



Media Release

14 July 2023

Hope for more protection of Cockburn’s significant trees as Council seeks Ministerial approval for preservation orders in its Town Planning Scheme

The City of Cockburn will ask the Minister for Planning to grant approval to update its Town Planning Scheme (TPS) to include specific orders to provide greater protection for trees on its Significant Tree List.

The City’s Significant Tree List, which forms part of its Local Government Inventory, currently contains 27 individual listings of trees and stands of multiple trees on private property that are considered of landmark historical, commemorative, cultural, social, scientific, visual, aesthetic or ecological value.

The proposed update to the City’s Town Planning Scheme No.3 would include Tree Preservation Orders in addition to the Significant Tree List, to protect significant trees into the future.

The scheme amendment would do this by providing a clear framework and process for the creation, amendment or revocation of tree preservation orders, and the ability to impose an emergency order where there is an imminent risk of damage to a specified tree.

It would also include an updated interpretation of the elements of tree preservation, orders and their registration, the destruction and biosecurity of trees, and notice of decisions.

Cockburn Council endorsed the amendments to the TPS for Ministerial approval at its Ordinary Council Meeting (OCM) on 13 July.

Acting Chief of Natural and Built Environment Carol Catherwood said the proposed update to the City’s TPS was a response to growing development pressure and change throughout the City.

“The preservation of trees which contribute to the local area for their historical, cultural,



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social, aesthetic or ecological value is becoming more important,” Ms Catherwood said.

“The City was keen to investigate introducing improved, robust and enforceable statutory provisions to better protect trees that are on the City’s Significant Tree List.

“The proposed amendment has many advantages including preservation criteria not being confined to cultural heritage matters, and allowing for immediate protection of a tree, reducing the risk that it could be removed before being included on the List.

“Including Tree Preservation Orders as part of the City’s Town Planning Scheme also provides a more robust legal framework in cases of prosecution of unauthorised removal of trees on the List.”

At the 13 July OCM, the Council also requested a further amendment to the TPS that would require development approval for the removal or substantial pruning of trees in areas of the City where it has development control.

It would allow for reasonable exemptions, including for trees that were diseased or a recognised weed species.

The further amendment is motivated by the WA Local Government Association’s recent endorsement of a new urban forest advocacy position of a minimum tree canopy target of 30 per cent by 2040 for the Perth and Peel regions.

A report to detail the amendment is expected within the next 12 months, with City officers advising Council that WA Planning Commission permission would be needed to enable public consultation.

No change to the City’s Town Planning Scheme would occur without the approval of the Minister for Planning.

The proposed Tree Preservation Orders scheme amendments were advertised for public consultation.

The City first introduced its current framework for protection of significant trees in 1998.

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Caption: 42 Trees at the City of Cockburn's Administration Centre feature on the City's Significant Tree List.



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