

# Warringah Council Policy

## Policy No. PL 800 Urban Forest

### Urban Forest Policy

#### 1 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a principle based framework to guide a planned, systematic and integrated approach to managing Warringah's urban forest which will improve the natural and built environment. The policy applies to all land uses in the Warringah local government area, excluding national parks.

#### 2. Context

An urban forest can contribute to a variety of environmental, social and economic benefits such as:

Environmental: improve air quality, prevent soil erosion, improve water quality, increase carbon sequestration, aid storm water retention, increase energy conservation, noise reduction, reduce urban heat island effect and increase habitat and wildlife corridors for local fauna;

Social: increased ability to absorb air pollution and reduce potential health issues, increase in mental well-being, increase in visual amenity and providing shade for skin protection enabling people to have more active lifestyles;

Economic: decreased heating and cooling costs, increase in property values.

Council is committed to establishing a culture of sustainability in relation to tree and shrub management. This includes balancing the protection and enhancement of the urban forest whilst managing risks to infrastructure and personal safety. An Urban Forest Strategy will be developed to implement the following principles.

#### 3 Principles

- 1.1 To recognise Warringah's urban forest as an asset with economic, environmental and social benefits;
- 1.2 To protect and manage Warringah's urban forest via urban forest principles (i.e. Planned, Systematic and Integrated Management) to optimise its health and condition; and to minimise threats by increasing species diversity and establishing a wide age distribution of trees.
- 1.3 To set a financially and environmentally sustainable canopy coverage target through the development of the Urban Forest Strategy.
- 1.4 To manage risk to life, property, public infrastructure and the environment through best practice tree planting and maintenance, in accordance with Council's adopted Enterprise Risk Management Framework;
- 1.5 To promote the retention and planting of trees and shrubs, preferably locally endemic species where appropriate, which will enable plant and animal communities to survive;
- 1.6 To recognise and enhance the role that the urban forest has in habitat connectivity, particularly in wildlife corridors;



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- 1.7 To ensure that public trees that are removed as a result of private development are replaced and maintained through an establishment period of 10 weeks at the expense of the proponent of the development.
- 1.8 To promote the importance of the urban forest to all stakeholders.

## **2 Authorisation**

This Policy was adopted by Council on 15 December 2015.

It is effective from 16 December 2016.

It is due for review on 15 December 2010.

## **3 Amendments**

This Policy was last amended on 15 December 2015.

## **4 Who is responsible for implementing this Policy?**

Group Manager Parks, Reserves and Foreshores

## **5 Document owner**

Deputy General Manager Environment

## **6 Related Council Policies**

- a) Street Tree Planting Policy PL 416.
- b) Removal of private trees threatening Council stormwater pipes. PL 415 to be replaced by Water Management Policy
- c) Bushland Policy ENV – PL 005
- d) Protection of Waterways and Riparian Land Policy PL 740
- e) Environmental Sustainability Policy STR-PL 830
- f) Tree Preservation Order Policy – PL 440
- g) Water Sensitive Urban Design Policy – PR 820 – to be replaced by Water Management Policy
- h) Asset Management Policy – PL550

## **7 Legislation and references**

- a) Warringah Natural Area Survey, August 2005
- b) Warringah Local Environment Plan 2000 and 2011
- c) Development Control Plan 2000 and 2011
- d) Local Government Association Urban Forest Policy 2003

## **8 Definitions**



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**Canopy coverage:** an indicator of the quantity of urban forest often used as a measure of an urban forest's general capacity to provide economic, social, environmental and aesthetic benefits.

**Urban forest:** 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) within the Local Government Area (LGA) and is measured as a canopy cover percentage of the total area, and is recognised as a primary component of the urban ecosystem. The Urban Forest Policy applies to all land within the LGA excluding national parks.

**Urban Forest Management:** A planned, systematic and integrated approach to managing the urban forest. The principles can be broadly broken down into the following:

- Planned Management – An urban forest strategic plan is fundamental to achieving the optimal development and quality of the urban forest.
- Systematic Management – Adequate resourcing is invested and these are managed effectively and efficiently.
- Integrated Management – All relevant stakeholders must work in an integrated manner to achieve the best outcomes for urban areas.

**Habitat connectivity:** Habitat connectivity is a measure of the degree of interconnection of habitat. It is an important issue for managing remnant native vegetation in a unified manner across different land tenure units.

**Wildlife Corridor:** means a vegetation feature (preferably remnant bushland, but may include remnant trees, native plantings, weed thickets and gardens) that connects larger areas of remnant bushland and facilitates fauna movement between them. Fauna movement allows dispersal, interbreeding and recolonisation to occur, making fauna populations more viable in the long term. Fauna movement also facilitates pollen and seed dispersal, enhancing the viability of plant populations. Continuous corridors are preferable, but discontinuous corridors still contribute to fauna movement, and can potentially be improved through habitat enhancement.