



# **GREENING LOXTON STRATEGY**

*The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now!*

## ***Loxton Recreation Grounds Committee***

The Loxton Recreation Grounds Committee (LRGC) is a Section 41 Committee of the District Council of Loxton Waikerie. The purpose of the Committee is to assist the Council in relation to *recreation grounds and facilities* under the care, control and management of Council within the Loxton township and general surrounds, specifically to:

- Provide recommendations to Council for their long-term strategic management and development;
- Initiate, develop and coordinate community projects;
- Provide a conduit to Council for the community.

*Recreation grounds and facilities* refer to any existing land and associated facilities used for recreational purposes and reserve dedicated for recreational use with the boundaries of the Loxton township being defined as the area contained within the 80km speed zones.

## ***About Loxton***

Loxton is situated on the southern banks of the Murray River in the Riverland of South Australia. It is the largest township within the District Council of Loxton Waikerie with a population of 5,575 (as at the 2021 Census), located on the traditional land of the Ngawait Aboriginal people.

The Loxton district area as specified in the LRGC Terms of Reference, has 6 parks and reserves, 5 playgrounds totalling approx. 27 ha of open space as well as a nationally recognised golf course and a thriving main street precinct in the heart of town.

Main industries include agriculture and horticulture with the district contributing significantly to the national output of food and beverage. Tourism also plays an important part in the mix of the local economy and, whilst the region is faced with several population, economic and environmental challenges, the proud community continues to show resilience with a 'can do' attitude and an extraordinary spirit that makes Loxton a great place to live.

## ***Scope of the Strategy***

The Greening Loxton Strategy is an initiative of the Committee which aims to guide and assist the Loxton Recreation Grounds Committee to fulfil its purpose as well as to assist the Council prioritise project and service delivery through its Annual Business Planning processes.

The Strategy seeks to identify projects and activities that will enhance the liveability of the Loxton township including:

- Streetscapes
- Parks and Gardens
- Reserves
- Open space areas and
- Natural Environment



## **Objectives of the Strategy**

The LRGC's focus is to protect and enhance our green assets. Trees and other vegetation are regarded as providing critical 'living' infrastructure – being as important as road verges and footpaths, creating a landscape that will help to define our town's character.

The Greening Loxton Strategy will focus on ways to assist in addressing climate change and help to reduce urban heating. It will support recommendations and direction to Council that will enhance our community's wellbeing and create a greener, cooler and attractive town for the future.

Some of the key benefits of urban greening in our area include:

- Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change.  
*Australia has warmed 1.47°C from 1910-2020, with a decline in rainfall of 10-20% in southern Australia in the cooler months (BOM). Adelaide's average number of hot days above 35 degrees is predicted to increase by up to 47 days per year by 2070 (PlanSA).*
- Cooling urban environment.  
*Urban green infrastructure minimises heat accumulation through shade, evapotranspiration and altering wind patterns. Trees and other vegetation can reduce surface temperatures by 5-6°C. (Norton 2013, dit.sa.gov.au).*
- Increasing property values.  
*Property values on tree-lined streets can be worth up to 20% more than similar properties on tree-less streets. (State planning commission)*
- Extending the lifespan of buildings, infrastructure and roads.
- Enhancing habitat for wildlife and increased biodiversity.  
*Urbanisation has led to the decline and fragmentation of native plant and animal species. Planting locally native species promotes wildlife corridors and ecosystem function and provides habitat diversity. (dit.sa.gov.au).*
- Improving physical and mental health of community.  
*The positive impacts of nature are widespread when it comes to human health, including better psychological health, sleep, reduced stress, improved connectedness, and increased happiness. (newscientist)*
- Increasing stormwater and grey water harvesting.  
*Streets with higher vegetation cover are three to six times more effective in managing storm water than those without (Norton 2013).*

## Key Strategies

Trees and other vegetation are invaluable contributors to our town. The key strategies outlined below will help to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate and better manage our 'living assets' so we can maximise their benefits and our return on investment in them.



### Protect and enhance existing trees and other vegetation

- Undergo an audit and data collection to record species, size, health and spatial mapping to create a baseline Digital Tree Inventory
- Introduce a proactive tree maintenance program to improve the overall quality, health and viability of existing trees. (*Improved health of existing trees will provide 5 x the canopy benefits than new plantings.*)
- Limit the loss of native and planted vegetation through development per Planning, Development & Infrastructure Act and Native Vegetation Act 1991.
- Limit the loss of trees per Council's Tree Management Policy.
- Establish an economic value of Loxton's trees as an asset

### Increase canopy cover

- Calculate current % of canopy cover to set targets for future planting and long term planning (including replacement of ageing trees), working towards an optimum cover of 30-40%.
- Continue annual tree planting of a minimum 800 trees in streets, parks and public open spaces.
- Identify areas for tree planting priorities for *new* and *additional* street tree plantings based on Digital Tree Inventory.
- Encourage appropriate plantings on private land through the development of grants or collaborative partnerships.
- Consider a Vegetation & Planting plan be incorporated into any new developments or upgrades.

### **Educate and engage with community**

- Ongoing communication about this Strategy with community members and groups as well as key stakeholders to create opportunities to get involved and deliver outcomes together.
- Continue to support LRG's volunteer Tree Watering crews.
- Develop a community engagement project 'Adopt-a-Tree' to assist Council staff to maximise success of future public plantings.
- Recognise community efforts and achievements.

### **Deliver best practice**

- Investigate new materials and technologies to enhance water absorption into the root zone.
- Consider improved water harvesting and smart irrigation techniques in future developments.
- Regularly update Council's Approved Tree Species list to provide clarity and consistency in planting the right trees in the right places.
- Ensure adequate diversity is included in the Approved Tree Species list to minimise risks associated with monocultures.
- Implement quality pruning and management techniques to maximise canopy cover and optimise health of established trees.
- Provide relevant professional development to Council staff in line with the objectives of this Strategy
- Ensure annual priorities to action this Strategy are submitted for support in the DCLW Annual Business Plan



## **Strategic Context**

This plan is governed by the following District Council of Loxton Waikerie documents:

- Annual Business Plan
- Tree Management Policy 2021
- Loxton Recreation Grounds Committee Terms of Reference
- Growth Strategy
- Riverfront Masterplan 2022

## **Associated Activities**

- Management of Little Corellas to reduce damage to existing canopy
- Use of cool surfaces with new infrastructure, taking into account colour and porous surfaces
- Introduction of additional shelters to provide further shade
- Reconsider street designs during development and upgrades, to create opportunities for additional plantings
- Explore additional biodiversity opportunities

## **Appendixes**

A: Approved Tree Species list (updated) 2022

B: Digital Tree Inventory (draft) 2022

## **Summary and Ongoing Review**

By adopting this Strategy we believe we can improve the overall liveability of our town, improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and help our region adapt to climate change. All of this will provide broad based benefits to our community.

Annual review of the Strategy will be required to identify opportunities for implementation and consider costs involved in certain elements. This will enable effective forward planning, budgeting and applications for grant funding.

## **References:**

- [http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/#:~:text=Climate%20change%20continues%20to%20influence,October\)%20rainfall%20in%20recent%20decades](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/#:~:text=Climate%20change%20continues%20to%20influence,October)%20rainfall%20in%20recent%20decades).
- [https://plan.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/744941/Preserving\\_our\\_green\\_infrastructure.pdf](https://plan.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/744941/Preserving_our_green_infrastructure.pdf)
- Norton, Briony & Coutts, Andrew & Livesley, Stephen & Williams, Nicholas. (2013). Decision principles for the selection and placement of green infrastructure to mitigate urban hotspots and heat waves.
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