

Urban Greening

Public survey



Tell us about you

To help us understand the composition of the community with views on urban greening, we have some broad questions about you:

Q1. What is the name of your suburb

Q2. What is your connection to Perth or Peel (tick all that apply)?

Urban Bushland Council WA Inc (UBC)

UBC is a voluntary community association of 90 member groups (each with their own local membership from 10-165 individuals) and 112 individual supporters – all of which have a common interest in the conservation of urban bushland and wetlands.

UBC is an incorporated, not for profit organisation registered as a charity. <https://www.bushlandperth.org.au/>

We are the key community organisation in WA providing a public voice on the need for retention of what remains of our urban bushland and wetlands which is also critical for a healthy and prosperous future. We advocate to all levels of Government for natural areas protection. We do this with limited resources through the amazing efforts of our 'Friends Groups' and their many volunteers – from all walks of life 'working' to improve and maintain the health of patches of neighbourhood nature – many working in close collaboration with your department and their local council.

Urban greening

Urban greening is about making cities healthy and attractive places to live and work. It involves retaining and planting as many trees and plants as possible, ensuring our neighbourhoods have adequate shade and protection from hot weather, and retaining and enhancing habitat for our native plants and animals. Urban greening is an important part of the Government's plans to improve the liveability of our suburbs and urban centres as they grow and develop.

Q3. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate how green (vegetation wise) you currently think the Perth and Peel regions are? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

2

Please help us understand your response by providing additional comments below:

UBC has members across the Perth & Peel Regions.

UBC is both observing ourself, as well as hearing our members concerns around negative impacts on canopy of:

- clearing – of natural areas
- drying climate –on both rehabilitation areas as well as mature trees and shrubs in the natural areas they care for as well as streets, gardens, parks, other bushland areas.
- loss of mature trees and green space in residential areas – due to both the subdivision of properties and the lack of xx
- Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB) – on both trees in natural areas as well as residential and commercial – both native and non-native species
- Lack of adequate & recurring conservation management funding – to state agencies eg Dept Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions.

These negative impacts include:

- loss of natural areas
- loss of sense of place
- loss of habitat for native fauna including Carnabys and Forest Red-Tail Black Cockatoos
- increasing temperatures across the suburbs

The 2020 DPLH /WAPC Canopy Dashboard shows West Perth (where UBC has an office) with a 16% canopy cover.

Q4. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate your level of support for additional urban greening in the Perth and Peel regions? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

10

Please help us understand your response by providing additional comments below:

UBC is highly concerned that if we do not collectively and actively make substantial increases in our canopy cover our natural ecosystems will collapse and not be able to provide basic habitat for our native fauna.

In addition, they will then not be able to contribute to:

- reducing heat island effect
- providing native fauna (insects, birds, mammals, reptiles) with the opportunity to move along our ecological linkages to other patches of biodiversity
- health and wellbeing of our communities
- sense of place – both locally & regionally
- critical environmental services (eg producing oxygen)
- passive ecotourism

Q5. What do you consider the most important benefits of urban greening? Please number the options in importance to you from 1-10 (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

	Importance to you 1-10
Better looking gardens, streets and neighbourhoods	4
More shade to provide a canopy for people to spend more time outside	8
Reduced heat in urban areas	9
Creates a habitat for local plants and wildlife	10
Improved air quality	6
Physical and mental health benefits	5
Economic benefits, including reduced energy costs and increased property values	1
Spiritual or cultural values	3
Improvements to walking and cycling options	2
Other, please specify in the box below	7
Other	Community development thru caring for local patches of neighbourhood nature with others.
Q6. Have you heard of the “urban heat island effect” and its consequences for the community?	Yes

Tree retention and planting

A key component of urban greening is the retention and enhancement of tree canopy cover. To help us understand community attitudes to tree retention and tree planting please answer the following questions.

Q7. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the current level of tree canopy cover in your suburb? (10 being highest, 1 being lowest)

3

Q7a. Which suburb did you rate?

West Perth

Q8. Do you support increasing the number of trees in your suburb?

Yes

Q9. Thinking of anywhere in Perth and Peel region, where would you like to see more trees or other vegetation planted?

- Parks
- Neighbourhood streets (median strips, verges, on street carparking etc)
- Car parks
- Verges
- Private properties
- New developments
- Railway corridors
- Highways and freeways
- Government buildings/development
- Hospital/health related facilities
- Natural areas that require rehabilitation - to maintain both health of the habitat and the canopy

Q10. How many trees (above approximately 2m) do you have in your front or back garden or front verge?

4-5

Q11. What are barriers that prevent you from planting a tree or more trees in your front or back yard or on your front verge?

Not allowed to (eg rental property or council restrictions)

Q12. Have you removed a tree front or back yard or on your front verge in the last 5 years?

No

Q13. Is there anything else you would like to say about trees in your nominated suburb or Perth and Peel?

The UBC highlights that diminishing tree canopy, further clearing for housing developments, removal of mature trees on urban blocks, heat island effects, Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB), a drying climate and a long hot summer that doesn't want to end are all reasons why we want to contribute to the development of the 'Perth & Peel Urban Greening Strategy'. And we thank you for the opportunity.

Whilst the Urban Bushland Council (UBC) is very pleased that the WA Government focussing on 'Urban Greening' we are most concerned:

- The focus appears to be limited to 'planted' vegetation at the exclusion of natural areas, whilst natural areas contribute significantly to urban greening:
 - contribute to the 'canopy cover percentages' that State Government, LGAs and community are using to guide their urban forest activities
 - provide the 'pool' of native fauna (insects, birds, mammals, reptiles) that may take the opportunity to move along our ecological linkages to other patches of biodiversity
- If these natural areas are not protected and managed for conservation (including active rehabilitation with local native species where needed), they will decline and thus impact on their contribution to 'canopy cover percentages'
- Whilst the community is becoming better informed about the causes and impacts of 'Urban Heat Island Effect' and 'Climate Change' we still do not have an enforceable government and community target for 'tree cover' nor essential climate adaptation measures such as retaining vegetation (natural, private, public) to moderate the climate and provide habitat for wildlife
- Similarly, large trees and shrubs (that also provide temperature regulation, fauna habitat, aesthetics and carbon sequestration) are being cleared for residential, commercial, industrial and government developments – without consideration of their critical contribution to improving where we live &/or where of native plants and animals live
- Bushlands and wetlands are still being cleared
- Bush Forever Sites are still being cleared, disturbed &/or impacted (eg via impacts on hydrology, reduced buffers)
- Proposed Regional Parks (including Gngangara, Lower Serpentine, Swan & Helena Rivers, Peel and Yule Brook) are not being gazetted – whilst the quality of the vegetation communities is being affected by little or no active conservation management
- The allocated and recurring budget for good conservation management by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions (DBCA) continues to be totally inadequate
- The ecological and wellbeing benefits of 'tree canopy' and 'ecological linkages' cannot be created in isolation of our natural areas. Natural areas make up a significant percent of the Perth and Peel canopy. As such, the Urban Bushland Council calls on the WA State Government to set and regulate a 30% Tree Canopy Target by 2040.

To meet such a target, native vegetation has a crucial role to play. The following list identifies some of the ways we can protect our existing native vegetation canopy, thus mitigating the loss of canopy elsewhere from other human activities:

- increase the understanding in our governments and the community of the value and function of our natural areas and the important role they play in the urban canopy debate
- protect and manage those areas for conservation or we will lose canopy along with habitat
- re-double efforts to restore ecological communities within original ranges by active abatement of threats (eg illegal tracks, illegal rubbish dumping, weeds, fire, feral animals), revegetation, and other conservation initiatives
- end clearing of the Swan Coastal Plain
- acquire remaining sites and gazette all Bush Forever Sites for purpose of conservation, vesting in either Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions or Local Government Authorities
- assist community bushcare groups in their volunteer efforts to care for natural areas
- properly fund responsible agencies such as the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) for conservation management
- actively design and deliver for a 3:30:300 Perth & Peel – encompassing the residential, commercial and educational communities
- regulate the removal of large trees on all urban land
- ban new domestic & commercial bores in suburbs that have saltwater incursion from over extraction of freshwater or where superficial water table is dropping and reviewing all bore use agreements

- all LGAs to have a plan of where they will be planting for canopy cover of 30% by 2040 and the land covenanted for this purpose – with annual reporting on their websites.
- include dedicated, informed community organisations in your extended community engagement including Urban Bushland Council (UBC), Birdlife WA (BWA), Ecovision, The Beeliam Group (TBG), WA Insect Study Society, WA Naturalists Club (WANats), WA Tree Canopy Advocates (WATCA), Wetlands Conservation Society (WCS) and Wildflower Society of WA (WSWA)
- include native shrub, sedge, herb and grass layers in plantings as well as permeable ‘pavement’ (across all categories of land use eg residential, commercial, local government, education) to support all the smaller birds, insects and reptiles who WONT travel across wide expanses. Green understorey corridors have an important role to play in creating ecological links for these creatures and should be explicitly included in the urban greening strategy.
- cat and fox control to both reduce the loss of fauna (birds, insects, reptiles, mammals) and promote return of quenda to spread fungi for bush resilience
- no prescribed burns on Swan Coastal Plain
- fast response to fires and early suppression (whether arson, accidental or natural) to ensure they do not spread through bushland (e.g. satellite monitoring, quick response, fences, grassy weed control, arson watch)
-

Education Awareness

A key component of implementing a strategy will be the delivery of an education awareness program.

Q14. Please indicate what topics you would like to know more about?

The benefits of protecting and maintaining natural bushland & wetlands including:

- nature’s intrinsic qualities & our collective responsibility as custodians
- wellbeing – including joining a local ‘Friends of groups’
- supporting and providing the fauna (insects, birds, mammals, reptiles etc) that can them move thru our ecological linkages including our backyards
- environmental education
- Nyoongar Cultural Education
- Ecotourism of passive activities.

The benefits of well designed ‘naturelinks’ across our community:

- enabling everyone including residents, businesses, schools, tertiary institutions, local governments and community groups to contribute to the overall implementation.

The impacts of weeds, ferals and diseases eg Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB) are also critical foci for education and awareness programs.

Q15. Where have you seen some good examples of tree / canopy education or retention initiatives? These can be in Australia or internationally.

1. NatureLink Perth (Murdoch University)
provides a hub for people and organisations to work together to conserve our biodiversity or integrate nature into our city. We must embrace nature in the city if we are to sustain our unique plants and animals into the future.
NatureLink Perth WA actively works with ‘friends of groups’ to identify, design and partner in ecological linkages connecting natural areas across our suburbs. Their resources are innovative and practical.
<https://www.naturelinkperth.org/resources/>
2. Know, Grow, Conserve, Enjoy (Wildflower Society of WA (WSWA))
Across WA organisation and Branches, WSWA designs & delivers numerous talks and hands-on-workshop focussing on WA flora, vegetation and habitat.
They also contribute to educational materials.
In addition many of the Branches collect seed, propagate and sell local native plants.
<https://www.wildflowersocietywa.org.au/>

3. **Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD) (Univ of Melbourne)**

BSUD draws on ecological theory and understanding to apply five simple principles to urban design:

- a. protect and create habitat
- b. help species disperse
- c. minimise anthropogenic threats
- d. promote ecological processes
- e. encourage positive human-nature interactions.

These principles are designed to address the biggest impacts of urbanisation on biodiversity. They can be applied at any scale, from individual houses to precinct-scale developments.

<https://icon-science.org/biodiversity-sensitive-urban-design/>

4. **Biodiversity in Place (BiP) (NSW Government)**

Extract from executive summary: “In a time of ecological and biodiversity crisis, our urban green spaces must be created and cared for in ways that allow them to support global efforts to restore ecosystems.

Biodiversity in Place is a call to action to support nature recovery and enhance biodiversity.

Biodiversity in Place explains how communities, policymakers and industry can assist in reshaping nature-positive urban environments to reconnect people with larger natural systems. This will create cooler places, provide wildlife habitat and food, support biodiversity, improve mental health and beautify our living spaces. Supporting biodiversity represents a significant opportunity to connect with Country and foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to ensure sustainable and resilient outcomes.”

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-05/biodiversity-in-place.pdf>

5. **Bush Plants for Perth Gardens (Greening WA & National Trust)**

Program of support thru the design of gardens and verges using local native plants – whether it be for a garden with a ‘natural look’ thru to ‘formal, clipped topiary’.

The materials linked to soils as well as location in garden/landscape.

<https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/>

If you would like to receive a copy of this form please provide your email address.

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