

## **Greening Sydney with free trees**

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Planet Ark is joining with NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to increase tree canopy and green cover across Greater Sydney. As part of a three-year sponsorship of Planet Ark's National Tree Day and the Premier's Priority for Greening our City, the partnership aims to plant one million trees across the greater Sydney region by 2022. Source: Timberbiz

The Greening our City Premier's Priority aims to make Sydney and surrounding suburbs more sustainable and liveable by increasing tree canopy and green cover, with a goal of planting one million trees by 2022.

This is part of a broader commitment by the NSW Government to plant five million trees by 2030.

The Greening our City Program works with local government, the community and organisations like Planet. The program has already made more than \$17 million in grant funding available to councils and their partners for tree planting and demonstration projects.

It has also partnered with non-government organisations to deliver tree planting and education programs across Sydney, with a focus on reducing the urban heat island effect in Western Sydney, including at NSW schools. The program has also commenced a review of policy and regulations in NSW to support reforms for enhanced tree canopy and is providing assistance to residents to encourage community tree planting.

The Department is offering up to 8750 households in Greater Sydney a free tree to plant at their homes.

Trees in urban spaces provide a range of benefits to both the environment and communities. Planet Ark's 2019 Tree Day Report, *Living Cities: Trees in the Urban Environment*, details the benefits of increasing green cover in cities and urban spaces. The report found an increase of just 5% in tree cover can reduce nearby daytime temperatures by 2.3C, which could be crucial to protecting communities as heatwaves cost more lives than all other climate change impacts combined.

As well as mitigating the urban heat island effect by providing shade, trees also reduce carbon dioxide in the air, produce oxygen for us to breathe, filter pollutants from the air and enhance the experience of outdoor recreation. Furthermore, time spent in nature reduces stress, improves happiness, wellbeing and productivity, and can even lower the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

With many Australians spending more time indoors and having less access to nature due to the coronavirus pandemic, public parks and green spaces in cities have increased in popularity.

Data from this year's Tree Report, *Regenerating: Our Land, Our People, Our Future*, further reinforces the importance of human connection to nature, with 55% of Australians agreeing time in nature improved their mood or eased anxieties during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, compared with just 12% who disagreed.

Source: <https://www.timberbiz.com.au/greening-sydney-with-free-trees/>