

Town Tree Plan 2021 – Heyfield

Short Version & FAQ

Council wishes to create a long-term vision and strategy for the urban forest in each of the shire's towns. By developing individual Town Tree Plans, it allows each town's character to be defined and to incorporate the community's feedback at a town-by-town level. To this end the approach to tree planting in each town is quite different and reflects the quite different character of each area.

This plan isn't just about the future, it about doing things now. The objective is to plant a wide range and significant number of street trees throughout the town over the next planting season (Autumn/Winter 2021). Tree planting will focus on in-filling existing gaps and replacing the trees that are removed as part of this plan.

The plans in the Town Tree Plan 2021 has plans showing red dots for where gaps in the urban forest exist. This is where a new tree will be planted. Yellow dots are locations where trees are to be removed and then replaced. A significant and unique part of this program is to let property owners choose from a selected list of tree(s) they would like to see on the naturestrip next to their property.

A recent inspection of street trees throughout Heyfield by Council's arborist confirmed just how diverse existing street tree plantings in the town are. The inspection also identified many opportunities for planting and a number of trees that should be replaced.

For Heyfield, the planting and replacement program will occur over the planting season (Autumn/Winter 2021). Property owners that have naturestrips suitable for planting or where trees have been identified for removal are being offered the opportunity to choose a tree or trees. The Town Tree Plan- Tree Species Information also includes a short description and photograph of each species.

We encourage all property owners and resident to provide feedback either via email, phone, via the attached feedback form. Alternatively, you can:

- Go to www.wellington.vic.gov.au/HeyfieldTrees to view the plan and the tree species information for Heyfield.
- Next to your property, look for the marked red and yellow dots. Each yellow dot represents a nature strip tree that will be removed and replaced. Each red dot represents where a nature strip tree will be planted.
- For a dot (or dots) marked on the nature strip(s) outside your property we would like you to tell us which species of tree from the preferred lists you would like planted. The preferred list of trees is supplied on the Street Planting Nomination Form and you will find plenty of information about each species in the Town Tree Plan – Heyfield 2021 document.
- Once you decide on which tree/s you would like, simply tick the appropriate box on the nomination form, make sure you provide your address on the form, place in the reply-paid envelope and post it back before Friday 31 July 2020.

All property owners have received this letter and a Reply-Paid envelope. Property owners who have been identified to have a tree planted on the nature strip are asked to choose a preferred tree (or trees) from the species list and return the form in the Reply- Paid envelope by **Friday 31 July 2020**.

If you do not mind which of the preferred tree is planted outside your property, or if we do not receive your completed form by that date, Council officers will select a tree from the list on your behalf.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the point of the plan?

- The primary point of the program is to create a long-term vision and strategy for the urban forest in each of the shire's towns. This plan encompasses a vision for each town/street for at least the next 50 years.
- By developing individual Town Tree Plans, it allows each town's character to be defined and to incorporate the community's feedback at a town by town level.
- This plan isn't just about the future, it about doing things now. The major plan objective is to plant a wide range and significant number of street trees throughout the towns over the next planting season (Autumn/Winter 2021) whilst removing only trees that genuinely need to be removed. Planting will fill in existing gaps and replace most removed trees.

Is this just about tree removal and/or replacement?

- This plan is not only about the short-term removal and/or replacement or wholesale replacement of trees. It is about the sustainable management of trees, creating a long-term vision and a commitment to sustainably manage and enhance the town's the urban character.
- Only trees that are high risk, dead, dying, diseased and trees with only a short useful life expectancy will be removed. Some environmental weed species will also be recommended for removal.

Why now?

- Wellington Shire Council's Open Space Plan 2014 – 2024 and Urban Forest Plan highlight the importance of having a long-term aim to create sustainable management plans for urban forests. Hence, it is an opportune time to develop these long-term visions for each town.
- This is the fifth Town Tree Plan. The previous ones at Briagolong, Cowwarr, Seaspray and Yarram worked extremely well and it is exciting to take the same approach to Heyfield. This method to street tree planting has some unique challenges that makes this a learning exercise for us which will improve outcomes across the shire as we roll out other Town Plans.

Town Character – what is it?

- Town character is the 'feel' that a particular town gives residents or visitors, it comes from a range of sensory inputs, a major input is the streetscapes; trees are the most dominant feature of the streetscape. The town of Bright is a good example that most people can readily envisage. Imagine a Bright planted to eucalypts or conifers; whilst there is nothing wrong with such plantings, the current ambience would be completely different.

What streets and why?

- The plan includes all streets (although works will be undertaken over a number of years). The character of a town is derived from its major streets; the street tree plan has designated streets as primary and local. The primary streets are town entries and those carrying significant through traffic or leading to major destinations, whereas the secondary streets are those feeding local areas, and local streets are those primarily used by local access traffic only.

What species?

Species selection is critical to developing and/or maintaining town character. Species selection depends on many factors including:

- Biological – soils, rainfall, wind, exposure, drainage (will the tree grow here?)
- Physical constraints- Powerlines, nature-strip width, road design, footpaths, etc
- Tree Style/Character (what visual effect will this species have on the overall streetscape?)
- Biodiversity value (how much does this species add to the street tree biodiversity)

The intent of this plan is to strengthen diversity by allowing property owners to select species from a range of suitable trees (selected because they are already performing well in the town or are species we are reasonably confident will do well here).

Native versus exotic and evergreen versus deciduous?

These arguments are largely irrelevant, towns are contrived ecosystems and the choice of tree species should be based on the “What species” question above. Fundamentally the right tree in the right place.

What about well-established and healthy trees or remnant vegetation?

Trees will only be removed if they are high risk (e.g., major structure faults), dead, dying, diseased or have a short life expectancy (not expected to last more than 10 years). In some instances, environmental weed species will also be recommended for removal. Healthy trees will be retained (*except where they are considered highly invasive weeds species*).

Remnant vegetation is important and protected by legislation, removal can and will be only undertaken in specific circumstances. This plan will also highlight the need to protect and improve the growing conditions for remnant and heritage trees.

What if I disagree with your recommendation to remove a particular tree?

We are not perfect, Council’s arborist has undertaken an inspection of all of the trees, and the recommendation to remove is based on this inspection. We are happy to review any recommendation if you feel that there is a good reason to retain the tree. If we have identified a tree for removal on your nature strip and you feel there is a good reason to keep the tree please contact our Open Space Arborist Cameron McGregor, on 51423109 or email cameronm@wellington.vic.gov.au.

What about trees under powerlines?

Trees and powerlines co-exist through all urban areas of the world, and largely when managed co-exist quite well. Location and species are important; some of the naturestrips in Heyfield are narrow with powerlines dominating the space. In these cases, smaller or slower growing species have been selected. The plant lists have a list of trees suitable for near powerlines.

Does this plan affect trees on private property?

No, this plan is only concerned with streetscapes not trees on private land.

Where to from here?

Rather than send out the document to every ratepayer (at considerable expense and paper), you are encouraged to access the Town Tree Plan 2021 at www.wellington.vic.gov.au/HeyfieldTrees. In this document you will find the strategic context and background, but importantly the maps and the tree species information.

- Residents are asked to complete the attached feedback form
- Given the current health concerns, Council will not be conducting information sessions at this stage. Council staff will be available via phone to answer your questions on what's happening to individual trees, the general trees on your street or more broadly within the towns.
- The first year of planting shall take place over this planting season (Autumn/Winter of 2020). Year 2 planting of the Heyfield Town Tree Plan 2021 will take place during next year's planting season (Autumn/Winter 2021). Council will undertake further consultation with Heyfield residents in 2021 to complete the program of tree planting for Heyfield.

Tree selections are to be received by **Friday 2 October 2020**.

Where can I get more information?

Further copies of the town tree plan, FAQ and feedback form are available from Council's website. www.wellington.vic.gov.au/HeyfieldTrees

Or contact: Liam Cole - Open Space Planning Officer
liamc@wellington.vic.gov.au or 1300 366 244