



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

2026 - 2030 Township Greening Action Plan



Acknowledgement of Country

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands of the Mount Barker District. We respect the First Nations people and their spiritual relationship with their country and their cultural and heritage beliefs.



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Prepared by Climate Cavalry

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Our 2044 vision To be the most liveable region in South Australia.

Which means...

“A liveable place is somewhere that is: safe, attractive, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable; with affordable and diverse types of housing, public open space, local shops, health and community services, leisure and cultural opportunities; with opportunities for employment and education all accessible by convenient public transport, walking and cycling.”

— Australian Urban Observatory, 2024

Our five pillars to achieve this are...



Executive Summary

Trees and vegetation are critical to keeping Mount Barker's townships cool, liveable and healthy as the district grows. They provide shade and cooling during heatwaves, support biodiversity, improve streetscapes and neighbourhood character, help manage stormwater and enhance wellbeing. With rapid growth and increasing pressure on streets, reserves and infrastructure corridors, Council needs a more coordinated approach to protect existing canopy and secure space for new greening in both established areas and new developments.

The Township Greening Action Plan 2026–2030 is Council's four-year implementation plan to deliver on the Environment and Sustainability Strategy objective to establish high levels of canopy cover and biodiverse areas as part of Council's open space network and road reserves.

Key priorities

- Grow the Mount Barker Parklands together
- Protect and connect
- Accelerate council planting and tree management program
- Support private land greening

This Township Greening Action Plan is one of five interlinked action plans nested under Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy. Many actions in this Plan are closely connected to priorities in the other action plans, recognising that greening outcomes rely on integrated water management, biodiversity protection and restoration, and climate resilience planning.

The Plan has been developed to bring together existing greening activities, emerging priorities and community aspirations identified through the Environment and Sustainability Strategy. It reflects current pressures from growth and climate change, practical delivery experience across Council, and early input from staff and the community. Supporting context and background information are referenced separately.

The actions in this Plan contribute to Council's 2035 climate targets, including:

- Increase tree canopy in all townships to support the State Government's target of 30% cover by 2055 (with a tailored interim 2035 target to be developed once baseline canopy data is captured)
- Retain 95% mature trees in masterplan developments

A summary of the priority actions is provided overpage. Over the next four years, this Plan will guide practical, coordinated action to protect and grow tree canopy, strengthen connected green corridors and support greening across both public and private land.



Township Greening Action Plan

- Summary of Actions and Strategic Alignment

REF	ACTION	CONTRIBUTE TO ESS PRIORITIES			
		GROW MT BARKER PARKLANDS TOGETHER	PROTECT AND CONNECT	ACCELERATE COUNCIL PLANTING	SUPPORT PRIVATE LAND GREENING
Governance, policy and processes					
G1	Township Planting Guidelines	X	X	X	
G2	Review Tree Management Policy		X	X	X
Track, plan and manage					
G3	Tree Asset Management Plan	X	X	X	
G4	Set and monitor tree cover targets in townships	X	X	X	
G5	Develop Mount Barker Parklands Masterplan	X	X	X	X
Educate, inspire and involve					
G6	Annual plant “I’m Giving Back to Nature” campaign	X			X
G7	Promote benefits of greening	X	X		X
G8	New residents information kit	X			X
Protect and maintain					
G9	Increase monitoring of greening conditions in new developments		X		X
Establish, expand or restore					
G10	Accelerated annual street tree planting and establishment	X		X	
G11	Deliver corridor connection projects	X	X	X	
G12	More tree space in streets and projects	X		X	
Partnerships and advocacy					
G13	Support community greening projects	X			X
G14	Partner on research		X	X	
G15	Advocacy with State Government and developers	X	X		X

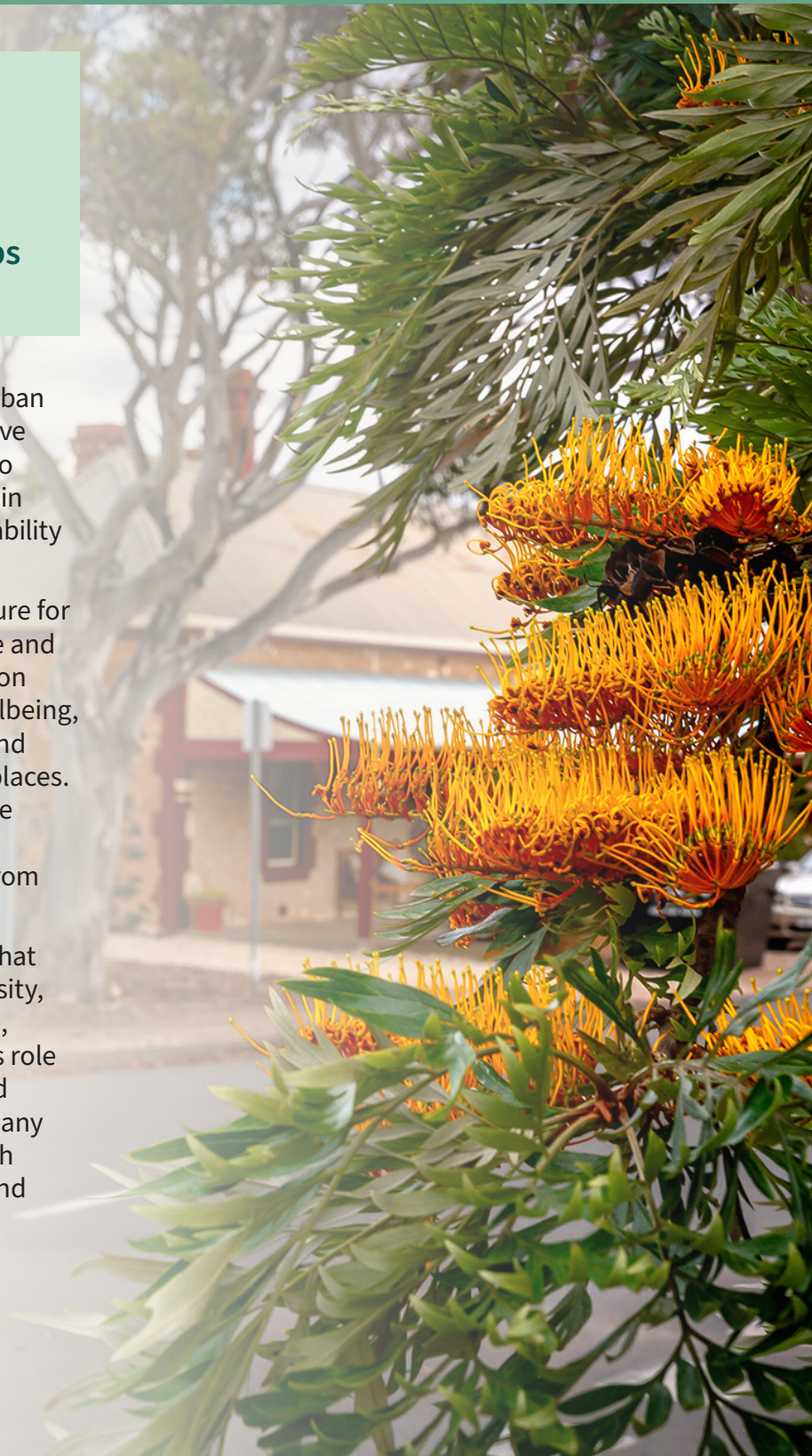
Introduction

The Township Greening Action Plan sets out Council's priority actions to grow, protect and manage trees and vegetation across Mount Barker's townships over the next four years.

It focuses on practical measures to reduce urban heat, expand and protect tree canopy, improve habitat connectivity and embed greening into planning, design and day-to-day operations, in line with Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy.

Trees and vegetation are critical infrastructure for fast-growing townships. They provide shade and cooling during heatwaves, reduce pressure on built infrastructure, improve health and wellbeing, support biodiversity, manage stormwater and contribute to the character and identity of places. As the district grows and densifies, proactive township greening is essential to protect liveability and ensure all residents benefit from access to green, healthy environments.

This Plan brings together greening actions that have previously sat across climate, biodiversity, water and open space planning into a single, coordinated framework. It clarifies Council's role as a land manager, planner, asset owner and community leader, while recognising that many greening outcomes rely on partnerships with residents, developers, community groups and other agencies.



The Plan focuses on three core areas of township greening action:

Trees as critical infrastructure

Trees are long-lived assets that require space, protection and ongoing maintenance. This Plan aims to treat trees and vegetation in township areas as essential infrastructure, embedding greening into planning, design, asset management and renewal to ensure they can establish, thrive and deliver long-term benefits.

Strengthening green corridors and connected parklands

Connected green corridors enhance biodiversity, recreation and access to nature, while also delivering cooling and water management benefits. The Plan supports a more coordinated approach to linear parks, trails, streetscapes and reserves, including progression of the Mount Barker Parklands concept as a long-term framework for linking townships, natural areas and key destinations through a network of cool, green spaces.

Urban heat and cooling

Township areas with low tree canopy cover experience higher temperatures, particularly during heatwaves. Strategic greening of streets, parks and public spaces is one of the most effective and cost-efficient ways to reduce heat, protect vulnerable people and improve comfort and usability of townships.

This Township Greening Action Plan 2026–2030 is the first standalone greening plan for the district. It builds on existing programs, past strategies and community investment in trees and open space, while responding to current pressures from growth, climate change and rising expectations around urban liveability.

The Plan covers the period 2026–2030. Actions will be implemented, monitored and reviewed through Council's existing planning, asset management and reporting processes, with progress informing future updates to Council strategies, master plans and delivery programs.



Guiding Principles

Our District's environment supports a liveable, resilient, thriving and creative community. That's why we value it so highly. These endorsed principles from the Environment and Sustainability Strategy establish the foundation for Council's approach, actions and decision-making.

A better future together

Council will work proactively with First Nations, community groups, developers, landholders, the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board (HFLB) and other partners – and embed action across Council – to amplify shared efforts and outcomes.

Celebrate, empower and inspire

We seek to inspire a love of nature and sustainable living by telling stories, celebrating our assets and achievements, connecting people and nature, sharing knowledge, and empowering people to act.

Protect and prioritise nature

We will protect and connect wildlife habitats and grow protected areas, prioritising planting indigenous species where practical, because healthy ecosystems are vital to a thriving community.

Take urgent climate action

Council will take immediate and ambitious action on the climate emergency, working with the community to reduce our impact and adapt to increased storms, heat, bushfires, flood and drought.

Be bold yet practical

Council will take bold action on immediate priorities, learning and improving along the way. Our efforts will be practical, evidence-based and achievable, with clear pathways to success. Council will lead by example, pursue best practice, and advocate for positive change.

Strategic Framework

Council's strategic framework

The Township Greening Action Plan 2026–2030 is a four-year action plan nested under Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy and supports delivery of Council's Community Plan vision and priorities.

This Action Plan forms part of a suite of five interlinked four-year action plans under the Environment and Sustainability Strategy, alongside:

- Climate Change
- Waste to Resources
- Nature and Wildlife
- Integrated Water Management

Together, these action plans provide an integrated approach to improving environmental outcomes, reducing risk and enhancing liveability. Many actions in this Plan align with and reinforce actions in the other plans, recognising that climate resilience, emissions reduction, greening, water management and biodiversity outcomes are interdependent.

This Plan also connects with and supports implementation of other Council strategies and plans, including (but not limited to):

- Open Space Management
- Strategic Asset Management Plans
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Public Health and Wellbeing planning
- Advocacy Plan

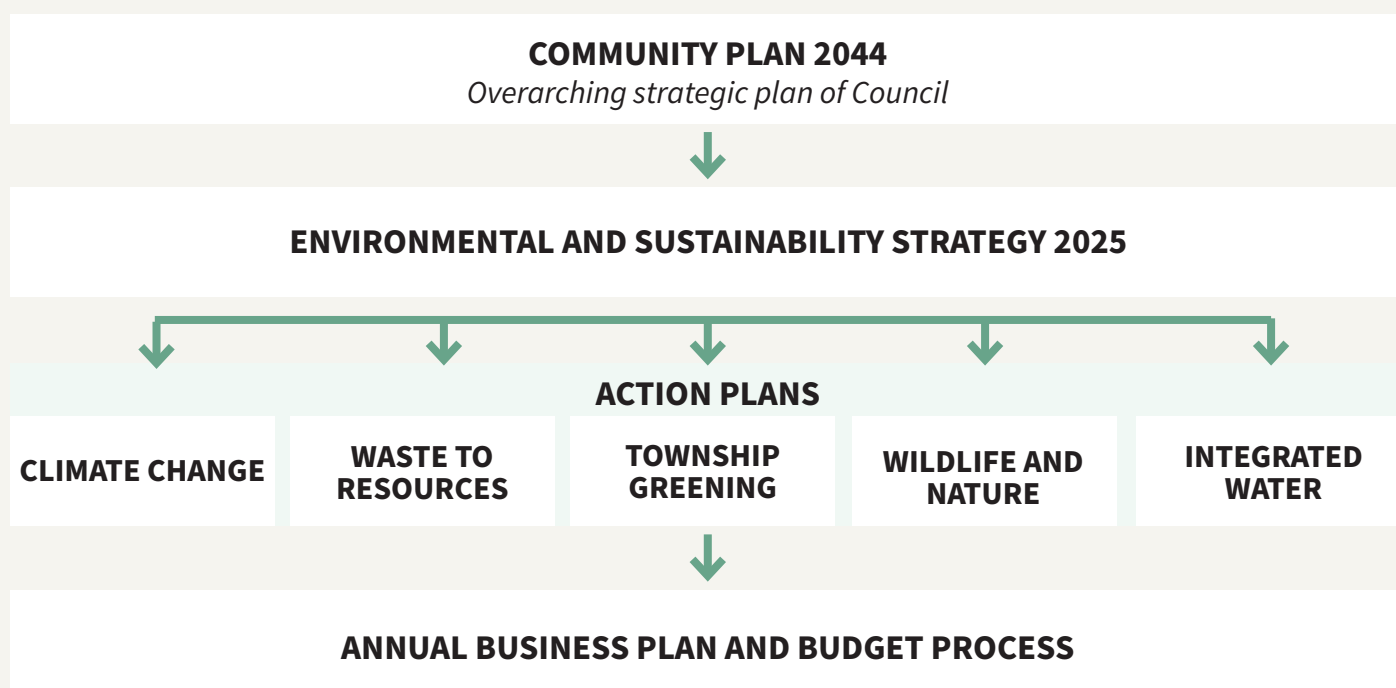


Figure 1: Strategic context

Alignment with state and national policy

The Township Greening Action Plan aligns with relevant South Australian and Australian Government policy and legislative frameworks that support urban greening, tree canopy expansion, biodiversity protection and climate resilience. This includes state targets to increase urban canopy cover, policies that promote water-sensitive and biodiversity-sensitive urban design, and planning frameworks that recognise the role of green infrastructure in cooling, liveability and public health.

Regional collaboration

Council works collaboratively with regional partners to support coordinated township greening outcomes. Regional collaboration plays an important role in sharing data, trialling new approaches, building evidence on tree species performance and avoiding duplication of effort.

Actions in this Plan complement regional initiatives progressed through partnerships such as Resilient Hills and Coasts, the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board, the Urban Greening Strategy for Metropolitan Adelaide and research collaborations, while remaining focused on Council's local role in planning, asset management and community greening.

Further reading

For more detail, please refer to the following resources available at www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au

- *Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2025*
Sets Council's long-term vision, objectives, guiding principles and priority focus areas for environment and sustainability, and provides the strategic framework.
- *State of the Environment Report 2024*
A detailed evidence base including policy context, community values, benefits, emerging trends, current status and review of progress since 2018 across key environmental themes.
- *Biodiversity Strategy (2016)*
Outlines Council's earlier strategic direction for biodiversity conservation and rich detail on biodiversity assets across the district.
- *Resilient Hills and Coasts Climate Change Adaptation Plan and ReCAP Backcast (2024)*
Includes regional analysis and case studies on heat mitigation, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions that inform Council's township greening approach.



Current Snapshot

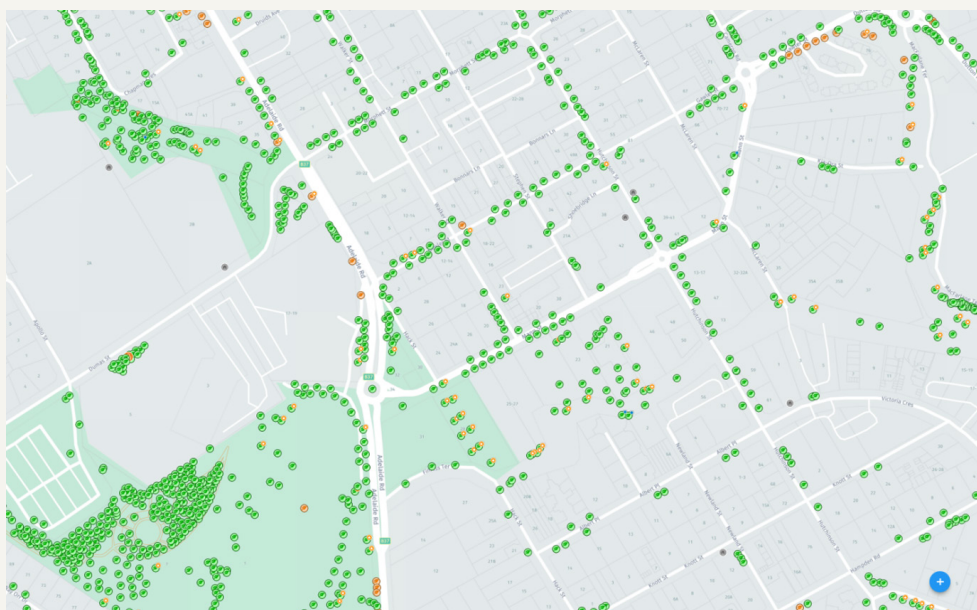
Township greening plays a critical role in supporting liveability, climate resilience and community wellbeing across the Mount Barker District. Trees and vegetation provide shade and cooling, improve air quality, support biodiversity, manage stormwater and enhance the character and identity of townships. These benefits are becoming increasingly important as temperatures rise and extreme heat events become more frequent.

As one of South Australia's fastest-growing regions, Mount Barker is experiencing rapid urban expansion and increasing pressure on public open space, streetscapes and infrastructure corridors. New development can reduce space available for trees if greening is not planned early and embedded into design, while existing established trees face pressures from infrastructure upgrades and competing land uses. At the same time, growth presents a

significant opportunity to lock in climate-ready, green townships through better planning, design standards and coordinated investment.

Current tree canopy cover varies across townships, with limited baseline data available beyond Mount Barker township itself. Urban heat, uneven access to green space and gaps in habitat connectivity are emerging equity and resilience issues across the district. There is need for a more strategic, evidence-based approach to where, how and why trees and vegetation are planted, protected and maintained.

Responsibility for township greening is shared. Council manages street trees, reserves and public open space, but a large proportion of land sits in private ownership. Achieving meaningful greening outcomes therefore relies on a combination of Council leadership, planning controls, community education and partnerships with residents, developers and other agencies.



Example of tree inventory data, enabling proactive tree asset management.

Key Achievements to Date

While this is the first standalone Township Greening Action Plan, Council has already laid important groundwork through related strategies, programs and on-ground delivery.

These actions provide a solid foundation, but greening pressures are intensifying as the district grows. A more coordinated, township-wide and asset-focused approach is now needed to protect existing canopy, expand greening where it is most needed, and ensure new development contributes positively to long-term liveability and resilience.

Key recent achievements include:

Establishing a strong planting and maintenance base

- Ongoing annual street tree planting programs across townships, with at least 200 new street trees per year in recent years.
- Continued investment in tree maintenance, including watering, formative pruning and risk management to protect existing assets.

Building knowledge and evidence

- Tree canopy mapping for Mount Barker township precinct
- Updated tree inventory in specialised software management tool

Integrating greening into broader Council work

- Application of water-sensitive and biodiversity-sensitive design principles in selected capital works and public realm projects.

Supporting community participation

- Delivery of the annual Sustainable Mount Barker native plant program, supporting residents to green private land.
- Partnerships with community groups, schools and volunteers to support planting, care and stewardship of local green spaces including planting around 10,000 local species annually (15% trees).



Objective

Establish high levels of canopy cover and biodiverse areas as part of our open space network and road reserves.

Why this matters

Greening in townships, including parks, gardens, commercial and residential areas, is essential but complex. Trees and vegetation cool townships, improve air quality, support biodiversity, and enhance community wellbeing. However, managing green spaces requires balancing recreation, infrastructure and biodiversity needs. A well connected and diverse green network strengthens community identity and provides beauty in private and public spaces that we value. As Mount Barker grows, expanding and maintaining green infrastructure will ensure our townships remain vibrant and sustainable. By integrating greening into our planning and fostering collaboration with residents, businesses, and landowners, we can create a region where people and nature thrive together.

Related priorities and integration

Township greening supports emissions reduction and climate resilience through cooling and nature-based solutions, while (depending on species selection and composition) also strengthening biodiversity outcomes through habitat connectivity and planting choices. Water management is essential for township greening, particularly where irrigation, WSUD, stormwater harvesting and water efficiency are relevant.

Key priorities

Grow the Mount Barker Parklands together

Work with the community and partnerships to plan and establish an expansive, connected green network that enhances cooling, biodiversity, recreation opportunities, and beauty in our region's natural landscapes.

Protect and connect

Improve preservation of our trees and other vegetation to keep our townships cool, green and wildlife friendly, particularly at masterplan stage of greenfield developments.

Accelerate council planting and tree management program

Accelerate street tree planting, improve ongoing maintenance and managing trees as assets.

Support private land greening

Support business and residents' involvement in greening their own land, including productive trees and gardens.

Actions

This section sets out the actions Council will deliver between 2026 and 2030.

Actions are organised into functional areas that reflect how Council operates, from strategy and decision-making, through to service delivery, partnerships and on-ground outcomes. Using a consistent functional structure across all action plans helps embed priorities into core business and supports coordinated implementation, monitoring and reporting. It also helps ensure responsibility, timing and budget allocations are aligned to the appropriate stage of work.

The actions listed are not intended to be exhaustive. They represent a prioritised set of actions where focused effort over the next four years will have the greatest impact in progressing Council's objectives and 'moving the needle' on outcomes, alongside the continued delivery of core services and existing programs.

Each action may contribute to multiple strategic priorities and may also support outcomes across other action plans, reflecting the interconnected nature of Council's work.

Governance, policy and processes

Establishing or updating the policies, frameworks and internal processes that guide Council decision-making and enable improved implementation.

Track, plan and manage

Building the evidence base, tools and systems needed to plan effectively, manage performance and support informed decisions over time.

Educate, inspire and involve

Supporting learning, engagement and participation to build capability, influence behaviour and enable action by Council and the community.

Protect and maintain

Managing risks, maintaining existing assets and services, and carrying out any relevant regulation roles.

Establish, expand or restore

Delivering new projects and on-ground actions that create or improve assets, services, systems or environments.

Partnerships and advocacy

Working with partners, stakeholders and other levels of government to align effort, leverage resources and influence outcomes beyond Council's direct control.

Township Greening Actions Table

ACTION	KPI	INDICATIVE RESOURCING*	TIMING				LEAD	PLAN LINKS			
			26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30		C	R	N	W
Governance, Policy and Processes											
G1. Township Planting Guidelines Develop guidelines to achieve equitable canopy, understorey planting, water-wise species, increased habitat and ecological function, safe streetscapes and plantings suited to each township’s character.	Guidelines developed	Additional staff time / Project \$11-\$50K	X	X			Operations	X	X	X	X
G2. Review Tree Management Policy Add commitment to corridor connections and protection of dead trees and strengthen alignment with greening, shade and biodiversity objectives.	Updated policy endorsed	Existing staff time	X				Operations	X		X	X
Track, Plan and Manage											
G3. Tree Asset Management Plan Develop AMP for Council managed trees. Maintain asset and inventory data, including mapped vacant tree planting spaces.	AMP created	Existing staff time / expert input \$11-\$50K			X	X	Assets	X		X	
G4. Set and Monitor Tree Cover Targets in Townships Conduct baseline canopy assessment for townships and set evidence based spatial canopy targets and interim milestones to guide investment. Undertake regular canopy mapping and reporting to track gains, losses, health and opportunities. Explore whether new estates are on track to meet long-term canopy targets.	Baseline completed, targets set, track level every 5 years or less	Existing staff time Project \$11-\$50K / Collaboration with Landscape Board	X				Information Services				
G5. Develop Mount Barker Parklands Masterplan Include township greening precinct plans with prioritised streets for infill planting and nature positive initiatives. Consider including key townships entry trees to set tone.	Masterplan completed	Project \$51 - \$100K		X	X		Strategic Planning	X		X	X

ACTION	KPI	INDICATIVE RESOURCING*	TIMING				LEAD	PLAN LINKS			
			26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30		C	R	N	W
Educate, Inspire and Involve											
G6. Annual Plant “Backyards for Wildlife” campaign Continue the annual Sustainable Mount Barker plant subsidy. Improve promotion and community engagement and consider expansion opportunities. Review program scope and demand in year 4.	4000 plants per year	Existing Operational	X	X	X	X	Operations	X		X	
G7. Promote Benefits of Greening Deliver annual communications program including social media, ‘how to’ workshops, stories, interpretive signage content for Trails Action Plan, and demonstration sites.	At least 24 engagements per year	Existing staff time	X	X	X	X	Operations	X		X	
G8. New Residents Information Kit Develop welcoming information kit and supporting resources on trees, plants, firewise and biodiversity friendly landscaping to new residents including nature strip guidelines.	Kit published. Track number of# downloads	Existing staff time plus project \$1-\$10K	X				Operations	X		X	
Protect and Maintain											
G9. Increase monitoring and follow up of greening conditions in new developments Improve proactive monitoring and follow-up of approved township greening requirements in new developments including inspections to support adherence to existing conditions, tree protection zones etc.	90% sites inspected are compliant	Additional staff time	X	X	X	X	City Development	X		X	
Establish, Expand or Restore											
G10. Accelerated Annual Street Tree Planting and Establishment Deliver expanded annual street tree planting with focus on low canopy areas with matching strengthened establishment program (watering and formative pruning) to improve survival, reduce long term maintenance costs and protect planting investment. Consider complementary understorey plantings to add diversity and additional habitat.	500/yr planted and over 90% survivorships of new trees in first 3 years	Existing staff time plus operational ~\$21K for 201 trees establishment + watering Plants + planting costs \$51 - \$100K	X	X	X	X	Operations	X		X	

ACTION	KPI	INDICATIVE RESOURCING*	TIMING				LEAD	PLAN LINKS			
			26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30		C	R	N	W
G11. Deliver Corridor Connection Projects Implement priority Mount Barker Parklands Masterplan projects along corridors, parks, reserves and streets with habitat and connection to nature including connections to private land.	Number of parkland initiatives TBA subject to plan development	Additional staff time plus new capital project / seek grants \$51 to over \$100K			X	X	Operations	X		X	X
G12. Trees in Challenging Spaces Integrate tree trenches, load-bearing vaults and road design modifications (e.g. road diets) as part of asset management works to expand planting space and improve tree longevity.	All relevant capital projects incorporate expanded tree space	Incorporate within capital project budgets	X	X	X	X	Assets	X			X
Partnerships and Advocacy											
G13. Support Community Projects Continue to partner with community nursery, schools, groups, and local businesses on community township greening projects.	At least 2 projects per year	Existing staff time	X	X	X	X	Operations	X			
G14. Partner on Research Continue to partner with research bodies on projects like tree species trials with TreeNet.	Research partnership outcomes reported	Existing staff time and project \$5-\$10K	X	X	X	X	Operations	X		X	
G15. Advocacy with State Government and Developers Continue to advocate for better greening outcomes on private land as part of Council's Advocacy Plan.	At least 1 submission per year	Existing staff time	X	X	X	X	Strategic Planning	X			X

*Resourcing is indicative only and subject to annual budget processes. Existing staff time = action can be delivered within existing roles and workloads | Additional staff time = action is not currently resourced but may be delivered through reprioritisation or existing workloads | FTE establishment = delivery of action is expected to require new staff capacity, subject to future Council consideration and approval.

Implementation

The Township Greening Action Plan 2026–2030 will be implemented through Council’s existing governance, planning and delivery processes. Actions will be led by nominated business units, with delivery supported through collaboration across Council where required.

Implementation will be staged over the four-year period, recognising that some actions focus on developing or updating policies, plans or tools, while others relate to delivery or on-ground outcomes. Where actions require additional resourcing, these will be considered through Council’s annual business planning and budget processes.

Council will actively seek to leverage external funding, partnerships and collaborative delivery opportunities to support implementation. This includes pursuing grants and joint initiatives with regional partners, State Government, research organisations and industry, particularly where shared challenges or economies of scale exist.

Delivery of this Plan will be coordinated alongside Council’s other Environment and Sustainability Strategy action plans to maximise alignment, manage dependencies and avoid duplication. Where appropriate, Council will adapt and build on existing tools, guidelines, policies and resources developed by Council or partner organisations, rather than duplicating effort. For example, shared templates, regional guidance or co-developed programs may be tailored to local needs.



Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Progress against actions will be monitored internally on a regular basis, using the success measures identified for each action.

Key greening indicators, including spatial data, planting records and asset management systems, will be tracked over time and reported through existing corporate reporting mechanisms. This includes public reporting where appropriate, such as inclusion in Council's Annual Report and other relevant publications.

Urban growth patterns, climate conditions, development pressures and planting success rates may change over time. Council will use monitoring data and implementation experience to refine greening priorities, targets and delivery approaches as required.

Contribute towards 2035 targets

The actions in this Plan also directly contribute to Council's longer-term climate targets to 2035 in the Environment Sustainability Strategy:

6. Increase tree canopy in all townships to support the State Government's target of 30% canopy cover by 2055.

(A tailored interim 2035 target will be developed once baseline canopy data for all townships is captured. Canopy change will then be tracked at regular intervals.)

7. Retain 95% of mature trees in masterplan developments. (This indicator will be measured from 2025 onwards.)



Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Adaptation	Actions that help people, infrastructure, services and ecosystems adjust to climate impacts that are already occurring or locked in, to reduce harm and take advantage of emerging opportunities as the climate changes.
Biodiversity / biodiverse	The variety of all plants, animals and microorganisms, their genes, and the ecosystems they live in.
Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design (BSUD)	An approach to planning, design and development that seeks to protect, enhance and connect habitats, support native species, and embed nature into streets, buildings and public spaces alongside other urban functions.
Canopy	The upper level of a tree or trees. In cities this is typically measured for trees tall enough to provide functional shade for people (3m+).
Climate change	Long-term changes in temperature, rainfall patterns and the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, driven primarily by greenhouse gas emissions from human activities.
Ecosystem	A community of living organisms interacting with each other in their habitat.
Emissions	The release of gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, into the atmosphere from activities like burning fossil fuels
Habitat	Food, water, shelter and space that supports plant or animal life
Infrastructure	Human-engineered structures like roads, buildings, footpaths and carparks.
Net zero emissions	A state where the amount of greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere is balanced by the amount removed or offset, resulting in no net increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases.
Resilient / resilience	Able to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks are experienced.
Resource recovery	The process of obtaining materials or energy from discarded materials.
Sustainable / sustainability	Responsibly managing our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This includes social, financial and environmental resources.
Township/Urban greening	All trees and plants on public and private land.
Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	Planning that manages the water cycle sustainably, promoting rainwater reuse, reducing runoff and incorporating green infrastructure.



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