



Draft Urban Forest Strategy

Community Engagement Report **2020/21**





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Executive Summary

Overview:

The City has a long-term vision for the future of the natural environment - formed from the views of the community, focused on looking after our place, our homes, our biodiversity and natural environment.

The Urban Forest Strategy was created to complement and sit alongside both the Local Environment Strategy and Local Biodiversity Strategy.

The draft Strategy was created following extensive community consultation. Once complete, the City invited comment to ensure public confidence and review community feedback.

Community engagement ran from 9 December 2020 to 29 January 2021.

Traditional stakeholder engagement was conducted through the City's monthly newsletter, website, and social media channels; alerts were issued to key groups including Friends Groups and local businesses ie. orchardists and wineries.

A feedback form was listed on the City's engage portal with hard copy forms placed at all City locations.

24 submissions were received.

Review

The City issued information regarding the Strategy and encouraged people to Have Their Say via:

EDM:

- City Subscribers (2054 email addresses) - Promotion in December 2020 and January 2021
- Friends Groups (124 email addresses) - Promotion in January 2021

Social Media:

Promotional posts were published to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter - clippings are included on pg 16 of this report showing social media insights for the campaign.

Posts across channels cumulatively reached <12K with an engagement rate of <5%.

Letter Drop:

- Letters detailing the Strategy and inviting people to Have Their Say were issued to 37 businesses in the Perth Hills.

Kalamunda Chamber of Commerce:

- The City partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to promote the Strategy and call for feedback.

Engage Portal:

The online engage project received 221 visits and 24 submissions.

Engagement Outcome:

Reviewing the community engagement uptake, the following should be noted:

- Those wishing to comment had to read the Strategy
- Feedback focused on what the respondent did not like about the Strategy
- Engagement ran over Christmas/New Year - community engagement is traditionally low at this time of year

With this in mind, project engagement key takeaways are:

- The City used its existing relationship with the Kalamunda Chamber of Commerce to assist with promotion
- Communications Team completed a direct letter drop to 37 targeted local businesses (orchardists/wineries etc) informing them of the engagement - this received great feedback
- Promotion to City email subscribers and specific groups received above average open rate and click through rate
- More than 200 unique visitors to engage portal indicating awareness was there. As conversion rate dropped off here, positive sentiment towards the strategy could be assumed.



Draft Urban Forest Strategy | Engaging with the community

The City of Kalamunda released a Draft Urban Forest Strategy for public comment in December 2020.

Our vision for the City's urban forest is: Our diverse forest is valued as an intrinsic feature of our evolving urban landscape that supports a happy, healthy and prosperous community.

A recent independent study conducted within 131 Councils across Australia ranked the City of Kalamunda in the top 20 Councils of the 131 assessed in terms of overall tree canopy however it ranked poorly in terms of annual loss of tree canopy, primarily due to residential and industrial development.

The draft Strategy has been developed in part to respond to this annual loss of tree canopy, especially in the urban environment. The Strategy looks at the three main environments within the City (Swan Coastal Plain, Darling Scarp and Darling Plateau) with targets for both retention and improvements in tree canopy coverage by 2028 against the 2018 benchmark. Specific actions have been proposed in the Strategy.

**A community survey was open from
9 December 2020 - 29 January 2021**

FAQs |

What is an Urban Forest?

Urban forest is a population of trees and vegetation growing within an urban setting for the purpose of improving the livability of that urban setting whilst providing social, economic and environmental benefits to the community as a whole.

Why do we need a Strategy?

To maintain, preserve and protect our urban forest we face many challenges. Some of these include:

- pathogen management
- public perception and perceived risks
- limited influence on private land

- competing priorities with utility providers
- changing urban environmental conditions
- ongoing budget constraints
- climate change including temperature changes and water availability
- available space to plant
- requirement to increase urban density

In order to appropriately address these issues and challenges, it is crucial that the city establish a holistic urban forest strategy to guide in the planned, systematic and integrated approach to managing the City's urban forest.

Urban forest is a population of trees and vegetation growing within an urban setting for the purpose of improving the livability of that urban setting whilst providing social, economic and environmental benefits to the community as a whole.

What are the goals of the draft strategy?

The City of Kalamunda is well known for its bushland, forests, parks and leafy streets. The draft Urban Forest Strategy outlines 11 key objectives with 38 actionable that aim to maintain and protect the City's urban forest.

Swan Coastal Plain Area

- Increase canopy cover to an average of 20% with no net loss based on the 2018 baseline within residential lots and road reserves by 2028.
- maintain current canopy cover within parks and reserves
- Retain at least 20% canopy cover within areas earmarked for, but yet to undergo, urban development
- Increase canopy cover in industrial areas to an average of 5 to 10% based on 2018 baseline by 2028

Darling Scarp Area

- Maintain overall canopy coverage with no net loss based on the 2018 baseline
- Increase canopy coverage in areas with less than 20% canopy cover (including the Kalamunda Town Centre)
- Increase canopy cover in industrial areas to an average of 5 to 10% based on 2018 baseline by 2028



Darling Plateau Area

- Maintain overall canopy coverage with no net loss based on the 2018 baseline
- To achieve the goals to maintain and increase the City's urban forest canopy cover an action plan has been developed. High priority actions should be implemented within two years, medium priority within five years and low priority actions within 10 years

Engage Portal | Traffic



Engage Traffic

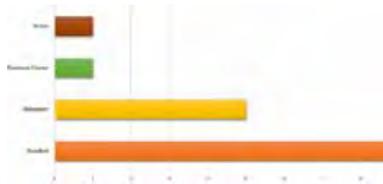
- 221** Total visits
- 22** Maximum visits per day
- 98** Informed Visitors
- 178** Aware Visitors



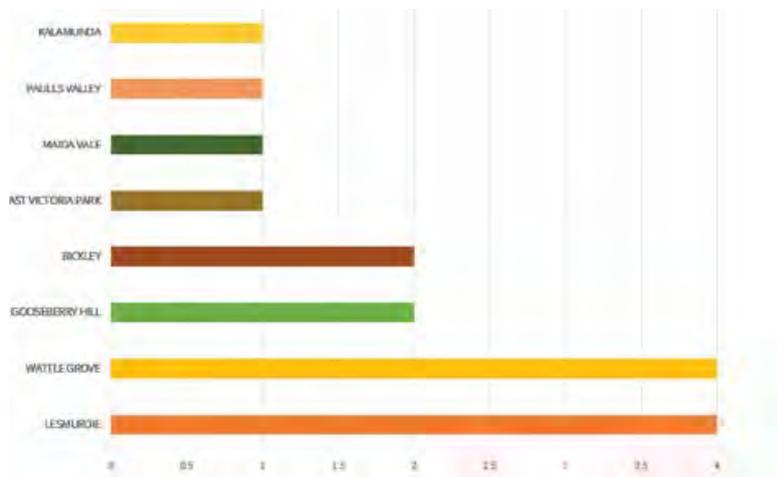
Engage (Survey) | Demographics

The Survey received 24 contributions

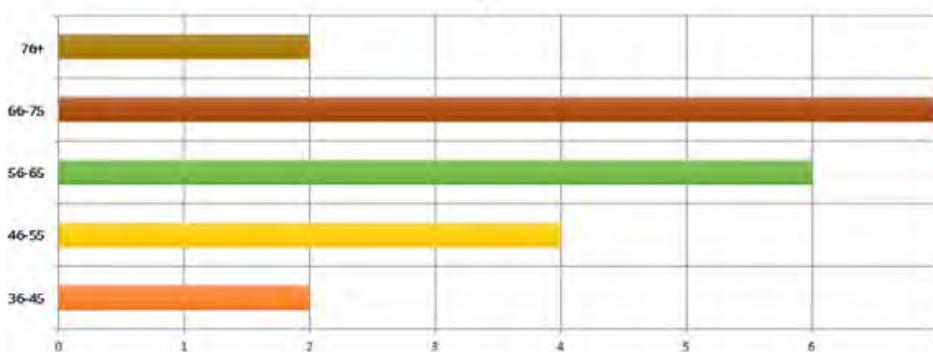
Gender of Respondents



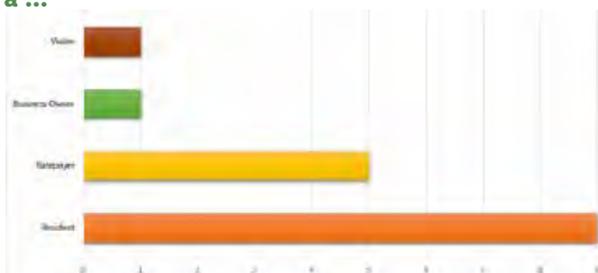
Suburb



Age



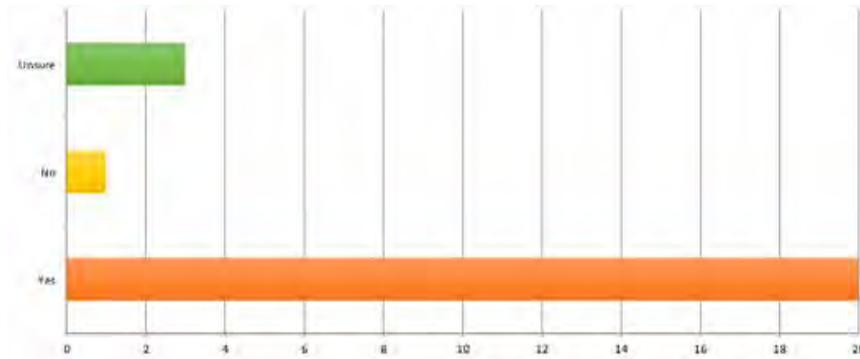
I am a ...



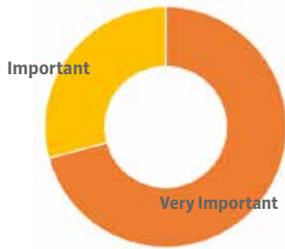


Engage | Survey Responses

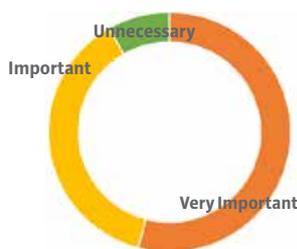
Did you find the draft urban forest strategy easy to understand?



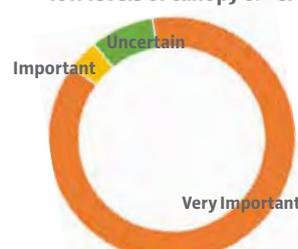
Rating: Increased planting on road reserves and street verges



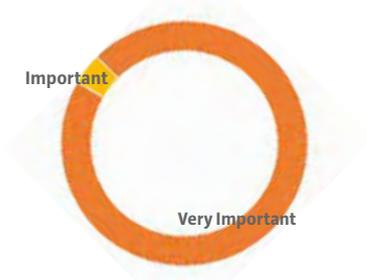
Rating: Increased species diversity within the City's streetscapes



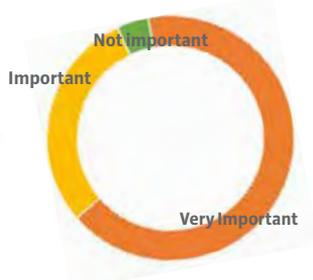
Rating: Increased planting within parks and reserves with low levels of canopy cover



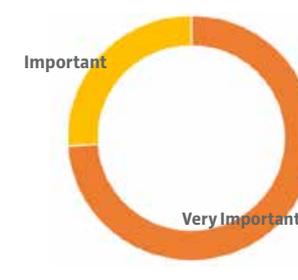
Rating: Maintain existing canopy cover within parks, reserves and road reserves (verges and medians)



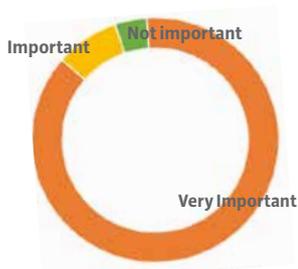
Rating: Increased planting on private property



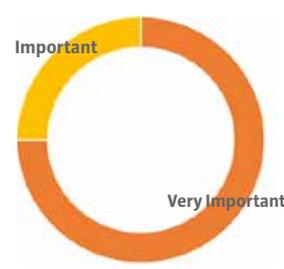
Rating: Maintain trees and other vegetation on private property



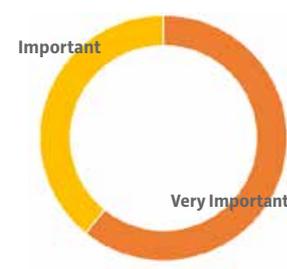
Rating: Maintain urban forest within areas earmarked for urban development



Rating: Increased urban forest canopy in industrial areas

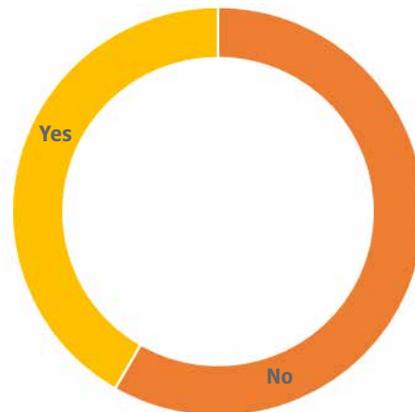


Rating: Increased urban canopy cover in the Kalamunda Town Centre and surrounds





Do you disagree with any of the actions and if so which ones and why?

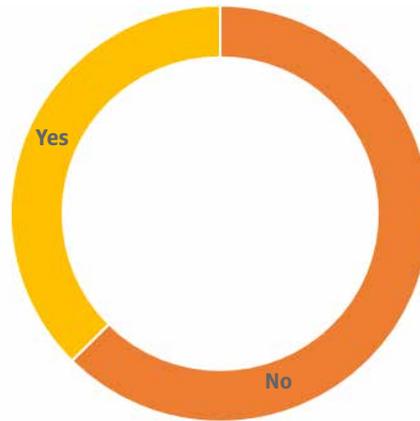


Comments
>> Missing any treatment of the conflict between the Fire inspectors demanding trees near houses be removed and clearing of vegetation/mulch within 20m of houses... in other regions this causes constant conflict as the two departments never seem to have a common ground - eg. in Armadale you can be instructed to remove trees, and then receive a notice to replant the trees
>> 10.2 Create a database to track the number of trees and vegetation planted and removed by the City on an annual basis" only covers trees planted and removed by the City of Kalamunda (not local residents), it should also include trees removed privately too (i.e. often due to private development) i.e. it would be much more inclusive to have "Create a database to track the number of trees and vegetation planted and removed *in* the City on an annual basis
>> Development and human activity in the forest areas will only cause further tree loss and environmental damage
>> I agree with all the points, some of the moderate to low values applied should be questioned, as I think that all points are of equal importance. The Darling Scarp is seeing a lot of tree removal as people are developing their private property, so I would advise that it is very important to work at lessening that impact on the Urban Forest cover. I think it is very important the City is very hands on at educating the Tree Removalists about any and all changes. They are the front line to people having trees/cover removed. If the City is to retain some of the significant trees, the removalists need to have a clear idea as to the guidelines. Once old trees are removed it takes a person's lifetime or more to grow them back to a point of decent cover again

Comments
>> Increasing planting (large trees) on private property - fire trees overhanging properties should reduce not increase. Whilst I agree to increase planting in urban forest canopy we need to increase the controlled burning to reduce fire loads in forest. We are one fire away from a disaster - strong easterly & fire load
>> No disagreement with actions (although it is mentioned in document, would stress the importance of ensuring appropriate species are carefully selected for verge etc plantings to avoid costs to City/ratepayers of pruning under power lines, ditto along walk/bike trails)
>> All actions that are given medium priority should be upgraded to high priority
>> No. 6 add - Council not to spot rezone or allow urban and industrial developments on significant environmental and tree canopy areas which are privately owned
>> The proposed Guide to Verge Planting and Planting Under Powerlines should be given high priority, not medium. We need ways to easily unlock the Community's energy both in groups and individuals. Guides that allow individual and group landholders to take positive action should come sooner rather than later
>> All actions that have been given medium priority should be treated as high priority

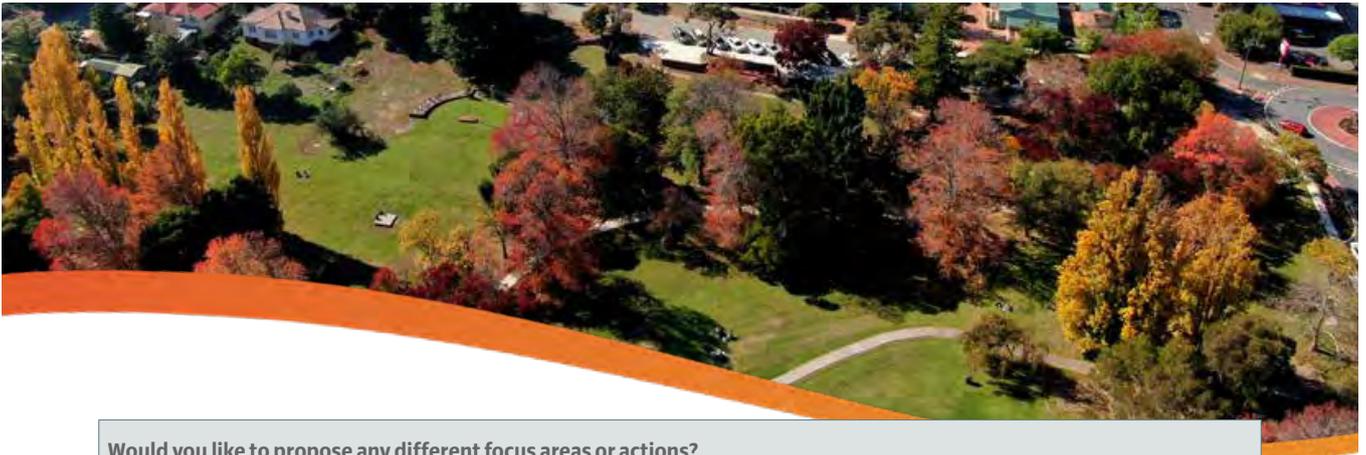


Do you disagree with the priorities attached to any of the actions and if so which ones and why?



Comments
>> 11.1 Create a dedicated urban forest team within the City." Successful implementation of the strategy is going to be difficult without a dedicated team. This should be prioritised, loaded with expertise and given the powers required to implement changes
>> We have already lost natural environment to urban development. Given the importance of the forest areas for water catchment, biodiversity and as the "lungs" for the city any further "development" in treed area is highly UNDESIRABLE
>>4.8 Given the environmental importance of the Local Biodiversity Strategy and the Public Open Space Strategy, this action deserves to be ""High"" priority
>> The Darling Scarp region needs to be a higher priority because at the current rate the tree removal is likely to become significantly denuded as residents subdivide and develop their blocks. As I have observed from my property (in Kalamunda) we have lost at least 50 very large and significant trees just in the immediate area in the last ten years. More than 75% of these were removals by owners of private properties. We really need to educate people about the value of their trees, to them, their pockets and then the rest of the environment
>> The overall priority is far too low
>> No need to increase planting on land tagged for urban development or earmarked for development in the next 10 years unless fast growing (2 years)

Comments
>> Agree with action priorities but would consider the order in which they are arranged in Table 3. Would place the maintenance and protection of existing canopy cover ahead of strategies for planting etc. Fully support the establishment of an urban forest team
>> All of the actions that are given medium priority should be high priority. Q11.1 I feel this team should have been in place when the forest strategy was first spoken of years ago. By retaining rural and special rural areas the benefits as has been stated on page 3 1.1 can only assist the next survey of canopy cover and all the other goals to be achieved
>> All of the actions that have been given medium priority should be treated as high priority



Would you like to propose any different focus areas or actions?
>> Align urban forest and fire control or it will end up being a continual battle, also clarify ownership and responsibility for verges - in 2020 the City did nothing to reduce dry grass on verges -which are the main fire start locations.. most residents expect the City to be responsible for the verge, Finally - more details on how to manage developments - typically the clear-fell everything and then do some plantings - this erases any benefits to the ecosystem since mature trees are host to many fauna
>> Increase the Plants for Residents program to take place several times a year. It would be good to have a planting guide provided with each plant also
>> As Kalamunda is thought of by many residents as ""our home in the forest"" - it is imperative to maintain total tree cover. Preventing ""net loss of tree canopy and other vegetation"" is simply not enough - offsetting vegetation and tree loss, is not the same as preventing gross loss of tree canopy and other vegetation. It is critical to preserve what vegetation already exists, as well as add to it. The City of Kalamunda must review its Local Planning Strategy and Scheme to change how future developments happen with in its boundaries. This is where the majority of tree loss is occurring
>> Inappropriate planting of verges i.e. hostile plants that have weedy potential
>> I think it should be of a high priority that native trees are planted in industrial areas. Not "medium" priority. The huge development in Wattle Grove and destruction of trees makes me cry
>> Help us preserve our rural life style in Wattle Grove and save us from the developers
>> I wonder whether the KAL can harness the eyes and ears of the community and set up a hotline for people with concerns over forest and tree management?
>> Yes, focus on the removal of non indigenous species from forest areas, limit and contain human access to the still pristine areas of natural bush
>> Whilst fully endorsing all the tabled Strategies, I would urge the City to view them all in relation to their future bushfire implications. This would involve input from the relevant authorities, within the City and outside City limits
>> Keep existing tree canopy and stop being developer focused
>> Please remember that the people in the Darling Scarp region will also want to be included in the Plants for Resident's scheme. I personally have been using the plants that I got from this scheme to plant cover in the areas that I would not have had the funds to cover myself. So the very back of my property and also my verge has benefited from this scheme and as a result the mature trees that I have on my block have improved in health over the past 10 years
>> Yes, concentrate on preventing all clearance by commercial and private developers on any established shade trees
>> Fire planning in line with increased canopies, especially area's backing onto forest addressing fire load management
>> I would like to propose a different action and that is to keep Wattle Grove South's zoning as special rural/semi rural with block sizes no less than 2000 sqms
>> More information on the wildlife effects on reduction of tree canopy
>> The strategy is fantastic - well done. My only suggestions are: The City needs to negotiate seriously with Western Power who are a big cause of people cutting down the trees in their front yard in Gooseberry Hill as they are always tagging the trees to be pruned every year and eventually people get fed up with the expense and end up cutting down the whole tree. Plus Western Power never tell residents that if it's a naturally occurring tree (ie a marri), WP will prune the tree at their own expense. This needs to be publicly known and not just for those who persist.



Would you like to propose any different focus areas or actions? (Continued)
<p>>> Reviewing current developmental proposals to include and ensure the approvals retain vegetation, rather than remove all vegetation and replace with younger trees. Limiting denser infill building construction. Include corridors of natural vegetation (not replanted) and open space rather than parks in isolation allowing animals to move freely between habitats. New subdivisions for housing and industry do not allow avenues for wildlife to move uninterrupted, thereby causing distress to both the wildlife and humans. People have to find a solution to animals they may not want in their gardens and relocation is not always an option</p>
<p>>> The intention to increase verge plantings is very welcome indeed but I was disappointed to see the lack of detail with regard to how this would be done. One issue that I believe is very important is combining the increased tree cover with considerations of how to ensure that both the new plantings and existing trees don't unnecessarily lead to dramatically increased maintenance costs for the City. Currently the City's policies strongly discourage the removal of trees on road verges and that is vitally important. However certain species are more likely than others to lead to lifting of road and footpath pavements. It is also highly likely that any large tree growing within two metres or so of a footpath or road edge will lead to damage in the future. Repairs to both road surfaces and footpaths are very expensive and therefore designing a policy which encourages the avoidance of species known to be a problem and planting trees well back from the road or footpath edge would achieve increased tree cover while eliminating heavy ongoing costs.</p> <p>I am sure the City would always pay attention to the positioning of new plantings and that that positioning would cover my concerns. Hopefully some research would also go into the selection of species. However, with regard to existing problem trees, could the City identify these culprits and, as a priority, plant replacement trees further away from the road/footpath and of a suitable species? Then in, say, five years time, when the new trees were 3 metres or so tall, remove the undesirable trees. The financial implications of retaining unsuitable trees was brought home to me a few years ago when the City replaced a section of roadway which had become seriously degraded due to the roots of a nearby tree. The work undertaken involved the stripping of 20 to 30 metres of the road, compacting and levelling before resealing and re-kerbing. Based on other works of a similar nature, I "guesstimate" that the overall cost could have been as high as \$20,000. When discussing the work with the resident living opposite, she noted that this section had been resurfaced seven times now due to the tree roots. Even if my estimate is a bit high (although I don't believe it is) the cost of leaving this tree (and other similar ones) in place without a plan for it's replacement seems a wanton waste of precious resources - resources that could contribute significantly towards increasing the tree canopy in a more responsible manner. These problem trees are usually self seeded and appear to have germinated in soil that has been disturbed for road or footpath construction. Hence their proximity to those surfaces.</p> <p>I believe that those of us seeking to improve the environment need to bear in mind that significant sections of the community see us as tree huggers and that this work is not important. Unless we show that we have thought this through professionally and we aren't burdening the ratepayers with avoidable costs, I think we will continue to be deemed irrelevant.</p> <p>On to something completely different but also important. The City has many areas where native bush is relatively undisturbed. These include unallocated crown land, city reserves and state managed parks. Street verge plantings in these areas have the potential to threaten those bush areas. Could the strategy include planting guidelines that avoid species known to be invasive and which threaten the natural value of these areas? Eastern states wattles and eucalypts are just a couple of obvious examples</p>
<p>>> I feel that implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy needs to be expedited before more canopy cover is destroyed</p>
<p>>> No consideration to green/vegetated roofs. This might not be appropriate given initial cost and ongoing water usage however they do provide environmental services (improves air quality, reduces ambient temperature, noise reduction and increases solar panel efficiency to name a few. Incorporating appropriate species into future rail/drainage reserves</p>
<p>>> Hollows: The word doesn't appear in a keyword search of the draft strategy. This omission is glaring because of the role hollows play in the life of our forests. Their decline ('need to get rid of that old dead tree.') needs to be halted. Yes, there is a threat from honeybees, but they are already a threat and meanwhile a large swathe of our bird, mammal and reptile populations is losing the shelter they need to survive. Read the literature, (Gold Coast Council has stuff on it) and add a Hollows Plan or a Strategy goal to 'investigate and report on the role of hollows in Kalamunda's urban forest areas and recommend actions where required'</p>
<p>>> I would like to propose to keep Wattle Grove South zoned rural with block sizes no less than 2000 square metres</p>



Are there specific other comments you have that are important in finalising the strategy?

>> I'm glad its finally been addressed

>> Maybe the City could offer educational sessions for residents to learn more about looking after their trees/plants and which ones to encourage them to plant - natives, fire retardant, waterwise and bird/wildlife attracting etc
There is reference to disease and other aspects causing a reduction in canopy cover, however the clearing of land to build housing estates (eg Bushmead) contributes to the lack of canopy cover particularly when bodies such as DFES have such strict BAL guidelines which essentially forces people to reduce their canopy so their house plans get approved by the City

>> The main cause of tree loss and heat island effect is dense urban development and new industrial areas. The City of Kalamunda can have an impact on these forms of development and thereby drastically reduce its environmental impact through the Local Planning Strategy and Scheme. This is where the most Urban Forest can be saved. Planting trees in streetscapes and parks can only do so much to alleviate the heat island affect and tree loss. How new development occurs must be changed (through the Local Planning Strategy) to preserve existing urban forest.
The City of Kalamunda needs to seriously review it's development policies and how it holds them to account - it has to date ignored its own police which is to 'deliver environmental sustainability and maintain the integrity of the natural environment'. It has clearly failed here. More action is needed.

>> I'd like to suggest a financial reward for ratepayers as an incentive to care for and keep trees on private land. Rather than fine owners for removing trees, we could reward owners with a rates discount determined according to the amount of canopy cover on their property. Canopy levels could be bracketed, so if an owner removes a tree or if a tree dies on their property, they may drop into a lower bracket. By putting a dollar value on trees, land owners will see them as an asset. It also compensates owners for the additional work involved in managing urban forest. Canopy levels could be assessed every 5 years, with owners given the opportunity to apply to change brackets if they believe the canopy has increased. Canopy could also be reassessed whenever council receives information that trees have been lost

>> Many of the species of "trees" on road verges are weedy wattles i.e. E.S. species that are rapidly spreading especially in the upper reaches of the Darling Scarp and Plateau

>> Will the City of Kalamunda be able to enforce the Urban Forest Strategy or can it be over ruled by the State Planning division, as it has happened so often in the past? Unless the State Government has the same strategy all your good efforts can be for naught! PS, I would love to see street trees planted in our street, to replace the once that have died or been removed. That is in Bauhinia Rd Forrestfield.

>> The City needs to have a good hard look at its self and try to repair its reputation when it comes to environmental issues around land clearing and development. The word is out that Kalamunda is one of the worst local governments in the country for over seeing vegetation loss. Having read the strategy it would be great if we could make some inroads into stopping rampant development and destruction of our environment. However what we have endured and the struggle down here in Wattle Grove over the past decade and more to preserve our environment, makes me very cynical and ho hum if anything would get done at all or is it just going through the process to make things look good, as though someone actually cares.

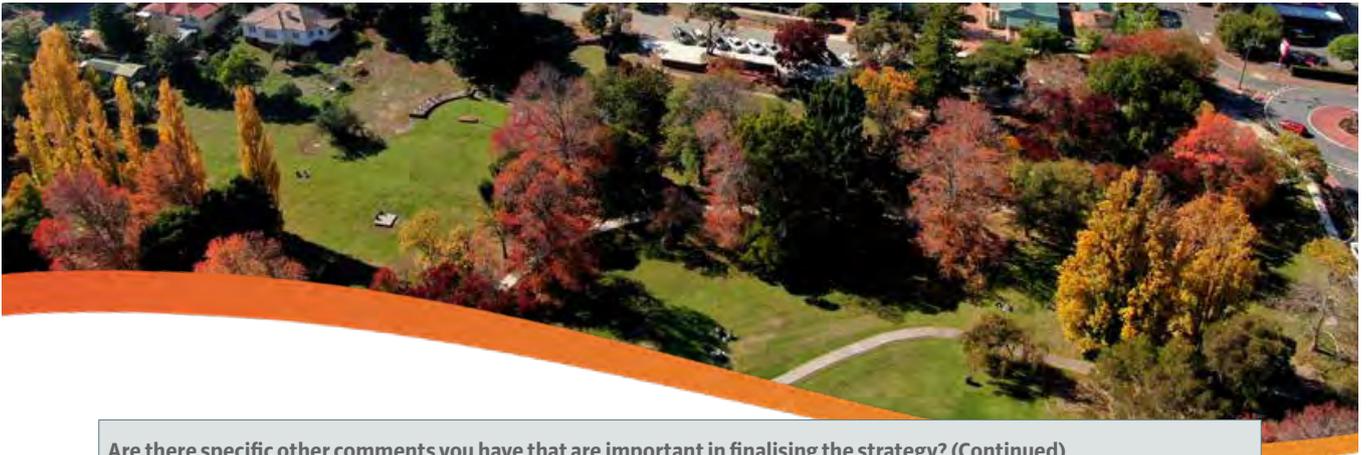
>> The Council has encourage over the past 15 years off road bike activity in our forests. This has resulted in the spread of non indigenous species, increased road traffic on roads not suitable for this, erosion, the building of bike trails in parks designated only for walking, antisocial activity locally

>> This Strategy is welcomed and covers, in varying degrees, the environmental and health concerns of the majority of the residents. Whilst Strategy 6 "Maintain trees and other vegetation on private property" addresses the 'elephant in the room', it is essential that long-overdue action be taken. There will be substantial opposition to any reduction of a landowner's right to do whatever he/she likes on their block of land. Using the ELUPS to "incorporate a provision in the Scheme" may be the only way to address this longstanding problem. It should be remembered that recent research has found that, regardless of the success of an authority in retaining tree cover on lands it manages, failure to address the topic of tree preservation on private land, will always result in a net LOSS of tree canopy

>> City of Kalamunda has an appalling reputation for destroying tree canopy and not listening to residents. This should change



Are there specific other comments you have that are important in finalising the strategy? (Continued)
<p>>> I think it is a very good idea to add road verges to the Friends Groups care, there are two advantages that I can see from this. One it would help to educate people on weed species that are affecting the reserves and parks. Two it would increase urban forest cover. Can I also suggest Adopt-a-Verge Tree Scheme where people can sign up to have a verge tree planted and then they are responsible to maintain it ie. water it etc. The last point that I would like to add to the debate is this. That one of the things that I have not seen mentioned in the benefits of increased urban forest is that it dampens down the noise pollution of the urban environment. The plant cover really softens the echo caused by urban hard surfaces</p>
<p>>> Yes, the overall programme is inadequate as a serious response to known climate change - seems as though it is being trivialised and grossly under resourced bearing in mind the seriousness of the issues identified in the consultants research</p>
<p>>> Some suggested improvements to the document: (a) Noting the photos used early in the document, would it be better to have a triptych of captioned photos showing representative examples of urban forest envisioned for the three City of Kalamunda regions i.e. Swan. Scarp and Plateau? (b) Sect 1.1 para 3, p 3. Urban forest also mitigates against extreme cold/frost reducing heating costs or crop damage. (c) Sect 1.2, para 1 p. 3. Purpose of Urban Forest Strategy: The over-riding purpose is to protect, enhance, establish and maintain all habitats (be they natural or modified) to improve the quality of life of all living things (d) Fig 2, p. 5. Is it worth stating somewhere what happens when residents/developers etc are in default of planning or legislative requirements regarding vegetation protection/removal? You want to avoid sounding punitive: but also, people need to be aware that there can be consequences for unauthorised vegetation removal (?some of this covered in EULPS or other City documents). This would help underpin the important Strategy objectives of maintaining and protecting the present urban forest cover, let alone any that is later established. (e) p.7 The importance of the senses (sight, sound, touch, smell), as well as emotional responses in to trees/forest is indicated. The following reference broadens out these values. Cherry, T. D. (1999): Assessing Aesthetic Landscape Values. A Community Participatory Methodology, Master of Science thesis, Department of Geography. University of Western Australia. (f) Missing is something on Aboriginal values, expectations; and historical values (heritage trees arc mentioned in the doc). (g) p 7. Economic benefit from useful tree plantings (nut, fruit, flowers etc)</p>
<p>>> On 24 November 2020, I believe the City contradicted all that they say they believe in regard to the City priority goal to keep Kalamunda City "Clean and Green" when they voted to destroy the environment of Wattle Grove South, with their plan to urbanize the area. Not only did they contradict themselves but also betrayed the voice of the people with 215 submissions against urbanization and 2 in favour of it</p>
<p>>> With the destruction of trees and turning rural blocks into new high density suburbs - HEAT ISLANDS --TREELESS SUBURBS. The difference in temperature is 10 degrees. Just consider the energy used to cool these new suburbs. Energy use means more mining for coal more environmental damage</p>
<p>>> Another issue is that the installation of solar panels on household rooftops is leading to trees being cut down, because people want to make sure their solar energy works. The stupidity of this is staggering but it has happened in our area - the trees were cooling the person's house far more and at less cost than the solar panels were but some people don't realise this. Maybe they should only be allowed to install the solar panels with micro-inverters in the hills, and there needs to be more education about the superior cooling effects of trees</p>
<p>>> It takes many years, even centuries, for mature trees to develop and successfully support larger species of wildlife and form sustainable ecosystems. Removing trees and replacing them does not equate to maintaining a good forest even with strategy/planning. Soil, nutrients and microscopic factors are disturbed</p>
<p>>> By proposing an increase in the diversity of plant species to be planted, one hopes that these species will be local native species rather than non-native species</p>



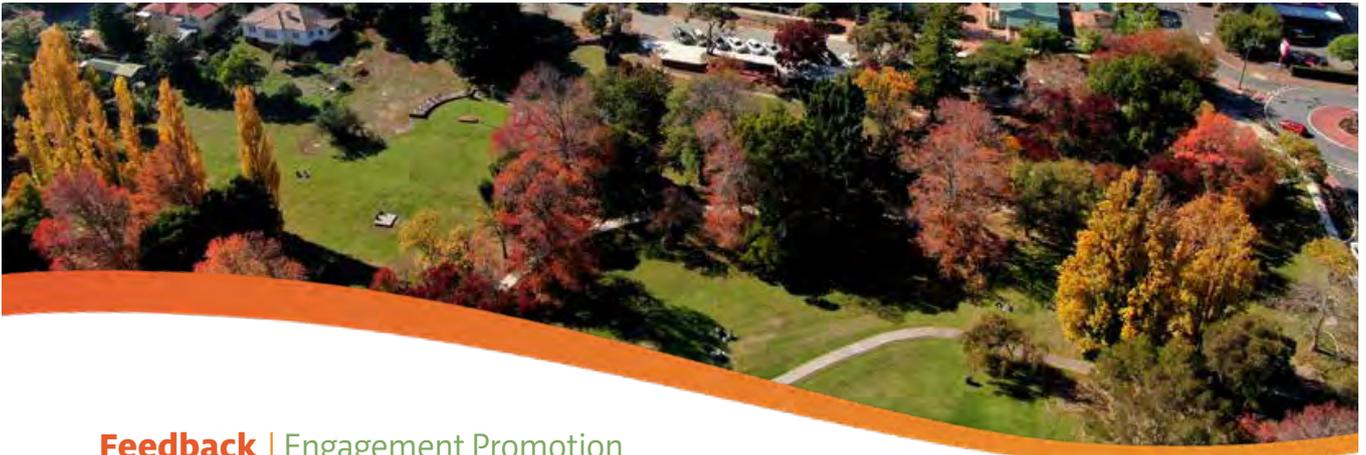
Are there specific other comments you have that are important in finalising the strategy? (Continued)

>> The addition of each zones community expectations as they will likely vary between the coastal plain, scarp and plateau. This would impact on priority actions for each zone.

- The strategies goals are all the way back on page 35 and not highlighted in the introduction
- the use of ground covers associated with urban trees not explored (companion planting)
- Strategy doesn't explore the potential negative aspects of urban trees and propose solutions to these (ongoing maintenance, root damage to infrastructure, fire risk and competing landuse/community opinion).
- Incorporation of granite outcrop native species into carparks, potential to harvest water?
- No discussion regarding fire risk in the darling scarp or plateau (Climate change)
- Should the city be more proactive in monitoring for marri canker in priority reserves rather than waiting to review aerial photos, a bit late at that stage?
- More proactive managing dieback to incorporate cleaning stations for walkers, signage and vehicle hygiene around known dieback infestations
- Should the consequence of inappropriate tree removal be highlighted here or at least direction to further info (will date quickly)
- Could reference the Land Conservation Act regarding drainage, clearing threats in Darling Plateau

>> Well done so far. Beware vested interests if possible. Good luck

>> On the 24 of November 2020, I feel the City of Kalamunda betrayed the voice of the people when they voted to urbanize Wattle Grove South, which has an increasing tree canopy growth rate, contrary to the 215 submissions from the people not to urbanize the area and only two submissions in favour of the Roberts Day plan



Feedback | Engagement Promotion

Communications included:

- » Community Survey/Feedback Form
- » Social Media Awareness
- » Website Visibility/Link
- » Media Release
- » Flyers and inclusion in City commissioned EDMs
- » Letters to community members impacted by the Plan
- » Face-to-Face discussions led by Project Team

Content was posted across the City's buildings and shared with Stakeholders, such as Kalamunda Chamber of Commerce for placement in their member communications.

Media Release:



Survey:



Engage Traffic

- 221** Total visits
- 22** Maximum visits per day
- 98** Informed Visitors
- 178** Aware Visitors



Direct Letter Drop to Local Businesses:



signature businesses in the City of Draft Urban Forest Strategy

Name	Email	Address
AA's Landscaping	aa@aa.com.au	80 Monroe Rd, Carniel WA 6075
Adelaide Crane	adelaidecrane.com.au	225 Adelaide Rd, Bickley WA 6071
Ashley Estate Vineyard	ashleyestate@gmail.com	294 Adelaide Rd, Bickley WA 6071
Bullaro Orchard		80 Moorilla Rd, Pickering Brook WA 6071
Bickley Valley Cottage	bickleyvalleycottage@bickleyvalleycottage.com.au	81 Bickley Rd, Bickley WA 6071
Bickley Valley Fresh		85 Curvata Rd, Bickley WA 6071
Bickley Valley Petrol Bites		273 Adelaide Rd, Bickley WA 6071
Brockside Vineyard	brocksidevineyard@brocksidevineyard.com.au	47 Lanning Rd, Bickley WA 6075
Carlisle Homecraft Vineyard	carlislehomecraftvineyard.com.au	60 Marshall Rd, Bickley WA 6075
Cartmel Elder Co	cartmelelderco.com.au	180 Cartmel Rd, Carniel WA 6075
Cartmel Cherry Farm		101 Monroe Rd, Carniel WA 6075
Coos Elder	cooselder.com.au	75 Marvella Rd, Pickering Brook WA 6071
Coorwin Vine	coorwinvine.com.au	87 Unwin Rd, Carniel WA 6075
Farroshan	farroshan@farroshan.com.au	71 Cartmel Rd, Carniel WA 6075
Fish Summit		150 South Rd, Pickering Brook WA 6071
H&P Agriculture		85 Curvata Rd, Bickley WA 6075
Harold Vineyard and Cider Door	haroldvineyard.com.au	208 Vulture Rd, Bickley WA 6075
High Vale Orchard		35 Marvella Rd, Pickering Brook WA 6071
Keebrook Spring	keebrookspring.com.au	53 Weyron Rd, Pickering Brook 6071
La Farnosa Perth Hills	lafarnosa.com.au	21 Marvella Rd, Pickering Brook WA 6071
Lubin Marvella Pty Ltd		142 Curvata Rd, Carniel WA 6075
Limestone Hedges		49 Gipsy Rd, Leinster WA 6071
Maheta Bickley		290 Vulture Rd, Bickley WA 6075
Maheta's Place & Garden Farm	maheta@maheta.com.au	101 Turner Rd, Carniel WA 6075
Margherite		1610n Rd, Carniel WA 6075
Marigold Valley Nursery	marigoldvalley.com.au	101 Pines Rd, Kalamunda WA 6076
Pickley Stone & Lumber Co	pickleystone.com.au	19 Loring Rd, Bickley WA 6071
Peach Farm		41 Haverhill Rd, Vinton WA 6076
Phiona Estate Vineyard and Tapas	phionaestatevineyard.com.au	41 Haverhill Rd, Bickley WA 6071
Quarry Centre - Greenhouse		170 Weywood Rd, Leinster WA 6071
Quill Orchard		21 Haverhill Rd, Vinton WA 6076
Springhill Orchards		33 Springhill Rd, Kalamunda WA 6076
Town's Vineyard & Winery		41 Carniel Rd, Carniel WA 6075
The Blenheim Farm		101 Adelaide Rd, Pickering Brook WA 6071
White Grove Plant Farm		31 White Rd, Orange Grove WA 6071
Wesley Orchard		100 Frances Rd, Pickering Brook WA 6071

Verbal Feedback:

"Thank you so much for dropping off the letter advising us of the draft Urban Forest Strategy."

"We're not on email and rarely get any communication from the City. We don't get the local paper so finding out about things like this can be hard."

"We are ever so grateful!"

Kalamunda Chamber of Commerce Promotion:



Project promotion and engagement activities resulted in 24 contributions/submissions being received.



Appendix 1 | SUBMISSIONS

The following submissions were received in addition to the survey feedback
>> Respondent 1 - pg 19
>> Respondent 2 - pg 20
>> Respondent 3 - pg 22
>> EcoVision - pg 25
>> Respondent 5 - pg 35
>> Respondent 6 - pg 48
>> Respondent 7 - pg 51
>> NRPG - pg 52
>> Respondent 9 - pg 57
>> Respondent 10 - pg 58

» Respondent 1 [sic]

Dear Councillors and City staff

We regard it as essential for the City of Kalamunda to protect the remaining urban forest in the City by retaining the rural and semi-rural land use zonings of land within our City boundary and, in particular, the rural zoning of Wattle Grove South, a known unique and environmentally sensitive area.

As you know, the Environmental Protection Act specifically regulates the clearing of native vegetation and tree canopy in areas where land is zoned rural/special rural/rural residential. These protections do not exist in areas zoned for residential sub-division.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Yours sincerely

» Respondent 2 [sic]

26 January 2021

Dear Councillors and City staff,

RE: Draft Urban Forest Strategy

Being a resident in Wattle Grove South and having endured the relentless push from the City of Kalamunda Council for the last 2 ½ years to urbanise our beautiful eco sensitive semi-rural area, I know only too well the importance of protecting the 'urban forest'. While this draft strategy on the surface seems that you are now acknowledging the importance of this fact, it appears to be in complete contrast with your actions.

I would like to make comment on your draft strategy, as I believe you need to prevent this loss of forest rather than trying to fix the problem after you have created it. For this reason, it is crucial for the City of Kalamunda to protect the remaining urban forest in the City by retaining the rural and semi-rural land use zonings of land within our City boundary and, in particular, the rural zoning of Wattle Grove South, now documented as a known unique and environmentally sensitive area.

Your opening 'Vision' statement says "City of Kalamunda seeks to conserve and grow its urban forest" which means that you should not be allowing the disastrous clearing of land by developers and to some extent landowners.

The Environmental Protection Act specifically regulates the clearing of native vegetation and tree canopy in areas where land is zoned rural /special rural/rural residential. These protections do not exist in areas zoned for residential sub-division.

Your 'Introduction' statement highlights the destruction of urban infill, in particular along the Swan Coastal Plain. Through the Local Planning Strategy, the City has the ability to influence development, yet the City of Kalamunda through its own omissions has allowed this continual destruction. Once this vegetation is gone it's too late. You can put smoke and mirrors up and suggest replanting new trees etc and make it sound great, but what's done is done, and you have then destroyed an entire ecological system. These areas are the ones you should be focussing on more so and "conserve it where possible, and enhance it into the future" as your draft suggests. What is failed to be mentioned here, yet has been mentioned for the Darling Scarp and Darling Plateau, is that it is the residents that have worked hard in this area to conserve good tree and shrub canopy themselves, so I think this is an inaccurate summary of the area.

You ask for community engagement, and 75% of residents in Wattle Grove responded that this area should retain its rural land zoning, which as stated above allows for development that will protect the environment within this area. Yet this appeared to have fallen on deaf ears, with 7 councillors voting in favour of changing the future land use to urban, acting on the recommendation of the City administration, rather than the majority of residents, whom they are meant to represent.

I would like to comment on Figure 5 Urban Heat Island Effect. My block and my neighbouring blocks have quite a high density of trees and shrubs as does a lot of this area, so I would like to know where the data was taken for the temperature records? The map indicates the entire area as high average temperatures, whilst I would think this would only appear closer to the Tonkin Highway end where these blocks have less tree density, so I question this. This new term 'Heat Island' is something we should all be very concerned about. This is a result of urbanisation at its best, or should I say worst!

Overview 1.5 again sums up the significance of the '**already existing tall tree canopy and flora and fauna associated in areas which have already been identified and the need to retain these areas.**' It also states 'the loss of approximately 630 hectares of native vegetation from the City in the period from 2008-2020.' **YOU NEED TO STOP THIS NOW!!** We must retain these precious areas. Talk the talk, walk the walk!

Point 1.7 Swan Coastal Plain – **‘Urban development has often failed to retain urban forest or even retain a single tree.’** As stated in your draft, **‘Wattle Grove still has a significant area of rural owned land which allows for the retention of trees and increases the average canopy across the suburb.’** Yet you are willing for one of the largest urban forest areas remaining in the foothills, 340 hectares of Eco-sensitive land to be rezoned to urban, which will then no longer protect this land. So you are acknowledging in your own document the destruction of the urban forest by urban development, and this cannot continue. Again you **NEED TO PROTECT THESE AREAS.**

I would like clarification on ‘Canopy cover across the Swan Coastal Plain is summarized in Error! References not found.’

I would like clarification on ‘A major reason for large areas of low canopy cover indicated by the red area in Error! References not found.’

‘Opportunities’ – In this section I will agree with your 3 points of opportunities in the need to work with the community at large and revegetate where needed, I have absolutely no objection to this. However, this does not address the issue of urban development and its resultant removal of trees and vegetation which is vastly detrimental. This has been brought to the attention of Council on numerous occasions and yet it has appeared to have fallen on deaf ears. One example is the cleared private property on the corner of Brentwood Road and Welshpool Road, where the entire block was cleared. Another example is along Welshpool Rd near the Swan Animal Haven. How on earth did these get approval? I would like to know? The MKSEA is another area of terrible tree loss. Cell 9 – Wattle Grove is another where lovely homes have been built, yet there are no trees there. Where is the accountability? City of Kalamunda, you have allowed this to happen in your own backyard in what often appears to be developer driven.

So this brings me to my own view that your Draft Urban Forest Strategy appears to be quite hypocritical. I personally have stood up in Council on many occasions and told you like many others of the importance of protecting our tree canopy, the flora and fauna, and yet history has shown repeatedly, including at the Council meeting on the 24th November 2020, the City of Kalamunda blatantly ignored the pleas of the majority (75%) of residents to retain this area due to its environmental significance, and instead steamrolled ahead for urban zoning. The data is all there.

If you want the support of the community behind the ‘Draft Urban Forest Strategy’ then once and for all you need stop this deplorable destruction of our precious land. People today are very well educated on climate change and its causes, so do the right thing by your people. It is appalling that the City of Kalamunda is now on record as having one of the worst tree canopy losses in Australia. You can talk about planting trees everywhere as a solution in this draft, well stop chopping them down in the first place! It’s not just the trees, it is the wildlife and vegetation that goes with it that we will lose. You can’t put a bandaid on it anymore, or put your head in the sand and think this won’t matter, it will.

As I stated in my last deputation to you, and I will repeat this again, we have to remove our own selfish interests to make a quick buck now, we have to think about the interests of others, as what we decide now will leave a legacy for our future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my views.

Yours faithfully

» Respondent 3 [sic]

Jan 16, 2021

Re: Feedback on the Draft Kalamunda Urban Forest Strategy

To whom it may concern

Please find enclosed our comments on the *Draft Kalamunda Urban Forest Strategy*

As (also on other occasions) we have had problems trying accessing your feedback forms on line due to passwords not being accepted, we have submitted our comments in writing

Thank you for the opportunity to have input.

Yours sincerely

Draft Urban Forest Strategy Kalamunda; Comments

Because the website does not allow me to register, here are my comments on the Strategy

Overall, I think the team has done a good job and produced a good strategy. The following are what I trust are worthwhile additions to or expansion of some aspects.

Pages 7-8 and Figure 3. Vegetation not only takes up CO₂ but also, fundamentally releases oxygen to the atmosphere. This is absolutely crucial to all life (one might go so far as to say more important than climate change).

p. 8. Plants indeed provide habitat for insects, but importantly the insects provide food for birds as well as ground- and soil-dwelling fauna.

Trees and other vegetation are also crucial in returning nutrients to the soil, thereby maintaining and improving soil fertility (especially for native plants, which do not need synthetic fertilisers).

Vegetation transpires moisture, increases humidity and, potentially, rainfall.

p. 28 Opportunities: in relation to vegetating road reserves, placing wires underground would be highly beneficial in allowing trees to grow to normal heights and provide more abundant shade than Western Power trimming currently allows

p. 31, 1.9. Darling Plateau. There is an important distinction between the (remnant) plateau surfaces and the valleys such as Bickley Valley. They have different soils (duricrusted plateau, loamy valleys), different vegetation and different microclimates, including the effects of aspect, and therefore need to be managed differently

p. 33 Threats:

- Clearing. Agriculture is not the only cause: also quarrying, roads/tracks/fire breaks, power line routes;
- Fire?? Natural, accidental and deliberate causes. Role of prescribed burning?
- Spread of weeds, feral animals;
- Illegal off-road activity (4WDs, trail and mountain bikes);
- Illegal hunting – includes deliberate introduction of pigs for hunting.

All the above damage vegetation, introduce pests and diseases, and are dangerous to legitimate forest users, and to wildlife.

» EcoVision Submission

EcoVision Submission re Draft Urban Forest Strategy



Banksia in flower at Gavour Road, Wattle Grove South: Photo courtesy Graham Ryan

January 2021

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Overview

As may be expected, EcoVision welcomes the opportunity to comment upon the draft Urban Forest Strategy and the need to maintain and enhance what remains of 'urban forest' in the City of Kalamunda.

In reviewing the draft, EcoVision revisited the City's history of failure in environmental protection and in relation to the draft found:

- key references omitted or overlooked
- failure to engage contradictions between the City's environmental and land-use policies
- failure to highlight persistent misuse of the City's discretionary planning powers
- inequitable application of Strategy 6.2 of the draft action plan.

The City has come late to considering environmental values and the serious issue of loss of tree canopy in particular. Unbridled development—with the City's approval—has irretrievably damaged parts of the Hills and foothills of Kalamunda. And despite residents' opposition, the City continues to pursue policies that would further destroy environmental values in identified environmentally sensitive areas.

The contradiction between environmental values expressed in the draft and the City's blatant pro-development stance is insupportable.

That said, residents aligned with EcoVision are prepared to give in principle support to any effort to remediate and prevent further environmental damage in this beautiful area.

Introduction

EcoVision is a registered 'Town Team' within the City of Kalamunda committed to maintaining and enhancing an environmentally sustainable community in foothills Wattle Grove for the benefit of current and future generations.

This geographical area known as Wattle Grove South is described in the draft Urban Forest Strategy (the 'draft Strategy') as being located on the Swan Coastal Plain.

The extent and beauty of the area is depicted in the photograph below, included courtesy of local resident Graham Ryan. This view from Lions Lookout on the Darling Scarp shows the extensive existing tree canopy of the area.



Failed environmental custodianship

The City of Kalamunda recently attained the dubious distinction of having one of the largest reductions in tree canopy cover of all local government authorities in Australia over the past 4 years (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 2020, *Where will all the Trees be*).

This situation developed despite Priority 2 of the City's *Strategic Community Plan Kalamunda Advancing 2027*, which obliges the City to 'deliver environmental sustainability and maintain the integrity of the natural environment'. This commitment has been repeated in various iterations of the plan since 2013—and yet the City still managed to achieve ecological infamy in the 2020 RMIT study.

Such a disgraceful outcome does not surprise many residents aligned with EcoVision. At a council meeting held as recently as 24 November 2020, the City expressly ignored all reference to Priority 2 with respect to future land use considerations in environmentally sensitive Wattle Grove South.

The resultant majority decision of 7 councillors—acting on the recommendation of the City administration—had the effect of facilitating the removal of all existing environmental protections from this unique area. If progressed (against the express wishes of affected residents), the further destruction of our magnificent tree canopy will be the result.

There is little doubt too that the City will leapfrog over all other contenders in the next RMIT study to top of the list of councils with the highest loss of tree canopy in the country, despite some 'bandaid' actions proposed by the authors of the draft Strategy.

Regrettably, this Council decision was not taken in ignorance of the existence of Priority 2 or in ignorance of the likely environmental devastation that would result in 340ha of Wattle Grove South. It was taken in the full knowledge of the damage that will likely follow.

For many years, the City has failed to demonstrate genuine commitment to upholding Priority 2 in the face of competing priorities, notably with respect to land development. In almost every instance, the environment and the people have paid the price. This is the case despite a previous Council taking the position that when considering development proposals, it **would prioritise** environmental sustainability and social benefit over short term economic benefit for a few. (City of Kalamunda submission to the government's Green Paper to reform the WA Planning System, 27 July 2018)

It is difficult to believe that the adoption of the Strategy—particularly after the decision on Wattle Grove South—will make any significant impact on the documented downward trend of our City custodians in managing to keep Kalamunda 'Green and Clean'.

Key references overlooked

The draft Strategy released by the Council for comment appears to be put together by an external group known as GHD. No explanation is provided in the Strategy to explain the expertise and professional qualifications of this group. How can the public form a considered judgement as to whether its views can be relied upon?

Worryingly, the list of attached references to the draft Strategy does not indicate that the authors have considered all relevant information. In particular, a 2020 publication of ecological surveys in Wattle Grove South by AECOM is missing. This comprehensive report applies to one of the largest urban forest areas (340ha) remaining in the foothills, and yet it is missing.

Nor does the reference list include the RMIT research studies of tree canopy loss in local government areas since 2013 across Australia. This is a serious omission.

The omission of these two key references calls into question the validity of the draft Strategy.

Local Planning Strategy failure

The interrelationship between the City's environmental goals and their land-use planning goals is depicted in graphical form in Figure 2 on page 5 of the draft Strategy in a seemingly benign manner. The fact that the components are incompatible and that the system fails to work in the interests of residents is overlooked.

The draft correctly observes that development results in significant loss of vegetation and urban forest. On page 2, the authors say '... residential block infill is leading to mature tree loss on an unprecedented scale.' On page 23, they say '... industrial development often results in loss of vegetation and urban forest.' In short, the draft acknowledges that danger signs are evident everywhere.

But the draft Urban Forest Strategy (and the City) makes no attempt to reconcile the environmental goals of the strategy with the opposing development goals of the council's Local Planning Strategy. They are incompatible.

Further, the draft implies that such development (with the exception of public open space and road reserves) is largely beyond the control and direction of the City. This apparent attempt to absolve the City of any blame for the environmental disaster that is unfolding within its boundaries is deplorable.

Under the Local Planning Strategy, the City restricts some residential dwellings to a mere 180 square metres. Such residents have little room to play and yet the draft implies that they are accountable for the destruction of the existing tree canopy on their properties.

In neither case can the City duck its responsibility to reconcile both strategies in the interests of the majority of residents and to positively influence the retention of trees in the residential environment through its own planning policies.

The reality is that the City can legislatively and proactively influence the form of development permitted within its boundaries and alleviate the environmental impact of development. The available mechanism is the Local Planning Strategy. It is the will that is lacking.

History reveals minimal will on the part of the City to reduce the impact of development on the environment. On the contrary, councillors prefer to accommodate developer desires for 'constraint free' land use, often against the express wishes of its own ratepayers.

The principles of land-use zoning in the state's NE Sub-Regional Framework could be expected to guide the City's Local Planning Strategy. However, the draft makes no attempt to translate the broad land-use zones of the Framework into the local strategy. Because this work of analysis was skipped, an opportunity to prioritise retention of the City's environmental values was lost.

Planning regulations reflect the view that higher densities are usually associated with defined townsites or activity centres. This restriction is reinforced by the state government's 'urban infill' policy. Given the current climate change stressors and imperatives facing the Perth and Peel region, there appears to be no logical reason for the City to approve high-density residential codes (and therefore dwellings) in areas outside the 800 metre boundary of an activity centre. Away from designated activity centres, current zonings that protect the environment should be retained.

Having said that, the City's Local Planning Strategy is so embarrassingly out of date that it would have been admittedly difficult for the authors of the draft Strategy to consider themselves constrained by its evident inadequacies.

Misuse of discretionary power

Council decisions in relation to future land use in Wattle Grove South serve to illustrate the inherent hypocrisy of the City in promoting an Urban Forest Strategy at this time. At the same time as the City is putting forward this draft environmental strategy, it is actively facilitating the environmental destruction of up to 340ha of existing urban forest in Wattle Grove South by seeking to rezone this rural area as urban. Attempts to rezone the area have been relentless, despite the known wishes of 75% of affected residents and without any legislative imperative.

Indeed, the Department of Planning has made it clear that rezoning of Wattle Grove South from rural to urban will only be approved if any identified significant environmental attributes can be protected.

Despite the City having confirmed that the area does contain significant environmental values, it has inexplicably decided to increase its efforts to carve up this area into blocks as small as 300 square metres ahead of the Department of Planning's proposed review of the sub-regional framework in 2021.

In addition, the Department of Planning's publication Urban Monitor 11 indicates that it would take approximately 62 years to consume all of the land already zoned for urban development, provided that Perth meets its infill targets. This land availability means that there is no systemic pressure to destroy an identified environmentally sensitive area for urban development now or indeed well beyond 2050. Why does the City persist?

Moreover, the effects of COVID-19 are likely to result in a further slowing in the rate of consumption of land identified for urban intensification and/or increase the desire for greater space between dwellings for health reasons.

The fact that Wattle Grove South area does not have reticulated sewerage suitable for urban development is merely a further reason for saving the surrounding urban forest. Increased use of septic tanks in the area would be detrimental to both the environment and the watertable.

All of the characteristics of Wattle Grove South mentioned above reinforce the need for low-density living and retention of the current rural zoning under the Metropolitan Planning Scheme. Retention would permit sustainable population growth through the City's Local Planning Strategy while ensuring that the clearing of native vegetation for development would continue to require a clearing permit under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

Action plan inadequate

To achieve the stated goals to maintain and increase the City's urban forest canopy, the draft Strategy contains an action plan. The plan (Table 3, page 36) urges that high priority actions be implemented within 2 years, medium priority within 5 years and low priority actions within 10 years.

Most of the actions listed in Table 3 are essentially no different than would appear in all local government authorities' urban forest strategy publications.

But Strategy 6.2 (land rehabilitation) is of particular interest for what it fails to address. Some of the worst examples of deliberate and concerted environmental damage have been perpetrated by owners of rural properties on the Swan Coastal Plain. Yet Strategy 6.2 in the draft is directed only to property owners/occupiers in

the Darling Scarp and Darling Plateau, with the Swan Coastal Plain exempted. This exemption is inexplicable and inappropriate.

Clause 5.18 of the City's Local Planning Scheme No.3 and Section 51 of the *Environmental Protection Act* make it an offence to clear native vegetation unless permitted. The City has the power to take compliance action under the EPA Act but has rarely done so. This reluctance to enforce the law has emboldened some landowners to act in ways that have contributed to tree canopy decline in the City.

It is only fair and reasonable that all residents of the City should accept societal responsibility for protecting the existing tree canopy to the extent that the law provides for each resident—whether they live on the Darling Scarp, the Darling Plateau or the Swan Coastal Plain. Action 6.2 in Table 3 should be amended to reflect this obligation equitably.

Meanwhile, it is obvious that the **most** significant action that the draft Strategy could adopt to halt the swift decline of tree canopy loss in the City would simply be to prioritise protection of the remaining rural and semi-rural areas of the City from rezoning.

Conclusion

The Department of Planning and the CSIRO released the first publicly available urban forest publication in 2009. This publication urged local governments to act in relation to declining urban forest levels in Western Australia. A further iteration appeared around 2018. It has taken the City 12 years to direct its energies to considering this serious environmental issue.

It is therefore difficult for many of the environmentally conscious residents aligned with EcoVision to reconcile the apparent desire of the City to prevent further tree canopy loss with the City's blatant record of environmental destruction.

The historical evidence shows that much of the area's environmental damage came about as a consequence of the City's questionable land-use planning decisions and its consistent failure to afford more than lip service to Priority 2 in the face of competing land-use priorities.

Sadly, the above observation is not simply a matter of historical reflection on past City administrations. It applies equally to the current administration as evidenced by the complete failure of 7 councillors at council meeting held on 24 November 2020 to acknowledge the applicability of Priority 2 to their decision to change land zoning in Wattle Grove South from rural to urban. Urban zoning will result in the loss of all existing legal environmental protections for this environmentally unique area.

Many people cynically believe that the City's belated interest in our declining tree canopy has come about as a direct result of increased public scrutiny of the City in the RMIT survey and its naming and shaming as one of the worst local government authorities in Australia in terms of its responsible custodianship of environmental values.

Whatever the reason, residents aligned with EcoVision support all initiatives designed to protect and enhance the natural environment and to minimise the adverse impacts of human activity to the extent possible.

We ask that you give due regard to this submission and any suggested enhancements.

Yours sincerely

» Respondent 5 [sic]

City of Kalamunda Urban Forest Strategy - Comment

Closing Date: 29 January 2021

Overall the Draft Strategy is good, I sincerely hope it is not just words as sadly although the words and thoughts expressed about protecting the natural environment are comforting to read when it comes to Wattle Grove South / Crystal Brook the reality is very different and the City vision for protecting the natural environment is ignored.

The strategy opens with the following vision:

1. Vision

The City of Kalamunda is committed to an environmentally sustainable future. At a time when climate change and urban growth pose challenges to Kalamunda's 'Clean and Green' environment, the City seeks to conserve and grow its urban forest canopy for the wellbeing of all its residents.

Yet the City continues to pursue destruction of the environment in the Wattle Grove rural zone.

Protecting rural zone Wattle Grove is easily a first step the City can take to put into action the Draft Strategy vision it purports to hold.

Having said that the content of part 2 Introduction was welcome reading and shows a degree of acknowledgement by the City that development of the design, housing types and volumes that has occurred until now cannot continue.

Anyone who lives in an area with good tree canopy knows the difference in air-conditioning use, heat retention of the dwelling and sense of general well-being offered by good tree canopy cover. On our own property on a hot day being under the area that is heavily treed is several degrees cooler than just metres away in an area with less native vegetation, in this regard I quote part of the introduction:

Many Local Government Areas of the Perth metropolitan area have set targets of a minimum 20% canopy cover across their cities to address heat sinks, improve overall community health and enhance landscape character. Yet urban forest canopy in approximately 60% of private land 1 in the City of Kalamunda's Swan Coastal Plain suburbs has been reduced to under 10%; and 78% of private land has less than 20% cover.

Note: 1: Private land includes urban forest classified as street blocks, on the Swan Coastal Plain. This includes residential and industrial land.

With the future pointing to the potential further loss of urban forest canopy in areas earmarked for development, it is important to limit this loss. For example, initial modelling for the Forrestfield North development suggests that the urban forest canopy could reduce from the current 30-40% to as low as 5-10% even with the proposed protection of vegetation in local reserves. This strategy will provide the tools to improve this for future developments in the City of Kalamunda.

That this has continued to occur despite years of knowledge and acknowledgement of environmental stresses caused by tree canopy loss and heat island effect is entirely attributable to successive governments and regulators taking the short-term view of appeasing developers rather than taking a longer term view and protecting the environment and ultimately public health and well-being.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, LANDS AND HERITAGE

Statistical report: The urban forest of Perth and Peel CSIRO Urban Monitor 5 February 2019

As I am sure you are all by now aware Valcan Road Orange Grove and Wattle Grove is a no-through road sharing the boundary between the City of Kalamunda and the City of Gosnells. The City of Gosnells part of Valcan Road is the lower end and can be access only by travelling in two directions, one requires travelling 2km from the City of Gosnells boundary on Kelvin Road into the City of Kalamunda before re-entering the City of Gosnells in Valcan Road. The only other access route requires travelling approximately 6km through the City of Kalamunda council area before re-entering the City of Gosnells end of Valcan Road.

I have long held the view, spoken at council meetings in multiple council areas and made submissions regarding protecting the environment.

It is the responsibility of LGA's to protect their local environments. This means taking responsibility; not shifting responsibility to other authorities. The City, as with all LGA's approvals planning applications, developers like to have a blank canvas to develop and to achieve that they wantonly demolish native vegetation destroying the tree canopy and native habitat.

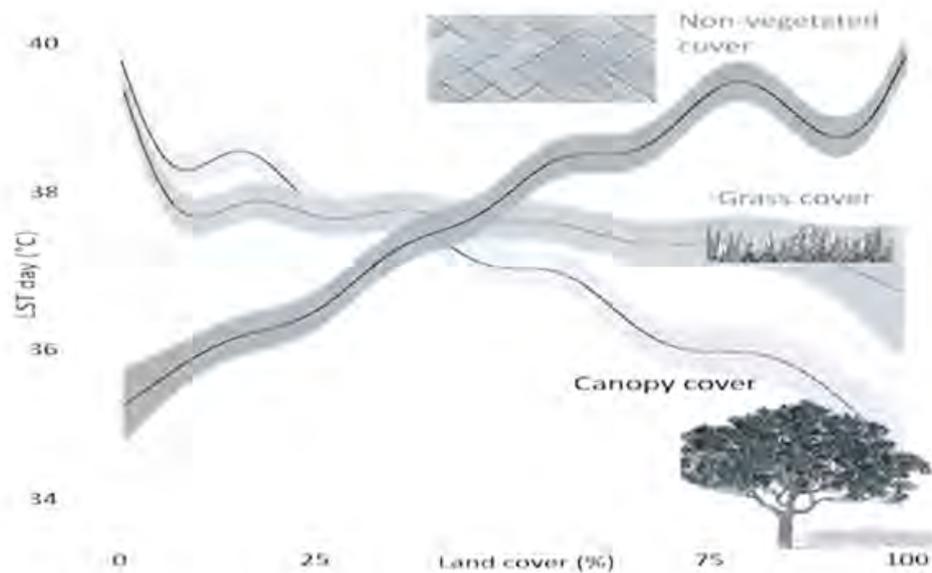
It is easy for LGA's to stop this wanton destruction through their planning departments controlling land clearance for development and ensuring a substantial percentage of vegetation is retained and developers have to work around the vegetation. The long-term effects

of the wanton destruction of native vegetation are being felt now; time is running out, councils must act now to protect the remaining environment.

Just this week the following ABC report received media attention.

REF: ABC Perth, 23 January at 20:01pm. Please look carefully at the heat island effect diagram below and please refer to the media report in full. Extract: *'With Australia's largest city (Sydney) facing 50-degree-plus summers, experts say its suburbs must be radically redesigned and rebuilt in order to remain liveable'*.

In precis the article stresses that as a result of the mass destruction of tree canopy and the resultant heat island effect Australian cities will have to be redesigned to include underground living and activity to remain liveable, the concept of underground living is not new and is common in countries like Canada, due of course to opposite climatic conditions to Australia. It is not a way of living that results in a happy and healthy population as there is no direct daylight, no direct interaction with the natural environment and results in increased rates of depression in the population at large.



In some local council areas, including the City of Gosnells when an acreage is subdivided the council controls what vegetation removal is permitted. Recent local acreage subdivisions by family and friends include that the property owner cannot remove any native trees or native vegetation of any type on their property without application to council and approval to do so, the LGA determined the building envelope area accordingly taking into consideration the placement of native vegetation. Several years ago we also subdivided our acreage property and the same tree protection applied and the City of Gosnells determined native trees and vegetation that could not be removed, tagged native trees accordingly and determined specifically the exact location of the building envelope. This resulted in an additional building cost of over \$50,000, a short-term financial pain but long-term protection of the environment.

To clarify, I hasten to add that the blocks mentioned were all lifestyle acreages and horse properties not bush blocks.

The report titled 'The Urban Forest of Perth and Peel CSIRO Urban Monitor' published by the DPLH (Department of Planning Lands and Heritage) and CSIRO covers the period 2009 - 2016 and provides statistics on 'The Urban Canopy Cover of Perth and Peel'. The report data on tree canopy loss covered trees of three metres height and above.

The community expects public servants and elected members to act ethically and they each have a duty to do so. I have referred to the report previously both in deputations and in submissions to the State Government and the City of Kalamunda and I sincerely hope that by now all council staff and councillors are familiar with the shocking content of the report as any council staff member preparing report content and any councillor voting on any issue related in any way to the environment can only do so responsibly when they fulfil their duty to the community they serve and make themselves aware of the alarming facts on tree canopy loss and heat island effect. Subsequent reports on tree canopy loss in the Perth metropolitan show the situation is continuing unabated.

The report is horrifying yet the tree canopy destruction and destruction of flora, fauna and fauna habitat continues unabated.

The report statistics on urban tree canopy cover; the rapid loss of urban tree canopy should concern every one of us; I have spoken to my peers and friends about this major environmental issue; an environmental catastrophe happening now, right here in our suburbs and our local environment, they are similarly horrified at the statistics in the report and the past myopic blinkeredness of governments at all levels that has permitted this to happen, yet it continues to happen aided by all levels of government and particularly local government who

appear to see no responsibility towards our environmental future other than saying the right words at the right time.

The City of Kalamunda as a local government has a large part to play in taking responsibility for these shocking statistics and now has the opportunity to right the wrongs of the past and act quickly to create policies to protect our tree canopy.

In righting the wrongs of the past CoK must ensure that policies created to protect our rapidly diminishing tree canopy do not permit exemptions for any facilities whether aged care, residential developers or any other category. The tree canopy cannot be put at further risk of destruction. The tree canopy is the lungs of Perth, we destroy it at our peril.

Whether trees are on private or public land trees create the environment for us all. Clearing native vegetation should therefore not be a decision for an individual property owner. Local governments must protect our environment. Local governments must take immediate action to halt this environmental disaster by creating policies to stop this loss of urban tree canopy.

Overwhelmingly data collected by CoK determines that a priority for local residents is preservation of our treed environment.

Protect our urban tree canopy for future generations.

The City is commended on the development of the ELUPS and efforts to protect our environment and rapid loss of urban tree canopy.

I note that the ELUPS introduction states that 'green infrastructure' informs the distinctive character of the area and is an asset that requires protection, preservation and management. The term 'Urban forest' refers to any type of green infrastructure; all trees, shrubs,

lawn and pervious soils in urban areas and moves beyond simply planning and considers the health, diversity and canopy of the whole urban area.

Whilst it is always preferred to protect our native species, for street tree planting in higher density areas there is neither the space or an identifiable purpose in using native species, generally speaking most species of natives are larger trees that may create issues with overhead power lines.

In high density areas DECIDUOUS trees which permit sunlight to dwellings during winter yet create shade in summer and in doing so keep the environment cooler in summer when in leaf, and when dormant in winter following leaf loss in autumn, allow more warmth reducing power consumption year around. That said no-one can deny the value of larger native species. It is not good enough to allow private land owners to do as they like and remove established trees on their land, on our property in an adjacent LGA to CoK our council tagged our trees and we are not allowed to remove any trees despite us having planted them in the first place. I fully agree with this policy as after the watching the clearing of the MKSEA industrial area anyone who watched the cockatoos swarming around the sky day after day not knowing where to go would fully understand why we must protect our vegetation and trees, particularly mature native vegetation and trees. Much of the undergrowth vegetation relies on the mature tree canopy to survive and the undergrowth is habitat and food source for many small species of wildlife.

The report titled 'The Urban Forest of Perth and Peel CSIRO Urban Monitor' published by the DPLH (Department of Planning Lands and Heritage) and CSIRO provides statistical data on loss of tree canopy of trees 3 metres high and above. Since becoming aware of the report

I have spoken to many people about the report content and statistical data provided.

It is urgent that the City develops policies that recognise that across Australia urban tree canopy loss has become a major environmental issue and many LGA's are now responding positively to protect the urban tree canopy. In researching tree canopy loss across Australia I have found that tree canopy loss and loss of native ground covers is a major problem for LGA's right across Australia, not only in WA.

In recent years many LGA's, in the eastern states have introduced policies to protect the tree canopy whether on private or public land and the eastern states trend is to set identifiable, achievable goals to retain existing green infrastructure and increase urban area tree canopy eg: 20 percent greener by 2020. The Draft Strategy appears to some extent to recognise this but although the Strategy process has to be followed we need action to be swift to reduce the destruction of our natural environment quickly.

The Draft Strategy does not go far enough with protecting the native flora and fauna. Nationally, native species are all protected and require approval before removal, however in most states this rule has until now only applied to rural areas. Until now only ACT and South Australia have had urban and rural blanket rules against removing native tree species with heavy fines imposed for non-compliant activity; an example from media reports is of tree lopper Greg Davies, of Coromandel Valley in the Adelaide hills, convicted in the Environment, Resources and Development Court for "tree damaging activity"; ie: removal of limbs from a Lemon Scented Gum (note damaging activity; not actually removing the tree). The tree lopper accepted the word of the householder but did not seek evidence of council approval to remove tree limbs. He was fined \$6,000. The

maximum penalty for the offence is \$120,000. The severity of the possible fine is evidence that authorities in Adelaide are serious about protecting the urban tree canopy for future generations. In NSW breaching the terms of a Tree Protection Order has a maximum penalty in local court of \$110,000. Similarly in Victoria, Vegetation Protection Overlays (VPOs) are used by 63% of Victorian councils to specify local area protected vegetation and severe penalties are imposed for non-compliance. The City needs to not only have a system of protection but to enforce that protection, once individuals and particularly development companies are fined behaviour will change more rapidly.

In recent years many eastern states councils have enacted policies to protect native trees and vegetation on urban private property, implementing programs to address factors that result in loss of urban tree canopy eg: not permitting total lot clearance by developers but ensuring tree retention; developers prefer to 'clean sweep' lots rather than design around existing trees but local governments have a responsibility to seriously consider the loss of wildlife and the long-term cost of this to the urban environment.

A number of WA local councils now have policies to protect native vegetation and tree canopy to protect the urban forest. A good example of a sound, working strategy is the 'Town of Bassendean Urban Forrest Strategy 2016 - 2026'.

My research on individual councils and their policies discloses acknowledgement that to encourage compliance, penalties imposed for non-compliance must be enforced and must be severe.

Damage and or removal of significant trees, or canopy trees results in degradation of established character, particularly in a hills LGA like CoK.

Councils and Councillors have an obligation to enact policies that reflect the wishes of the majority of residents, who in a number of surveys and local online pages have expressed their wish to retain the treed environment the council area is noted for. The City needs to acknowledge repetitively to residents that they will protect our precious environment and that native trees, tree canopy and vegetation in the urban environment has a series of environmental benefits such as reducing the impact of the urban heat island effect, reducing the effects of climate change, reducing temperatures in and around buildings, reducing stormwater runoff as tree roots absorb the water, absorb pollution, provide habitat and promote biodiversity.

Some LGA's continue to be unwilling to recognize or acknowledge the major environmental problem resulting from development biased towards keeping developer costs lower rather than protecting our environment.

Through the Draft Strategy and then the final Strategy Council and Councillors can ensure that CoK is an LGA that is willing to acknowledge tree canopy loss as a major environment problem and join those forward thinking WA LGA's that are already proactive and move towards formulating initiatives to reverse the trend of horrific tree canopy loss within CoK boundaries.

Local governments must become proactive in protecting our environment; as a hills council, the CoK with its stated Guiding Principle to ensure environmental sustainability the City has environmental community responsibilities that residents and ratepayers can and should expect elected members to abide by.

Canopy trees are valuable because of:

- Canopy size

- Heritage value
- Aesthetic value
- Functional purpose (shade, habitat, avenue windbreaks) enhance and beautify landscapes
- Improves the look of our neighbourhoods
- helps block unwanted views
- reduces heat island effect by providing shade and shelter
- protects the health of our soils
- moderates wind and absorb pollutants
- reduces noise and dust levels
- provides habitat for wildlife and biodiversity; and
- supports the sustainability of our environment and community
- Reduces impact of flooding / Reduce impact of drought
- Improved waterway health
- Improved soil health
- Improves air quality
- Improves habitat and biodiversity
- Reduces greenhouse emissions
- Improves human physical health
- Improves human mental health
- Lessens impact of urban growth
- Improves precinct management

The City of Kalamunda is in the unique position of having areas worthy of protection under its authority and must recognise the responsibility that ensues from that.

Residents of the City of Kalamunda and immediately surrounding areas hold strong connections to the environment; the ambience of a treed, natural environment is why people choose to reside in a hills environment as a desirable location.

» Respondent 6 [sic]

1

Draft Urban Forest Strategy.**A community-based Response to City of Kalamunda and Council.****Home in the forest?**

The community of Kalamunda included within this Local Authority perhaps subconsciously assume that we still live in an afforested area by continuing use of the Whadjuk Noongar language description 'Home in the Forest)

However that today is very far from reality as the Draft Strategy outlines in the 'Introduction'. The eastward sloping Darling Plateau is still predominantly mature tree covered and cooled by that shade effect, but the sloping Escarpment that includes the Kalamunda town centre is increasingly surrounded by dual-density multi-unit treeless residential blocks. Also, the large area of Foothills sites close to the Perth International Airport have been for several decades approved through the Development Planning process for intensive clearing of vegetation and dense urbanisation without any consideration to planting of trees for either shade or amenity for the occupants.

Although the City has a so-called 'Environmental Land-use Planning Strategy' (ELUPS), that has not seriously addressed the reality of a long known and recorded change of climate in SW WA that has been on average notably warmer and drier for several recent decades. (Most freshwater Dams are now only partially filled and tree growth will have slowed.)

Extremes in Foothills localities -

Furthermore and rarely mentioned, the vast CoK Foothills area from the City of Swan to Gosnells boundaries, apart from a very few small Reserves adjacent to sports complexes (that are themselves treeless); due to being in a conflicted microclimatic zone from late Spring through Summer and into Autumn is at least 3deg.C hotter than either the Escarpment or areas westward beyond the Airport. The intense overnight Easterly and gully winds continue much longer in this zone until the cooling westerly sea breezes arrive usually much later than elsewhere.

Useful theoretical introduction -

This Draft Strategy prepared by external consultants provides a useful theoretical guide to contemporary research into the causes and effects of surface warming and cooling and the benefits of enhanced tree-canopy cover.

Development Planning implications -

However, it does not address the immediate practical issues of halting and reversing still on-going Development Planning policies by City of Kalamunda that have, and are still causing gross loss of trees and resultant increasing 'heat-island' warming.

This draft is too generalised to adopt -

The interpretation of heat mapping in this lengthy Draft is far too crude and generalised and

the photographic illustrations are frequently misleading. In the case of Kalamunda Town centre a failed 2018/19 'Activity Centre Plan' by other external consultants is uncritically embraced, including a 'Landscape Master Plan' that was in fact physically impractical. (It seems that consultants GHD failed to notice that roads surrounding that Town centre are not wide enough to allow tree planting in the centre of them and still retain essential kerb-side parking!) Also, there are far more large well-established street trees in Barber Street, lower Haynes Street and City Square up to Central precinct than these and other external consultants are so far willing to admit.

Community ethos -

External consultants unfamiliar with local preferences must realise that a large percentage of the Kalamunda/Lesmurdie community made a deliberate choice long ago to live in these localities because of a 'tree change' escape from intense urban living; and are still reluctant to alter that predominant preference. That represents a continuing rate-paying community demand (that should **be more explicit** in the CoK forward **Strategic Community Plan**).

Most local residents will accept an effort in principle by the Local Authority to plant more trees and alter Development Planning directives to enforce that outcome locally; but the practical consequences will require a much larger financial budget and associated employed expertise than is currently in place. *(This writer bases that comment on attending seminars and workshops by other WA Local Authorities, who have operated substantial Urban Forest programmes already for at least 3 years.)*

Complexities not explained -

To be enduring and successful, careful choice of species for shade and suited to different locations is complex and extensive collaborative liaison must be negotiated with local residents. Adequate ground water and intense on-going maintenance for at least 18 months is essential and represents a new and continuing major financial commitment for this Local Authority.

Realities of delayed response -

Although not mentioned in this daft, the current reality as researched nationally throughout Australia by RMIT, is that City of Kalamunda is bar one other, the worst Local Authority area in Australia for loss of tree cover. Since the current State Government is apparently offering \$100 million to WA Local Authorities for additional Urban Forest initiatives to confront climate change, CoK should obviously take an **immediate initiative** to urgently **document a comprehensive programme** and compete for that funding - bearing in mind that as yet, compared to many other Local Authorities in WA, it has no established track-record of having an existing programme.

Contradictions in Strategic Planning -

Several examples follow that illustrate failures of local Strategic Planning to address climate-change, that conflict with the objectives of an Urban Forest intensification Strategy.-

3

1. Development Planning under City of Kalamunda supervision close to the new Forrestfield North/ Maida Vale Railway Station shows a large area of sound mature shade-trees (mainly Marri) alongside Brae Road to be cleared altogether and replaced by intensely high-density residential housing. Those trees are in fact habitat for Black Cockatoos that commute daily to forage on trees remaining in patches on the Escarpment around Kalamunda. (Consequence - greatly increased heat-island effect and risk to threatened species biodiversity.)
2. A substantial land area adjacent to, but not part of the MKSEA, alongside Welshpool Road East fully under the jurisdiction of City of Kalamunda, as mapped has approx.60% mature shade tree cover but is already being partly clear-felled for unspecified industrial use. That area spans across to Tonkin Highway and includes the Yule Brook outfall from Lesmurdie Falls (National Park), feeding the adjacent high biodiversity value Brixton Street Wetlands conservation Reserve. Yet Yule Brook and its often wooded surroundings is under imminent threat from a recent City of Kalamunda employed external Planning consultants proposal to rezone that area that also extends between Tonkin Hwy and Lewis Rd. for high-density residential housing.
3. A nearby substantially mature tree covered and professionally verified biodiverse land area currently zoned Rural, named Wattle Grove (South) or 'Crystal Brook' is also under imminent threat by City of Kalamunda and private sector Developers for clearing, to be replaced by undeclared areas of high-density housing on very small blocks. All obviously counter-productive to this Urban Forest Strategy.

Conclusions -

While the City of Kalamunda must be commended for belatedly considering a Council proposal, supported by its Environmental Advisory Committee, to adopt an Urban Forest Strategy throughout its different districts; implementation will not only be costly but must also involve significant review and change to current Development Planning policies,.

This Draft Urban Forest Strategy prepared by external consultants is only a preliminary introduction and is still very far from detailing a complex Tactical programme of action for costing and early implementation.

» Respondent 7 [sic]

Dear Councillors and City staff ,

I regard it as essential for the City of Kalamunda to protect the remaining urban forest in the City by retaining the rural and semi- rural land use zonings of land within our City boundary and, in particular, the rural zoning of Wattle Grove South, a known unique and environmentally sensitive area.

As you know, the Environmental Protection Act specifically regulates the clearing of native vegetation and tree canopy in areas where land is zoned rural /special rural/rural residential. These protections do not exist in areas zoned for residential sub-division.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

» Nature Reserves Preservation Group Submission



NATURE RESERVES PRESERVATION GROUP

KALAMUNDA WA 6926

www.nrpg.org.au

President : Steve Gates 9293 2915, Mob. 0400 870 887

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To: Enquiries@kalamunda.wa.gov.au

Date: 28 January 2021

Subject: City of Kalamunda Urban Forest Strategy (Draft).

This submission on the above draft, is on behalf of the Nature Reserves Preservation Group (NRPG) Inc. It will address specific parts of the draft, citing the section, followed by 'boxed' comments. NRPG members have also been encouraged to make their contributions via the "have your say" site.

This Strategy is a welcome, if long-overdue initiative. The significant work of those involved in its preparation should be recognised and applauded. Acknowledging the challenges posed by the changing climate and the increasing demands for increased density, is a first step. All this good work will be wasted unless councillors and staff ensure future budget allocations permit the required actions to be taken. Failure to do so will compromise the success of the strategy.

Message from the Mayor**2. Introduction.**

"For example, initial modelling for the Forrestfield North development suggests that the urban forest canopy could reduce from the current 30-40% to as low as 5-10% even with the proposed protection of vegetation in local reserves. This strategy will provide the tools to improve this for future developments in the City of Kalamunda."

The NRPG submission on the Forrestfield North Residential Precinct Local Structure Plan, welcomed the emphasis placed on the retention of natural environmental assets. We did, however, have reservations over the degree to which the City of Kalamunda would achieve its vision of creating a "forest neighbourhood", particularly at the Subdivision and Development Approval stage. The above modelling, showing such a dramatic reduction of the urban forest canopy, indicates our reservations were justified. It is essential this draft Strategy be approved if future losses are to be curtailed.

1.1 What is an Urban Forest?

Whilst tree canopy cover is a convenient measure and its contribution to combatting the Heat Island Effect well-established, it is encouraging to see the importance of understorey vegetation clearly acknowledged.

1.2 Purpose of the Urban Forest Strategy.

"...an Urban Forest Strategy must consider vegetation from a holistic view, considering both public and private land and different land tenures."

Whilst this statement is welcomed, the Strategy goes on to describe the limitations of local government in tackling problems arising from this view. Where loss of vegetation occurs on land beyond the control of the City, the implications of this loss on this strategy, must be assessed and compensated for by increased revegetation on land under the City's control. The protection of "high-value vegetation" on private land, will require considerable effort by staff and councillors, given the historic and oft-declared opposition of some representatives to any interference with the rights of landowners. The key may lie in educating landowners to the value of that vegetation or providing some tangible incentive to the landowner for its preservation. Defining the purpose of the Strategy by basing it on community feedback, ensures the aspirations of the community are being catered for. This, in turn, should ensure the support of that community.

Figure 2. City of Kalamunda Strategic Environmental Framework.

Although simply a schematic, it gives no assurance that, throughout the process, there will be no 'disconnect' between Environment and Planning. Past experience has shown such a disconnect between City departments, resulting in environmental setbacks. At one stage, there was a proposal to establish a Planning and Environment section, designed to avoid such breakdowns in communication. NRPG, in past submissions, has pressed for having an 'environment in all decisions' concept accepted, in the same way 'health and safety' features in all decisions.

1.3 What are the benefits of an Urban Forest?

"A significant volume of research, in WA, Australia and Internationally, has demonstrated the economic, environmental, psychological and physical health benefits provided by Urban Forests."

One would expect the creation of such a valuable community initiative to receive overwhelming support. The benefits are well described in this draft, well supported by the above mentioned research and should convince the council that urgent implementation of the final Strategy document is urgently required. The benefits of such a strategy have been known for some time (several Local Government Authorities have had such strategies in operation for up to ten years). The City's environmental consultants, in plans for projects such as Forrestfield North, echoed the elements of this Strategy, yet clearing of valuable native vegetation has continued unabated (see earlier comments on Residential Precinct Local Structure Plan).

Social and community health benefits

"Trees naturally filter air, and so planting vegetative barriers along transport corridors can be beneficial for removing diesel particulate matter and decrease residents' exposure..."

Despite research supporting this statement, including the Canberra Urban Forest project (placing the value of “energy reduction, pollution mitigation carbon sequestration” at US\$ 20-60 million) and a U.K. study on the “removal of atmospheric particulate pollution by urban tree canopy of London”, more recent research suggests the need for more careful studies to be conducted.

“Plant selection is one of the most important components in an environmentally sustainable program to keep our cities healthy and thriving.”

(Ferrini, F., Fini, A., Mori, J. & Gori, A. (2020). Role of vegetation as a mitigating factor in the urban context. *Sustainability*, 12, 4247, Basel, Switzerland: MDPI.).

Given that this study is focussed on the same climatic conditions as those enjoyed by Perth (i.e. Mediterranean), it could be a valuable resource.

Environmental and biodiversity benefits

These benefits are but the main ones. Many more could be included for the benefit of ‘doubters’, with perhaps more references for residents interested in this topic.

1.4 The relationship between Urban Forest Canopy Cover and Urban Heat Island Effect.

It has been widely accepted for some time that, increasing canopy cover will reduce the ambient temperature of a location. Dramatic temperature images of unshaded and shaded streetscapes provide the incontrovertible evidence. The Heat Island figures make a convincing argument. The contribution of air conditioners to the effect is often forgotten. Air conditioning is increasingly required in ‘scorched earth’ subdivision developments.

4. How do we increase our urban forest?

1.10. Goals

Swan Coastal Plain Area

This is the area most at threat of vegetation and tree cover loss. It should be given the highest priority and adequate budget funding to ensure the implementation of the strategy takes place smoothly. Given that the infill requirements of the State Government are contributing to the loss of canopy, should they be requested to make funding available to the City through specific Urban Forest grants?

1.11. Action Plan.

Strategy 4.

Action 4.8

“Undertake a review of all City-managed reserves (including reserve purpose) to identify opportunities to revegetate underutilised spaces, including increasing urban canopy through planting (combine with implementation of the Local Biodiversity Strategy and Public Open Space Strategy)”.

Whilst it is comforting to see so many actions given a “High” priority, given the environmental importance of both these strategies, this action also deserves a “High” priority.

Strategy 6.**Action 6.1**

"Through the implementation of the Environmental Land Use Planning Strategy investigate the implementation of a local planning policy to address clearing of significant trees on private property."

It is essential that the problem of private land clearing is addressed and that any policy created has sufficient powers to tackle this problem effectively. Such a policy will doubtless face some opposition in Council, as the failure of past proposals will attest.

6.2

"Through the implementation of the Environmental Land Use Planning Strategy incorporate a provision in the Scheme allowing the City to require rehabilitation of land where an owner or occupier has caused or allowed land to be cleared, managed or degraded in such a way as to cause environmental harm or to adversely affect the amenity of adjoining or nearby land."

This action may ensure the problem is addressed. See above comments.

Strategy 7.**Action 7.1**

"...develop a local planning policy to support the retention of urban forest on newly created lots as part of structure planning, subdivision and development..."

This action is long overdue and its proposal is welcomed. It is also essential that areas declared to be retained on such lots are carefully monitored. Past examples have shown that areas intended for retention, have 'accidentally' been cleared. In such instances, "replacement planting or contribution to Council", should be at a far higher rate than that where "it is not possible to retain urban forest".

Strategy 8.**Action 8.3**

"...target planting in specific areas including industrial areas..."

Assigned "Medium" priority, it is essential this be given "High" priority. Through 'infill' and land development pressures, the Swan Coastal Plain is the area most likely to be generating the heat island effect. Within the Swan Coastal Plain, industrial areas will be the main generators of this effect, becoming 'super HIE generators'. This will have a dramatic effect on adjacent or 'downwind' residential areas when the heated air masses migrate to the residential blocks. These super-HIE-generators should not be considered in isolation when assessing the need for improved canopy cover.

Conclusion.

Whilst fully endorsing all the strategies (with the above suggested modifications) it is an oversight not to include some consideration of the overall effect of this welcome strategy on

bushfire level threat within the City. It is hoped that the relevant bodies within and outside the City had input into the draft at some stage. The final strategy should detail any such consultation and the end result of such discussion on the final draft.

The draft Strategy is welcomed and addresses, in varying degrees, the environmental and health concerns of the residents. Whilst Strategy 6. "*Maintain trees and other vegetation on private property*" addresses the 'elephant in the room', it is essential that long-overdue action be taken. There will be substantial opposition to any reduction in a landowner's right to do whatever he/she likes on the block of land. Using the ELUPS "*to incorporate a provision in the Scheme*", may be the only way to tackle this longstanding problem.

Recent research has suggested that, regardless of the success of a local authority in retaining tree cover on lands for which it is responsible, failure to address the topic of tree preservation on private land, will always lead to increasing canopy loss.

NRPG appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft and congratulates staff involved on the work done.

For information only. Errata in draft document.

p.7 dot point three. Replace "buy" with "by".

p.33 Replace "Floodeed Gum" with "Flooded Gum".

» Respondent 9 [sic]

Response to City of Kalamunda Urban Forrest Strategy (Draft)

The City Council received a substantial Petition one year ago at the Annual Electors Meeting, calling for substantial and immediate local action to combat Climate Change. So far as can be observed the only action taken was to refer the subject to its Parks Department and an Advisory Committee that includes some Councillors.

The only related positive outcome during the last twelve months seems to be reference to external consultants to advise on a possible Draft Urban Forest Strategy.

Then in that draft, a list of minor proposals (pages 36/37) supposed to increase planting of shade trees generally. All somehow expected to reduce the current very substantial heat island effect across the City region that has resulted from massive clearance of native vegetation (under City supervision) by commercial and private developers.

The target timetable to complete even this modest action is still **seven years away** "by 2028" and even then most of the actions proposed are minor, even relying on expanding community Friends Groups to do planting.

With this extremely low level of serious commitment compared to some other Local Authorities, young people in our community who are becoming increasingly concerned about their future, will be appalled and expect this region to become less comfortably habitable and even less energy efficient than it currently is.

» Respondent 10 [sic]

Submission re draft Urban Forest Strategy

Vision

'The City of Kalamunda is committed to an environmentally sustainable future. At a time when climate change and urban growth pose challenges to Kalamunda's 'Clean and Green' environment, the City seeks to conserve and grow its urban forest canopy for the wellbeing of all its residents.'

It is admirable the City of Kalamunda is seriously considering the benefits of urban forest and setting conservation plans in place for future generations. We endorse and fully support this vision.

For us personally, it is a bit like 'After the horse has bolted.'

An area close to our hearts and of particular importance to us as residents and rate payers is Wattle Grove South. An area which is scientifically known as unique and environmentally sensitive. On our property alone, an abundance of wildlife abounds. Every evening all species of birds come in to drink from the water troughs, including endangered red tailed cockatoos, then rest in the trees at night. It was so disappointing to observe the number of councillors at the November 2020 Council meeting, who did not support the majority of residents request to retain the rural/semi-rural zoning of this area, thus paving the way for developers to destroy/pillage this environment. (Yes as no doubt you know, developers are already on the band wagon in this area and it is obvious they must have enormous influence with regard to zoning/re-zoning)

We firmly believe it is of paramount importance the City of Kalamunda protect the remaining mature urban forest and tree canopy, by retaining the rural and semi-rural land use zonings within our city boundary.

It is one thing to maintain mature/old growth tree canopy and another to destroy old growth and then re-plant. We all know how long it takes for a tree to reach maturity.

We note in the draft strategy, acknowledgement of the heat factor. Recently on the Channel 7 news it was reported Australia clears 200 thousand square metres every year, resulting in suburbs I referred to in my November 2020 submission to council as 'A sea of roofs' and referred to in the above report as Heat Islands – Treeless Suburbs.

Developers move in and totally annihilate the land. Bulldoze mature trees, many, many years old. The natural tree canopy of an area totally destroyed. We need tree canopy maintained within suburban areas, not just in national parks, bush reserves or public parks. As previously stated, we need to maintain 'old growth', rather than destroy and replant.

In an article I read recently, the very truth of this quote by Sir David Attenborough attracted my attention.

“Our well-being, our economies, everything depends on a healthy planet, and yet we continue to neglect it.”

Sir David Attenborough

The article went on to say:

‘The natural world is in crisis.

Scientists have warned that **up to a million species could be driven to extinction this century**. In the last 50 years, **the world’s wildlife populations have fallen by 70%**, with nature being pushed to the brink by deforestation, land conversion and poaching.

This destruction of nature is also harming the ability of ecosystems to absorb and store carbon emissions, **exacerbating the climate crisis**.

Let us be the change so badly needed. Let us make a difference.

As already stated, we fully endorse and support the vision of the Urban Forest Strategy and any efforts to maintain urban forest and tree canopy. Let’s prevent further environmental destruction to our beautiful, natural environment. It is important too, that all councillors are on the same page with regard to the Urban Forest Strategy and our wish would be that they would support the majority, as in any true democracy.

Yours sincerely