



The CEO,
Northern Beaches Council,
PO Box 82,
Manly, NSW 1655

8 Nov 2018

Re: Northern Beaches Council Urban Tree Canopy Plan

Dear Sir,

Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment is an organisation of over 1400 members and supporters whose mission is to lobby for the permanent environmental protection of the remaining bushland in the catchment of Narrabeen Lagoon.

It is encouraging that the Council is developing this Urban Tree Canopy Plan with a focus on the tree canopy of the Northern Beaches and that the plan outlines the values of maintaining and enhancing tree cover.

1. Plan must be incorporated into Council budget

We support this plan with its aims and objectives, however it is important that after this plan is adopted the Council incorporate the agreed programs into their financial plans and budgets for all public lands under Council control and provides sufficient funds for compliance on private lands.

2. Plan must be incorporated into Council LEP and DCPs

The relevant issues need to be incorporated in the LEP and DCPs to ensure compliance can be enforced and the budget also needs to include funding for more rangers to assist with this enforcement and prevent unauthorised tree removal.

3. Updated LIDAR is urgent to supply accurate background data

The Plan identifies an issue where the LIDAR survey was completed some years ago and that another one for the whole of Northern Beaches area is urgently needed to ensure that plans and policies are informed with current data.

4. Planned planting program is vital and it would be good to even increase the projected numbers of trees to be planted

It is disturbing to read that in 2017, 2000 trees needed to be removed and that only 500 were planted and encouraging that this Urban Tree Canopy Plan, when adopted and upheld, could ensure that this loss of green cover does not recur and that, in fact, over time there could be even more canopy cover provided.

5. Using local native Australian species is imperative for new plantings

It is encouraging to read that "Australian native species" will be used but the wording for this is not very strong. It is necessary to have a strong, adopted program of ensuring the

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use of native species to avoid the unfortunate choices that have been made in the past, e.g. planting Chinese Elm trees in Dee Why. The impact on the Northern Beaches environment of introducing exotic species in public spaces is not acceptable. We would like to ask for a defined proportion e.g. 2/3 at least of new plantings being indigenous tree species – specifically those suitable for the Northern Beaches. Local species of trees would be so much better for wildlife corridor function.

6. Plantings of understorey plants also important to ensure linkages

We are particularly interested in an increase to the cover of indigenous trees and local understorey plants extending from the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment into neighbouring core habitats especially linkages to Manly Dam bushland and over to Middle Harbour (Garigal NP) and Ku-ring-gai Chase NP. These extra plantings need to be buffered and supported by tree-lined streets in adjacent areas using local indigenous plants.

7. Monetary value of trees valuable but also expand this to whole ecosystems

Producing a method for assessing the monetary value of trees and adopting an asset management approach is important in our current economic system. It would be good to see that monetary value system expanded to give an economic value to whole ecosystems in terms of the contributions to the health of the environment and the health, including mental health, of the people who live in it.

8. Undisturbed natural bushland areas need protection from urban development

It is understandable that this Urban Tree Canopy Plan has a focus on street trees, trees in parks and trees in private properties but the high rating of 64.2% tree canopy cover recorded for the Northern Beaches area is also dependent upon the presence of National Parks and undisturbed areas of natural bushland such as that found in the catchment of Narrabeen Lagoon. The undisturbed areas need protection from urban development.

9 Importance of Shade – particularly as the climate changes

The Urban Tree Canopy Plan identifies the issue of Climate Change and the importance of providing shade and counteracting against urban heat islands – including those created by hard surfaces such as carparks (these need strategically placed trees to mitigate against the heat).

NOTE: It would be good if Council could do an audit on public seating across all areas of the Northern Beaches to identify how much of this seating is provided with shade and that a policy is developed where no new seating is installed without the provision of shade.

10. Ongoing public education about value of trees is crucial

It is correct that the majority of people living in the Northern Beaches area value this area for the quality of the air (provided by trees) and the quantity of bushland and beach environments. Continuing programs of public education about the role of trees in terms of human health is important to counteract the sensational news when a storm or

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drought or a tree's old age cause limbs or trees to fall. It is encouraging that Northern Beaches Council is planning to keep providing "give-away" native trees as part an ongoing public education program to support this.

11. Wildlife corridors essential to mitigate against impacts of climate change

Mention is made of wildlife corridors and linkages with National Parks but as the Climate changes these escape routes for wildlife will become even more important. We support all efforts to ensure these natural habitat connections and strengthen them with appropriate plantings.

Conclusion: The Urban Tree Canopy Plan needs to be supported by strong measures to prevent urban development from disturbing the tree canopy we already have in undisturbed bushland areas.

It is good that the Urban Tree Canopy Plan identifies the importance of maintaining the healthy tree cover provided in wildlife corridors and areas of natural bushland and that there is a plan to have annual planting programs in built up areas, open spaces and also in bushland areas. This needs to be accompanied by strong measures to prevent urban development encroaching upon good areas of natural bushland so that the investment in planting programs and support for bush regeneration is not wasted.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. C. Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Judith Bennett, President