Theme one:

Greening, trees and biodiversity

Background

Trees and biodiversity provide unique character to place and are highly valued features in the Marion council area. In addition to having value in its own right, there are many strong and well-documented links between high biodiversity and high community wellbeing.

Despite City of Marion being a highly urbanised metropolitan area, we still have remnant native vegetation and significant biodiversity. Healthy ecosystems and green spaces provide a range of services including reduced urban heat island effects, improved air and water quality, enhanced amenity, and improved wellbeing through a sense of calm, identity and connection to place.

There are many strong and well-documented links between high biodiversity and high community wellbeing.

Draft

Greening, trees and biodiversity

Key challenges include:

- **Tree canopy loss** across the city due to tree loss on private land associated with infill development.
- **Urban heat islands** forming due to infill development and climate change.
- **Lack of protection** for native vegetation in Metropolitan Adelaide.
- **Integrating** valuation, funding and management of natural assets (e.g. trees, wetlands, biodiversity etc.) into traditional asset management systems.
- **Restriction on the planting potential** of council land due to roadway and utility clearances.
- **Tree and other vegetation loss** due to warming and drying events.
- **Optimising infrastructure design** to enable greening, trees and biodiversity outcomes.

Our role

We play a key role in protecting, enhancing and restoring biodiversity, and creating cool, healthy and diverse natural environments for the benefit of both the community and local wildlife.

We deliver and support urban greening, tree management and biodiversity conservation through our own operations and in partnership with others. By promoting the planting and maintenance of trees, preserving natural habitats, and encouraging community involvement in environmental stewardship, we aim to build a greener, more resilient urban landscape that supports both ecological health and community wellbeing. Wherever possible, we optimise infrastructure design to work in harmony with existing trees and biodiversity areas and seek opportunities to enhance these natural features as part of our development and renewal projects.

Greening, trees and biodiversity hierarchy

The following hierarchy guides councils decisions around greening, trees and biodiversity:

1. Protect remnant biodiversity and existing trees on council land.
2. Enhance and restore existing natural areas on council land.
3. Create new opportunities for biodiversity, trees and natural spaces on council land.
4. Support and advocate for protection and enhancement of biodiversity, trees and green spaces on non-council land.
5. Offsetting of any unavoidable losses of biodiversity, trees or greenspaces to be retained within the council area.

Draft

Strategic alignment and targets

This theme aligns with the following priorities in our Strategic Plan:

L2.2 Maintain and deliver community spaces, streetscapes and facilities that are intergenerational, vibrant, multiuse, and welcoming.

S1.1 Mitigate urban heat by enhancing cooling and greening efforts throughout the city, and by seeking new opportunities to create additional open spaces.

S1.2 Manage tree planting and canopy development with an emphasis on enhancing character, ensuring diversity promoting safety and boosting climate resilience.

S1.3 Expand biodiversity and natural landscaping across the city, with a focus on the protection and restoration of remnant and threatened species and ecosystems.

S2.1 Create attractive, vibrant, useable open spaces.

S2.3 Explore partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to learn and share traditional land management practices.

Alignment with state and national targets

We aim to support these greening and biodiversity targets that have been set by the South Australian and the Australian Government, noting that we have only limited control over the outcomes.

30% tree canopy cover across Metropolitan Adelaide by 2055[1]

No new extinctions[2]



Draft

Greening, trees and biodiversity

Targets for council operations

These targets will measure our progress towards achieving improved greening, trees and biodiversity outcomes for our operations.

1.Ensure **90%** of plantable spaces along council-managed roads are filled with trees by **2030**

2. Achieve **30%** canopy cover over council-managed land by **2055**[7]

3. Plant **60,000** native plants by **2030** (baseline 2024/2025)[8]

4. Biodiversity condition at priority biodiversity sites is **maintained or improved**[9]

Stretch target for council operations

1. No loss of remnant vegetation on council-managed land.

Community and environmental indicators and goals

These indicators, industry trends and community aspirations are outside of council control, however they will be monitored to help inform our future programs and funding priorities. Each indicator is accompanied by a preferred trend direction and data sources. The trend direction is based on past community feedback or existing government directions.

- Increase protection laws for remnant vegetation, revegetation greater than 20 years and revegetation in priority areas.[3]
- Developments in the council area have a net positive biodiversity impact.[4]
- Improve the condition and extent of remnant native vegetation and biodiversity in the council area.[5]
- Increase tree canopy cover on private land within our city.[6]

Draft

Current activities

✓ Tree planting and maintenance
Annually, we plant over 3,500 trees, aiming to enhance urban greenery and environmental health. This work is guided by an industry-leading Trees Asset Management Plan 2024-2034. We are progressively increasing tree canopy on council-managed land.

✓ Interactive tree map
Residents can access an online map to view tree locations, species information, and future planting sites within the city.

✓ Biodiversity Plan 2024-2029
This plan guides the management, enhancement, and protection of natural areas and biodiversity over the next five years. We aim to improve connectivity of biodiversity through our major corridors including the coastline and gullies, Field River, Southern Hills Face and Sturt River - Warriparri.

✓ Supporting wildlife-friendly gardens and weed removal
Resources are offered to help residents create gardens that support native wildlife, including butterflies, birds, frogs, and lizards, alongside programs targeting the eradication of invasive plants like gazanias and fountain grass.

✓ Urban Tree Warriors and Adopt-a-Tree
Support is provided for residents to get involved with caring for newly planted street trees.

✓ Verge and significant tree incentives
Funding is available to support residents to plant and maintain their verges, as well as supporting private landowners to retain and maintain significant and regulated trees.



Draft

Greening, trees and biodiversity



✓ Support local conservation groups
Council staff support four Friends groups who volunteer thousands of hours each year to plant and maintain biodiversity in our reserves.

✓ Coastal biodiversity protection
Continuing to protect significant coastal heathland and grassland sites, educate our community and advocate for the protection of intertidal and subtidal biodiversity, rocky reefs and marine areas.

✓ Advocating for biodiversity and greening outcomes
Our advocacy efforts include improved biodiversity protection laws and biodiversity outcomes in State Government infrastructure and transport projects.

✓ Collaborating on regional conservation efforts
Working with the State Government and regional partners on conservation projects, including coastal conservation, Glenthorne National Park-Ityamaiitpinna Yarta and the Kauwi-marnirla Field River catchment.

✓ Promoting and celebrating local biodiversity and trees
Providing opportunities for the community to celebrate and appreciate local biodiversity and trees including educational tree tags and Tree of the Month.

✓ Promote greening in commercial precincts
Encourage the integration of greening and biodiversity in commercial business precincts including through the Greening of Edwardstown project.

✓ Biosecurity, nuisance and declared species
Working with regional partners on ecologically sensitive approaches to problem-causing species in the council area.

Draft

Priority G1

Expand and improve council's natural assets

Objectives

- **G1a** Protect, enhance and restore biodiversity with a focus on the critical protection of remnant vegetation.
- **G1b** Develop open spaces and streetscapes that protect and enhance tree canopy, promote natural landscaping and enable climate resilience.
- **G1c** Increase nature in council developments through biodiversity-sensitive urban design (BSUD).
- **G1d** Develop organisational maturity in natural asset management through improved data, planning and monitoring.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

G1.1 Sustainable streetscapes: During the revision of streetscape guidelines, include detail that supports developers to prioritise climate resilience and greening in public realm– particularly in verge spaces.

G1.2 Verge gardening demonstration sites: Promotion of verge gardening projects to showcase appropriate native species and designs.

G1.3 Alignment of footpath upgrades with verge gardening promotion: Look for opportunities to align the footpath capital works with promotion of the verge incentive program to support residents with dolomite removal required in preparation for verge gardens.

G1.4 Biodiversity mapping: Increase mapping and reporting on the condition and extent of biodiversity on council-managed land.

G1.5 Strengthening tree management practices: Ensure all council-managed trees are mapped in the Forestree management system and engage with national and international networks to monitor leading practices in tree management.

G1.6 Support habitat creation in our open spaces: Review and where appropriate expand the program for constructed tree hollows.

G1.7 Biodiversity-sensitive urban design (BSUD): Investigate opportunities for BSUD demonstration projects to enhance urban biodiversity.

G1.8 Natural asset management: Work with Resilient South councils and the Institute of Public Works and Engineering Australia (IPWEA) to investigate approaches to incorporate natural assets into conventional asset management planning systems including consideration of green infrastructure / natural asset in the next round of asset management planning.

Draft

Priority G2

Advocate for trees, greening and biodiversity in the community



Objectives

- **G2a** Encourage residents to protect, enhance and restore tree canopy and biodiversity on private land.
- **G2b** Advocate for State Government policies that promote increased tree canopy and protection of trees.
- **G2c** Encourage greening and biodiversity-sensitive design in residential and commercial developments.
- **G2d** Advocate for improved biodiversity protection laws.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

G2.1 Greening in vulnerable communities: Explore new partnerships and engagement opportunities to enhance greening in low socio-economic areas.

G2.2 Increased promotion of greening in developments: Further promotion of resources and educational materials that assist in greening in residential developments.

G2.3 Education about tree selection and care: Develop new resources to help educate residents about tree species selection, planting and caring for trees on their land.

G2.4 Biodiversity Act: Seek opportunities for improved protection of urban biodiversity through the new *Biodiversity Act 2025*.

G2.5 Big trees: Advocate for the improved protection and management of large trees now and into the future – particularly river red gum communities.

Draft

Priority G3

Enhance regional biodiversity and greening

Objectives

- **G3a** Collaborate with partners to protect, enhance and restore regional biodiversity corridors along Sturt River - Warriparri, Field River, coastline and the southern hills face.
- **G3b** Collaborate with partners to enhance greening of regional active transport connections and other transit routes.
- **G3c** Collaborate with partners to support regional monitoring of tree canopy, green cover and urban heat.
- **G3d** Collaborate with partners to develop regionally consistent biodiversity monitoring and reporting protocols.
- **G3e** Collaborate with Kaurna to improve cultural connections through nature.
- **G3f** Support research and development to enhance and future-proof our natural environment.
- **G3g** Advocate for the Local Government Association (LGA) to improve council access to local markets for nature repair and carbon sequestration.

New activities

The following new activities will be undertaken over the course of this plan in addition to our current activities:

G3.1 Urban heat and tree canopy mapping: Work with State and local government partners to update mapping of tree canopy cover and urban heat in 2026 and 2030.

G3.2 Climate-resilient trees: Collaborate with in-kind support for research programs such as Future Trees (University of Adelaide) to understand threats to our trees and encourage diversity and climate resilience.

G3.3 Tree data standards: Work with Resilient South councils to scope the development of consistent tree data standards that promote consistent monitoring and reporting.

G3.4 Biodiversity metrics: Work with Resilient South councils to scope the development of consistent biodiversity monitoring and reporting.

G3.5 Sturt River - Warriparri: Look for new opportunities to increase ecological and cultural outcomes along Sturt River – Warriparri.

G3.6 Torrens to Darlington (T2D) South Road Upgrade: Collaborate with partners to advocate for improve greening outcomes through the State Government T2D initiative.

Draft