

# DRAFT TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT



Date of issue: December 2022

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

#### ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

On 27 September 2022, Council endorsed the release the Draft Tree Management Policy for community consultation for a period of four weeks.

The community were invited to have its say on the proposed changes in the draft Public Tree Management Policy and if they supported the changes.

Proposed changes to the policy included:

- changing the name to 'Public Tree Management Policy' to clarify that the policy applies to City owned and managed trees,
- referring to 'Tree Canopy Contribution' as opposed to what was previously called 'offset value', to differentiate the contribution from Native vegetation offsets,
- adding section 6 to make clear the Tree Canopy Contribution requirements, and
- adding clauses 3.5 and 3.6 to Section 3 - Tree Maintenance, to clarify the extent to which a tree canopy will be pruned.

The community engagement campaign opened on 28 September 2022 and closed on 28 October 2022.

#### ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

The following activities and tools were employed to support the community engagement:

- Media release announcing the release of the Draft Policy.
- Communications to promote the engagement through social media.
- Dedicated community engagement page to review the draft Policy and to 'have your say'. The page was inclusive of the full plan, 13 summary network reports, project timelines and background information.
- A quick poll was established to measure if the changes were supported by the community.
- The surveying tool was used to gauge overall sentiment and gather constructive feedback from contributors.

A summary of the consultation process is provided below:



**4 weeks**

of engagement



**618**

Visitors to the HYS project page



**69**

contributions received via an online quick poll (45) & survey (24).



**1**

Media release in local newspaper

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

**23901**

Reach/Impressions



**863**

Actions (Clicks, reactions, shares, comments etc.)



**21**

People following the project

The following provides a summary of respondent sentiment towards the overall draft Policy. The feedback was addressed in two sections, a feedback survey, and a quick poll.

#### **SURVEY (24 responses)**

Survey respondents were asked about changes to the policy, whether they supported the changes to the name and changes and addition of clauses within the policy, and if not why. They were also asked to provide further feedback for the City to consider. All feedback was considered in the final Public Tree Management Policy.

- **87%** of survey respondents supported the change of the name to Public Tree Management Policy.
- **91%** of survey respondents supported the change from the terminology 'Offset value' to 'Tree Canopy Contribution'
- **85%** of survey respondents supported the addition of Section 6 to clarify the Tree Canopy Contribution requirements.
- **86%** of survey respondents supported the addition of Clauses 3.5 & 3.6 to clarify the extent tree canopy will be pruned.

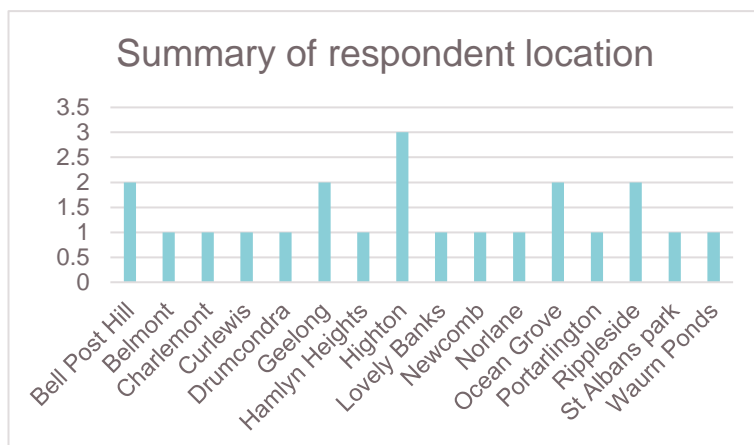
#### **QUICK POLL (45 responses)**

**53%** of quick poll participants supported the proposed changes to the Tree Management Policy.

*Please note - The quick poll was a single question used to quickly find out the community's support of the proposed changes to the policy. A greater number of responses were received through the quick poll compared to the survey. Whilst the majority of quick poll responses supported the policy changes it was at a lower rate than the support shown through the full survey responses. This could be due to people who may not have been as informed about the policy using the quick poll rather than providing more detailed feedback via the survey.*

## LOCATION

The following provides a summary overview of respondent location.



**Q: To help us with your feedback, can you please select the suburb you live?**

## WHAT WE HEARD – THEMES AND VERBATIM COMMENTS

### SUMMARY FEEDBACK

The following represents a summary of feedback themes and comments provided by respondents; and outlines the response relative to the final Tree Management Policy.

*Please note – there may be more than one feedback theme or comment per respondent. The total number of respondents in relation to each feedback theme is shown for context.*

CHANGES	SUMMARY/COMMENTS	RESPONSE/ACTION IN FINAL POLICY
<b>The name of the policy changed to 'Public Tree Management Policy' to clarify that the policy applies to City owned and managed trees. (n=22)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19 respondents support the change. 3 respondents do not support the change</li> </ul>	<p>The strong overall support from our community and key stakeholders has demonstrated that the proposed name change is appropriate.</p> <p>The term 'management' has been retained as urban trees have management requirements under legislation that have to be met.</p> <p>Council is currently compiling a report that will outline options for enhancing protection of trees on private land in urban environments within Greater Geelong and identify the process/s for introduction of any such initiatives, should Council wish to pursue them.</p> <p>This report should be complete in July 2023.</p>
<b>The term 'offset value' has been changed to 'Tree Canopy Contribution' to differentiate the</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This disguises a reduction in the scope of the Tree Policy so it has even less application to trees on private land. The Council should be working to implement changes to the Planning Scheme and introduce a local law to protect existing trees.</li> <li>I think it should just be called the "trees policy" so people feel less compelled to "manage" or "interfere" with the growing/living of trees</li> </ul>	<p>The strong overall support from our community and key stakeholders has demonstrated that the proposed name change is appropriate.</p>

<b>contribution from Native vegetation offsets</b>		We have retained the term contribution as this represents the contribution that an individual or entity makes to compensate the community for the canopy lost to facilitate works.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I do prefer the name "Tree Canopy Contribution" to what it was but it's still so transactional and measured sounding. What not just talk about "Tree Canopies"</li> </ul>	
<b>Section 6 added to clarify the Tree Canopy Contribution requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17 respondents support the change. 3 respondents do not support the change</li> </ul>	The strong overall support from our community and key stakeholders has demonstrated that the proposed clarification of the Tree Canopy Contribution process is appropriate.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think there needs to be much higher contribution of tree canopy cover</li> </ul>	The costs charged reflect what is required to replace the canopy lost as soon as the trees are planted. This has been in place and accepted by the wider community for many years.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The costs charged should be the tree replacement costs.</li> </ul>	
<b>Clauses 3.5 and 3.6 added to Section 3 Tree Maintenance to clarify the extent a tree canopy will be pruned.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18 respondents support the change. 3 respondents do not support the change</li> </ul>	The strong overall support from our community and key stakeholders has demonstrated that the proposed clarification of the extent a tree canopy will be pruned is appropriate.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I still think the "pruning" of most trees is excessive</li> </ul>	Best arboricultural practices require trees are pruned to the minimum extent possible. At times this conflicts with legislated clearance requirements. The City works to balance these competing requirements by utilising qualified arborists to undertake works.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private owners should have the right to remove tree canopies that encroach on their property at their discretion. Also, property owners should not have to deal with dropping from public's tree onto their property.</li> </ul>	For people who live in urban environments, it is appropriate to expect that some degree of house and grounds maintenance will be required in order to appreciate and retain the social, financial, aesthetic, and environmental benefits of having trees in an urban environment.

## SECTION FEEDBACK

<b>Section 2 Tree Planting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trees should be planted in line with the policy as described, for the benefit of the community. Planting positions should be advantageous to the community, and if in doing so blocks someone's view of the water, that should be viewed as secondary</li> </ul>	<p>The ongoing renewal of our existing urban forest is integral in achieving a cool green city.</p> <p>The following policy statement has been adopted to reflect its importance:</p> <p><i>New plantings in reserves will not be prevented on the grounds of impeding access to a view, however species selection and placement will be considered to frame and complement the landscape.</i></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More evergreens</li> </ul>	<p>We select tree species to provide a diverse and resilient tree population. To do so we will plant both evergreen and deciduous species where appropriate.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a statement that locations for tree planting on reserves will not be influenced by resident views</li> </ul>	<p>The ongoing renewal of our existing urban forest is integral in achieving a cool green city.</p> <p>The following policy statement has been adopted to reflect his importance:</p> <p><i>New plantings in reserves will not be prevented on the grounds of impeding access to a view, however species selection and placement will be considered to frame and complement the landscape.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COGG would be welcome to engage with community members who are willing to support and increase the tree numbers in their neighbourhood. The responses I have had from city employees on this issue has been woeful.</li> </ul>	<p>Residents are welcome to request tree planting via our customer service team. The City will confer with any resident living adjacent the site to confirm the species and location are preferred by the resident.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree succession planting in public spaces is required as tree populations in older parks age and need replacing. I strongly support planting for improving native vegetation cover and biodiversity in new areas where the native vegetation has been cleared.</li> </ul>	<p>Feedback is consistent with Tree Management Policy and noted with thanks. If any specific sites would benefit from more trees new planting can be requested via our customer service team.</p>
<b>Section 3 Tree Maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weed around planted trees and mulch them more and removed guards and infill plant more</li> </ul>	<p>The City maintains newly planted trees for two years, including weed and mulch control. If specific sites need attention these can be reported via our customer service team.</p>
<b>Section 4 Tree Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I believe all trees should be protected not just indigenous trees or native trees. we should have more than one opinion as to whether a tree is a weed or not for example willows and poplars and ash have been removed on the Barwon river during a drought</li> </ul>	<p>Council is currently compiling a report that will outline options for enhancing protection of trees on private land in urban environments within Greater Geelong and identify the process/s for introduction of any such initiatives, should Council wish to pursue them. This report should be complete in July 2023.</p> <p>The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority is responsible for weed management along the Barwon River through Geelong.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trees with hollows on developer land should be protected - we saw so many</li> </ul>	<p>The retention of trees on land proposed for development takes into consideration the habitat value of the</p>

	trees with nesting lorikeets destroyed in Charlemont and Armstrong Creek	tree, as well as native vegetation quality, extent, and connectivity to the landscape.
<b>Section 5 Tree Removal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a Local Law to require approval for canopy tree removal on private or public land.</li> </ul>	Council is currently compiling a report that will outline options for enhancing protection of trees on private land in urban environments within Greater Geelong and identify the process/s for introduction of any such initiatives, should Council wish to pursue them. This report should be complete in July 2023.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firm and on-going education of incoming people &amp; builders is needed: The first thing they do is cut down mature/established trees...HELP!</li> </ul>	Council is currently compiling a report that will outline options for enhancing protection of trees on private land in urban environments within Greater Geelong and identify the process/s for introduction of any such initiatives, should Council wish to pursue them. This report should be complete in July 2023.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is often community angst when a tree in a park or reserve is to be removed. I would like to recommend that where appropriate another tree is replaced in it's place during the following planting season.</li> </ul>	Feedback is consistent with Tree Management Policy and noted with thanks. If any specific sites would benefit from more trees new planting can be requested via our customer service team.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The payment for illegal tree removal should ALWAYS be the maximum when it is done for improving a view!</li> </ul>	The City takes illegal tree removal very seriously and will investigate any reported incidents, infringements are pursued when there is sufficient evidence.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trees encroaching on private property be trimmed/removed.</li> </ul>	Trees in the urban environment provide many social, financial, and environmental benefits to the local community and residents. To maximise the benefits and maintain a safe and healthy population trees are pruned to the minimum extent required.
<b>Section 6 Tree Canopy Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No comment recorded</li> </ul>	
<b>Section 7 Tree root interactions with public and private infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better planning, maintenance of &amp; possible removal of trees &amp; plants to make walking paths or areas lacking these more safe &amp; accessible</li> </ul>	The City undertakes proactive inspections of our trees every three years, and our footpaths are inspected in line with the inspection regime set in the City's Road Management Plan to ensure they are safe and accessible. Any changes that occur between inspections may be reported via our customer service team.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City should take responsibility for damage or annoyances caused to private properties as a result of the trees they plant.</li> </ul>	If you are concerned about a public tree managed by the City, please submit a request via our customer service team and we will investigate and contact you to discuss the outcome.

<b>Section 8 Native Vegetation Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Park should be transformed from the current ornamental style gardens into more grassy woodlands/ heath and endemic species with more ground cover planting. Additionally more ground cover plantings should be considered in street scapes to enhance</li> </ul>	<p>Thank you for the suggestion regarding Eastern Park, it has been noted for future planning of the gardens.</p> <p>If residents wish to plant ground cover plantings in their nature strip, they can refer to our Approved alternative nature strip surface guidelines on our website.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I suggest you study the work of Dr Akira Miyawaki and plant a network of tiny forests across the city.</li> </ul>	<p>Geelong's Plan for Nature will identify opportunities for creating bio links across the city to facilitate the movement of wildlife around the city. This feedback has been added to the consultation process that is currently open until 16 January.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for opportunities to include food trees for indigenous wildlife</li> </ul>	<p>Geelong's Plan for Nature will identify opportunities for increasing food for indigenous wildlife. This feedback has been added to the consultation process that is currently open until 16 January.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like you to consider using the term "rewilding". Rewilding is a progressive approach to conservation. It's about letting nature take care of itself, enabling natural processes. Particularly for regional reserves and roadside trees that are habitat.</li> </ul>	<p>Geelong's Plan for Nature will identify opportunities for rewilding. This feedback has been added to the consultation process that is currently open until 16 January.</p>

## NEXT STEPS

The Public Tree Management Policy was adopted by Council on Tuesday 13 December 2022.

The City now looks forward to working with the community and stakeholders on implementing the policy.