



*City of*  
**KINGSTON**

# Street & Park Tree Management STRATEGY 2019



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RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE	General Manager City Assets and Environment
STRATEGY OWNER	Manager Parks

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## Introduction & Vision

### Vision

Council will maintain and enhance the urban forest to underpin the sense of a happy and healthy community, and to maintain vibrant neighbourhoods, through sustaining the City's beautiful streetscapes and parklands.

The urban forest will be resilient through the application of timely, scheduled works to respond to changes in the environment and the community's expectations. Council will undertake tree management programs to increase canopy coverage, protect existing trees, promote public safety and tree health, implement cost effective enhancement and maintenance of the public trees, increase public awareness of the value of our trees, and maximize the social, economic, and environmental benefits of public trees for current residents and future generations.

### Executive Summary

The residents and the City of Kingston have made trees a priority for the environmental and quality of life benefits they provide. In response to the growing public appreciation of trees and to respond to the increasing challenge of managing trees in an urban environment, Council has developed a Street and Park Tree Management Strategy. The document outlines Council's policies and strategic direction in regard to the management of the public component of the Urban Forest.

Protecting and enhancing Kingston's urban forest through proper management is vital to sustaining a healthy, vibrant community. The urban forest provides a multitude of benefits from an ecological, climatic, architectural, psychological and economic point of view. The urban forest provides habitat and food sources for wildlife, provides efficient use of storm water runoff, mitigates noise and dust levels, improves air and water quality, absorbs pollutants, sequesters carbon and helps conserve energy. Understanding the functions, values and services that the urban forest provides is integral to its successful management.

The USDA Forest Service (2000) suggests that in the majority of cases, "the dollar value of existing trees will either remain the same or increase as time goes by, as long as they are maintained adequately. This is in contrast to other capital expenditures, such as building and maintenance equipment, which decreases in value with age." This is one of the reasons Council provides appropriate funding for the management of Kingston's urban forest each year.

Council has, or is developing, a number of strategies which specify the value of trees in public and private spaces and set appropriate targets. These include the Biodiversity Strategy, the Kingston Urban Cooling Strategy, the Kingston Climate Change Strategy, the Housing Strategy and Neighbourhood Character Study and Living Melbourne: Our Metropolitan Urban Forest Strategy which was produced by Resilient Melbourne and The Nature Conservancy, in consultation with various State and Local Govt authorities, NGOs and the private sector. This Street and Park Tree Management Strategy in conjunction with the Tree Management and Technical Guidelines provides the operational guidelines for achieving the visions and targets of the other strategies.



The City of Kingston Street and Park Tree Management Strategy is Volume 1 of the City of Kingston's tree management documents. While the Street and Park Tree Management Strategy provides an overview of the strategic direction for the management of the public Urban Forest, Volume 2 The City of Kingston Tree Management & Technical Guidelines underpins the implementation of the policy and outlines current best arboricultural practice for tree management functions (*commercial or professional procedures that through research and experience are broadly accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective and can be proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption*). The Guidelines are a living document which is updated as legislation or other changes impact on practice.

## Introduction

The City of Kingston is one of Melbourne's most diverse municipalities, with a population of approximately 156,754 (ABS Estimated Resident Population 2016), with a population density of 17.17 persons per hectare, living in 59,854 households over 91 square kilometres. It is the tenth largest municipality in Melbourne and continues to grow with a forecast population of 185,214 by 2036.

Trees are a significant part of Kingston's landscape character. They provide the City of Kingston with social, economic, amenity and environmental benefits. The community is naturally concerned with conserving trees - particularly large canopy trees that take many years to mature. In line with the State Government's Biodiversity Strategy, Kingston is aiming to increase canopy cover throughout the City. The increase of the tree canopy cover is addressed at a practical level through the various elements of this strategy and underpinned by the Tree Management & Technical Guidelines.

Kingston manages over 300 open space areas throughout the City, including areas such as Peter Scullin Reserve, Bicentennial Park, Bradshaw Park, The Grange Heathland, Kingston Heath Reserve and approximately 13 kilometres of foreshore. The importance of the City's open space and environmental areas is illustrated by the deep green colour in the City of Kingston logo.

The City of Kingston manages approximately 90,000 trees located within reserves, streets and Council managed facilities. It is a Council objective to protect and restore the quality of Kingston's natural environment and streetscapes, and to provide for the responsible management of its assets. All tree work shall be performed to the best arboricultural standard to provide healthy well balanced trees of good growth and aesthetically pleasing appearance.

Urban trees improve the quality of urban life and contribute to a sense of community; they also contribute to an attractive green city and can communicate the image of a positive, nature-oriented city. Indirectly, urban trees can promote tourism and enhance economic development. At the local level trees contribute to the quality of housing and working environments and their benefits are reflected in residential property values.

For councils deciding on where to direct expenditure in order to improve a street, planting trees can provide one of the most cost effective means of maximising a range benefits.

## Council's Core Tree Management Objectives

The following objectives will be applied across all tree management activities:

- Increasing canopy cover to mitigate urban heat island and impacts of climate change within the municipality in accordance with other strategies.
- Increasing the proportion of indigenous and native trees within the overall tree population to support wildlife and enhance biodiversity
- Ensuring trees do not compromise safety or make other infrastructure unmanageable
- Ensuring Council complies with legislative requirements
- Enhancing the amenity of streetscapes and parks
- Ensuring the community are engaged

## Measurement

Measurement of this strategy will be undertaken in the following ways.

The process of implementing the strategy will be measured in terms of:

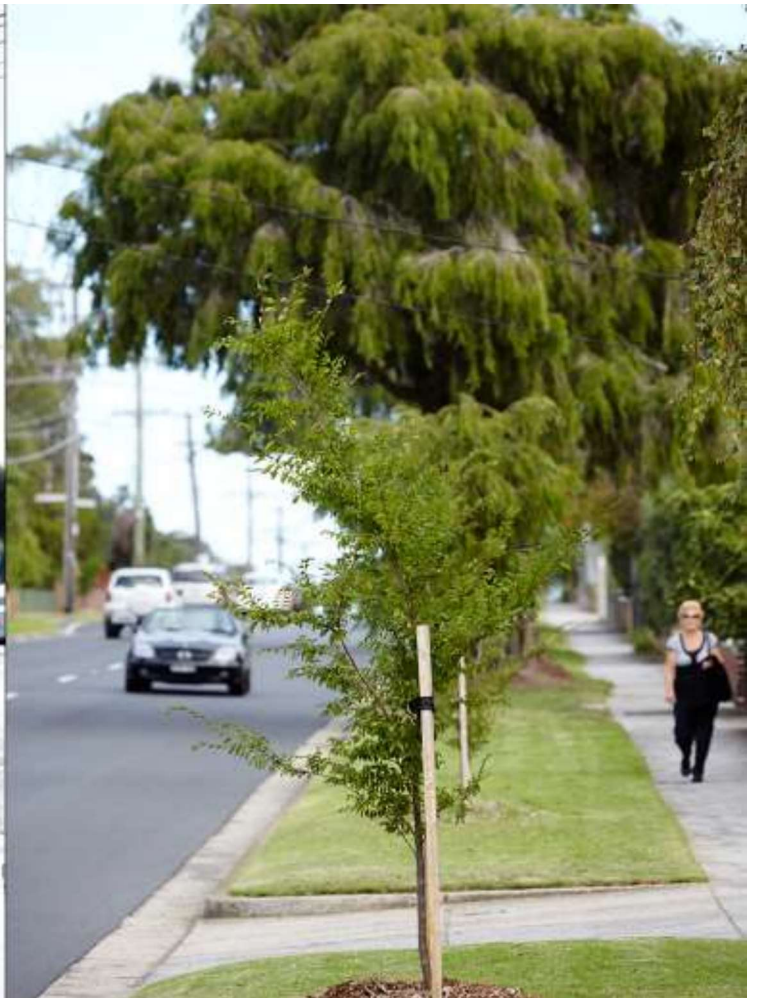
1. Number of street trees planted
2. Number of park trees planted
3. Proportion of indigenous and native trees planted
4. Successful establishment rate

The impact of implementing the strategy will be measured in terms of:

1. Increased number of council managed trees
2. Increased proportion of indigenous and native trees in streets

The outcomes of the strategy will contribute to the delivery of other Council Strategies including the Climate Change Strategy and Urban Cooling Strategy. In particular this policy will increase canopy cover on Council land and contribute to the objective of increasing canopy cover in the municipality to 30%.





## Activity 1 - Tree Establishment

### Tree Selection and Planting

Trees are the dominant component in landscapes and one of the most effective ways of improving the image and landscape character of a city is to upgrade the street tree / roadside and public open space planting.

Council recognises the value of tree planting as a method of increasing tree canopy cover and improving the urban forest so invests heavily in the planting and establishment of trees throughout the city. This also includes the selection of specific trees for suitability as well as the follow up watering over a two year period for all trees planted in Kingston.

Council will regularly review and investigate new tree species in line with aesthetic, functional and climatic/environmental requirements if necessary to find a species that will survive successfully in a particular area.

### Policy statements associated with core objectives

#### **Increasing canopy cover**

- *Proactively carry out tree planting in nature strips, parks and reserves and other Council managed land;*
- *Increase the number of trees and overall canopy coverage within the City's streets and other Council managed land by planting one and if there is room two trees on every house frontage, where practical;*
- *Maintain high tree planting and establishment standards;*

#### **Increasing indigenous and native trees**

- *Plant indigenous or native trees wherever possible and practical, however, appropriate alternative species may also be considered;*
- *Reinforce habitat links;*

#### **Ensure safety/ Ensure legislative compliance**

- *Select tree species for planting for their suitability to the site, biological diversity, performance, pest and disease resistance and potential to contribute to the landscape without onerous management or risk implications;*

#### **Enhance amenity**

- *Preserve and enhance the local character of the distinct areas within the City;*
- *Reinforce plantings along main roads in the City;*

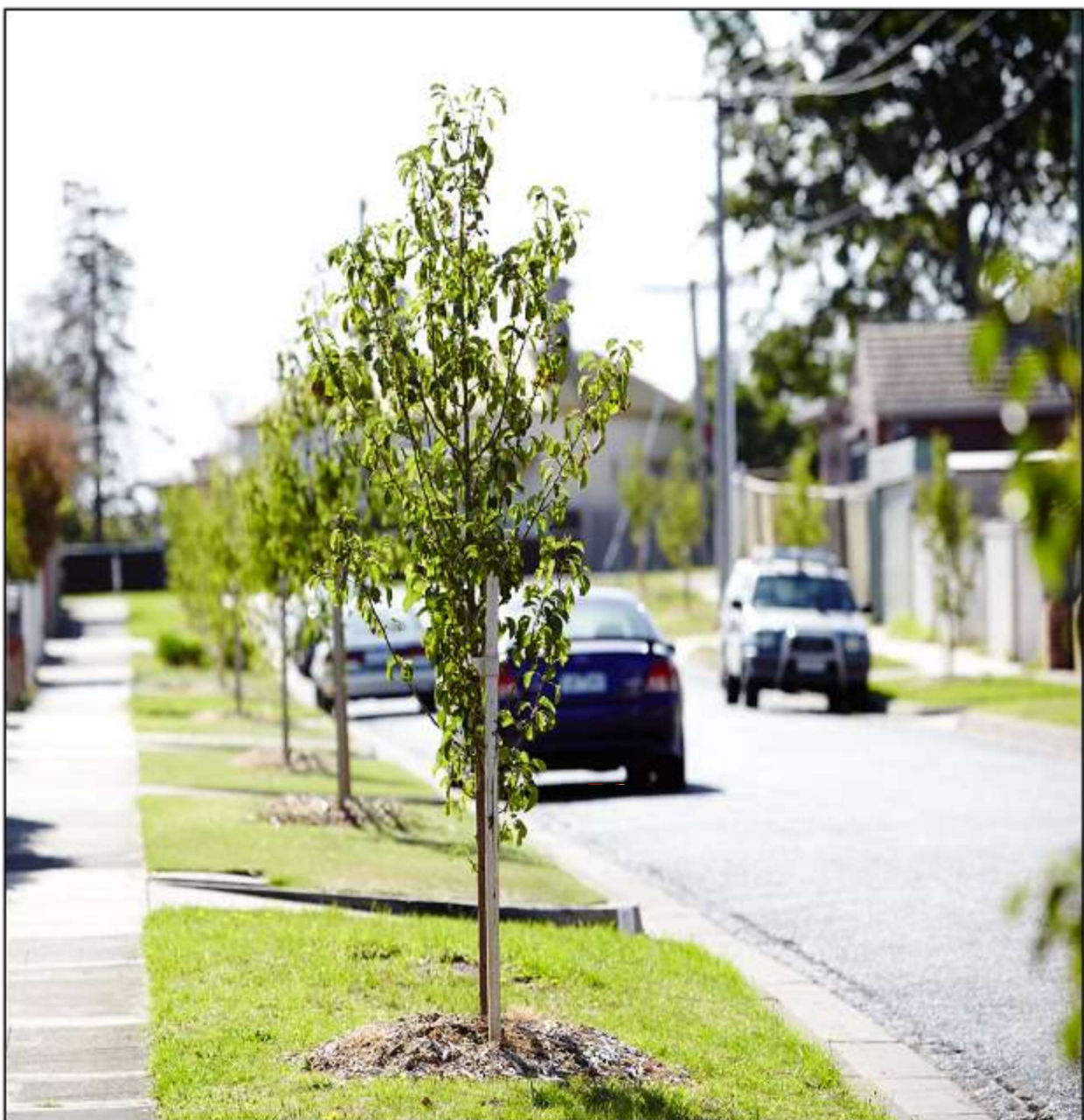
#### **Engage the community**

- *Consult, inform and engage the community about all major projects involving tree planting.*



### Strategic actions

- Evaluate existing streetscapes and identify new strategic planting opportunities.
- Develop a priority tree planting program for streets, parks and reserves in conjunction with park masterplans. Assessments will also identify links from parks and reserves to adjoining streets and other open space.
- Assess other Council managed land for tree planting opportunities.
- Continue to investigate tree species selection as a means of reducing conflicts with infrastructure and to respond to environmental changes.









## Activity 2 - Tree maintenance

### Pruning for safety, compliance and health

The City of Kingston maintains trees on Council-managed land to fulfil its legislative and management obligations to residents and visitors to the area. The key to maintaining and enhancing the urban forest is ensuring quality tree work. Maintenance work performed on trees aims to manage tree health and enhance the quality of the treed landscape across the City as well as reducing the inherent risks associated with trees in an urban area.

Public trees are planted and maintained by Council in accordance with this strategy and Tree Management Guidelines.

The City of Kingston undertakes pruning programs on trees managed by Council to:

- reduce the risk to public safety,
- decrease risk of damage to property,
- provide clearances for pedestrians, vehicles and sight lines,
- provide clearances around services and utility lines,
- manage tree health, and
- to formatively shape young trees.

Street trees are inspected on a two-year cycle and if required, pruned to ensure tree health and required clearances that satisfy Council's legislative and management obligations to residents and visitors to the area.

An annual high voltage power line clearance program also occurs to meet the current Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations.

Trees located within high use areas such as playgrounds in parks and reserves are inspected as part of a two year program. All other trees located in parks and reserves are inspected on a five year program. This tree inspection frequency is based on risk management principles of likelihood and consequences.

Maintenance work on trees will also occur in response to unexpected events or emergencies, such as tree or branch failure resulting from severe storms.

Certain trees within the municipality may require specialist maintenance work, for example, topiary trees that require pruning to maintain shape and aesthetics. Palms also require specific maintenance works. Some trees may require specialised tree surgery works.

Other tree maintenance tasks include management of tree roots and pests and diseases.

Any operation known to be detrimental to long-term tree health is not appropriate.

### Tree root management

Certain tree root treatment work, including selective root pruning and root barrier / deflector installation, is occasionally required to be performed. This work is required for risk management,

to maintain public safety and contain tree root growth. Where necessary, root pruning is also required to undertake repairs or prevent damage to property, roads and pavements.

Council will consider a range of strategies, such as species selection and site assessment, infrastructure design solutions, root pruning and barrier placement, to avoid or manage tree root conflicts with infrastructure.

### Management of pests and diseases

Pests and diseases are a component of the urban landscape and Council recognises that control measures will be required at times to maintain healthy and aesthetically pleasing landscapes. Council will adopt the principles of integrated pest and disease management (IPDM) to address pest and disease management with a focus on problem prevention through appropriate tree selection, planting and tree maintenance. Council officers will have a thorough understanding of the biology of the plants and key pests in relation to the ecosystems they are managing by completing on-going training and education. Advice and management programs will be sought from other agencies or pest control regulator, for example Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions - Agriculture, to ensure the best approach is adopted for any pest outbreak.

### Policy statements associated with core objectives

#### **Increasing canopy cover**

- *Undertake tree maintenance works as required to protect, enhance and preserve existing trees to a high standard;*
- *Integrate latest technology to ensure tree maintenance programs continue to meet best tree care practices;*
- *Undertake root pruning of Council managed trees in accordance with the relevant Australia Standard to ensure the health, stability, and longevity of the tree;*
- *Undertake current best practice approach to pest management;*
- *Constantly monitor the urban forest to allow timely and appropriate maintenance responses.*

#### **Increasing indigenous and native trees**

- *Support research into biological controls for pests and diseases that pose a threat to indigenous and native species;*

#### **Ensure safety/ Ensure legislative compliance**

- *Undertake tree pruning in line with relevant legislative requirements, strategic policies and accepted tree care practices;*
- *Minimise the conflicting requirements of trees and infrastructure;*
- *Utilise a program of systematic tree assessment and timely best practice tree management to mitigate tree risk for residents and visitors to the City;*



- *Maintain accurate and current documentation on the status (condition) and management of Council's tree assets;*

### **Enhance amenity**

- *Undertake all pruning to comply with the current Australian Standard for Pruning of amenity trees;*

### **Engage the community**

- *Communicate with residents when tree maintenance works are required.*

### **Strategic actions**

- Investigate overhead powerline alternatives to reduce requirement for pruning of trees to meet Electricity Safety under the current Electric Line Clearance Regulations and Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance, strategic policies and accepted tree care practices.
- Continue to maintain and update tree related records to assist with tree population status, risk assessment, works scheduling, monitoring and recording of the tree resource.
- Continue to adopt industry best practice to ensure optimum outcomes for the City's trees and the community.









## Activity 3 - Tree protection

### Protection of street and park trees

The primary goal of tree protection is the long-term survival and viability of a tree.

The urban forest is subject to a variety of pressures, conflicts, changes to land-use and public requirements. These pressures lead to damaged trees which may affect their function and viability in the landscape.

Protecting and maintaining healthy, safe and aesthetically pleasing trees is vital to Council achieving the desired landscape, social and environmental objectives for the City. The protection of the urban forest is a multi-departmental, community wide endeavour.

### Assigning a Monetary Tree Value

Establishing and maintaining trees in the urban landscape incurs substantial costs. The return on this investment includes landscape amenity, amelioration of climatic conditions, ecological benefits and reducing environmental demand. Visual amenity value of a tree alone may be counter-balanced by other factors, for example the best use or benefits of the land the tree occupies. That is, the value of the land or the use of that piece of land that a tree occupies could be worth more than the tree.

Council requires a system for assessing the economic loss when trees are accidentally or maliciously damaged or destroyed or removed for private development.

Council will apply a cost-based approach to attaining a valuation for a public tree. Assigning a monetary value to a tree, based on the reasonable cost of associated works to reproduce or replace what existed is an equitable and objective measure of loss.

### Policy statements associated with core objectives

#### **Increasing canopy cover**

- *Council managed trees will be protected from construction works and other activities that threaten tree condition, safety or amenity;*
- *Compensation for the value of a tree will be sought if it requires removal for private development, or as a result of an unauthorised tree removal or a tree is damaged structurally or aesthetically to a point where it can not be retained.*
- *Council will regularly review the compensation valuation method used to ensure this meets industry best practice.*

#### **Increasing indigenous and native trees**

- *On the foreshore and other areas where views are an issue, Council will plant at least five trees to replace any tree that is destroyed by vandalism and also erect a sign to indicate the vandalism has occurred. The sign will remain in place until the new trees are as tall as the tree that has been destroyed.*

### **Ensure safety/ Ensure legislative compliance**

- *Residents are not permitted to prune, remove or plant any trees within a nature strip or park or reserve;*

### **Enhance amenity**

- *The conflicting requirements of trees and maintenance or enhancements of other infrastructure will be minimised where possible;*

### **Engage the community**

- *Regularly and clearly communicate the benefits of trees and the reasons for protecting them.*

### **Strategic actions**

- Review and update the Significant Tree Register
- Develop and enforce tree protection guidelines, include information on the tree protection guidelines and relevant Australian Standards in all planning applications.
- Ensure Council projects do not impact negatively on the urban forest. Where trees are required to be removed ensure appropriate offset planting is undertaken.
- Ensure Council's website contains clear and accessible information on the benefits of trees and reasons for protecting them.





## Activity 4 - Tree removal

### Removal of trees from streets, parks and reserves

The City of Kingston will investigate all tree management options before recommending tree removal. While Council acknowledges trees will shed tree materials, this is seen as a natural occurrence and the removal of a tree solely on this basis is not supported.

There are circumstances, however, in which tree removal is an acceptable management option in nature strips, parks and reserves and other Council managed land when required for human health and safety, to protect infrastructure, to facilitate approved development and infrastructure improvements, to maintain a healthy urban forest or for ecological restoration.

### Policy statements associated with core objectives

#### **Increasing canopy cover**

- *All tree management options will be investigated prior to the recommendation for tree removal;*

#### **Increasing indigenous and native trees**

- *Trees will be removed when they are infected with an epidemic insect or disease where the recommended control is not applicable and removal is the recommended practice to prevent transmission.*

#### **Ensure safety/ Ensure legislative compliance**

- *Tree removals will be conducted within the Kingston tree risk management procedure and tree assessment method and with minimal environmental impacts;*
- *Trees that are dead or dying will be removed if necessary to ensure streets, parks and reserves are safe for use;*
- *Trees that are recognised woody weed species will be removed when opportunities are presented through the normal management of the City's tree population.*

#### **Enhance amenity**

- *Removal of trees will be undertaken where necessary to reinvigorate the City's landscapes;*

#### **Engage the community**

- *Council will provide residents a minimum fourteen days' notice regarding proposed street tree removal unless a tree poses an unacceptable risk and requires immediate removal.*
- *Residents have the option to appeal the decision to remove a tree and may obtain an independent arborist report.*

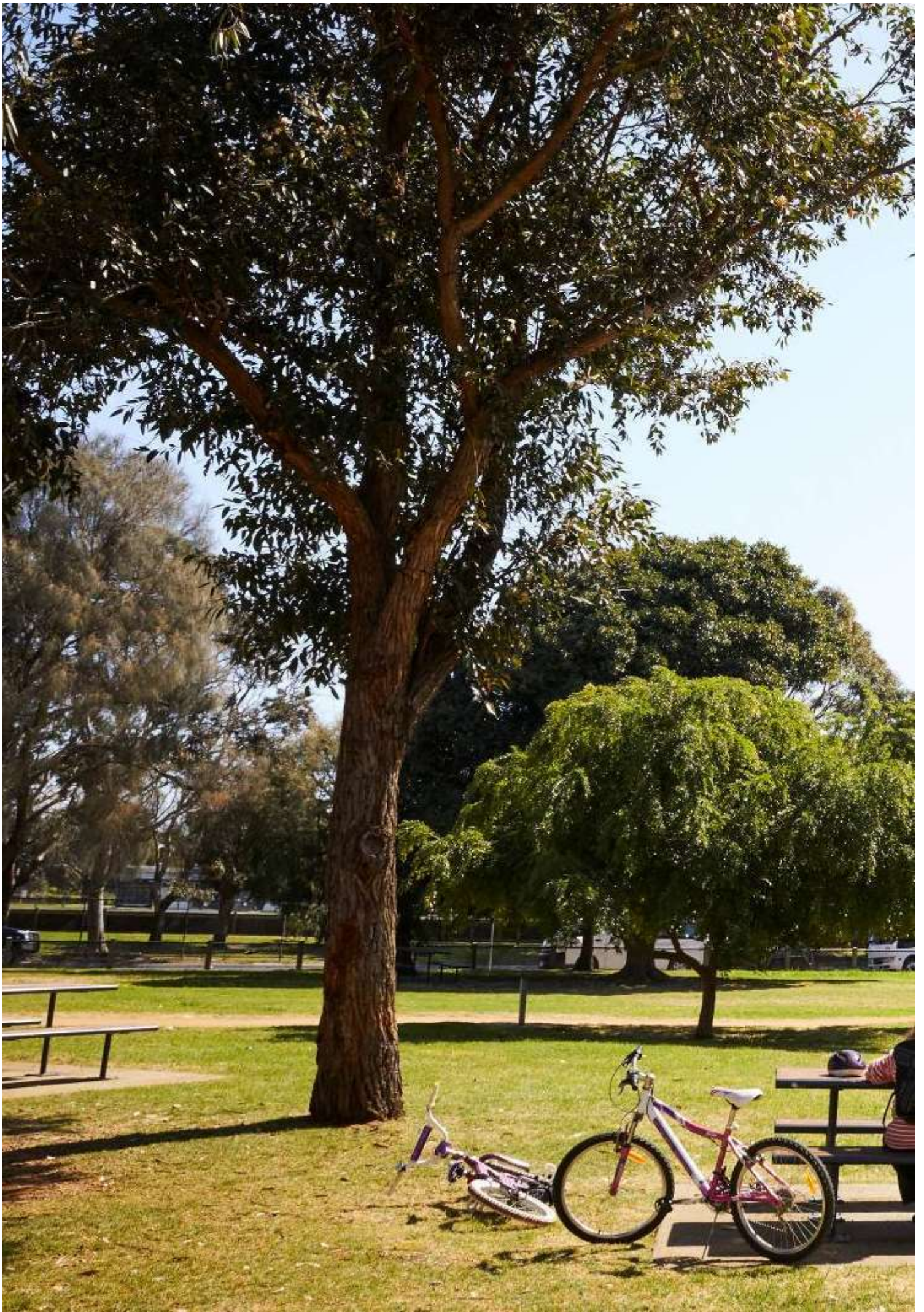


### Strategic actions

- Continue to replace trees that have reached the end of their useful life expectancy, pose a risk, or no longer contribute to the amenity of streetscapes, Council managed facilities and/or parks.











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