

Support for Strengthened Verge Tree Planting Policy for the City of Melville

For a greener, cooler, healthier community

Why Verge Trees Matter

Verge trees are more than decoration — they are critical urban infrastructure. They:

- - Cool streets and reducing the urban heat island effect
- - Improve air quality and manage stormwater
- - Support biodiversity and native species like Carnaby's black cockatoos
- - Reduce household energy costs and improve comfort
- - Boost property values and enhance neighbourhood appeal
- - Support the City of Melville to meet their canopy target

The Facts & Benefits

Property Value

- UWA research: each broad-leaved verge tree adds approx. \$17,000 to median property value (2010 dollars — worth even more today).
- Other Australian studies: shaded streets increase property values by 5–15%.

Health & Wellbeing

- Shaded paths encourage walking, social connection, and physical activity.
- Make walking to school, public transport, or the shops more appealing in summer and even on rainy days.

Climate Resilience

- Essential to meeting the City's 15% tree canopy target.
- Offsets canopy loss from redevelopment and infill housing.
- Creates connected, climate-ready streetscapes.

Equity & Fairness

Tree canopy must not be a privilege for wealthier suburbs. Every resident in Melville deserves shaded, attractive, healthy streets. Verge planting is one of the most equitable ways to deliver that.

Addressing Concerns

- Parking: Verge trees and parking can coexist with good planning.
- Solar Panels: Smart species selection prevents shading conflicts.
- Tree Safety: Risk of injury from trees is less than being struck by lightning when trees are well maintained.

Legislative Duty

Under the Local Government Act 1995, Council must plan for:

1. Economic, social, and environmental sustainability
2. Climate change mitigation
3. Long-term impacts on future generations

This policy directly fulfils those obligations.

Our Ask

Adopt a comprehensive verge tree planting policy that strengthens protections against unauthorised pruning, damage, or removal, while **empowering Council staff to proactively plant trees wherever space and conditions allow**. The policy must prevent individual residents from opting out of verge tree planting or requesting the removal of healthy trees, recognising verge trees as essential public assets. Council has a clear responsibility to protect and expand this green infrastructure for the benefit of the whole community, ensuring cooler, greener, and more resilient neighbourhoods for future generations. This approach will deliver lasting benefits, including:

- Cooler, healthier, and more resilient neighbourhoods
- Enhanced property values and improved community amenity
- Richer, thriving habitats for native fauna

References

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