



SUPPLEMENTARY BUSINESS PAPER

(Mayoral Minute)

GENERAL MEETING

**Wednesday 11 July 2018
at 6:30PM**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

Item 8	MM12/18 Council Tree Planting Program	1
--------	---	---

8 COUNCIL TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

Council's community consultation has repeatedly delivered a clear message from our residents: our natural environment is the most loved aspect of living here and protection of our extensive tree canopy is top priority. People are proud to live in the Bushland Shire and they want to ensure it stays that way.

Hornsby Shire's councillors share those sentiments. At a recent informal workshop Council officers identified a number of possible options to enhance the Shire's tree canopy and councillors favoured the most ambitious: planting 25,000 new trees by September 2020. This is a significant step up from Council's current program of planting 2,000 new trees each year, so I am bringing the proposal before Council for formal endorsement.

The planting of more trees is not simply an aesthetic choice and our native wildlife are not the only winners. Increased tree coverage brings a number of very real benefits that improve quality of life for our community, including cleaner air and lower summer temperatures.

Meeting this goal will not be easy and will require a whole-of-Council approach. An urban forest strategy will be developed to coordinate Council's actions in protecting and planting more trees.

Council's Community Nursery will play a key role in delivering this goal. Currently approximately 50,000 plants are propagated by the nursery volunteers every year for use in Council's operations or given to residents. Nursery production will be adjusted to accommodate our new tree planting initiative.

I am advised there are currently more than 2,500 trees available at the community nursery ready for planting, with a further 665 trees that will be ready within six to eight weeks.

A number of streets have been identified as top priority throughout the Shire's three wards and if Council adopts this proposal planting can occur there over the next three to six months. These streets include, but are not limited to: Alma Court, Thornleigh; Burdett Street, Hornsby; Cobah Road, Arcadia; Geelans Road, Arcadia; Malton Road, Beecroft; Nursery Street, Hornsby; Old Northern Road, Dural; and Taylors Road, Dural. Trees will also be planted in public spaces such as Arcadia Oval, Brickpit Park, Fagan Park, Greenway Park, Hayes Oval, Headen Park, Oxley Reserve, Pennant Hills Park, Reddy Park and Rofe Park.

Meeting the full goal of 25,000 trees by 2020 will require the allocation of additional resources. An exact figure cannot be placed upon this until the urban forest strategy is created, but I am informed it will be up to \$1 million per annum depending on the locations selected for planting, how advanced the trees are and how involved the community are with tree maintenance.

For example trees planted in Town Centres, where civil works are required to the footpath or roadway cost significantly more than trees in suburban areas or in reserves. Likewise the tree establishment/maintenance period can add substantially to the cost of a tree where undertaken by contractors. Opportunities to reduce this cost by using resident volunteers to water and weed trees during the first three months following planting will be actively explored.

Noting that Council's adopted 2018/19 budget does not include increased funding for tree planting activities, it is proposed that opportunities to fund a substantially expanded tree planting program across the Shire form part of the Long Term Financial Plan with any subsequent budget changes reported to Council at a quarterly review.

The urban forest strategy will not just coordinate the planting of new trees but will also help us to protect them once they are in place. Council will not be able to do this alone. To succeed in this task we will need assistance and cooperation from the community, both in planting and maintaining the trees. Given the high value our residents place on our natural environment, not to mention the support Council already receives from committed volunteers through the Community Nursery and Bushcare program, I am confident we will achieve this.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Adopt a goal to plant 25,000 trees by September 2020.
2. Authorise the General Manager to identify opportunities to fund an increased tree planting program across the Shire as part of the preparation of the Long Term Financial Plan with any subsequent budget changes to be reported to Council at a quarterly review.
3. Commence increased tree plantings through existing budget allocations and staff resources whilst the Long Term Financial Plan is being developed.

The Honourable Cr PHILIP RUDDOCK

Mayor

Attachments:

There are no attachments for this report.

File Reference: F2013/00275

Document Number: D07475245