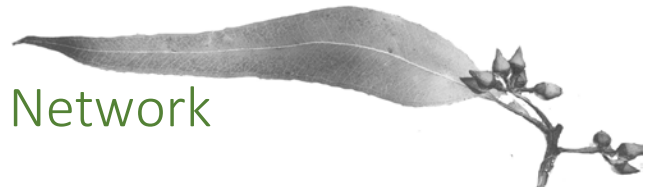


Australian Urban Forestry Network



Better Practice Guide: Public Tree Planting

AUTHORS: Myles Ritchie, University of Hawaii at Manoa; Rachael Dawes, ACT Government; Ben Hall, City of Holdfast Bay Council; Dr. Lyndal Plant, Urban Forester

INTRODUCTION

Planting trees in public areas can be an ideal way to increase the urban forest. Parks and streets are common locations where these plantings occur and allow community members access to these trees and the many benefits that they provide. However, there is often pushback from the public resulting from a number of concerns that can derail these well intended projects. Informing, consulting, participating and empowering the public are tactics that can be employed to overcome the hesitation and opposition often associated with proposed planting programs. This better practice guide uses a modified version of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum (Figure 1) to derive a community engagement plan that could be used by government agencies, non-profits, community groups, etc., desiring to implement or improve public tree planting efforts. Three case studies have also been included that show examples of how organisations have approached the challenge of delivering public tree programs. Effective community engagement should lead to increased support for the planting of new trees in public areas, resulting in a healthier and more robust urban forest based on the recommendations of residents who will interact with these trees on a daily basis.

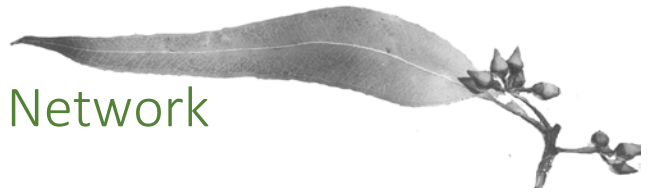


Photo credit: Ben Hall



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Australian Urban Forestry Network



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

In building your community engagement plan, think about three factors. First, why do we want to engage? Second, who should be engaged? Third, how much time is allocated for engagement? Your responses to these three questions will determine which level of engagement may suit best.



Level 1. Inform

- Tools – fact sheet, website, and/or information sessions
- Share the Council's vision - why/what/how/where?
- Share personal stories on trees - what are view-points based on experiences? How have trees had an effect on you? (good and bad)
- Benefits to be highlighted
- Negatives to expect and acknowledge



Level 2. Consult

- Tools – written submission, focus groups, surveys, brochures, letters and/or public meetings
- Consider independent facilitator
- Reaffirm support, register any opposition or concern



Level 3. Participate

- Tools – workshops, community planting, species selection (short list)
- Consider incentives
 - Free plants for home
 - Tools for tree care (e.g. watering can)
 - Social event/Food
 - Promotional/marketing materials (e.g. stickers)
- Planting instructions/safety induction
- Sharing and clarifying responsibilities for tree care



Level 4. Empower

- Tools – Sharing data/success stories, implement reward system
- Recognise successes
- Consider involving in monitoring of tree health and ecosystem services
- Consider pilot program

Benefits to be highlighted

- Addressing all the benefits that a healthy Urban Forest will provide for the community (utilization of examples & imagery to portray the message)
- Added value to the suburbs and your property ~ economic and financial benefits
- Ensuring we keep our suburbs cool for the community and future generations
- Carbon sequestration
- Improved health and well-being for the community
- Increased and improved biodiversity
- Creating a sense of place
- Increasing public shade and amenity etc.
- Gauge community feel following discussions

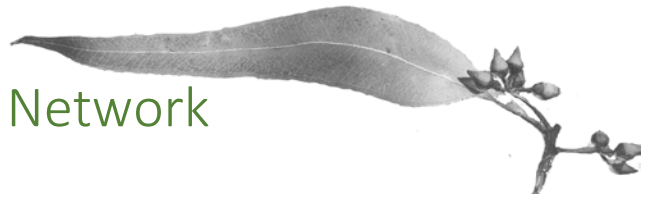
Negatives to expect and acknowledge

- Loss of car parks
- Allergies
- Damage to infrastructure
- Maintenance
- Funding
- Fear
- Undesirable shade (blocking solar panels/clothes lines)
- Shedding exudates (aka leaf debris causing mess or trip hazards)



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Australian Urban Forestry Network



Pilot Program

Treat your initial rollout as a pilot program. This can be used to test the tools and techniques of your program before the approach is fully endorsed. Refer to the points below to assist in the creation of a pilot program.

- Invite and test a range of catchy titles
- Build your toolkit from the guide
 - Gather existing information and data
- Collaborate with existing volunteer groups
 - Do not reinvent the wheel
- Choose an achievable scale
- Set up evaluation metrics
- Acknowledge achievements and recognise what could be improved
- Use metrics to support the business case for the program

CASE STUDIES ACROSS AUSTRALIA

CASE STUDY ONE: Cool Streets – Blacktown City Council



The Cool Streets Method© combines information modelling using the Cool Streets Model© in unison with a collaborative decision-making process to coordinate replanting projects on streets with low canopy cover.

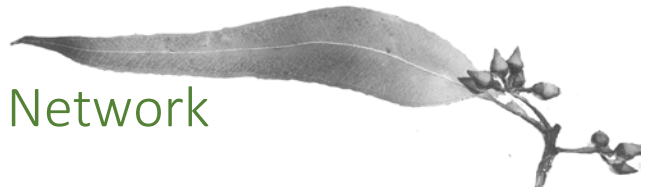
The Cool Streets Model©, developed by Gallagher Studio, is software that models streetscape components to determine the best environmental outcomes. These components can include various types of trees, layouts of plantings as well as streetscape elements such as pavements and kerbs. Data from the Cool Streets Model© is used to start a conversation with residents and other interested parties. Focusing on street level engagement, participants can share information, understand each other's preferences and shape an appropriate design for their street. Residents approve the final design for their street and feel a sense of ownership to look after the trees as they grow.

MORE INFORMATION: <https://www.coolstreets.com.au/>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Australian Urban Forestry Network



CASE STUDY TWO: Neighbourhood Shadeways program – Brisbane City Council



Brisbane City Council's Neighbourhood Shadeways program invites the community to plant street trees at fun and informative events, activating a strategic approach to planting. Residents can plant new street trees with neighbours and share a barbecue and a cold drink afterwards. Shadeways plantings target sunny and open footpaths in residential suburbs. In the 2017-2018 financial year, more than 660 residents came along to plant 2843 trees in local streets. All participating volunteers receive three free plants and a pack full of sustainable living ideas with tips for caring for their own trees. The Council's website, YourSay page, newspapers and social media are used to inform the public of planting events.

MORE INFORMATION: <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/clean-and-green/natural-environment-and-water/plants-trees-and-gardens/brisbanes-trees/street-trees>

CASE STUDY THREE: Urban Forest Precinct Plans – City of Melbourne



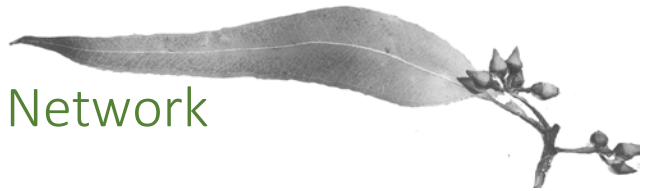
Melbourne central area is divided into 10 precincts, each with a precinct plan which will help to guide implementation of the urban forest strategy in Melbourne's public places. The information provided in the plans will direct the annual tree planting program to achieve urban forest strategy objectives, protect and enhance neighbourhood character, and to prioritise works and budgets within each precinct. The City of Melbourne's urban forest precinct plans have been developed in collaboration with the community, which is reflected in the character, vision, planting plan and priorities defined for each precinct's urban forest. A series of events were held for each precinct inviting members of the community to help design their plan. Consultation highlighted what the residents felt was intrinsic to their precinct and collated their preferences for the future state of their urban forest.

MORE INFORMATION: <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/urban-forest/Pages/urban-forest-precinct-plans.aspx>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Australian Urban Forestry Network



CONCLUSION

This guide applies recognised tools, techniques and case studies to help deliver effective community engagement. Increased support for the planting of new trees in public areas will result in a healthier and more robust urban forest that will enable stronger connections between people and trees for generations to come.

Levels of Community Engagement

 Increasing level of engagement	Inform	
	Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
	Our commitment to you	We will keep you informed.
	Public participation tools	Fact sheets, websites, information sessions.
	Consult	
	Public participation goal	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
	Our commitment to you	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
	Public participation tools	Written submission, focus groups, surveys, public meetings.
	Involve	
	Public participation goal	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
	Our commitment to you	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
	Public participation tools	Workshops, deliberative polling, expert panels.
	Collaborate	
	Public participation goal	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
	Our commitment to you	We will look for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
	Public participation tools	Advisory committees, participatory decision-making.
	Empower	
	Public participation goal	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
	Our commitment to you	We will implement what you decide.
Public participation tools	Citizen juries, ballots, delegated decision.	

© IAP2. All rights reserved.

Figure 1. **Levels of Community Engagement**

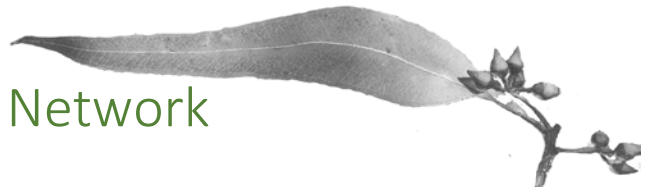
Adapted from IAP2 by Hume City Council,

<https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/files/51cbbebe-df6c-453c-ae26->



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Australian Urban Forestry Network



[9f280edb59f/Community_Engagement_Framework.pdf](https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/files/51cbbebe-df6c-453c-ae26-9f280edb59f/Community_Engagement_Framework.pdf), Accessed December 5, 2019

REFERENCES

Blacktown City Council. Cool Streets. <https://www.coolstreets.com.au/>, Accessed: December 5, 2019

Brisbane City Council. Neighbourhood Shadeways. <https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/clean-and-green/natural-environment-and-water/plants-trees-and-gardens/brisbanes-trees/street-trees>, Accessed: December 5, 2019

City of Melbourne. Urban Forest Precinct Plans. <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/greening-the-city/urban-forest/Pages/urban-forest-precinct-plans.aspx>, Accessed: December 5, 2019

Hume City Council. Community Engagement Framework, https://www.hume.vic.gov.au/files/51cbbebe-df6c-453c-ae26-9f280edb59f/Community_Engagement_Framework.pdf. Accessed: December 5, 2019

RESOURCES

IAP2 Tales from the Trenches, <https://www.iap2.org.au/resources/tales-from-the-trenches/>, Accessed: December 5, 2019

Greener Spaces Better Places. Who's with us? <https://www.greenerplacesbetterplaces.com.au/guides/who-s-with-us/>. Accessed 23 January 2020



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.