

ITEM 3. TREE DONATION POLICY 2016 – ADOPTION**FILE NO: S077746****SUMMARY**

This report recommends that Council adopt the updated Tree Donation Policy 2016.

On 15 November 2010, Council adopted the Tree Donation Policy (the Policy) following community consultation. The Policy provides a framework to guide decisions by the City and the community about the donation and placement of trees in the local government area.

The Policy was developed in response to community interest and applies to all trees donated to the City for planting in streets, parks and open spaces. It assists in managing community expectations, while ensuring a planned and systematic approach to tree planting and management.

A five year review of the Policy has now been completed and, where appropriate, minor changes have been made. A copy of the Policy is at Attachment A.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council adopt the Tree Donation Policy 2016, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to approve minor updates of the Tree Donation Policy 2016 that do not substantially change the policy directions.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Tree Donation Policy 2016

BACKGROUND

1. On 15 November 2010, Council adopted the Tree Donation Policy (the Policy) following community consultation.
2. The Policy was developed in response to the many enquiries the City receives about donating trees, often to commemorate an event, place or person.
3. The purpose of the Policy is to assist the community to plant trees on Council land and to provide guidelines for donation categories and recognition.
4. The Policy outlines:
 - (a) Planting Locations – the City will use its tree database and relevant master plans for street and park trees to determine the planting locations. Where planting locations are not suitable, a park seat may be considered;
 - (b) Tree Selection – the City will source high quality trees on behalf of the donors. All new trees will conform to the Australian Standard and the industry standard *Specifying Trees – A Guide to Assessment of Tree Quality*, 2nd Edition, 2003;
 - (c) Timing of Works – planting will take place in the cooler months of the year between March and September;
 - (d) Tree Maintenance – donated trees will receive regular maintenance by a qualified arborist for the first two years of establishment and then annual visits;
 - (e) Work Health and Safety - the tree donor's role in the planting process will be limited to adding topsoil after the tree has been positioned into the planting hole; and
 - (f) Donation Register – all donated trees / seats will be recorded in the City's online donation register and in the City's electronic asset management system linked to a geographical information system. The City does not support installing and maintaining individual plaques.
5. There have been 16 tree donations since the Policy was adopted, with the latest donor paying \$5,000 for a tree to be planted in Sydney Park, and tree donations, particularly in the \$1,000 category, proving to be increasingly popular.
6. The Policy is very much appreciated by the community and expressions of gratitude and positive feedback are often received from the donors. For example:

"We would like to say a very big thank you. I can't explain how much it means that we now have a place to go to remember our mother in Redfern Park which was so close to her home for over 35 years".

Donation Categories

7. The updated Policy proposes six donation categories:
 - (a) \$1,000 per tree for advanced trees planted from 100 – 300 litre containers, that will be approximately two to four metres in height at planting;
 - (b) \$5,000 per tree for advanced trees planted from 300 – 400 litre containers, that will be approximately four metres to five metres in height at planting;

- (c) \$10,000 per tree for advanced trees planted in high profile locations that will be planted from 400 litre (or greater) containers. These trees will be approximately five metres (or over) in height at planting;
 - (d) \$50,000 per tree for advanced trees planted in the City's iconic parks (e.g. the future replacement planting of the Hills Figs into Hyde Park's Central Avenue);
 - (e) a new category of \$3,000 per park seat, noting that the seat style and materials are specified in the City's Park Technical Manual; and
 - (f) general donations will be accepted as a contribution to the City's tree planting programs throughout the local government area.
8. The donation categories are considered appropriate because they cover the City's costs to supply the trees / seats and are still affordable for most sectors of the community. The costs compare favourably with other institutions such as Centennial Parklands, which charges a minimum rate of \$10,000 for a tree for 25 years.

Proposed Amendments

9. During the life of the current Policy, the City received some requests to install park seats where tree planting was not suitable. Changes made as a result of the review of the Policy are:
- (a) inclusion of a new category for installing park seats;
 - (b) minor amendments to simplify the Policy document language; and
 - (c) re-formatting of the Policy into the City's new policy template.
10. A copy of the amended Policy can be found at Attachment A. Text changes to the Policy have been highlighted in ***bold italics***.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

11. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) *Direction 2* provides a road map for the City to become a Leading Environmental Performer – increasing tree canopy cover through donations helps to lower the urban heat island effect, offset greenhouse gas emissions, improve the environmental performance of buildings, extend the life of asphaltic pavements and reduce storm water and pollutant loads.
12. The Policy is also aligned with:
- (a) The Urban Forest Strategy – outlines strategies to improve the quality and quantity of the urban forest and assist the community to green the city; and
 - (b) The Greening Sydney Plan – outlines a vision to implement priority actions of the Urban Forest Strategy to increase urban canopy cover by 50 per cent by the year 2030.

Organisational Impact

13. The Policy outlines a clear process for planting donated trees and installing donated park seats, and provides a framework for the assessment, administration and management of donated trees and seats, ensuring a consistent approach.

Social / Cultural / Community

14. The Policy actively encourages and supports the community's participation in greening the city, improving the environment, as well as commemorating significant events, places or people.
15. There has been very little interest by the business community to participate in the Policy. City staff will consult with the business community to understand if there are barriers to participation, or if there is interest in tree planting donations during corporate social responsibility events held on City sites.

Environmental

16. Tree planting increases the city's urban canopy coverage and provides numerous environmental benefits, including:
 - (a) reducing summer temperatures by up to 2 degrees Celsius;
 - (b) reducing total heating and cooling energy use by up to 10 per cent; and
 - (c) reducing storm water run-off and improving air quality by removing harmful pollutants.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

17. Donations cover the expense of the tree planting, and the installation of park seats. The volume of tree donations does not have a significant impact on the City's operational or capital budgets.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

18. Local Government Act 1993.
19. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

20. The Policy was originally on public exhibition for four weeks of community consultation from 9 August to 6 September 2010. No submissions were received.
21. Ongoing consultation with potential tree donors has been conducted since the Policy was adopted. This has led to the minor changes proposed in this review.
22. No additional consultation is required as there are only minor amendments proposed.

23. Tree donors constantly provide expressions of gratitude and positive feedback. Further examples include:

“Just a note to say thanks to you, Sam and the team for making Erin's tree planting ceremony so special. It was all the little things like allowing the time, the space and being there to chat to Erin's family and recognising how special the tree is and will continue to be. If you could please pass on our sincere appreciation”.

“Thank you so much for arranging the planting of Victoria's tree. The tree is majestic and looks so healthy. Please say a grateful thank you to the gentlemen who so expertly undertook all the hard work and ask them to keep a special watch over it as I will be in Wales. I visited the site last evening just to say au revoir and it looked so right in that setting. Victoria's colleagues pointed out that the tree can be seen from her office”.

GEORGE ANGELIS

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