DRAFT

HOBSONS BAY URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

2020 ACTION PLAN







HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL









GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following describes the principles, strategies and actions required to deliver the Urban Forest Strategy.

The guiding principles underpinning the Hobsons Bay Urban Forest Strategy are to:

Develop a healthy and resilient urban forest in Hobsons Bay that:
Cools neighbourhoods including residential and industrial areas
Is healthy, resilient and will thrive in our changing climatic conditions
Reflects the unique character and identity of Hobsons Bay
Creates attractive and comfortable streets, parks, waterfronts and public spaces
Improves neighbourhood amenity
Assists in climate mitigation and adaptation
Improves community health and wellbeing
Supports healthy ecosystems and improves biodiversity

Increase the understanding of the attributes, role and benefits of Hobsons Bay's urban canopy to:
encourage greater care, protection and custodianship of urban trees
promote greater participation in decision making on urban trees
encourage all members of the community (including residents and businesses) to contribute by planting new trees on private land

To achieve the vision for a healthy and resilient urban forest in Hobsons Bay, four key objectives have been developed. These objectives are supported by a series of priority actions to assist in delivery and implementation.

STRATEGIES

Four key objectives have been developed - these are:

Objective 1: Increase Tree Canopy in Hobsons Bay to 30% by 2040

A generous urban tree canopy that cools the city is crucial to improving community health and wellbeing. This can vary depending on a city's structure, climate and land use patterns. Targets are best developed based on constraints to creating canopy such as densities and land use.

The objective of 30 per cent canopy target provides an aspirational yet achievable target for Hobsons Bay. This considers the unique attributes of the LGA including the large proportion of industrial areas, parklands and conservation lands including grasslands and wetlands. This overall canopy target of 30 per cent is informed by detailed canopy projections for each land use. Projections for trees in each land use have been drawn from existing canopy cover averages for various land uses in western Melbourne (Hurley et al 2018), as well examples for tree canopy in other Australian cities.

Objective 2: Develop a diverse and healthy urban forest

A diverse range of urban trees ensures the long-term health and viability of Hobsons Bay's urban forest. With a changing urban climate including hotter and drier conditions it is important to provide a wider range of species that can tolerate new climatic conditions. A diverse range of tree species will also lower the risk of loss from pests and diseases.

In Hobsons Bay, over 50 per cent of the LGA's street and park trees are in the Myrtaceae family. This dominance of a single family or genus within a family can leave the overall tree population at risk of mass decline if a pest or disease is introduced. The discovery of Myrtle Rust (Puccinia psidii) in the Greater Melbourne area presents a significant potential threat to the LGA's trees. It is important to develop a long-term plan that can withstand these threats. It also provides an opportunity to explore a more eclectic and unique tree palette that can enhance local character and create memorable parks and streets.

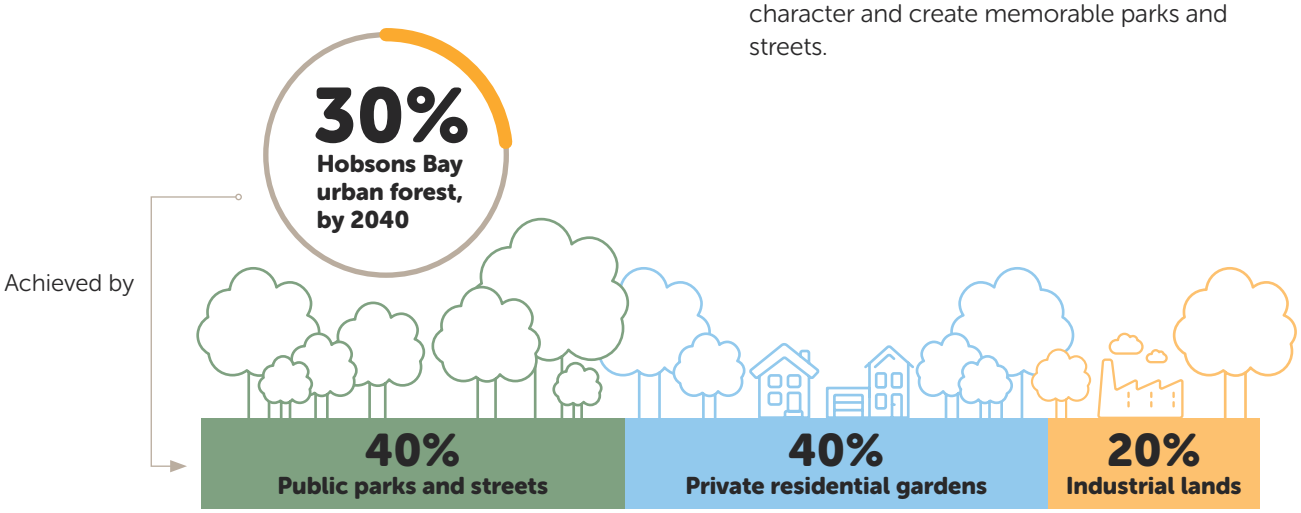


Figure 1.2: Hobsons Bay Urban Canopy Targets

Objective 3: Adopt a 'trees led' approach to city planning, design and delivery

Delivering a successful urban canopy requires an effective and integrated approach across all levels of administration, planning and delivery. Knowledge sharing, planning and collaboration are required to deliver an expanded, healthy and resilient urban forest for Hobsons Bay. Many of the challenges of integrating trees into the landscape can be overcome by developing an integrated approach that is supported in strategic planning, design and delivery. This objective reflects Hobson Bay City Council's wider commitment to be a council of excellence and innovation, in order to deliver well designed, maintained and environmentally sustainable places to the community.

The city's street verges are important areas for the delivery of urban trees. Many of the obstacles to tree planting can be overcome by early planning. An integrated approach to designing streets for trees can provide the dual benefit of reducing local temperatures on hot streets and mitigating stormwater runoff in the form of roadside tree pits, bioswales (channels) and rain gardens. This approach not only improves tree health but can reduce stormwater pollution.

Objective 4: Educate and foster care for urban trees

Delivering a healthy urban forest relies on not only community acceptance but encouraging care for the urban forest. Information sharing can increase acceptance and encourage wider participation from residents. Allowing people to participate in growing and sustaining the urban forest is critical.

A coordinated approach to working with the local community can provide a robust mechanism for information sharing and partnering that supports more tree planting. This may involve partnering with existing advocacy groups and/or developing new ways to engage with a wider cross section of residents. This aligns with Council's 2030 Community Vision which identified a strong desire from the Hobsons Bay community for expanded natural areas and more sustainable practices.

PRIORITY WORKS, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Priority works

In order to establish and implement an effective urban forest across Hobsons Bay, several foundational actions are required. These actions ensure that effective planning and guidance is in place to ensure delivery of a healthy urban forest. These are;

1. Development of an Urban Canopy Delivery Plan. This will establish an overarching LGA plan to direct all streetscape and park planting projects. This will provide a more detailed resolution of tree locations, configurations and species. This can track delivery of targets and identify any obstacles that require forward planning or consultation with stakeholders.

2. Development of Council engineering standards to prioritise tree growth and longevity. This ensures that all new trees are installed appropriately to safeguard their longterm health. This will also ensure tree planting works undertaken by others are appropriately constructed and delivered in accordance with relevant tree standards.

3. Integration of tree policies and targets into Council's planning regulations. This will embed tree targets across all council plans, strengthen tree protection and replenishment requirements. It is recommended that this be adopted into all relevant policies (such as within the planning scheme, in municipal strategic and neighbourhood character statements, development controls and in all council, capital works projects).

Monitoring and review

A critical component of the Urban Forest Strategy is undertaking regular reviews and monitoring to ensure;

- there is no net loss of trees in streets and parks
- there is an increase in canopy cover across the city, on public and on private land
- trees that are delivered are healthy, and well maintained
- community knowledge and support is increased
- improved tree species diversity is achieved

To achieve this, it is recommended that annual assessments are undertaken to review targets and measure outcomes. This review should also include feedback from inspections undertaken during the time frame to identify any issues and ensure tree standards are modified or adapted. A full review of the strategy should be undertaken after a five-year period.

Improvements to the data available on the city's trees is also required. This is to enable better assessment of long-term tree health. It is recommended that the current database be expanded to provide more detailed ULE information and to provide a more in-depth ULE categorisation (11 to 20 years, 20 to 30 years, 31 to 60 years).

ACTIONS







Objective 1: Increase Tree Canopy in Hobsons Bay to 30% by 2040

	Action	Cost	Time frame
1.1	Develop an LGA wide Urban Canopy Delivery Plan that identifies locations for new trees in high priority locations and implementation targets.	$100,000 year 1	1 to 2 years
1.2	Employ a Project Manager to oversee annual tree planting program and to assist with identifying priorities and delivery of new tree plantings.	$90,000 per year ongoing	Ongoing
1.3	Deliver an annual tree planting program that is in line with proposed target model recommended in Strategy (Delivery of 8,000 to 8,500 trees per year for 5 years, 4,000 to 4,500 trees thereafter).	$2,000,000 first 5 years, $1,100,000 after	1 to 5 years
1.4	Review planning polices, reporting frameworks, and statutory planning instruments to integrate targets. Review tree protection policies.	$60,000 year 1	1 to 2 years
1.5	Improve tree protection and planting requirements in planning scheme to increase tree canopy delivery requirements on private land.	Refer to 1.4	1 to 2 years
1.6	Investigate opportunities for matching grants and community planting programs to expand upon Council's tree planting programs.	Refer to 1.4	Ongoing

Subtotal $2,250,000 year 1
$2,090,000 year 2 to 5

Objective 2: Develop a diverse and healthy urban forest

	Action	Cost	Time frame
2.1	Employ a Inspecting Arborist to review and ensure compliance with Tree Protection requirements for council and private trees. Ensure trees are managed in accordance with industry and legislative requirements.	$90,000 per year ongoing	Ongoing
2.2	Improve inspection frequency of trees and tree maintenance works. Improving ULE classification and review.	Refer to 2.1	Ongoing
2.3	Provide specialised tree health measures to existing tree canopy.	$10,000 per year	Ongoing
2.4	Undertake regular audits of maintenance performance and to ensure all works are performed in accordance with Australian Standards	Refer to 2.1	Ongoing
2.5	Replacing the Laguanaria patersonia species with appropriate new large trees.	$150,000 per year for 5 years	1 to 5 years

Subtotal $250,000 years 1 to 5
$100,000 year 6 onwards

Objective 3: Adopt a 'trees led' approach to city planning, design and delivery

	Action	Cost	Time frame
3.1	Integrate minimum urban tree canopy and deep soil targets into all capital works projects.	Refer to 1.4	1 to 2 years
3.2	Develop and deliver an LGA wide Urban Canopy Delivery Plan that identifies locations for new trees in high priority locations and implementation targets.	Refer to 1.1	1 to 2 years
3.3	Review and early engagement with council's Urban Forest team to ensure appropriate design to achieve canopy targets.	Refer to 1.2	Ongoing
3.4	Develop/review standard engineering details that prioritise tree health, incl. passive watering, soil volume and permeable paving. Review WSUD standards and integrate with tree canopy requirements.	$70,000	1 to 2 years

Subtotal $2,250,000 year 1
$2,090,000 year 2 to 5

Objective 4: Educate and foster care for urban trees

	Action	Cost	Time frame
4.1	Develop key regional partnerships with organisations such as Greening the West, and with service and utility providers such as VicRoads.	Refer to 1.2	Ongoing
4.2	Strengthen partnerships with other greening agencies such as Landcare, Greening Australia, and local greening community groups.	Refer to 1.2	Ongoing
4.3	Develop a coordinated urban forest communication strategy. This would include coordination of approach including fact sheets, templates, process and response to all council related tree enquiries, for ongoing use by the Urban Forest team.	$60,000	1 to 2 years
4.4	Develop partnerships with businesses and offer grants for tree planting on existing industrial sites. Commitment would have to be made with organization to match $2 for every dollar council gives in grants.	$10,000 per year	Ongoing
4.5	Provide residents with a free tree at engagement events.	$10,000 per year	Ongoing
4.6	Continued delivery of 'Cool Streets' program	$80,000 per year	Ongoing

Subtotal $2,250,000 year 1
$2,090,000 year 2 to 5









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