

**WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING**

**BUSINESS PAPER**

**TUESDAY 10 MARCH 2009**

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3 March 2009

## **WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that a Works Committee Meeting of the Council of the City of Randwick will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 90 Avoca Street, Randwick, on Tuesday, 10 March 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

Committee Members: The Mayor, B Notley-Smith, Andrews (Chairperson), Belleli (Deputy Chairperson), Bowen, Hughes, Matson, Matthews, Nash, Procopiadis, Seng, Smith, Stevenson, Tracey, White & Woodsmith

Quorum: Eight (8) members.

NOTE: At the Extraordinary Meeting held on 28 September 2004, the Council resolved that the Works Committee be constituted as a committee with full delegation to determine matters on the agenda.

### **Apologies/Granting of Leave of Absences**

### **Confirmation of the Minutes**

Works Committee Meeting - 10 February 2009

### **Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

### **Address of Committee by Members of the Public**

### **Urgent Business**

### **Works Reports**

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### **Closed Session**

Nil

## Notices of Rescission Motions

Nil

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Ray Brownlee  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

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## Works Report No. W4/09



**Subject:** Adopt a Street Tree Program  
**Folder No:** F2004/07359  
**Author:** Bryan Bourke, Tree Management Officer

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### Introduction

Randwick City Council is committed to the ongoing greening of its streetscapes through a variety of tree planting programs but the environment into which many trees are planted is often harsh and unforgiving and the soils very nutrient deficient – particularly along Council's coastal strip.

Although newly planted street trees are maintained by tree planting contractors for a period of six months, the additional nurturing of those trees by residents would certainly increase their chances of survival and would give participants a very real sense of ownership of those assets.

### Issues

Council undertakes the planting of large numbers of street trees throughout the City on an annual basis and although the majority are native or indigenous to the area into which they are planted, a certain percentage do not survive to reach maturity.

Newly planted street trees are maintained by Council's tree planting contractors for a period of six months, after which no ongoing watering is undertaken and maintenance can be quite sporadic. The costs associated with extending the current maintenance period to twelve months are prohibitive within the context of Council's tree management budget and planting in the cooler months ensures that as many trees as possible survive and become established.

Another issue affecting the establishment and long-term retention of newly planted street trees are acts of wanton vandalism involving the destruction of public tree assets. There are many reasons why the vandalism of public trees occurs, ranging from random attacks to acts of purely pre-meditated self interest.

One way of possibly decreasing the occurrence of these events and to increase as much as possible the survival rate of newly planted street trees would be to get the community more involved in the nurturing and ongoing care and maintenance of these trees. With this in mind Council's Tree Management Officer has proposed the implementation of an 'Adopt a Street Tree Program'. This program will provide residents with the information necessary should they wish to contribute in a meaningful and practical way to the long-term maintenance of newly planted street trees. It is proposed that whenever new street trees are planted adjacent property owners will be given a copy of the program booklet for their consideration. By 'adopting' a street tree, residents would voluntarily take on the role of not only watering a street tree, but also regularly inspecting it for pests and diseases and informing Council of acts of vandalism or other problems. This would not only make participants much more aware of the community benefits and cultural requirements of street trees but it would also contribute to ensuring that nurtured trees have a much better chance of survival to maturity.

W4/09

## Relationship to City Plan

The relationship with the City Plan is as follows:

Outcome 10: A healthy Environment.  
Direction 10c: Land use planning and management enhances and protects biodiversity and natural heritage.

## Financial impact statement

The cost of the "Adopt a Street Tree Program" is \$1,600 per annum for printing.

## Conclusion

Although Council tree planting programs enjoy broad community support and reasonable success rates, there is always more that could be done to enhance the long-term survival rates of newly planted street trees.

Potentially, one of the most effective methods of achieving this objective would be to encourage the community to take more ownership of public tree assets through the implementation of an 'Adopt a Street Tree Program'. This program would also complement the existing maintenance regime undertaken by Council's tree planting contractors by ensuring that ongoing maintenance continues well beyond the six-month period currently undertaken. Participating residents would regularly water, weed and inspect 'adopted' street trees and would inform Council when trees needed re-mulching or re-staking or where they were sick or needed replacing. It would also encourage residents to be more protective of new street trees and to become more involved and pro-active in reporting acts of vandalism or tree destruction.

## Recommendation

That the report be received and noted.

## Attachment/s:

1. Adopt a Street Tree Program Booklet

W4/09



# Adopt a Street Tree Program



## What is the Adopt a Street Tree Program?

This program provides residents with the information they require should they wish to contribute in a practical way to the long-term maintenance of newly planted street trees.

Street trees provide shade, produce oxygen, reduce noise and pollution, provide habitat and food source for native birds and other fauna and generally improve the visual amenity of the City's streetscapes.

In the longer term they also increase property values and contribute to an improved sense of wellbeing within the community.

By 'adopting' a street tree, residents voluntarily take on the role of not only watering a street tree, but also regularly inspecting it for pests and diseases and informing Council of acts of vandalism or other problems.

The following information is designed to provide interested residents with a general overview of the requirements of newly planted street trees.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information about Council's Adopt A Street Tree Program, to report a sick or vandalised street tree or to request that a tree be re-mulched or pruned, contact Council's Call Centre on 1300 722 542.

Council's tree officers can also provide information on the species utilised as street trees in your area and they may be contacted on 9399 0858/0843.

Your involvement in this very worthwhile program would be **TREE-mendous**

W4/09

**NEWLY PLANTED STREET TREES**

A newly planted street tree requires significant nurturing to help it to develop into a healthy, dynamic, mature tree.

This is particularly the case in the nutrient deficient soils and harsh environment of Randwick's coastal strip.

Street trees are planted by contractors to a Council approved Specification which includes incorporating a wetting agent and slow release fertiliser into the soil, mulch, stakes and tie.

The diagram opposite details the Specification used for the planting of street trees throughout the Randwick City area.



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**MECHANICAL DAMAGE**

Damaging the trunk of a tree at any stage of its lifecycle can weaken the tree and allow the entry of pathogens and diseases.

The most common cause of trunk damage to street trees is the careless use of mowers and brush cutters. Damage is also often caused by motor vehicles or pedestrian traffic.

Trees may also be ringbarked by ties that are too tight or damaged if the trunk or branches rub against tree stakes.

If you notice any such damage to ANY street tree you should contact Council so that appropriate action can be organised.

**PRUNING**

Formative pruning of new street trees is generally undertaken at the time of planting.

Additional pruning is usually not required until the tree/s has become established and this will be undertaken by qualified Council staff.

Any pruning works which are carried out on trees should comply with the appropriate Australian Standard to ensure that they are done correctly and do not compromise the structural integrity of the tree.

If you think that a newly planted street tree requires pruning, please contact Council's Call Centre so that an assessment can be made by a Council tree officer.

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## TREE REQUIREMENTS

### WATERING

Sufficient water is perhaps the most crucial factor in the establishment and survival of newly planted street trees.

Council's tree planting contractors water and maintain new trees for a period of six months after planting but additional watering by residents will ensure that they are given the best possible chance of survival.

When watering young trees, it is important to observe the following:

- Mulch should be dished around base of tree
- Allow water to thoroughly soak into soil
- Water at a slow, even rate
- Water until mulch 'saucer' fills and then repeat
- Allow at least 9-10 litres per tree - water twice weekly in Spring-Summer, once a week in Autumn-Winter

### FERTILISING

The majority of street trees planted by Council are either native or indigenous and they require little or no additional fertiliser to that incorporated at the time of planting.

Adding fertiliser to the soil around a newly planted street tree may be detrimental to its health and may even kill the tree.

If you have any concerns about the health of ANY street tree, contact Council for further advice.

### STAKING

All street trees are staked and tied at the time of planting but this is more to provide protection for the tree from injury and vandalism than for support.

Because trees develop more strongly if stakes and tie are not used, Council ensures that there is some movement between the trunk and the supporting tie when trees are planted.

Some considerations when staking:

- Stake in a figure eight configuration
- Ensure some trunk movement is possible
- Place stakes outside root zone
- Replace tie when required

### MULCHING

Adequate mulch around the base of newly planted trees ensures that weed growth is minimised and that the trunk is protected from mechanical damage.

Mulch also assists in the retention of moisture, which is particularly important during the establishment period and drier months.

Some important points about mulching:

- Mulch should be 'dished' around base of tree
- Ensure mulch does not make contact with trunk
- Mulch to a depth of at least 75-100mm

## Works Report No. W5/09



**Subject:** Petition for Barwon Park, Matraville  
to be made a Leash Free Dog Park

**Folder No:** F2005/00834

**Author:** Kerry Colquhoun, Acting Co-ordinator Parks and Recreation

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### Introduction

This report is in response to a petition (containing 74 signatures) submitted to Council, requesting that Barwon Park, Matraville be established as a leash-free dog park. The petition has been organised by a local resident.

This report recommends that Council undertake community consultation to seek the views of local residents, to establish any issues related to this proposal.

Legislation requires that each Local Government Area must have at least one leash-free dog park. Randwick City Council has 13 existing leash-free dog parks. Leash-free dog parks provide dogs the opportunity for unstructured play, some training and to socialise freely. There is also evidence to show that, not only do the dogs benefit from socialising in a leash-free dog park, but that humans also benefit socially from this activity.

### Issues

Leash-free dog parks do raise concerns regarding safety. Problems can occur with an increased risk of injury to person or animal from attack. There is also the potential for damage to plants and other wildlife which may exist in the park. Another concern is the dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs defecate. This is a health concern for humans and other animals and can have a major impact on our natural environment. A further issue is that in an unfenced leash-free area, Council may be liable if a dog is injured on adjacent roads.

### Relationship to City Plan

The relationship with the City Plan is as follows:

Outcome 2: A vibrant and diverse community.  
Direction 2c: Strong partnerships between Council, community groups and government agencies.

### Financial impact statement

There is no direct financial impact for this matter.

### Conclusion

Dog parks are an important part of the community, providing space for both dogs and people to socialise. Dogs, especially in the city and suburbs require time to run freely. Randwick City Council has 13 leash-free dog parks, which is a comparatively high number. There is a leash-free area at Pioneer Park.

W5/09

**Recommendation**

That the report be received and noted.

**Attachment/s:**

**W/5/09**

## Works Report No. W6/09



**Subject:** Alcohol Free Zones - Coogee Basin Area  
**Folder No:** F2005/00873  
**Author:** Mark Shaw, Manager Technical Services

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### Introduction

Council, at its ordinary Council meeting held on Tuesday 16 December 2008, resolved (Cr Andrews/Mayor, Cr B Notley-Smith):

“that a report come to Council setting out the number of infringement notices issued by Council Rangers in the Coogee Basin for drinking alcohol in declared Alcohol Free Zones”.

### Issues

There are two separate provisions (under the Local Government Act 1993) whereby a council can implement measures to control the consumption of alcohol in public places.

These provisions are defined as follows:

#### Alcohol Free Zones

The objectives of Alcohol Free Zones are to put in place a mechanism to control street drinking and they were introduced in 1995 by amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 (see Local Government Amendment [Alcohol-free Zones] Act 1995 - assented to on 15 December 1995 and commenced on 22 December 1995). Subsequent changes to the Local Government Act 1993 commenced on 3 December 2008 and were brought about by the Liquor Legislation Amendment Act 2008.

Alcohol Free Zones only operate over streets, footpaths, roads, public car parks (and not other public places such as parks and reserves) and are established by a Council in accordance with part 4 – Street Drinking, of chapter 16 of the Local Government Act 1993 (see s.644 to s.646 of the LG Act).

Section 642 - Confiscation of alcohol in alcohol-free zones:

- (1) A police officer or an enforcement officer may seize any alcohol (and the bottle, can, receptacle or package in which it is contained) that is in the immediate possession of a person in an alcohol-free zone if:
  - (a) the person is drinking alcohol in the alcohol-free zone, or
  - (b) the officer has reasonable cause to believe that the person is about to drink, or has recently been drinking, alcohol in the alcohol-free zone.
- (2) Any alcohol or thing seized under this section is, by virtue of the seizure, forfeited:
  - (a) if seized by a police officer – to the State, or
  - (b) if seized by an enforcement officer – to the council that employs the officer.
- (3) Any alcohol seized under this section may:

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- (a) be disposed of immediately by tipping it out of the bottle, can, receptacle or package in which it is contained, or
  - (b) be otherwise disposed of in accordance with directions given by the Commissioner of Police or the council (as the case requires)
- (4) In this section, enforcement officer means an employee of a council authorised in writing by the Commissioner of Police to be an enforcement officer for the purpose of this section.

#### Acting Contrary to a Notice Erected by a Council

The other provision contained within the Local Government Act 1993 whereby a council can control the consumption of alcohol in a public place such as beaches, parks and reserves (but not streets, footpaths, roads and public car parks) is by erecting a Notice (a sign) controlling or prohibiting the consumption of alcohol or any other activity that a council wishes to control or prohibit (eg, dogs not to be walked unleashed in a reserve).

Randwick City Council, by erecting signs, prohibits the consumption of alcohol on its beaches and controls the consumption of alcohol at its reserves by prohibiting alcohol consumption from sunset to sunrise.

Acting contrary to a Notice erected by a council is an offence pursuant to s. 632 of the Local Government Act 1993 in which the Police or Council's authorised officers (which includes Council's Rangers) can issue a \$110.00 Penalty Notice (on- the- spot fine). However, where Randwick City Council Rangers observe people (who may be intoxicated) consuming alcohol contrary to the above provisions, they request that local police deal with such situations. Council has not sort approval from the Commissioner of Police to authorise its Rangers to be enforcement officers for the purpose of enforcing the provisions of Alcohol Free Zones due to Occupational Health and Safety concerns as well as the fact that Rangers are typically not on duty when the majority of consumption of alcohol in Alcohol Free Zones occurs. The response to Council Rangers by persons consuming alcohol within the Randwick LGA is often verbally abusive, threatening and contemptuous. Not only would it be unreasonable to expect that Rangers police Alcohol Free Zones but it would place them at genuine risk of assault or attack. Police Officers are specifically trained to deal with this sort of behaviour and are provided with the specialised equipment and back up that may be necessary to deal with people under the influence of alcohol, who are often in unruly groups or who respond aggressively to any form of authority. Council is also committed to providing a safe workplace without risk to the welfare of its staff in the undertaking of their work duties and this commitment would be seriously compromised should its Rangers be obliged to enforce Alcohol Free Zones as part of their duties.

#### **Relationship to City Plan**

The relationship with the City Plan is as follows:

Outcome 6: A liveable City.  
 Direction 6c: The safety of our community is paramount and is acknowledged and supported through pro-active policies, programmes and strategies.

#### **Financial impact statement**

There is no direct financial impact for this matter.

**Conclusion**

No penalty infringement notices have been issued by Council Rangers in the Coogee Basin for drinking Alcohol and Alcohol Free Zones.

**Recommendation**

That the report be received and noted.

**Attachment/s:**

Nil

**W6/09**