrive in the predicted conditions. This climate-resilient tree species palette must be diverse enough to be resilient to the effects of these changes.

A warmer climate creates hotter urban heat islands – which in turn create health problems for our community – and trees are the most effective way to reduce urban heat. The shade provided by a tree canopy can reduce the heat underneath it by 10°C to 30°C. Using shade trees in conjunction with other urban cooling options such as shade cloth, vine-covered trellises and pale road coverings, with

consideration for buildings and active transport routes, will help to make our city significantly more liveable in a warmer climate.

Objectives: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 2.3, 3.3, 3.4

Urban Development

With increasing urban development and population within our city, there are increasing challenges to retaining existing trees and finding available spaces to plant and maintain new trees. There is a lot less public land suitable for tree planting than there is suitable and available private land.

The challenges include new subdivisions, new driveways, and the installation of new services. The impacts of development on tree functions are a significant cause of declining urban forests due to the reduction of open earth areas, and increases in root compaction and disturbance. Homes are also, on average, taking up a larger proportion of a property area than in the past, leaving little open space for trees.

Objectives: 1.2, 1.4, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4

Water

Trees are extraordinary water managers. Trees contain so much water that if you took away everything from a tree that was not water, you would be left with a tree-shaped column of water moving from the ground up into the air. Trees help to cool our warm urban streets through the provision of shade and through a process called ‘transpiration’ as they release water vapour through their leaves, providing significant cooling around the tree. Trees also assist in cleaning water.

Opportunities and Challenges

Ensuring our trees can access more water helps them to be healthier, grow more foliage and provide more cooling. Therefore, a simple strategy for improving tree health is to create better opportunities for street trees to access more water.

Water-sensitive urban design (WUSD) applications, such as tree inlets, permeable surfaces and rain gardens, support a greener, healthier, more liveable city by enabling plants to access more stormwater while also reducing the amount of stormwater (and pollution) reaching Gulf St Vincent.

Objectives: 1.3, 2.3, 2.5, 3.4

Underground Infrastructure

Underground space is limited due to the high number of services located below our streets, including water, sewerage, stormwater, gas, and telecommunications. These services all require room to operate, and they compete with tree root systems for the same underground space. Legislation sets required clearances between trees and underground services to prevent damage, which can further restrict where trees can be planted.

Objectives: 1.4

Pests and Diseases

With a warming climate, and the increased movement of goods, products and people around the world, the threat of introduced pests and diseases that might harm our urban forest is increasing.

There is a range of known, and potential, pests and diseases that threaten our urban forest, and our arboricultural team work hard to address these as they arise and keep up with emerging threats and treatments. Two examples are the polyphagous shot-hole borer in Perth, which resulted in nearly 5,000 trees being removed, and the giant pine scale that has emerged in Adelaide, and killed almost 1,400 trees.

Increasing the species diversity of our urban forest is an effective way to improve resilience to and prevent pest and disease threats.

Objectives: 1.1, 2.5

Tree Planting Innovation

Many cities are now turning to novel planting techniques where underground space is contested by a range of infrastructure. New, below-ground applications are being designed and tested in the Adelaide metropolitan area and, while more expensive, can bring canopy into areas that would otherwise have no greenery at all.

A range of opportunities also exist to increase soil volume availability for larger trees. Some of these techniques are difficult to retrofit around existing trees and are best implemented during streetscape renewal projects. These design improvements allow more root space for trees and can be designed for the trees to access more water through a larger area of permeable surface soil around the tree.

Objectives: 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5



Power Lines

Overhead power lines present a significant challenge to increasing tree canopy cover because strict regulations limit the types of trees that can be planted beneath them. In these locations, only smaller tree species may be used, and existing larger trees often require substantial pruning to meet clearance requirements. Smaller species generally have shorter lifespans and need to be replaced more frequently than larger trees, increasing long-term maintenance and replacement costs for Council.

There are two approaches that can help address this issue in selected areas.

1. The use of aerial bundled cables, where multiple wires are insulated and grouped together. This reduces the need for heavy pruning and has already been implemented in parts of Holdfast Bay.
2. Undergrounding power lines, where the Power Line Environment Committee (PLEC) supports the Minister under the *Electricity Act 1996* and assists Councils in identifying locations where undergrounding will improve local amenity. This approach can create space for larger tree species, allow existing mature trees to grow fuller canopies, and support wider streetscape upgrades.

A number of locations already have underground power lines, including Jetty Road Glenelg, Jetty Road Brighton, North Esplanade Glenelg North, and sections of Augusta Street Glenelg, Adelphi Terrace Glenelg North, and Marine Parade Seacliff.

Council recently completed a strategic review to identify additional opportunities for undergrounding that could support canopy growth. While the assessment found some feasible sites, none were likely to result in a significant increase to canopy cover, meaning undergrounding power lines would not meet strategic canopy outcomes in the identified locations.

Objectives: 2.5

Measurement and Reporting



To ensure that we are making progress towards our canopy and diversity targets, we will regularly measure and report on our targets.

Measuring Canopy Cover

Urban forest canopy cover and other measures, such as urban heat, were measured in 2018 and 2022 using a range of technologies. Both state and local governments across metropolitan Adelaide were involved via multi-stakeholder projects. These large-scale projects are currently intended to take place approximately every four years. Data are provided to state and local government agencies and is publicly available via the online Urban Heat and Tree Mapping Viewer¹².

The City of Holdfast Bay will continue to be involved in these measurement projects to ensure data continuity and comparability.

Measuring Tree Species Diversity

Tree species are difficult to identify remotely and therefore must be visually inspected to verify the species. In order to capture our tree species diversity for the very first time, the City of Holdfast Bay spent two years physically looking at every public tree and capturing its identification in a special database.

As our arboricultural team move around the city to maintain, plant, remove and inspect trees, they record these works in the same database. This means that all tree species changes are recorded, for example, when a tree is removed and replaced by a different tree. This database can then be analysed at different intervals to report on our tree species diversity targets.

Reporting on our Progress

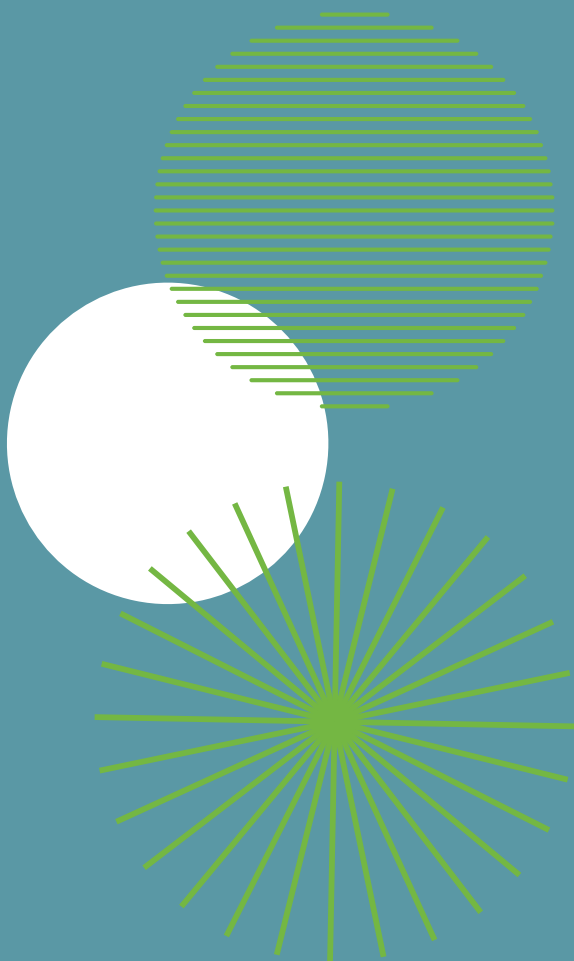
We will report on the number of trees planted on public land every year, and include the total number of trees in each Annual Report.

Council will report on our canopy cover progress in Annual Reports every four years. This information will come from the state government as it is responsible for the four-yearly canopy cover measurement.

Species diversity will change slowly, so we will report on species diversity once every four years, in alignment with the canopy cover reporting.

¹² spatialwebapps.environment.sa.gov.au

Glossary



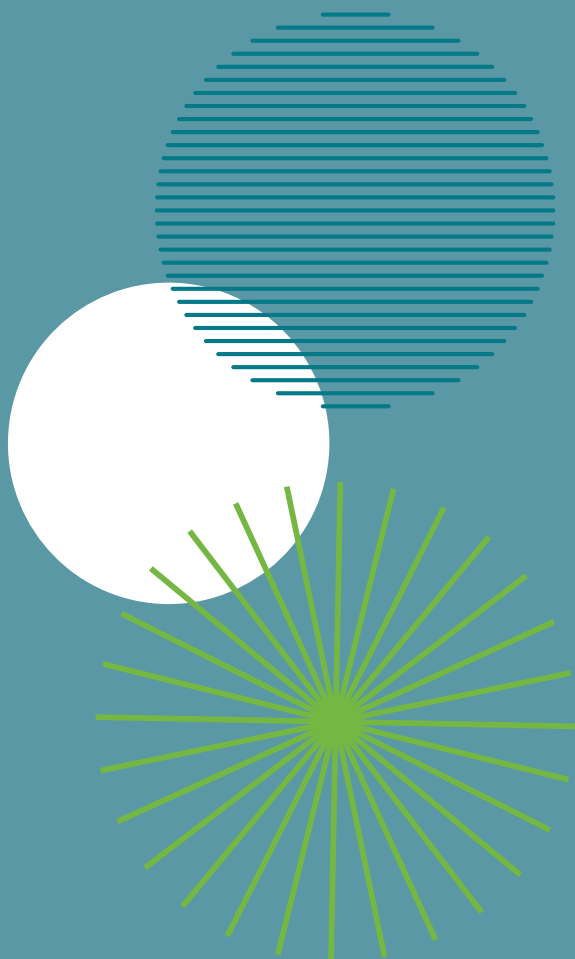
Term	Definition
Amenity	The amenity of a locality means any quality, condition or factor that helps to make it harmonious, pleasant and/or enjoyable.
Arboriculture	The management, assessment and cultivation of trees.
Biodiversity	The variety of all life forms: the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, and the ecosystems of which they are a part.
Canopy cover	The proportion of land area occupied by tree crown or canopy when visualised from directly above. It is the two-dimensional, horizontal extent of the combined canopies on a given land area, often expressed as a percentage of the total area covered ¹² .
Carbon sequestration	Carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere and stored by trees and other biological or chemical processes.
Family*	A scientific term for a group of related genera, e.g. Myrtaceae is the family that contains all the eucalypts and bottlebrushes.
Genus*	A scientific term for a group of related species, e.g. <i>Eucalyptus</i> (gum trees).
Liveability	An assessment of what a place is like to live in. It considers environmental quality, crime and safety, education and health provision, access to shops and services, transport facilities, recreational facilities, and cultural activities.
Species*	A scientific term for a specific type of organism, e.g. <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> (river red gum).
Urban forest	All trees in a specified area on all land types.
Urban heat island	Urban areas are warmer than rural areas due to the heat retention of hard surfaces. This stored heat is radiated at nighttime, increasing air temperatures, which can have serious consequences for the health of humans and nature, particularly during heatwaves. An urban heat island is an area where this effect is particularly noticeable due to the types of infrastructure materials and/or lack of shading. The most cost-effective and efficient mitigation of urban heat is an increase in tree canopy cover.
WSUD - Water sensitive urban design	Water-sensitive urban design is a means of using water to mimic the natural process of retaining, filtering and infiltrating stormwater near where it falls. This approach promotes the capture and use of water to support healthy vegetation in streetscapes and constrained urban areas ¹³ .

¹² City of Sydney Urban Forest Strategy 2013

¹³ Allison, R. 2015

* See Appendix A for a further explanation.

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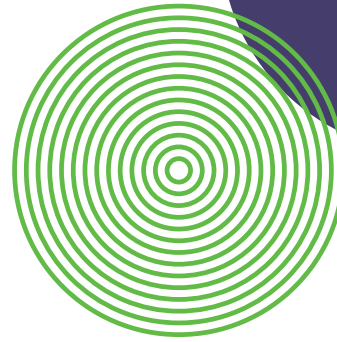
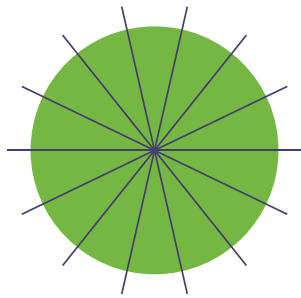
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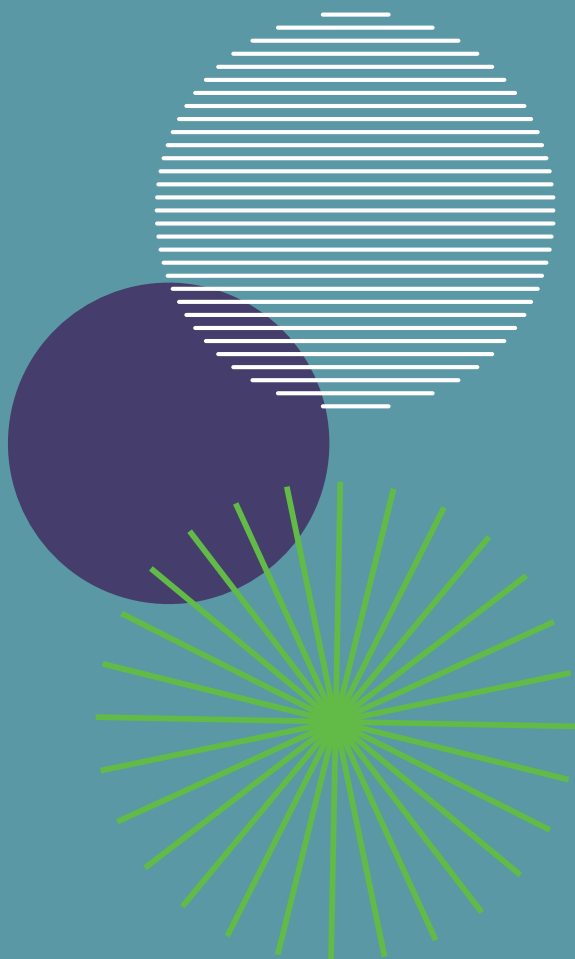
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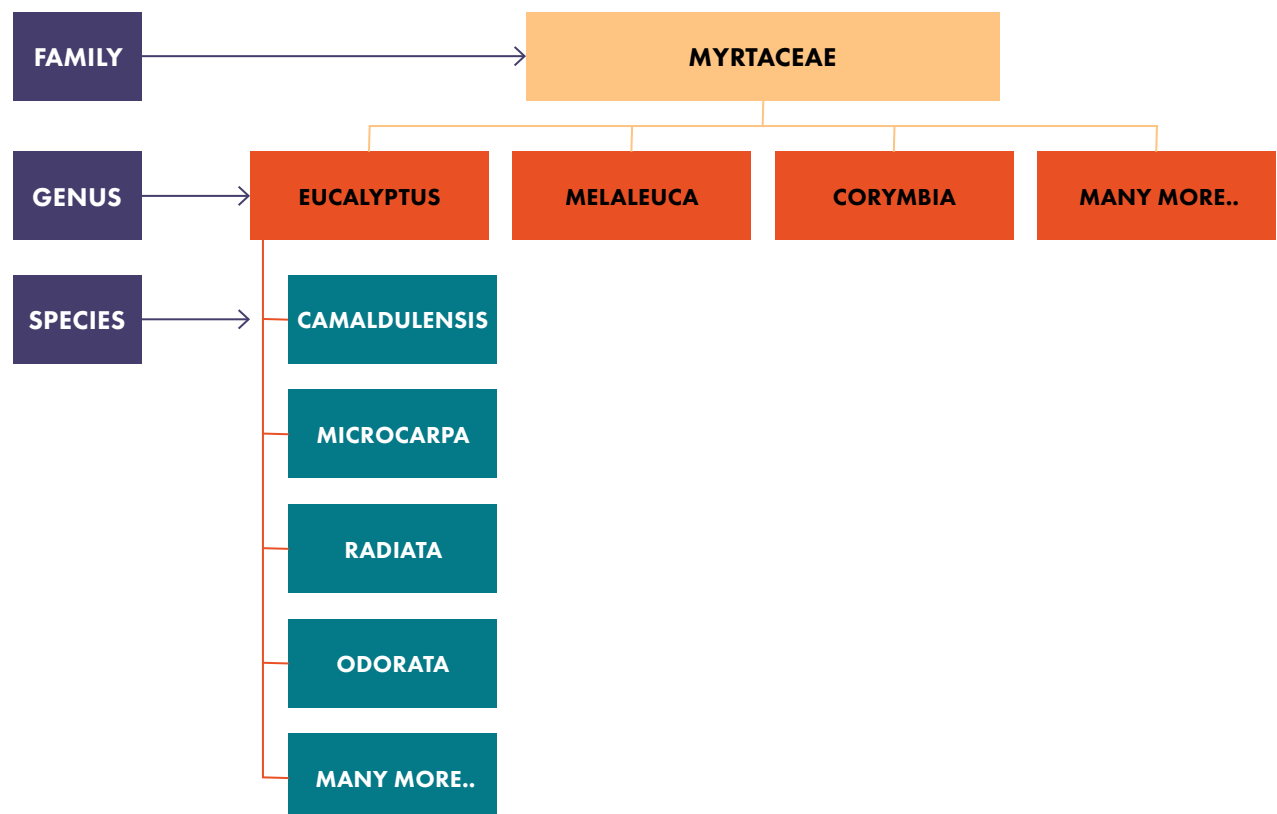
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Appendices



Appendix A: Family, genus and species

This diagram outlines the relationship between family, genus and species. As an example of how these names are related, it shows the genus and species for river red gums, also known as *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*.



Appendix B: Culturally important trees and areas containing trees in the City of Holdfast Bay

Note: only trees in the public realm are listed. There are a few heritage-listed trees on private properties that are not listed here to protect privacy.

State and Local Heritage trees

The SA Planning and Design Code overlay PO 5.1 (Landscape Context and Streetscape Amenity) states that *"Individually heritage listed trees, parks, historic gardens and memorial avenues are retained unless:*

- › *trees/planting are, or have the potential to be, a danger to life or property*

or

- › *trees/planting are significantly diseased, and their life expectancy is short."*

Below is a list of all trees (or areas containing trees) that are heritage-listed under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*:

- › Alfreda Street, Brighton: row of eucalypts - mature trees
- › 448 Brighton Road, Brighton: three Moreton Bay fig trees
- › 37 Vincent Avenue, North Brighton: Good Neighbour Garden Reserve - the full extent of the reserve area
- › Patawilya Reserve: the full area of the reserve
- › Patawalonga Reserve: the full area of the reserve
- › South Esplanade: South Esplanade Foreshore Reserve to the Broadway
- › 410–420 Brighton Road, Hove: row of sixteen stone pine trees on Stopford Road

- › Ilfracombe Avenue, North Brighton: avenue of mature river red gums
- › 40A Kauri Parade, Seacliff: Centenary Reserve - the whole of the reserve area
- › Kingston Park monument, spring and Norfolk Island Pine trees
- › 42–48 Scarborough Street, Somerton Park: entire row of Moreton Bay fig trees
- › Seaforth Park, Tarlton Street, Somerton Park: two pine trees
- › Dover Square Gardens, Broadway, South Brighton: the full extent of Dover Square Gardens
- › Broadway, South Brighton: all remnant olive trees in Broadway.

National Trust Trees (South Australia)

These trees can be found at the National Trust of Australia – Register of Significant Trees (<https://trusttrees.org.au/>)

- › The Old Gum Tree (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) at McFarlane Street, Glenelg North (public tree)
- › Hill's weeping figs (*Ficus microcarpa* var. *hillii*) at Torrens Square, Glenelg (public tree)
- › Ombu tree (*Phytolacca dioica*) at Partridge House (public trees)
- › Two separate Cook pines (*Araucaria columnaris*) at Minda Home (private trees)
- › Two Norfolk Island pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*) at the entrance to Kingston Park Caravan Park (public trees)
- › Avenue of olives (*Olea europaea*) at Dover Square, South Brighton (public trees)
- › Three Moreton Bay figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) at 448 Brighton Road, Brighton (public trees).

Avenues of Honour (South Australia)

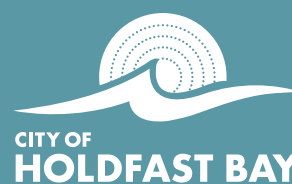
These avenues of trees can be found on the Avenues of Honour website (<https://avenuesofhonour.org/>)

- › Norfolk Island pines on Addison Road, Hove (Railway corridor)
- › Claret ash on Anzac Highway: Plympton Avenue of Honour (between Richmond Road and Tapley's Hill Road).

Other aesthetically significant tree populations

These are trees suggested for inclusion as aesthetically significant tree populations, despite not being listed in any of the above registers.

- › Norfolk Island pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*) along the foreshore of several beaches and lining several key streets within the council area
- › Group of holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*) on Shoreham Road, South Brighton
- › Group of holm oaks (*Quercus ilex*) on Moseley Street, Glenelg and Tarlton Street, Somerton Park
- › Date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) at Moseley Square and Brighton Jetty
- › North Brighton Cemetery
- › Group of white cedar (*Melia azedarach*) at Linwood Avenue and Athalney Avenue, Brighton
- › Group of Hill's weeping figs (*Ficus macrocarpa* var. *Hillii*) at Tucker Street, South Brighton
- › Group of Hill's weeping figs (*Ficus macrocarpa* var. *Hillii*) at Torrens Square, Glenelg.



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