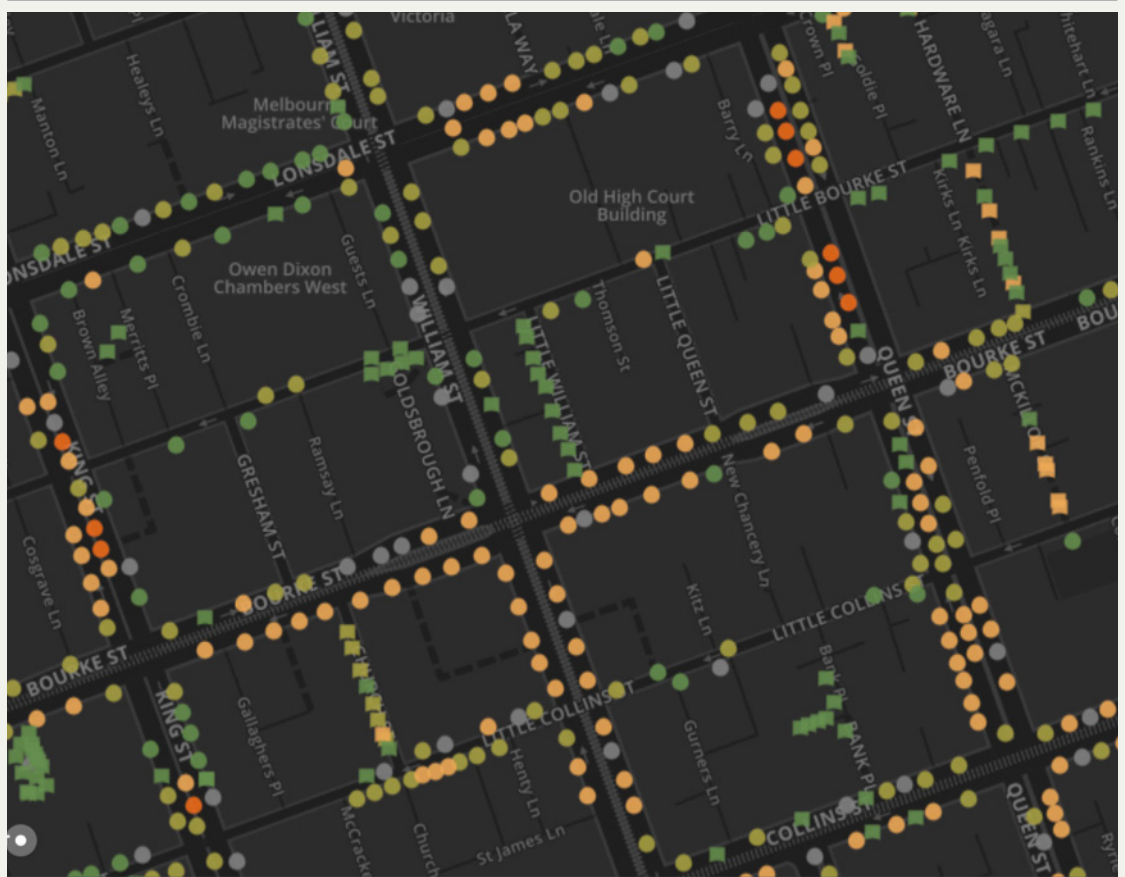


Melbourne's coordinated approach to streetscape projects to double canopy Melbourne, Australia

Canopy cover



TDAG Case Study

2 of 4



Completion date:
2012-ongoing

Team:
The urban forestry programme of work is led by the City of Melbourne's Urban Sustainability Branch (of the City Strategy and Place Group)

Further information:
Melbourne's Urban Forest Strategy: <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/parks-open-spaces/urban-forest/Pages/urban-forest-strategy.aspx>
Melbourne's Urban Forest Precincts Plan: <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/parks-open-spaces/urban-forest-precinct-plans.aspx>
Melbourne's Urban Forest Visual: <http://melbourneurbanforest.visual.com.au>

The impact of a "do nothing" scenario over canopy cover levels is made clear through interactive charts

Image: Extract from <http://melbourneurbanforest.visual.com.au>



© Trees and Design Action Group Trust.

Melbourne's coordinated approach to streetscape projects to double canopy [Melbourne, Australia](#)

Melbourne is aiming to double public realm canopy cover from 22.5% (2011 baseline) to 40% by 2040. To achieve this goal set in Melbourne's *Urban Forest Strategy* (2012), the council's urban landscape department, which leads strategic planning, management and capital investment for the city's public open spaces (including parks, gardens and the "urban forest"), conducted a comprehensive survey of Melbourne's street trees. The survey looked at species, size and condition to assess the safe useful life expectancy of each tree. This database was then used to model how the canopy would evolve under different circumstances, including a "do nothing" scenario. The modelling showed that reaching the 40% canopy cover target would require planting an average of 3,000 trees a year over the next decade. The modelling did not focus exclusively on tree numbers but also considered how the tree planting conditions would affect canopy size. The process showed that achieving the target will require planting trees into carriageways beyond existing kerb lines, where there is adequate below and above space to accommodate root and crown development, and where it is much easier to give the trees access to moisture. Extensive community consultation was conducted between 2012 and 2015 to establish for each of the city's ten neighbourhoods – or precincts as they are called locally – a ten-year urban forest plan identifying priority for tree planting and replacement, how the planting will support

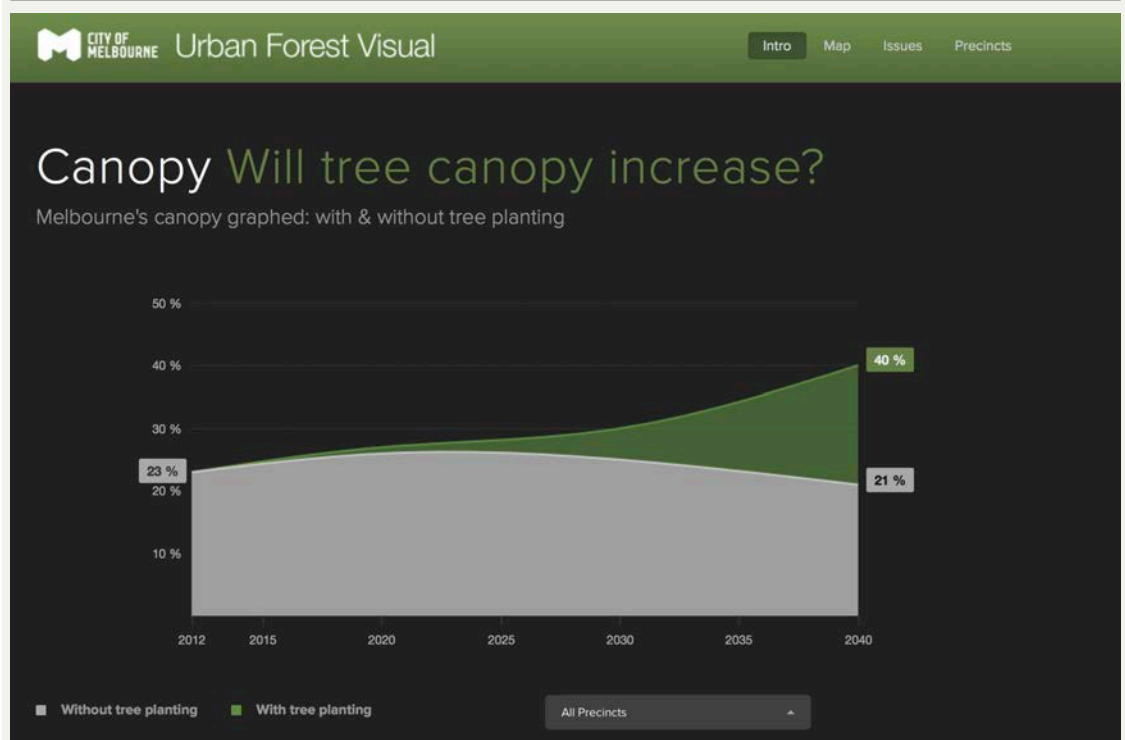
the local unique character of the area, and the benefits to be delivered.

Delivery of such an ambitious urban forestry programme would not be possible without strong interdepartmental collaboration. To facilitate this, a streetscape coordination committee has been established bringing together, on a monthly basis, the traffic and parking, capital works and urban landscape departments. The committee ensures that, wherever capital or refurbishment work is being planned in the highway, adequate green infrastructure provision is integrated into the projects, following the priorities and principles defined in the precinct plans. It also enables budgets and community engagement efforts to be shared across teams. Similar coordination takes place with the urban design team, when new developments make contributions to public realm improvements.

Results so far have been as follows:

The work underway has enabled canopy cover levels over the public realm to remain stable despite the removal of a large number of mature canopy trees that had gone into rapid decline following repeated heatwave over the recent years. A change in the season of aerial image used for conducting the canopy cover assessment also contributes to the minor drop observed in 2016-17.

Year	Trees planted	Trees removed (non-protected trees)	Trees removed (trees on heritage list)	Canopy cover (% of public realm)
2008				23.4
2011				22.5
2012-13	3000		2306	23.7
2013-14	3190	570	2333	24.38
2014-15	3155	755	3399	24.09
2015-16	3274	947	348	24.09
2016-17	3073	1040		23.84



TDAG Case Study

3 of 4

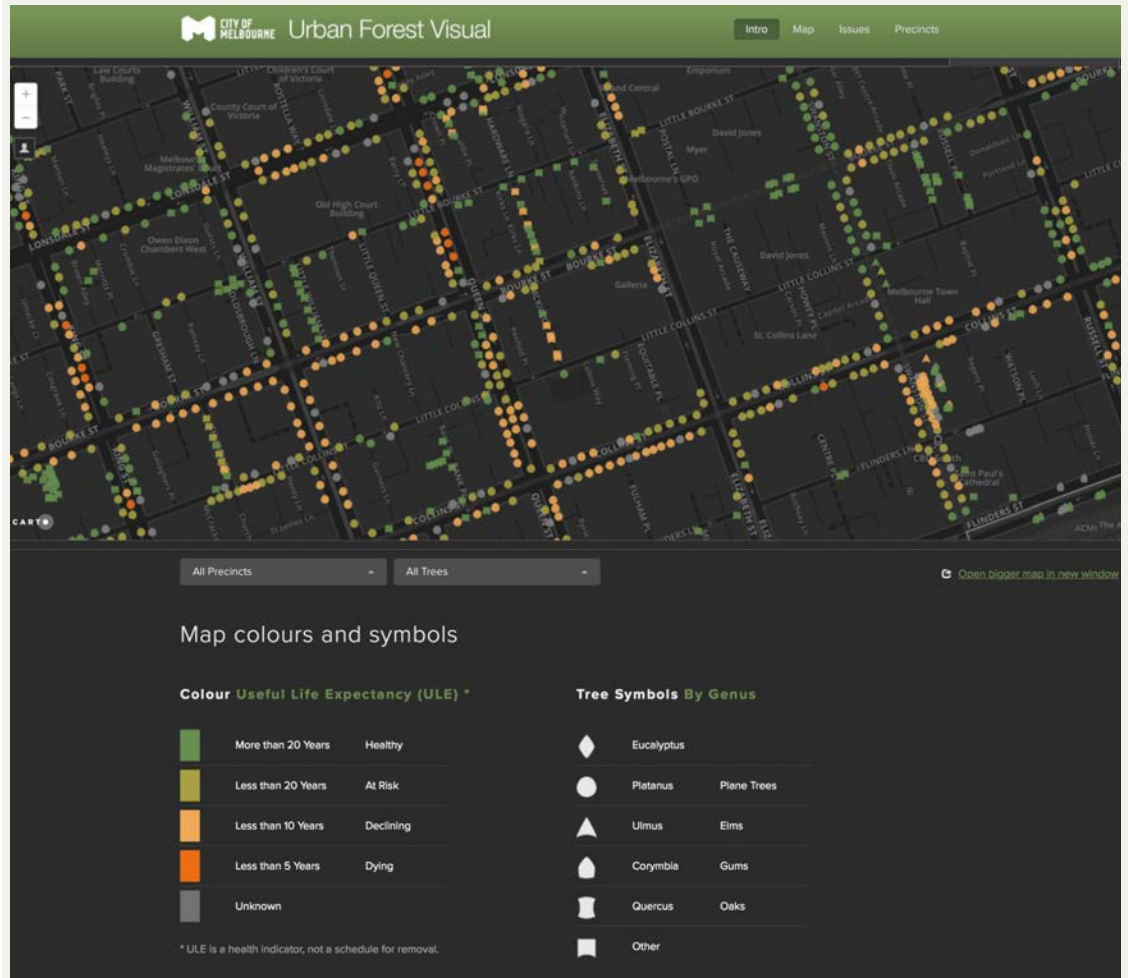
The planting schedule resulting from the precinct plans is part of Melbourne's online mapping resource on public realm trees and provides a means for continued community engagement

Image: Extract from <http://melbourneurbanforestvisual.com.au>

The results from Melbourne's street tree inventory have been turned into a publicly available mapping resource on the public realm trees

Image: Extract from <http://melbourneurbanforestvisual.com.au>

Melbourne's coordinated approach to streetscape projects to double canopy Melbourne, Australia



Melbourne's coordinated approach to streetscape projects to double canopy [Melbourne, Australia](#)

About this Case Study

In 2012, TDAG identified 12 good practice principles for urban trees. The project described in this case study illustrates the principles highlighted below:

- 1/ **Know your Tree Resource**
- 2/ **Have a Comprehensive Tree Strategy**
- 3/ Embed Trees into Policy and Other Plans
- 4/ Make Tree-friendly Places
- 5/ Pick the Right Trees
- 6/ Seek Multiple Benefits
- 7/ Procure a Healthy Tree
- 8/ Provide Soil, Air and Water
- 9/ **Create Stakeholders**
- 10/ Take an Asset Management Approach
- 11/ Be Risk Aware (Rather than Risk Averse)
- 12/ Adjust Management to Needs

For more about the 12 principles, see [*Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers*](#)

Keywords

Canopy cover targets, Citywide, Tree strategy, Community engagement.

Author and sources

This case study was drafted by Anne Jaluzot, based on interviews with Ian Shears (Leader, Urban Sustainability Branch, City Strategy and Place Group, City of Melbourne).

Version 1.1

This case study was originally published in [*Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery*](#) (2014). Version 1.1 was released in February 2018.