



ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

LATE ITEMS

6 AUGUST 2024

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5 GENERAL REPORTS

5.8 GREENING ORANGE - OUR URBAN FOREST STRATEGY - POST EXHIBITION

RECORD NUMBER: 2024/1369

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to seek Council's formal adoption of the Greening Orange – Our Urban Forest Strategy following a period of public exhibition for twenty-one days during July 2024.

LINK TO DELIVERY/OPERATIONAL PLAN

The recommendation in this report relates to the Delivery/Operational Plan strategy “1.2. Improve access to shade throughout parks and open spaces”.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That the strategic document Greening Orange – Our Urban Forest Strategy be adopted.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Consideration has been given to the recommendation's impact on Council's service delivery; image and reputation; political; environmental; health and safety; employees; stakeholders and project management; and no further implications or risks have been identified.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

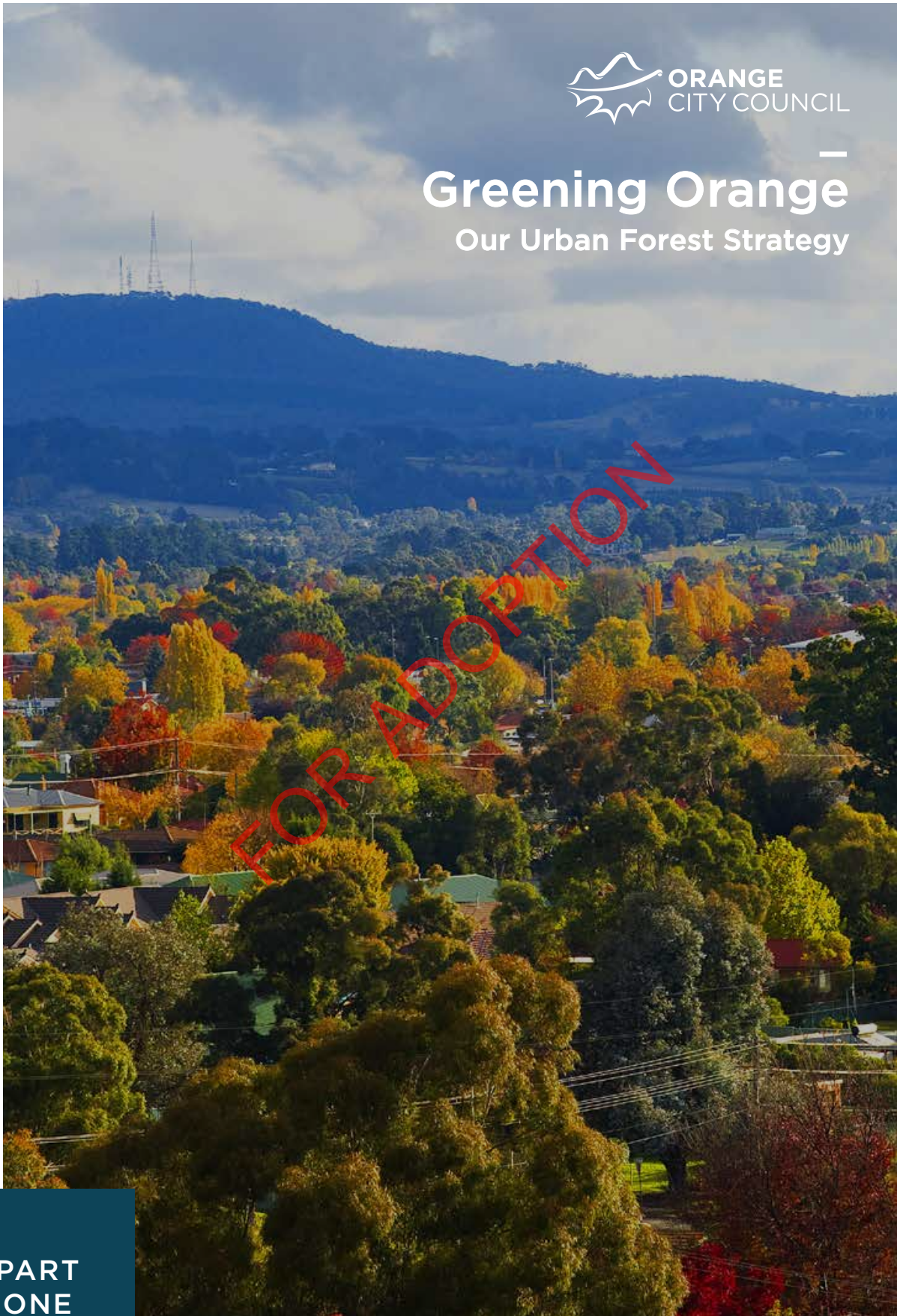
As previously reported to Council through workshops and consultation events, the Parks, Trees and Waterways Community Committee and the broader community have contributed to the development of a draft Greening Orange – Our Urban Forest Strategy. The Strategy sets the direction for sustaining, enriching and building all natural and cultivated tree and plant cover over our city until 2050 – our “Urban Forest”.

The strategic approach of this document will ensure tree planting and the provision of Greening Orange is focussed where needed most, often in low socio-economic areas, where shade is important for pedestrians along active transport routes.

The draft Greening Orange – Our Urban Forest strategy ('Strategy') was placed on public exhibition from 10 July to 31 July via Council's website. During the exhibition period Council posted six times on social media channels advising the community of the current exhibition of the Strategy. At the conclusion of the exhibition period Council received one formal submissions from Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Orange (ECCO) a copy of which is attached to this report (with permission of the submission author). This submission supports the strategy objectives and compliments Council on development of the Greening Orange – Our Urban Forest Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 FOR ADOPTION - Urban Forest Strategy - Orange - Part 1, [D24/67875](#)
- 2 FOR ADOPTION - Urban Forest Strategy - Orange - Part 2, [D24/67876](#)
- 3 Submission - ECCO, [D24/82329](#)



Greening Orange

Our Urban Forest Strategy

FOR ADOPTION

PART ONE

Acknowledgement of Country

Orange City Council is situated within the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri Nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodianship of these lands, and pay our respect to the Wiradjuri people for their care and stewardship of these lands for more than 40,000 years and to the Elders of the Wiradjuri Nation, past, present and emerging.



Executive Summary

The greatest contributor to the richness and vibrancy of Orange, the lifeblood of our 'Colour City', is our vast network of exotic, deciduous trees, and the brilliant show of colour they give us every autumn. The urban forest of Orange – the shrubs, grasses and climbing plants as well as the trees – is one of our region's greatest assets.

Greening Orange – our Urban Forest Strategy – sets the strategic direction for sustaining, enriching and building all natural and cultivated tree and plant cover over our entire city-region until 2050 – our "Urban Forest".

Our warming climate, expansion and densification of our urban footprint, increasing heat absorbing impermeable surfaces, and the ongoing impacts of historical clearing, are key issues this strategy addresses. We need to provide more tree canopy cover for heat mitigation - the shade and cooling benefits of trees are necessary to sustain the health and well-being of our communities and liveability of our City-Region with the Vision:

A healthy, diverse, expanding and valued urban forest that increases the liveability, colour city character and biodiversity of our city.

In attaining this vision, we seek to move our present canopy cover (2022 benchmarks) in key areas to 2050 targets of:

- 17.3% to **20% canopy cover for Orange**
- 7.0% to **9% canopy cover for Lucknow; and**
- 4.9% to **7% canopy cover for Spring Hill**

We will achieve this through strategies and action plans across four main themes following the lead of our Community Strategic Plan themes – *Live, Preserve, Prosper and Collaborate*:

- **Live:** "A healthy, safe, inclusive and vibrant community". We will *Green and Shade* our streets and parks to reduce heat, enhancing our region's liveability across all measures through targeted programs for trees located in streets, parks and private property
- **Preserve:** "Balancing the natural and built environment". We will *Sustain and Protect* our green amenity, cultivated landscape character and natural values
- **Prosper:** "A smart, innovative and resilient economy". We will *Innovate and Enhance* to promote the health and expansion of our urban forest to maximise our benefits
- **Collaborate:** "Leading and partnering to support the community". We will *Share and Collaborate* to grow and nurture our urban forest in partnership with the community

Our Urban Forest Strategy culminates in the presentation of a Prioritised Implementation Plan. This plan of action shows how plans, programs and local greening and shading initiatives can effectively deliver the outcomes of this strategy.

Greening Orange – our Urban Forest Strategy presents detailed strategy as well as rationale. The document reports on and explores all issues affecting our City-Region's 2022 canopy cover baseline, and future urban forest. We highlight opportunities for preserving and growing canopy in our region so that we can, together, deliver our vision.

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What's an urban forest?

Urban forests are most frequently referred to in a Local Government Area (LGA) context. Orange Council's urban forest comprises all trees, plants (including tussocks and turf grasses) and fungi growing within our LGA boundary - our collective urban forest. This includes vegetation growing on Council-controlled lands (our urban streetscapes, parks, nature and bushland reserves, and rural roadside reserves) as well as trees and plants growing in the LGA's privately owned land parcels. The soil, water and microorganisms that support our plants and trees are also components of an urban forest.

About this strategy

Greening Orange - our Urban Forest Strategy is our roadmap for the future of everything green in Orange. It sets the direction for growing our region's urban canopy cover, and for enriching and enhancing our urban forest.

The strategies provided are intended for our whole urban forest to retain, reinvigorate, and grow our native vegetation and enhance biodiversity. Actions are targeted for operational activities for trees on Council-controlled lands only.

Purpose

The key drivers prompting development of this strategy are urban heat, climate change and population growth, all of which significantly impact the integrity of our environment and liveability of our region.

Other key challenges surrounding our region's vegetation cover that need to be strategically addressed include:

- The history and practice of Native vegetation removal, especially on private land
- Reduced succession and new tree and shrub plantings on private land
- Reduced planting of larger growing canopy trees on privately owned land
- The provision of soil volumes necessary for root growth of large trees to minimise infrastructure/built form conflicts
- Equity in tree planting to ensure an even local canopy cover distribution that does not discriminate against areas or demographics and seeks to provide shade to hot spot and activity areas.

Strategy objectives

By setting the direction for the future, documenting our priorities and formulating realistic and deliverable solutions for the enhancement and benefit of the Urban Forest and socio-ecological system.

- Grow and expand the tree canopy to improve shading, summer cooling and all the socio-ecological factors

- Preserve and repair the region's biodiversity
- Work with the community to assure pride in their 'colour city'.

Desired outcomes

The outcomes this strategy seeks to achieve are:

- Trees contributing to community health and well-being by providing relief from the impacts of solar radiation and urban heat, and reduction in cooling costs
- Shady spaces providing opportunity for longer periods of time spent outdoors socialising and passive or active recreation
- Tree shade encouraging active transport rather than vehicle use to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions
- Equitable canopy cover and greening benefits in our urban residential streets and shady connections between urban residential areas, community and recreational facilities and townships
- A population of trees and plants growing on Council-controlled land that is attractive, healthy, and resilient
- Increased extents of our native vegetation cover and biodiversity values
- A greater volume of tree canopy growing in private land allotments

Our Canopy Cover Targets

To realise our vision, we aim to increase canopy cover in our urban townships by 2050 according to the following percentage canopy cover targets as listed in *Table 1: Canopy cover benchmarks and 2050 targets by urban area*.

Urban area	2022 Benchmark canopy cover		2050 Canopy cover target	
All	2,472 Ha	17.0%	2,863 Ha	19.7%
Orange	2,450 Ha	17.3%	2,833 Ha	20.0%
Lucknow	14.4 Ha	7.0%	18.5 Ha	9.0%
Spring Hill	8.5 Ha	4.9%	12.1 Ha	7.0%

Table 1: Canopy cover benchmarks and 2050 targets by urban area

Measurement of success

Cyclic recapture of canopy cover and radiant heat data will allow for ongoing monitoring and measurement of our performance in delivering the strategy's desired outcomes over time. This will allow for interrogation and refinement as required in a dynamic and evolving process. Our strategy will be considered a success when we have achieved our canopy cover targets.

