

POLICY REGISTER

TITLE: URBAN FOREST POLICY

STRATEGIC PROGRAM: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

DIVISION: INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICE DELIVERY

POLICY:

Two resolutions have been carried in respect of the Urban Forest Policy as outlined below – one from 28/8/07, the other from 23/11/10.

Definition

The Urban Forest is defined as the totality of trees and shrubs on all public and private land in and around urban areas (including bushland, parkland, gardens and street trees) and is measured as a canopy cover percentage of the total area, and is recognised as a primary component of the urban ecosystem

Goal – What we want to achieve

Leichhardt's Urban Forest contributing towards reducing the impacts of climate change and creating a sustainable environment through the protection, restoration and enhancement of our natural environment and native biodiversity including the urban landscape.

Policy Objectives – Tasks to achieve the goal

The following policy objectives describe what we want to achieve in relation to the Urban Forest in the Leichhardt Local Government Area.

1. Increase the health and extent of the canopy or vegetation cover of the Local Government Area to provide environmental and social benefits.
2. Address climate change locally by increasing the canopy and vegetation to capture carbon, provide shade to reduce ambient temperatures and reduce solar ultraviolet radiation exposure, reduce the impacts of storm water runoff and improve air quality
3. Increase the habitat provided by the trees and vegetation in our streets, parks, private gardens and urban forest for the wildlife that now exists in an Inner City context.
4. Improve the connectedness of habitat fragments across the Local Government Area by creating wildlife corridors between them.

5. Enable the community to value, nurture and protect trees, vegetation and wildlife in their gardens, streets and public spaces
6. Provide trees and plantings that beautify and enhance the streetscapes and that are appropriate to the location.
7. Ensure the community is aware and educated about trees and vegetation and involved in decision making about this issue in their area.
8. Deliver effective management approaches and programs based on sustainability principles so that optimal benefits are delivered at acceptable costs.
9. Provide an effective strategy for dealing with requests from residents and the community for the pruning of trees for views, and the siting and selection of new trees to be planted where a conflict with existing private view corridors may occur.

Policy Actions

- 1. Increase the health and extent of the canopy or vegetation cover of the Local Government Area to provide environmental and social benefits.**
 - Analyse the data collected by the tree inventory and develop a hierarchy of streets that have declining streetscape amenity and program these for replacement planting in line with community consultative processes
 - Remove certain species of trees in streets and parks that have a high risk of failure such as *Eucalyptus nicholii* or trees which have environmental issues such as *Celtis* sp. and sequentially replacing these with more suitable species
 - Stage plantings of trees within parks so that a healthy canopy of older trees is maintained and younger replacement trees are always growing to fill gaps left by trees that are too old or diseased and need to be removed.
 - Develop a replacement program that will take in to account the site conditions, community feedback and tree suitability
 - Continue to invest in the health of the urban forest by avoiding tree monocultures and planting a variety of native and other hardy non-invasive species
 - Ensure that the trees within private land are protected through implementation of appropriate controls
 - Develop long term strategies to increase the quantity and quality of Council's tree population in both the streets and parks

2. Address climate change locally by increasing the canopy and vegetation to capture carbon, provide shade to reduce ambient temperatures, reduce the impacts of storm water runoff and improve air quality

- Establish current tree canopy coverage levels and set targets and budget for increases in tree canopy coverage by 2020 to enhance capture of local carbon emissions.
- Consider planting programs which remediate climate change and reduce solar ultraviolet radiation exposure such as shading over housing, parking and popular walking and cycling routes and use of water sensitive urban design to remediate stormwater pollution and flooding issues.
- Educate the public on the ways that trees can help to reduce climate change

3. Increase the habitat provided by the trees and vegetation in our streets, parks, private gardens and urban forest for the wildlife that now exists in an Inner City context.

- Carry out a survey of existing native animals and investigate which native animals and plants can be attracted and sustained in the Local Government Area to ensure that plantings maximise shelter, feeding and breeding opportunities for this wildlife
- Encourage the use of plant communities native to the Leichhardt area which achieve native biodiversity and wildlife habitat (particularly for resident and migratory birds and other native fauna).
- Work towards a long term goal that native vegetation within open spaces is weed free, self sustaining and designed to provide habitat for wildlife known to occur in the area or be potentially attracted back into the area.
- Provide a reference list to guide native plantings suitable for Leichhardt that is a summary of current knowledge within the Council and local bushcare community
- Investigate and implement the use of nest boxes for native birds and mammals if appropriate
- Develop protection measures for unique ecosystems including remaining areas of native vegetation and revegetation.

4. Improve the connectedness of habitat fragments across the Local Government Area by creating wildlife corridors between them.

- Work to identify and achieve linkages between current habitat islands wherever possible within the streetscape and other corridors provided by rail and waterways.

5. Enable the community to value, nurture and protect trees, vegetation and wildlife in their gardens, streets and public spaces

- Produce community education materials outlining the benefits of trees and providing a list of suitable species which they can plant in varying situations which will not cause any long term negative impacts to their property while still promoting biodiversity.
- Continue and expand the support given to Rozelle Bay Community Native Nursery, the Friends of the Parks and other Bushcare volunteers in their worthwhile works undertaken to provide native vegetation and wildlife habitat in Leichhardt's parks and open space.
- Provide a new site for the Rozelle Bay Community Native Nursery. Consider the establishment of a City Farm within the masterplan for Callan Park. Continue to provide land for the establishment of community gardens
- Work with the community to reduce the impact of pest species and pets on biodiversity occurring in the area

6. Provide trees and plantings that beautify and enhance the streetscapes and that are appropriate to the location.

- Develop streetscape planting designs for all streets that take into account site constraints and tailor the planting to those conditions
- Keep up to date with new technologies and resolve issues through the use of innovative solutions such as paving around trees with decorative and/or porous material that still allows for pedestrian access.
- Determine appropriate species lists and standards for (biodiversity) sustainable tree planting and maintenance for use by Council staff, contractors, private developers and the community to ensure that current problems associated with urban trees do not recur, and that maintenance requirements are minimised.
- Look for opportunities to provide improved streetscapes across a range of issues such as pedestrian access, cycle routes, stormwater management and biodiversity corridors through improved management of data and networking internally

7. Ensure the community is aware and educated about trees and vegetation and involved in decision making about this issue in their area.

- Providing appropriate resources, advice and education material in a number of accessible formats such as via Council's website, to communicate Council's policies and procedures in relation to the management of Leichhardt's Urban Forest.

- Develop a process to ensure the views of the community are considered along with the range of other issues such as the need to provide green web corridors for example, needed to be included in the decision process about tree and vegetation management

8. Deliver effective management approaches and programs based on sustainability principles so that optimal benefits are delivered at acceptable costs.

- Develop budget costings as part of the yearly management plan process by providing details of the budget required to meet the vision and goals of the Urban Forestry Policy
- Continue to collect and update urban forest inventory data regarding Council's current tree population and vegetation to better manage these assets
- Ensure that tree health is maximised by providing training to staff on appropriate management techniques as detailed in the Urban Forest Procedure Manual.
- Continue to add to the significant trees register and develop a management plan to maximise their health and longevity
- Develop performance indicators which enable us to monitor progress towards our goals and aims
- Carry out tree management in Leichhardt within a risk management framework

9. Provide an effective strategy for dealing with requests from residents and the community for the pruning of trees for views, and the siting and selection of new trees to be planted where a conflict with existing private view corridors may occur.

- Selection of trees for planting in areas where private views may be affected will be undertaken with consultation and careful consideration with a goal to achieving a visually pleasing outcome.
- The paramount considerations for siting a tree are the streetscape/landscape amenity desired to be achieved, the optimal planting location given the physical constraints in the immediate locality, and the scale and form of the proposed tree in the space. Where a tree is selected to be planted, having undertaken those considerations, and a view from an immediately adjacent property may be affected, consultations with that property owner will be undertaken with the objective to plant a tree in a nearby location that does not compromise the initial selection decisions.
- Tree pruning or tree removal is not justified on the basis of maintaining private views.

- Where a park Plan of Management refers to views, the statement is interpreted to refer to views from within the park, unless the excerpt in the Plan of Management makes specific reference to the site from which a view is observed.

RESOLUTION: Minute No: C 295/07 Ordinary Meeting 28 August 2007

The above Policy was changed as a result of the Environment and Recreation Committee minutes to include point 9.

RESOLUTION: Minute No: C607/13 Ordinary Meeting 10 December 2013