

# BAYSIDE TREE STRATEGY



## **INTRODUCTION**

Bayside has a significant vegetation coverage that is valued by its residents. This vegetation is found on residential property, schools, industrial land, golf courses, lining our streets, on Council-owned land and managed parks and reserves, and on other public land (eg railway and road reserves).

The nature of housing stock in Bayside is changing, with increased densities and reduced open space on private allotments. This along with the senescence of many trees is resulting in a reduction in the tree canopy of the City.

This Strategy has been developed to provide a framework of actions to ensure that the future public and private spaces within Bayside are well treed.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2002, Council established a Study Team to consider opportunities to improve the management of trees in Bayside. In doing so, it engaged the Bayside Environmental Advisory Group (BEAG) to assist. The Study Team consisted of BEAG and other invited community representatives from the BEAG Local Expert Register, to enable broad discussion of the issues, and bring local expertise on tree management and urban planning to the debate. (NB: As a result of Council elections in March 2003 and Council annual meetings to elect Committees, the members of the Tree Study Team changed).

### **Tree Study Team Members 2002/05**

#### Councillors & BEAG Members

Cr Eden (Chair – 2002/03)

Cr Beadle (Chair – 2003/05))

Cr Graeme Disney - (2002/03)

Cr Craig Tucker – (2002/04)

Cr Derek Wilson – (2003/05)

Michael Norris Friends of Bayside Representative

Various Council staff

#### Community Members

Jill Orr Young

Ted Pearce

Dr Howard Wildman

Anne Tournay

Rhonda Boyle

Peter Clarke

Johnathan Dixon

Errol Driver

Alan Drummond

BEAG Local Expert Register member

BEAG Local Expert Register member

BEAG Local Expert Register member

BEAG Local Expert Register member

BEAG Local Expert Register member

Local Professional arborist

Real estate representative

Real estate representative

Development representative

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

In May 2002, Council endorsed Terms of Reference for the Study.

### ***AIM***

The Tree Study Team (TST) was established to overview Council systems that protect residential amenity now and into the future, through the retention and replacement of vegetation in Bayside.

### ***OBJECTIVES***

The TST will:

1. Assess and review Council policies and procedures that:
  - protect, retain and replace trees on private land (Local Law; Town Planning Scheme and any associate overlays);
  - protect and retain Significant Trees (Significant Tree Register);
  - consider impact of weedy tree species;
  - enforce regulatory and statutory requirements associated with trees on private land (Local Law; Town Planning Scheme and any associated overlays); and
  - enable the appropriate removal of trees on naturestrips (Council Tree Policy; Arboriculture Contract).
2. Consider opportunities to communicate to the local community the value of trees to residential amenity.
3. Provide a process to expand the knowledge base of members of the TST through expert independent advice.

### ***SCOPE OF WORKS***

The TST shall undertake the following activities:

1. Review relevant Council policies, procedures and activities that relate to trees. These can be found at Figure 1.
2. Identify alternative models/options.
3. Evaluate research findings.
4. Advise BEAG Core Group of findings.

Following review by BEAG, a report would subsequently be referred to Council.

***STRUCTURE***

The TST shall be overseen by the BEAG Core Management Group, and comprise:

1. Councillor as Chairperson;
2. Four (4) independent experts (from the arboricultural, urban design, and real estate/development sectors), plus two (2) alternates;
3. Four (4) members of the BEAG Local Expert Register with professional skills and experience relevant to the review, plus an alternate; and
4. Relevant Council officers.

***ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES***

➤ **BEAG Core Management Group (CMG)**

Manages the project

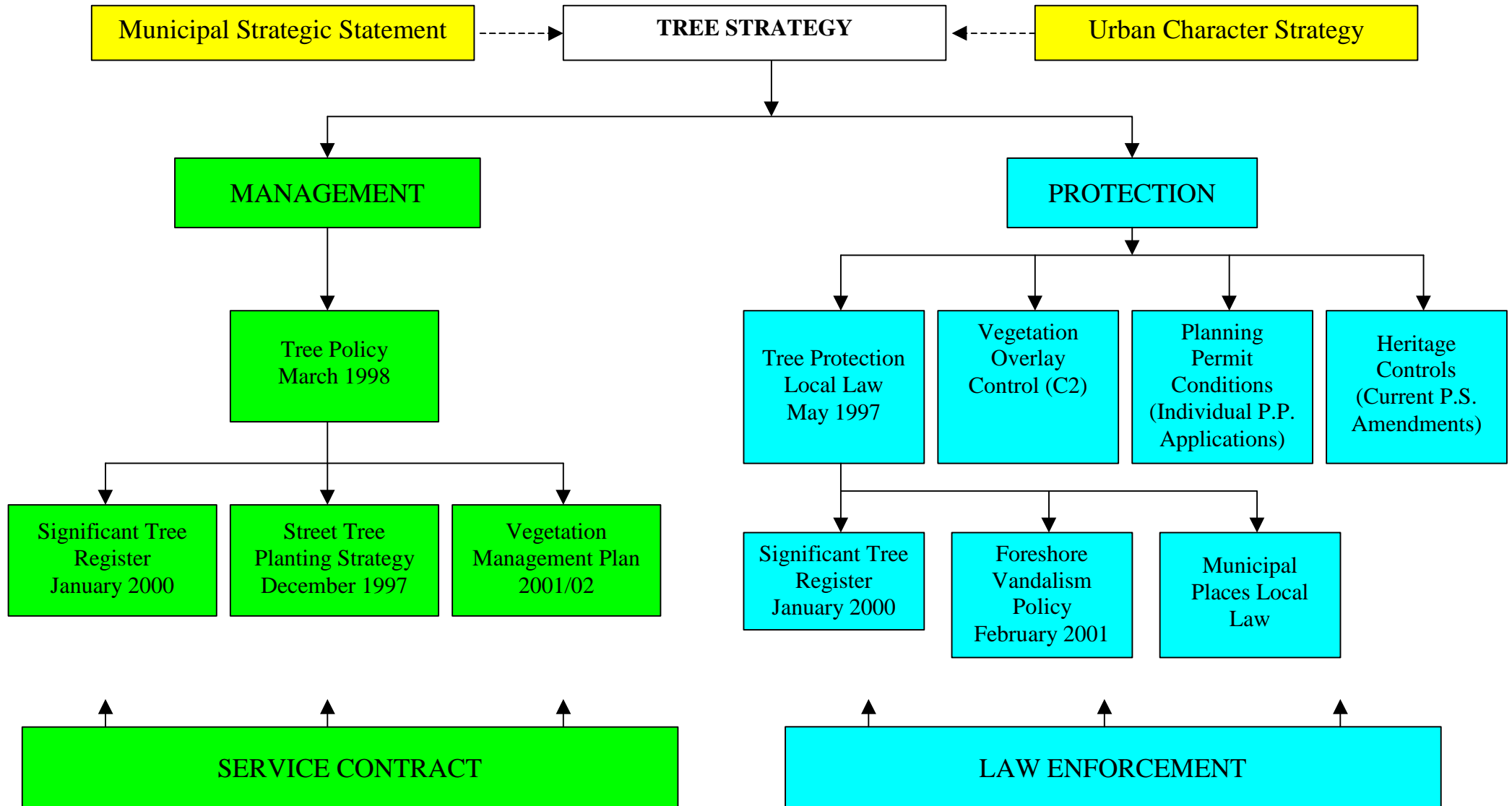
1. Strategic control of the outcomes of the review;
2. Select membership of the TST;
3. Approve and overview the scope of activities of the TST;
4. Consider consultative requirements;
5. Project management activities (eg resourcing, time-tabling, etc.); and
6. Compile outcomes and report to Council’s Business Review Forum.

➤ **TST**

- 2.5.1 Provides a forum to discuss issues, opportunities and solutions;
- 2.5.2 Identify and evaluate alternatives; and
- 2.5.3 Advise the CMG on matters relevant to the review.

TREE MANAGEMENT/PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

Figure 1



## **ANALYSIS OF CURRENT ISSUES**

The Study Team noted the following in considering tree management in Bayside:

### **2.1 Tree Coverage**

- The community perceives that Bayside has a good tree canopy, with a variety of species and landscape characteristics. This contributes to a distinct 'sense of place' within various neighbourhoods (eg Beaumaris).
- Tree canopies spread across public and private land, integrating the spaces.
- Council parks and reserves are well treed, although lack of appropriate understorey planting may inhibit natural pathogens of known tree pests.
- A number of well established golf courses schools and industrial land provide an opportunity for large trees to grow.

### **2.2 The Bayside Community**

- The community values trees as an important component of the character and amenity of the City.
- Use of appropriately trained arborists is important in sustaining a healthy and sustainable tree canopy.
- Vandalism, trampling and compaction are issues in maximising initial tree establishment and retaining foreshore vegetation.
- Laws and regulations generally help to protect trees, but may in some cases discourage good tree management or retention.
- A public liability risk exists with some trees. However, often 'potential risk' is used as an argument to remove safe trees.

### **2.3 Trees**

- Trees grow relatively rapidly in Bayside owing to beneficial soil profiles.
- Watering restrictions may affect the initial establishment and choice of trees.
- Narrow nature-strips can result in street tree damage to abutting public and private infrastructure.
- Infrastructure upgrades can impact negatively on tree health and vigour.
- Trees can be poorly selected and located, given their potential size and growth characteristics. Some are environmental weeds.
- Tree selection should be guided by location and species requirements. Indigenous vegetation is suitable in many locations.
- Fungi, insects and animals (eg possums) may adversely affect our tree population.
- Overhead cables in streets impact on the form of existing trees in nature-strips and selection of newly planted trees.

### **2.4 Private Property Development**

- Tree damage can occur as a result of property development.
- Increased ratio of site coverage of allotments is resulting in the loss of many trees, and reduced opportunities for planting of larger trees.
- Site layout will affect the retention of existing trees and opportunities for new trees.
- Increasing dwelling densities are increasing the number of driveway crossovers, reducing opportunities for street tree planting.

## **A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TREES**

### **CONTEXT**

Bayside City Council has established a broad framework to provide a long-term outlook for the City. The Council Plan 2005-2009 is Council's foremost corporate planning and strategic document. It recognises the history of the City, its present-day profile, its values and potential, and addresses its character. It indicates that Bayside is characterised by tree lined streets and the quality of its urban environment.



The Council Plan 2005-2009 establishes key goals areas for action, including one associated with 'environment and sustainability'. An aspiration of this goal area is for Council to protect and enhance Bayside's natural and built environment. It will achieve this by protecting, promoting and enhancing our natural resources through adopted management plans for all our natural assets. Further, the Council Plan encourages quality urban design, including a more comprehensive approach to streetscape design.

The completion and commencement of implementation of the Bayside Tree Strategy is a short term commitment of the Council Plan.

### ***Bayside Municipal Strategic Statement 2003 (MSS)***

The MSS is the key document that guides land use planning and development in Bayside. The current MSS is under review to establish a new MSS for Bayside.

## ***BAYSIDE TREE STRATEGY***

During the MSS review, the Bayside community is being consulted to identify issues that are important to the future character of the City. The consultation process reinforced that:



- Bayside has “significant and valuable natural features such as coast, bushland reserves and open space”, and that it is important that its “high quality open spaces and vegetation ... are carefully managed”;
- the impact of development of private property was, with “loss of mature trees and private open space, ... having a negative impact on neighbourhood character”;
- “tree and open space preservation and restoration are vital to maintaining Bayside’s neighbourhood character and amenity”; and
- “Council will ... contribute to enhancing the public realm and the interface with the ... private realm” by “initiatives such as streetscape improvements, and street tree planting”.



### ***Bayside Environmental Sustainability Framework (ESF)***

The Draft Tree Strategy conforms with the intent and direction of the ESF.

## **A VISION**

**“Bayside will have a sustainable landscape that integrates and enhances the City, and provides places for trees to grow.”**

Bayside will be known for its:

- Tree ‘corridors’ and quality streetscapes;
- ‘Green City’ appearance, with a dominant tree canopy; and
- Integration of public and private landscapes.

## **OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE VISION**

Bayside City Council will reach its preferred future by achieving the following objectives:

### **1. Influence PEOPLE through:**

- Effective Communication and Community Education;
- Encouragement or Facilitation of Initiatives; and
- Appropriate Regulation and Enforcement.

### **2. Protect and enhance TREESCAPES to:**

- Promote Tree Health;
- Enhance Neighbourhood “Character”;
- Contribute to Biodiversity and Habitat;
- Enhance the Amenity of Private Property; and
- Enhance Public Landscapes.

### **3. MONITOR our tree population to:**

- Establish and measure the “Landscape Rating” of the City;
- Collate and manage data on the Bayside tree population; and
- Provide evidence to influence future decisions.



**STRATEGIC PLAN TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES**

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<b>1. INFLUENCE PEOPLE</b>	
<b>1.1 Effective Communications and Community Education</b>	<p>1.1.1 Establish a strategy to disseminate information to community</p> <p>1.1.2 Develop and distribute information on various issues and make it readily accessible – eg brochures, information sheets</p> <p>1.1.3 Develop lists of trees to guide and promote their use (or non-use) in Bayside, including indigenous species.</p> <p>1.1.4 Develop and implement campaigns to promote the benefits of trees</p> <p>1.1.5 Educate specific community sectors about trees and good aboriginal practice and tree controls in Bayside (eg seminars and forums)</p>
<b>1.2 Encouragement or Facilitation of Initiatives</b>	<p>1.2.1 Provide services for residents to assist in tree retention and management</p> <p>1.2.2 Establish urban design and landscape awards for private land</p> <p>1.2.3 Provide incentives to plant trees on private land</p> <p>1.2.4 Seek external financial support for implementation of Strategy</p>
<b>1.3 Regulation and Enforcement</b>	<p>1.3.1 Encourage people to report those illegally damaging or removing trees</p> <p>1.3.2 Develop systems to monitor the effectiveness of enforcement</p>

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>
<b>2. PROTECT AND ENHANCE TREESCAPES</b>	
<b>2.1 Promote Tree Health</b>	2.1.1 Monitor and review impacts of tree pests and diseases
	2.1.2 Develop Response Plans to mitigate impacts
<b>2.2 Protect &amp; Enhance Neighbourhood Character</b>	2.2.1 Influence the planting of appropriate species on private land
	2.2.2 Plant appropriate species on Council controlled land
<b>2.3 Contribute to Biodiversity and Habitat</b>	2.3.1 Manage problem species on Council controlled land
	2.3.2 Manage problem tree specimens on Council controlled land
	2.3.3 Create ‘corridors’ to link local ‘indigenous habitat areas’
<b>2.4 Protect &amp; Enhance the Amenity of Private Property</b>	2.4.1 Review Local Law No 2 to protect trees on private land
	2.4.2 Review consultation processes in Local Law No 2
	2.4.3 Advocate to Government to appropriately manage legislation and strategy to optimise opportunities for trees
	2.4.4 Review planning scheme components to protect trees and encourage appropriate tree planting
	2.4.5 Review building permit processes and penalties to optimise tree protection
<b>2.5 Protect &amp; Enhance Public Landscapes</b>	2.5.1 Review strategic tree management framework
	2.5.2 Review mechanisms to manage and protect existing tree population
	2.5.3 Expand tree planting programs to maintain overall tree population

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>
<b>3. MONITOR OUR TREE POPULATION</b>	
<b>3.1 Establish Systems to Support Tree Management</b>	3.1.1 Establish systems to monitor tree population of Bayside
	3.1.2 Collate and manage data on the Bayside tree population
	3.1.3 Provide evidence to influence future decisions

**DEFINITIONS**

“Appropriate Species”	A species of plant selected to suit the site into which it is planted, including consideration of space, soil conditions, maritime proximity, provenance, growth habit and ‘weediness’.
“Environmental Weeds”	Plants which invade, persist and proliferate within, and cause maintenance, management, aesthetic or other problems in areas which are either set aside for or managed to protect their native vegetation, fauna or other natural or semi-natural environmental values [Swarbrick and Skarratt (1994)].
Indigenous Plants	In the context of this Strategy, indigenous means those plants originating and living or occurring naturally in the City of Bayside.
Neighbourhood Character	The setback, landscaping, overall form, proportion, materials and detailing of buildings that contribute towards the ‘essence’ of residential areas.

**REFERENCES**

- Swarbrick, J.T and Skarratt, D.B. (1994) ‘The Bushweed 2 Database of Environmental Weeds in Australia’ (University of Queensland Gatton College).