



Urban Forests and Local Government



WA Local Government Association

- The Western Australian Local Government Association (**WALGA**) works for Local Government in Western Australia.
- As the peak industry body, WALGA advocates on behalf of 138 WA Local Governments and negotiates service agreements for the sector.

Overview

- Background and context
- WALGA's involvement
- Approaches taken at a Local Government level
- Impediments
- Where to from here?

Background and context

- Local Governments are increasingly recognising the value of trees in an urban context
- Significant concerns over loss of tree canopy cover, particularly verge trees and on private land
- Local Governments have sought to address canopy loss through urban forest strategies, tree preservation orders, bonds etc
- Development pressures., increased density / urban infill targets, Green Growth Plan

WALGA's involvement in urban forests

- *Urban Street Trees Policy Discussion Paper* (May 2014)
- Street Trees Workshop for Local Government (June 2014)
- *Street Trees Guidance Report* (January 2015)
- Involvement in *2020 Vision: How to Grow and Urban Forest* workshop (November 2015)
- Climate Change Collaborators Urban Forestry Seminar (March 2016)
- Concurrent session on Urban Forestry at the WA Local Government Convention (August 2016)
- Hosting Department of Planning Urban Forest workshop for Local Government (November 2016)



Loss of tree canopy has been regularly raised at WALGA zone meetings and State Council

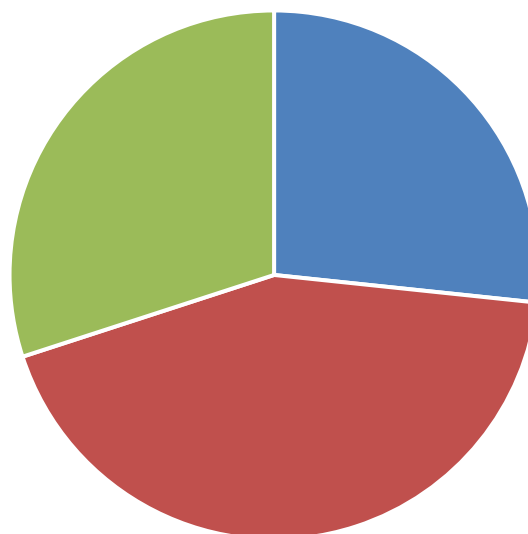
March 2017 WALGA State Council resolution:

- 1. Advocate and work with the State Government to further prevent the loss of urban tree canopy, which is a significant environmental and social issue for communities across the State; and*
- 2. Work with member Councils to develop a system of appropriate market based and regulatory instruments to promote the increase in the urban tree canopy on private property.*

Approaches taken by Local Government

Survey of 30 Perth Metropolitan Local Governments (Oct 2016)

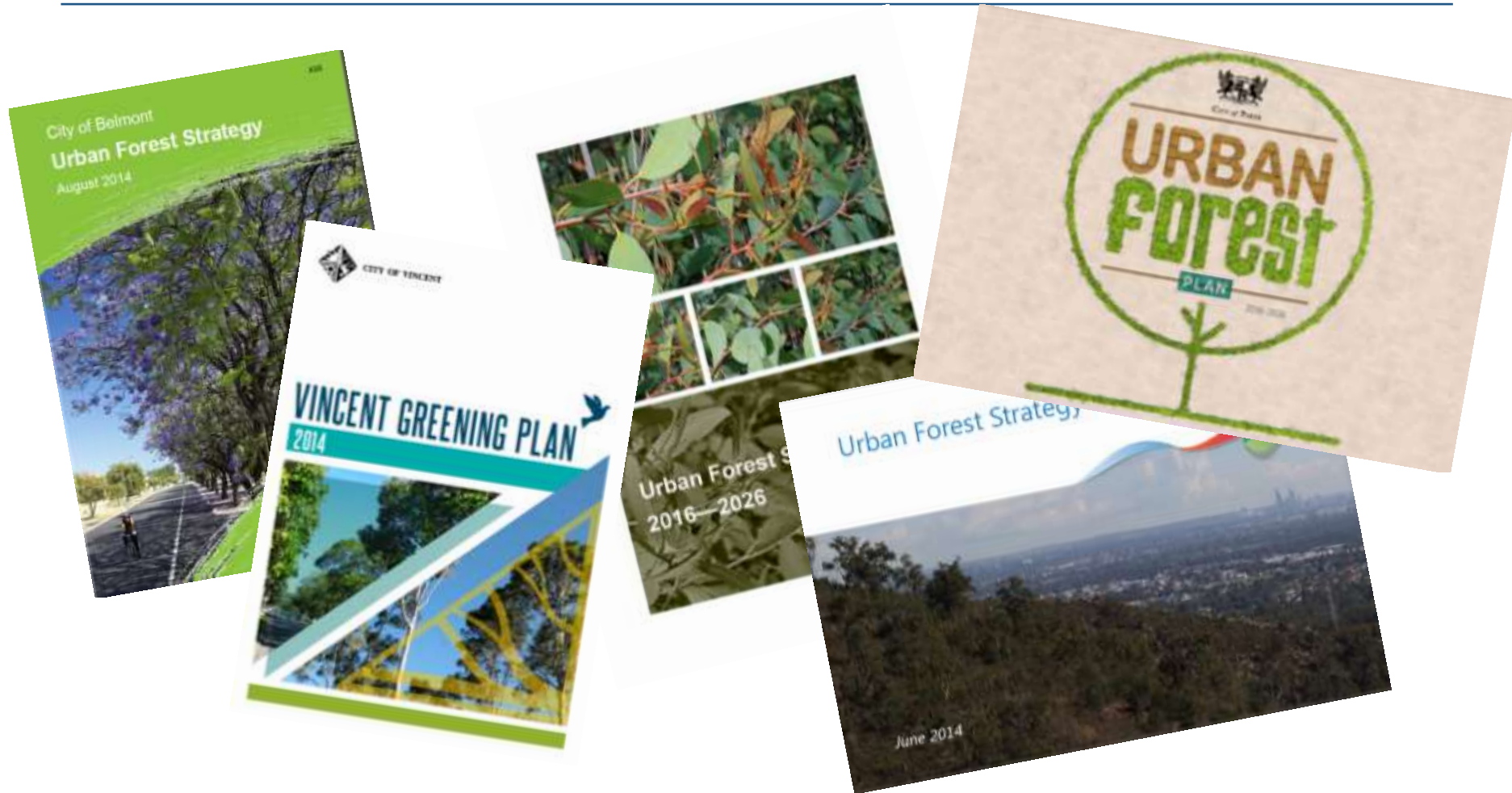
Urban Forest Strategy



■ Yes ■ No ■ In progress

(data: 2020 vision, 2016)

Urban Forest Strategies





Planning, and financial mechanisms

- Street tree policies and plans
- Local laws regarding tree protection
- Tree bonds
- Significant tree registers



City of Stirling

- Implementing a statutory framework
- Local Planning Scheme (LPS) Amendment and Local Planning Policy:
 - require developers to retain trees on-site or plant replacement trees on-site at a rate of one tree per 500m²
- Developers will also need to provide a street tree in the road reserve adjacent to the lot where one does not exist
- The City is working on a Comprehensive Tree Protection Policy and Scheme Amendment project:
 - significant trees to be placed on a Tree Register
 - no removal of registered trees except on rare occasions under special circumstances

Urban Forest Data

- High quality, clear and consistent data required to measure, benchmark and track progress
- Also need consistent methodology for measurement and interpretation of data
- Digital aerial photography (Urban Monitor), NIR imagery, satellite data or LiDAR
- Improved technology means data can be used for many purposes

Belmont LiDAR example

- Measured urban forest using LiDAR - automated, accurate and repeatable
- LiDAR data used to generate a 3D terrain model
- Extract contours, buildings and tree canopy
- Canopy height stratified to 5m, 10m, 15, 20m+
- Increase in accuracy = better dataset and better understanding



Impediments

- Community opposition or apathy towards street trees
- Competing priorities of trees and development
- Inconsistent State planning policies such as the R-Codes and Liveable Neighbourhoods that mitigate against trees
- Lack of requirement for revegetation in new developments
- Lack of control over trees on private property
- Having enough water now and in the future to maintain trees
- Budget required for tree planting and maintenance

Where to from here?

- Collaborate with Department of Planning on the development of an Urban Tree Canopy Framework:
 - communication strategy surrounding the benefits of street trees;
 - Survey and targeted workshop for Local Government; and
 - seeking to address existing impediments faced by Local Government in implementing effective urban forest strategies.
- Consult with Local Government to explore appropriate market based and regulatory instruments that could be used to promote the increase in the urban tree canopy on private property.



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