

HOBSONS BAY URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

2020 SUMMARY



HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL



What is the urban forest?

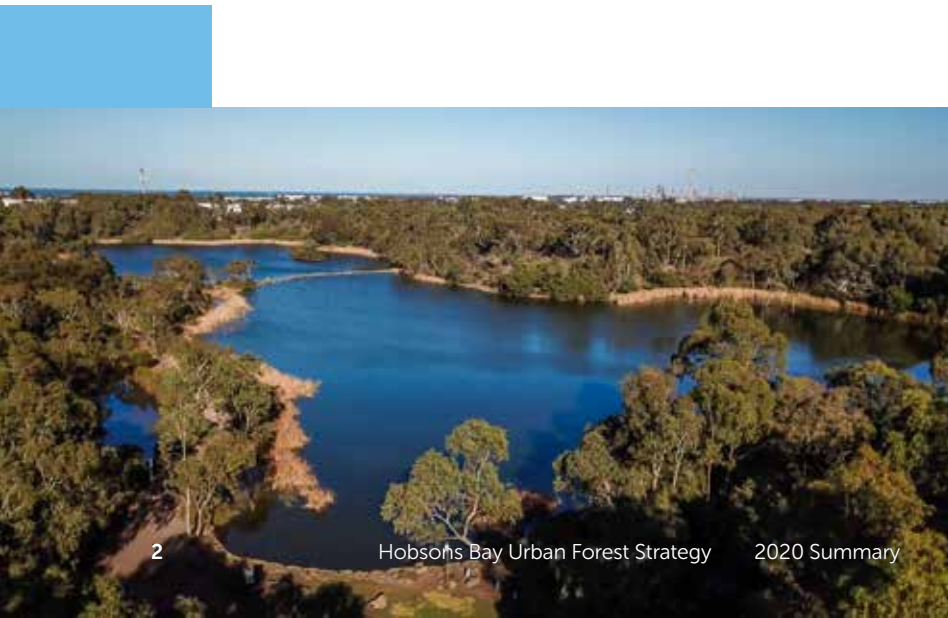
The urban forest refers to all trees on public and private land within urban areas. The urban forest is comprised of tree groves, avenues or individual specimens, located in a range of environments from public parks, squares, street verges, main streets to rail corridors, creek embankments, schools, business parks and private gardens.

Why is the urban forest important?

Urban trees are critical infrastructure in cities, providing substantial environmental, economic benefits and enhancing community health and wellbeing. Urban trees shade streets and buildings, act as carbon sinks, improve air quality, reduce stormwater flows and absorb nutrients that can pollute waterways. They can enhance biodiversity and support a wide range of species, including endangered animals.

Trees can reduce household electricity costs, improve property values for homes and businesses and increase retail sales and tourism activities. They also provide multiple physical and mental health benefits.

With climate change, Victoria is predicted to be warmer and drier. Heatwaves are likely to be more frequent and last longer. Tree canopy has been found to be effective in reducing urban heat and providing cooler urban areas.





Objectives of the urban forest strategy

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

A generous urban tree canopy that cools the city is crucial to improving community health and wellbeing. A 30% canopy target provides an aspirational yet achievable target for Hobsons Bay. This considers the unique attributes of the LGA including the large proportion of industrial areas, parks and reserves and conservation areas including grasslands, saltmarsh and wetlands. This target has been informed by detailed projections based on local conditions, as well examples for tree canopy in other Australian cities.



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

Delivering a successful expanded, healthy and resilient urban forest for Hobsons Bay requires an integrated approach across all levels of administration, planning and delivery.

An integrated approach to designing streets for trees can provide the dual benefit of reducing local temperatures on hot streets and reducing stormwater runoff in the form of roadside tree pits, bioswales and rain gardens. This approach not only improves tree health but can reduce stormwater pollution.

Objective 2: Develop a diverse and healthy urban forest

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

Objective 4: Educate and foster care for urban trees

Delivering a healthy urban forest relies on community acceptance and care for the urban forest. Information sharing can increase acceptance and encourage wider participation from residents. Allowing people to participate in growing and sustaining the urban forest is critical



Priority works

1. Development of an Urban Canopy Delivery Plan that will establish an overarching LGA plan to direct all streetscape and park planting projects. This will provide a more detailed tree locations, configurations and species.

2. Development of council engineering standards to prioritise tree growth and longevity. This ensures that all new trees are installed appropriately to safeguard their long-term health.

3. Integration of tree policies and targets into council’s planning regulations. This will embed tree targets across all council plans, strengthen tree protection and replenishment requirements.

Monitoring and review

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

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

To achieve this assessments will be undertaken to review targets and measure outcomes on a periodic basis.



Figure 1.2: Hobsons Bay Urban Canopy Targets