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 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).

In 2011 a review of the actions was undertaken and new actions adopted to replace the completed actions from 2005.

Tree Study Team Members 2002/05

Councillors & BEAG Members	Community Members	
Cr Eden (Chair – 2002/03)	Jill Orr Young	BEAG Local Expert Register member
Cr Beadle (Chair – 2003/05)	Ted Pearce	BEAG Local Expert Register member
Cr Graeme Disney – (2002/03)	Dr Howard Wildman	BEAG Local Expert Register member
Cr Craig Tucker – (2002.04)	Anne Tourney	BEAG Local Expert Register member
Cr Derek Wilson – (2003/05)	Rhonda Boyle	BEAG Local Expert Register member
Michael Norris – Friends of Bayside Representatives	Peter Clarke	Local Professional arborist
Various Council staff	Johnathan Dixon	Real estate representative
	Errol Driver	Real estate representative
	Alan Drummond	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:
    a. protect, retain and replace trees on private land (Local Law; Town Planning Scheme and any associated overlays)
    b. protect and retain Significant Trees (Significant Tree Register)
    c. consider impact of weedy tree species
    d. enforce regulatory and statutory requirements associated with trees on private land (Local Law; Town Planning Scheme and any associated overlays) and
    e. 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.
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) alternatives
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.
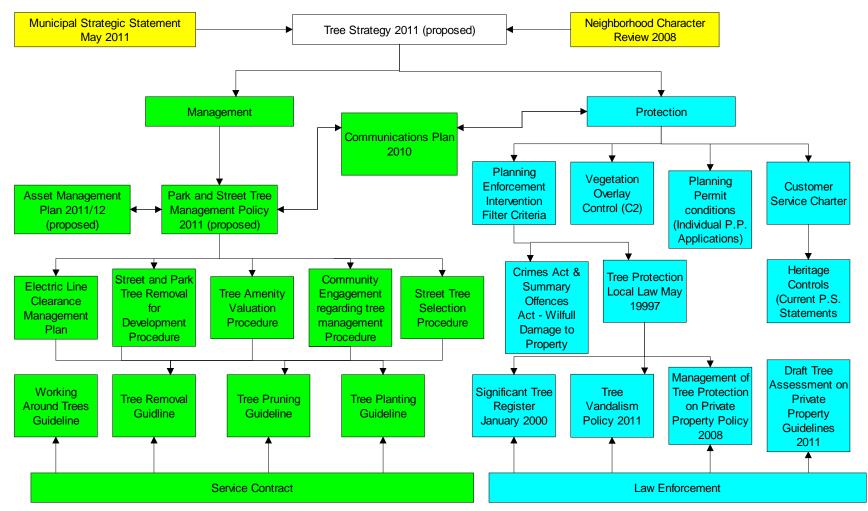
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BEAG Core Management Group (CMG)	**TST**
Manages the project	2.5.1 provides a forum to discuss issues, Opportunities and solutions
1. strategic control of the outcomes of the review	2.5.2 identify and evaluate alternatives; and
2. select membership of the TST	2.5.3 advise the CMG on matters relevant to the review.
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.	

TREE MANAGEMENT/PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

Municipal Strategic Statement May 2011 → **Tree Strategy 2011 (proposed)** ← **Neighborhood Character Review 2008**

Tree Strategy 2011 (proposed) branches into:

Management

- **Communications Plan 2010**
- **Asset Management Plan 2011/12 (proposed)** ↔ **Park and Street Tree Management Policy 2011 (proposed)**

Park and Street Tree Management Policy 2011 (proposed) branches into:

- Electric Line Clearance Management Plan
- Street and Park Tree Removal for Development Procedure
- Tree Amenity Valuation Procedure
- Community Engagement regarding tree management Procedure
- Street Tree Selection Procedure

Leading to:

- Working Around Trees Guideline
- Tree Removal Guidline
- Tree Pruning Guideline
- Tree Planting Guideline

Service Contract

Protection

- Planning Enforcement Intervention Filter Criteria
- Vegetation Overlay Control (C2)
- Planning Permit conditions (Individual P.P. Applications)
- Customer Service Charter

Leading to:

- Crimes Act & Summary Offences Act - Wilfull Damage to Property
- Tree Protection Local Law May 19997
- Heritage Controls (Current P.S. Statements

Leading to:

- Significant Tree Register January 2000
- Tree Vandalism Policy 2011
- Management of Tree Protection on Private Property Policy 2008
- Draft Tree Assessment on Private Property Guidelines 2011

Law Enforcement

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 naturestrips 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 naturestrips 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 goal 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.

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 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".
- "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 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 communications 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 "Landscaping Rating" of the City
   - Collate and manage data on the Bayside tree population and
   - Provide evidence to influence future decision.

STRATEGIC PLAN TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES
1. INFLUENCE PEOPLE	
1.1 Effective Communications and Community Education	1.1.1 Implement actions developed in the Tree Communications Plan 2010
	1.1.2 Develop an education program for the arboricultural and construction industries regarding requirements for working around trees in Bayside
1.2 Encouragement or Facilitation of Initiatives	1.2.1 Form partnerships with other public authorities and external stakeholders to encourage and implement initiatives to improve our urban forest.
	1.2.2 Investigate the potential for developing partnerships with the community to provide more flexible services that meet specific needs, such as tailored maintenance regimes and whole of street tree upgrades.
1.3 Regulation and Enforcement	1.3.1 Develop a policy to deter people from deliberately damaging public trees.
2. PROTECT AND ENHANCE TREESCAPES	
2.1 Promote Tree Health	2.1. Investigate the potential impacts of climate change on existing tree populations in Bayside and the implications for tree selection, planting and establishment
2.2 Protect and Enhance neighbourhood character	2.2.1 Review the role of the community nursery in providing local native trees to residents to use in their gardens.
	2.2.2 Review street tree planting on arterial roads and the role they play in defining and linking neighbourhoods.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES
	2.2.3 Review the street tree selection method to ensure it considers issues such as consistency with neighbourhood character and implications for nearby natural areas.
2.3 Contribute to biodiversity and habitat	2.3.1 Review street and park tree selection and planting to include the provision of habitat and linkages to support desirable native fauna species.
	2.3.3 Consider the 'Living links' master plan when developing tree planting projects along Elster Creek or the foreshore.
	2.3.4 Develop an education program aimed at residents living adjacent wildlife corridors and bushland reserves to promote local native trees.
2.4 Protect and enhance the amenity of private property	2.4.1 Develop a collaborative process between Councils Building, Asset Protection and Investigations teams to educate property owners, architects and builders about protecting trees prior to design commencing.
	2.4.2 Investigate the possibility of a partnership between Council and the private owners of trees listed on the Significant Tree Register to assist with managing the trees in order to encourage their retention and increased nominations.
	2.4.3 Implement the actions recommended by the review of the vegetation related provisions in the Bayside Planning Scheme for residential development and the Bayside Planning Scheme review.
2.5 Protect and enhance public landscapes	2.5.1 Create Asset Management Plans for street and park trees to provide a strategic tree management framework
	2.5.2 Establish a process within Council to determine the costs versus benefits of trees in streets to develop criteria to avoid creating irreconcilable conflicts between trees and infrastructure.
OBJECTIVE	**STRATEGIES**

3. MONITOR OUR TREE POPULATION	
3.1 Establish systems to support tree management	3.1.1 Review tree inventory data quality and its use in tree management decision making.