

Urban forest plan for Hobsons Bay

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Councillors Jonathon Marsden and Sandra Wilson at The 100 Steps of Federation in Altona Meadows, where hundreds of trees have been planted. Photo: Damjan Janevski 209780_02

Hobsons Bay's tree coverage will be increased to 30 per cent by 2040 to meet the definition of an urban forest.

The draft Hobsons Bay Urban Forest Strategy, released for community feedback, outlines the council's plans to increase the number of trees in the municipality from the current 76,000 it manages.

About 7.5 per cent of land in Hobsons Bay has canopy cover, most of which (4.7 per cent) is in public parks and streets.

The council wants to more than double this number to 12 per cent.

Nature strip vacancies could provide an additional two per cent canopy cover (about 18,000 large trees).

Hobsons Bay councillor Sandra Wilson said a 30 per cent target by 2040 was realistic.

"We are ranked the fourth worst – 28 out of 31 – of the metropolitan local government areas [for canopy cover]," she said.

"I suppose we have to qualify that with noting that we are in the western plains, so it's not like the eastern suburbs that have got the gum forests and a different set of vegetation, so we are playing catch-up in many ways."

The council also wants the number of trees in private residential gardens to increase from 1.5 per cent to 12 per cent and on industrial land from 0.45 per cent to six per cent.

Cr Jonathon Marsden said the council aimed to plant 8500 trees a year for the next five years.

“The main advantage for the city, when taken in aggregate, is the reduced heat island effect,” he said.

“Trees throw shade and shade means less energy required for heating and cooling.

“They’re also beautiful. They’re also a habitat for natural creatures.

“There’s enormous potential in private residential gardens and the goals that are set for those areas are really bold.”

The strategy will be on display for six weeks.

Source: <https://maribyrnonghobsonsbay.starweekly.com.au/news/urban-forest-plan-for-hobsonsbay/>