Alexandrina Council

Draft Greening our Townships Strategy 2026-2036



Alexandrina Council and its communities acknowledge the Ngarrindjeri, Peramangk, and Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of our Council District.



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Appendix A: Greening Opportunities in Alexandrina Townships

Message from the Mayor and CEO

Our trees and green spaces play a significant role in our region. They make our places and spaces more attractive and support our healthy lifestyles. As we move towards a warmer and more densely populated future, the role they play in cooling and shading our towns, sequestering carbon, and supporting regional biodiversity will be more important than ever.

This Greening our Townships Strategy is the start of our greening journey as we seek to respond to a changing climate and halt the loss of biodiversity.

It has been prepared with a vision for the future and a strategic focus for each township and outlines our need for, and approach to, sustaining and enhancing the benefits of urban greening across our townships.

While we acknowledge all greening is important, our focus is initially on townships given the multitude of benefits provided by trees to human health and wellbeing, biodiversity, environments, and local economies. The progressive expansion of greening our entire region is our ultimate goal.

Alexandrina's vision is to have townships that are vibrant, walkable communities, characterised by tree-lined streets and shady, green parks and reserves that enhance liveability, promote wellbeing, and foster biodiversity.

Greening our townships is a shared community effort. With 78% of Alexandrina's land in private ownership, the actions our community, landholders and businesses take every day play a vital role in creating greener, cooler places for everyone to enjoy.

Alexandrina Council recognises and values the huge role the community, First Nations Peoples, schools, businesses and developers play in greening our region by supporting projects and activities that enable our community to thrive.

Council sought expert advice from Edge Impact and Active Green to develop this document in close collaboration with staff and Council's Climate Emergency and Environment Advisory Committee.

Together we can make our townships 'Liveable. Green. Connected.' places for all to enjoy.

Kind regards





Andrew MacDonald
Chief Executive Officer

Mayor
Keith Parkes

Context



Figure 1 - Map of Alexandrina Council - total land area 1,827 km²

Context



In December 2019, Council declared a climate emergency, recognising the risk within the region from an increasingly drier and warmer climate, and providing a clear mandate to place climate change mitigation and adaptation at the forefront of all local action. Trees and plants play a significant role in our region, helping to cool our landscapes and mitigate climate change impacts, enhancing the aesthetic appeal of our surroundings, and contributing to our overall wellbeing. In the face of a progressively warmer climate and increasing urban density, their significance becomes even more evident.

Our trees and green spaces provide vital cooling and shading to our towns, offer a sense of place for our communities, actively sequester carbon, and foster regional biodiversity. As we navigate towards the future, their role will only grow in importance, making our commitment to their preservation and expansion even more critical.

As such, our urban trees and vegetation are not just a feature of our region; they are integral to the liveability and resilience of Alexandrina's major townships. Replenishing and sustaining the benefits of urban tree canopy cover and creating biodiverse green spaces is therefore central to our Greening our Townships Strategy.

Our objective is to systematically expand our network of green assets, fostering the growth of trees with optimal health and form throughout our townships. This Strategy aims to prioritise greening actions to better protect existing trees, address canopy deficiencies by planting in areas where trees and biodiverse vegetation are most essential, and to guide our strategic direction to implement realistic and appropriately resourced actions.

Successfully protecting, growing, and managing our urban tree canopy and greening initiatives will require support from many members of the community including First Nations Peoples, the public sector, developers, businesses, Council and the State Government (refer Page 7, Figure 1). This Strategy sets out recommendations for how township greening can be delivered through this partnership.

Strategic context

Greening our townships is consistently reported to be of the highest importance to our community, and is referenced in many community led Council Plans.

In 2020, we worked with our community to shape A2040, Alexandrina's 20 year Strategic Community Vision. Through this process, our community shared a clear aspiration for the region to thrive as a 'Liveable. Green. Connected.' place for everyone to enjoy.

- **Alexandrina's Community Strategic Plan (A2040)[2]**
  - In A2040, our community strategy and key guiding document for 2023-2040, we've committed to shaping a 'Liveable. Green. Connected.', Alexandrina and declared that it's our time to thrive. To deliver this commitment, it's essential that we establish a network of healthy and resilient urban trees distributed equitably within each of our townships. The vitality of our communities is intricately linked with the flourishing health of our trees and environment.
  - Township greening emerged as a focal point during Alexandrina's A2040 Village Conversations, highlighting the significance of tree canopy cover not only for environmental wellbeing but also for community health.
  - The 2024 review of the 2020 Community Strategic Plan highlighted that the community's vision to be 'Liveable. Green. Connected.' remained strong and relevant. One of the five key themes identified to bring the A2040 vision to life is 'Climate and environmental stewardship' where 'Alexandrina is a climate resilient community that values our natural assets'.
- **A2040 Strategic Delivery Plan 2025- 2035[3]**
  - One of the five key themes identified to bring the A2040 vision to life is 'Climate and environmental stewardship' where: 'Alexandrina is a climate resilient community that values our natural assets'. One of the three identified outcomes is 'Thriving ecosystems & biodiversity with Strategy 3.4 being to: Protect and enhance natural areas and biodiversity through integrated approaches, including land use planning, sustainable community land management, community stewardship, and facilitated habitat restoration' and the relevant success indicators are:
    - 'increased tree canopy coverage.
    - Progressing toward Council's 2040 Carbon Neutral goal.
- **Alexandrina's Environmental Action Plan 2030[4]**
  - As a community, we collectively share the responsibility of safeguarding our natural environment. Our Environmental Action Plan 2030 underscores our dedication and outlines the steps we'll take to fulfill our role as responsible stewards of the land and waters of Alexandrina.
  - This Plan provides a comprehensive overview of the context, opportunities, and challenges involved in implementing necessary changes to protect our ecosystems and improve environmental management.
- **Alexandrina's Climate Emergency Action Plan[5]**
  - Following this declaration, Council committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2040 and developed our Climate Emergency Action Plan, which identifies how together, as Council and community, we can respond to climate change and the carbon neutral target, and how we can elevate our mitigation and adaptation ambition.
  - Increased urban greening, including through tree planting and retention on public and private land, is identified as a key mechanism for helping to achieve Council's carbon neutral targets and better adapt to climate change impacts.

Benefits of urban trees and greening

Planting trees represents an investment in our future, with urban trees providing a large range of benefits, which can broadly be divided into three main service areas as follows:

Social benefits

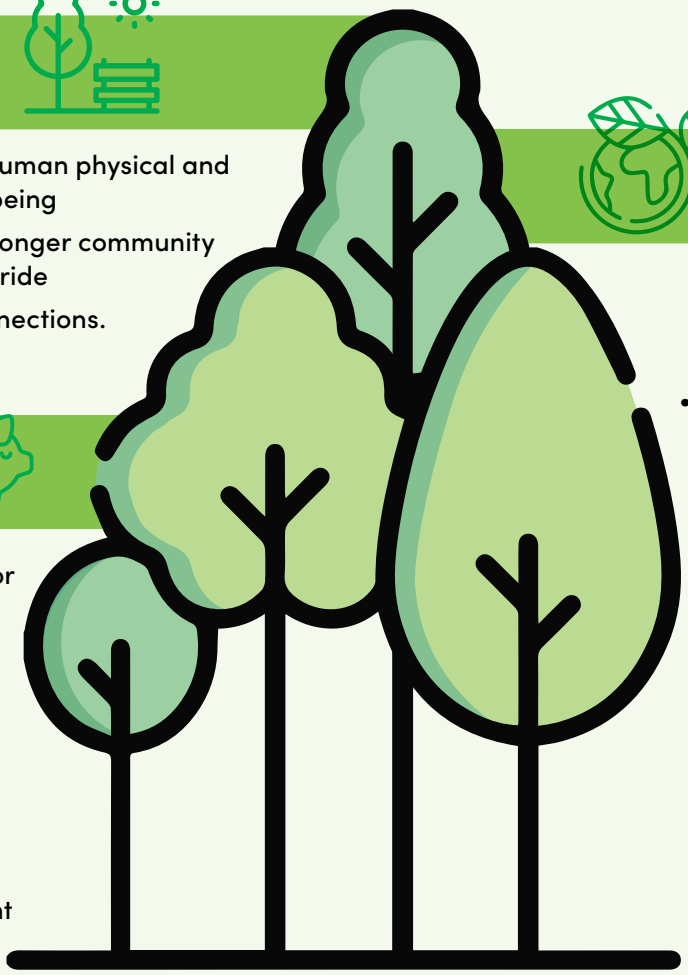
- Enhancing human physical and mental wellbeing
- Fostering stronger community bonds and pride
- Cultural connections.

Environmental benefits

- Supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts
- Enhanced biodiversity, habitats and landscape connectivity
- Reduced urban heat
- Improved protection from wind, storms, and fire events (dependent on species mix and planting design).

Economic benefits

- Decreasing expenses for energy, stormwater management, and erosion control
- Elevating property values by as much as 7-20%
- Increased consumer spending
- Generating employment opportunities.



Social benefits

- **Enhancing human physical and mental wellbeing, such as:**
  - Decreasing stress, depression, and anxiety
  - Improving air quality
  - Encourages physical activity in cool shaded, attractive areas
  - Decreased urban heat through shading and evapotranspiration
  - Contributing to food security and nutrition.
- **Fostering stronger community bonds and pride**
  - Creating a 'sense of place' and provide landscape character to an area
  - Encourages community connections, by making outdoor activities more appealing through providing cool, shaded spaces where people feel comfortable to meet and play.
- **Cultural connections**
  - Encourages an inclusive place that has been integral to the lives of the Ngarrindjeri, Peramangk and Kaurna First Nations for millennia
  - Developing closer relationships with First Nations and their deep connection to nature
  - Many tree species hold sacred significance for First nations People.

Economic benefits

- **Decreasing expenses for energy, stormwater management, and erosion control**
  - Provide shade to keep homes cooler, reducing the need for energy intensive air conditioners
  - Reduce stormwater flows, filtering runoff entering waterways
  - Root system acts to bind any loose soil and increases water filtration and reducing runoff.
- **Elevating property values by as much as 7-20%**
  - Greener, leafier suburbs demand higher land values
  - Tree-lined streets enhance land value.
- **Increased consumer spending**
  - Retail precincts with neighbouring trees and tree-shade show higher rates of consumer spending in hot temperatures.
- **Generating employment opportunities**
  - Increased consumer spending can increase need for additional job opportunities.

Environmental benefits

- **Supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, including through:**
  - Increased carbon storage and sequestration
  - Improved stormwater management and flood mitigation
  - Reduced air, noise, and pollution.
- **Enhanced biodiversity, habitats and landscape connectivity**
- **Reduced urban heat**
- **Improved protection from wind, storms, and fire events (dependent on species mix and planting design)**

Our shared responsibility

Our vision: Our townships are vibrant, walkable communities, characterised by tree lined streets and shady, green parks and reserves that enhance liveability, promote wellbeing, and foster biodiversity.



Our shared targets

Through this Strategy, and as a community, we aim to achieve the following:

Our community will...

- **Value and champion the many benefits that trees and green spaces provide for our environment, health, and wellbeing**
- **Actively contribute to our shared vision by greening homes and gardens**
- **Contribute to the greening of township parks and reserves**
- **Work together to help grow and care for greener, cooler townships for current and future generations.**

Council will...

- **Lead street tree plantings**
- **Grow richer, more diverse plantings across Council reserves by working alongside our community, volunteers, and partners**
- **Walk alongside our community on our shared greening journey, providing support, resources, and opportunities to get involved**
- **Build healthier, more resilient trees on Council land for the benefit of current and future generations**
- **Increase tree planting to achieve a 25% canopy cover on Council managed land by 2055 with interim milestones to track progress**
- **Seek grant funding to complement Council investment to reach our targets.**

Together we will...

- **Create cooler, greener, and more liveable neighbourhoods to benefit our community, nature, and future generations**
- **Build a strong culture of community stewardship by increasing participation in tree planting, watering, monitoring, and education programs**
- **Increase the number and diversity of species planted annually across the townships, with a shared goal of at least 80% survival after 5 years through joint care, watering, and stewardship**
- **Protect and retain existing mature, habitat, and culturally significant trees on public and private land, recognising that retention delivers faster canopy, cooling, and biodiversity benefits than new planting**
- **Aim to increase overall township tree canopy cover to 18.6% by 2055 across private and public land, with interim milestones to track progress.**

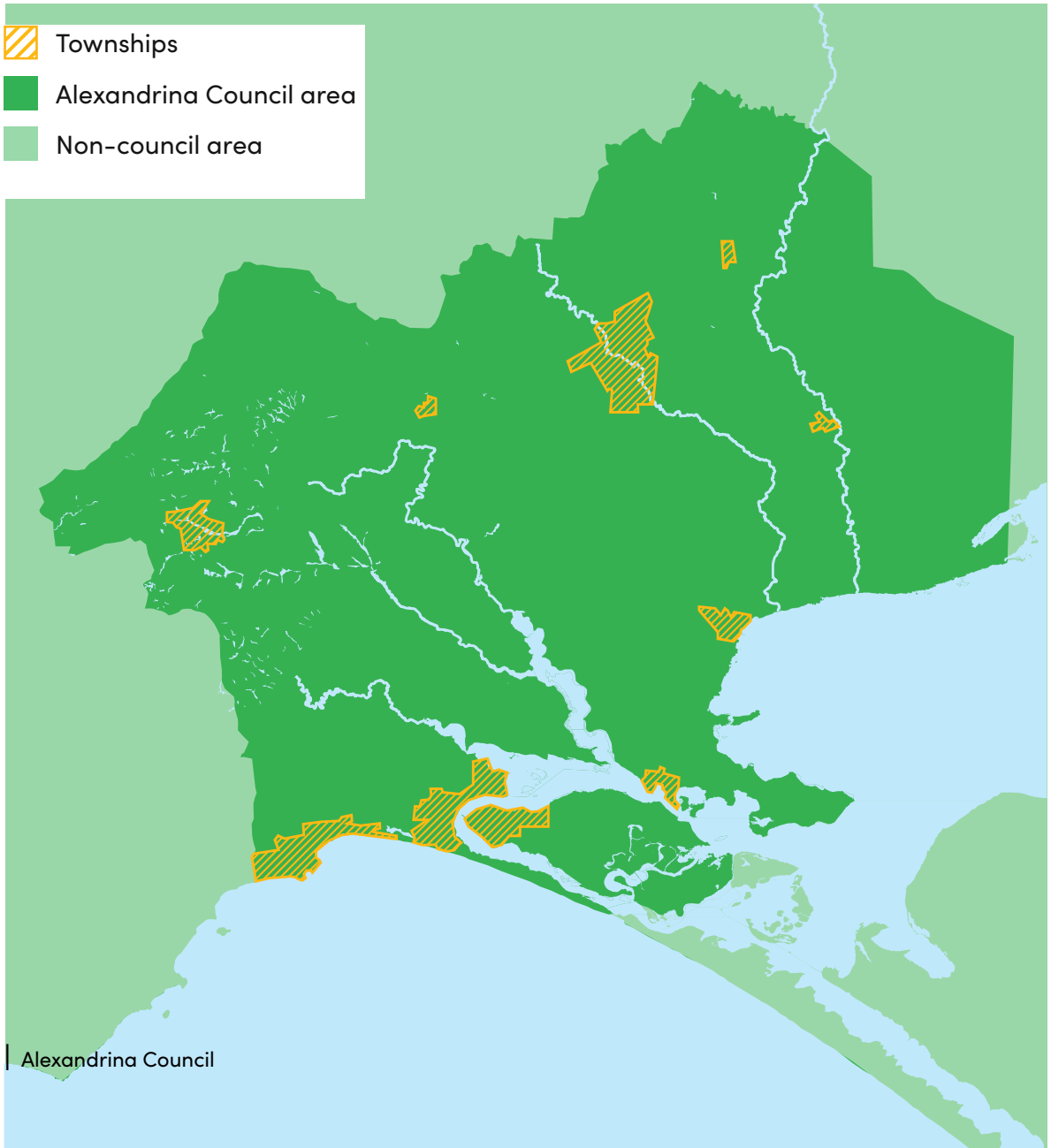
Scope

This Strategy sets the direction for Council, the community, landowners, and developers to protect what we have and to increase tree and vegetation cover across our townships.

It specifically focusses on our townships – our built, urban centres because of the benefits of greening where people live work and play.

Conservation, management and revegetation outside of our townships is outlined in Alexandrina's Environmental Action Plan 2030.

Area within scope of Strategy



Where have we come from?



Historical urban landscape

Prior to the impacts of European settlement in 1836, the Alexandrina Council area was covered by a continuous mosaic of vegetation that enabled native fauna to move freely across the landscape (along green corridors) and which provided essential resources for First Nations Peoples.

Vegetation communities were diverse (refer Page 15 - Figure 2) and included: the shrubby dunes and low grassy woodlands of the coastal strip; the reed beds and grasslands adjacent to the freshwater lower lakes and creeks; inland swamps and creeks; the mallee communities of the plains surrounding Lake Alexandrina; the widespread woodland communities of the foothills; and some denser stringybark forests on the higher ridges to the north of Ashbourne and Mount Compass. The local landscape was an integral part in the lives of the Ngarrindjeri, Peramangk and Kaurna First Nations people who have been stewards of the land and waters for millennia.

European settlement was initially driven by agriculture and grazing. As such, since settlement began, vegetation within our Council area has been subject to broad-scale clearing and disturbance for agricultural purposes, as well as urban and coastal development.

During the early stages of settlement, key townships such as Goolwa, Strathalbyn, and Mount Compass emerged as vital hubs for trade and commerce due to their strategic locations along major transport routes, including the Murray River and various roads connecting the region to Adelaide and other parts of South Australia. Before the spread of railways to inland Australia, Goolwa, situated near the mouth of the Murray River, played a significant role as a port town during the riverboat trade era, facilitating the transportation of goods and passengers between inland areas and the coast. Strathalbyn became a prominent agricultural centre, known for its fertile lands and thriving farming community, and developed as a service centre for the surrounding rural areas. Mount Compass, located in the north western part of the Council area, also developed as an agricultural township, with dairy farming and crop cultivation being primary economic activities.

The development and expansion though of these main townships, and others that emerged within the region, often involved extensive land clearing of native vegetation and forests, altering the landscape significantly. While early settlers cleared land for farming and infrastructure, they also recognised the value of native trees and vegetation for various purposes such as timber, fuel, and fodder. Native species were selectively harvested, and some efforts were made to preserve pockets of vegetation for their practical benefits. With the rise of industrialisation and urbanisation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the demand for land and resources intensified. This period saw further clearing of vegetation for urban development, expansion of transport networks, and establishment of industrial sites, leading to significant environmental changes.

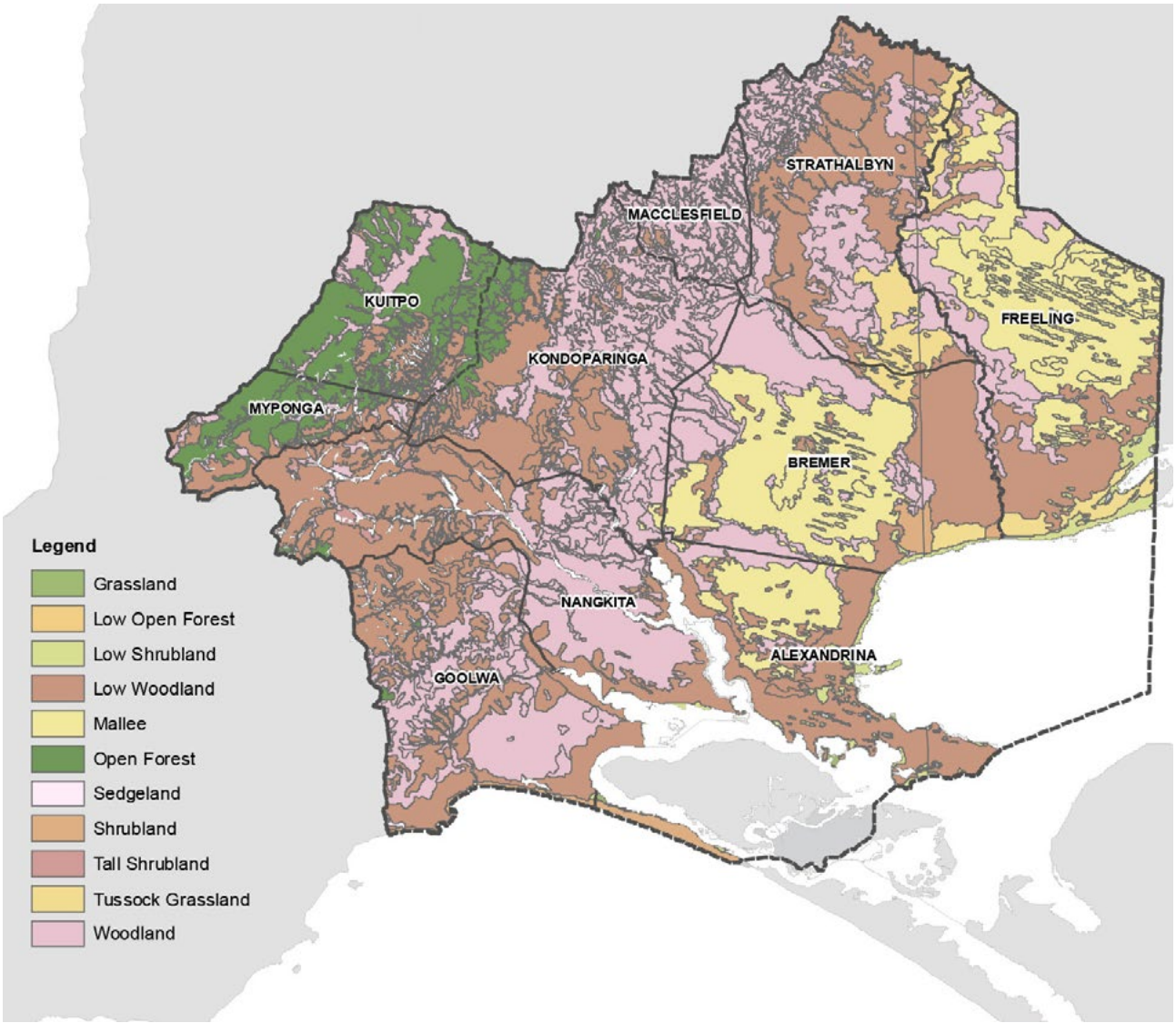


Figure 2. Pre-European Vegetation across our region. Source: Department for Environment and Water Digital Data (2014). Data not available for Hindmarsh Island.

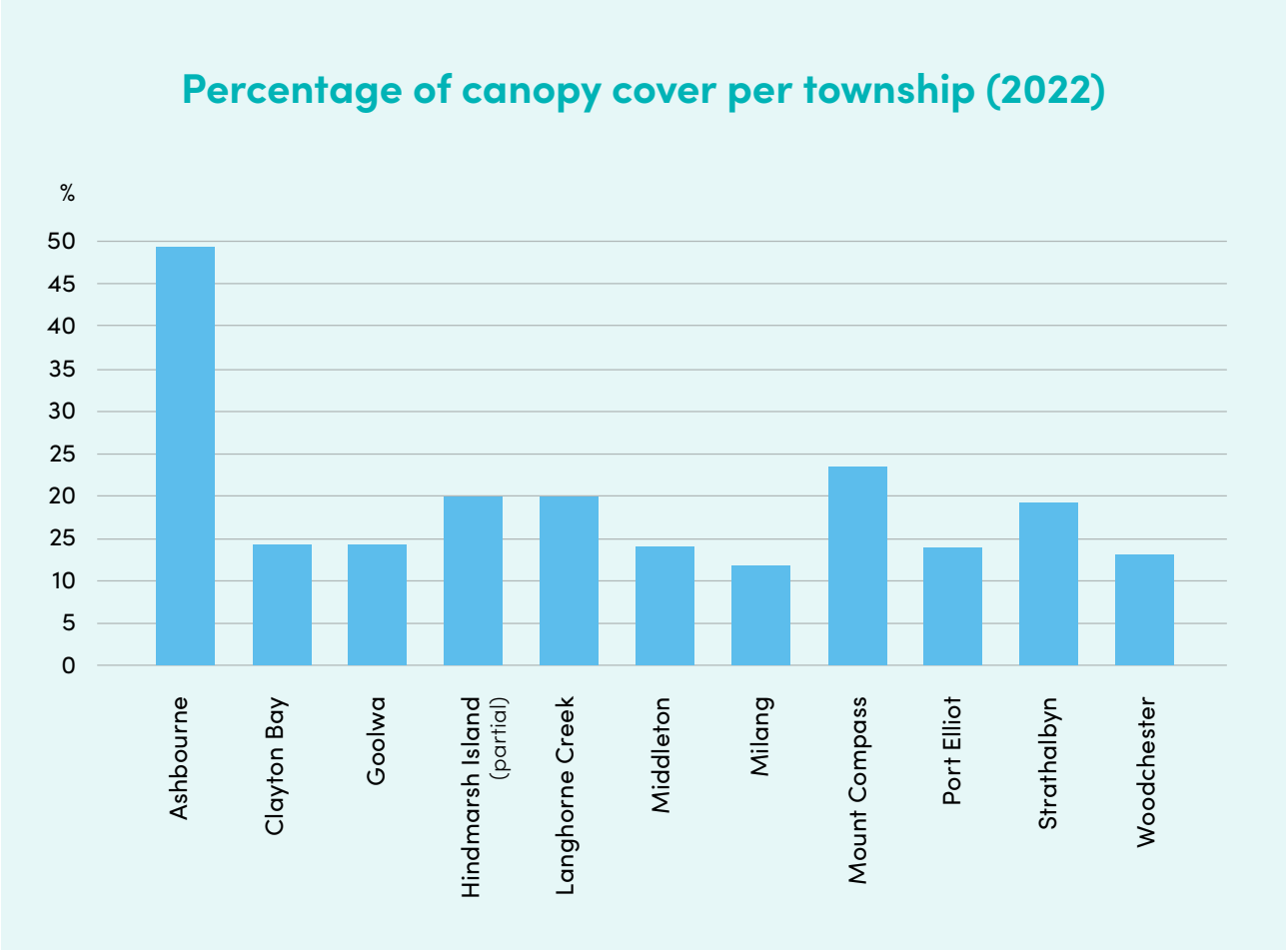
Where are we now?



Current urban canopy cover

In 2022, Council commissioned a study to capture and assess the baseline tree canopy cover within each of our 11 main townships.

This 'Tree Canopy Benchmarking Study'[6] (Benchmarking Study), established the current canopy cover baseline for our townships, including identifying locations where tree canopy cover is lacking. It showed that the average current urban tree canopy cover across all townships was 17.6%, which is substantially lower than the average of 23.4% across Adelaide's metropolitan councils. However, the percentage cover between each township varied significantly, from 11.7% in Milang to 49.3% in Ashbourne (see graph below).



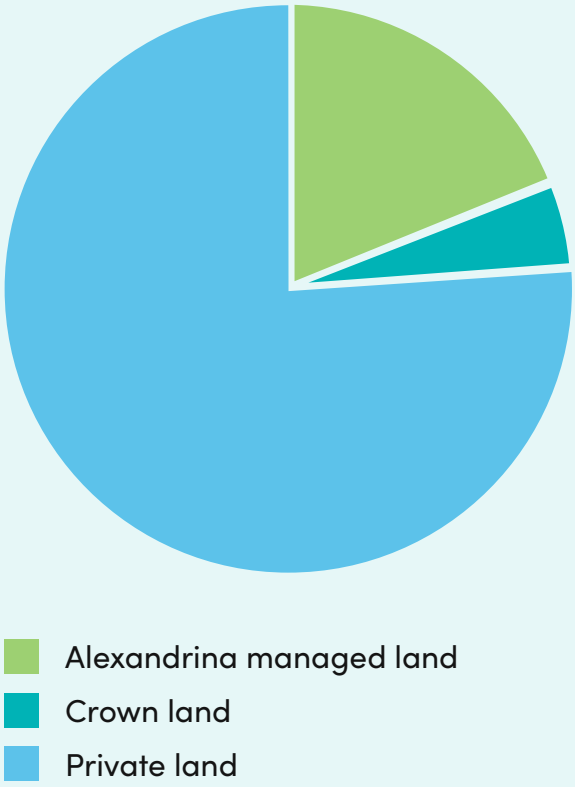


The Benchmarking Study also investigated canopy cover in relation to land tenure within each township. Private land ownership dominates the region, covering 78% of the total study area and supporting 76.4% of the total urban tree canopy cover. Comparatively, Council owned land comprises 21% of the study area and supports 19% of total urban canopy cover. The remaining 1% of land area and 4.6% of urban canopy cover is on Crown owned and managed land (see graph to right).

To offset a 1% loss of canopy cover on private land, an increase of 3.3% of canopy cover on Council land would be required.

This highlights the critical role that the community plays in aspirations to protect and grow Alexandrina's urban tree canopy.

Tree canopy cover across 11 townships between public land (Alexandrina and Crown) and private land (2022)



Current urban heat patterns

The 'Tree Canopy Benchmarking Study'[6] also included thermal imaging. Findings from this analysis mirrored those of other thermal studies within the State[7,8], showing that the hottest areas generally occurred in areas with low or no canopy cover, and/or expanses of dry vegetation.

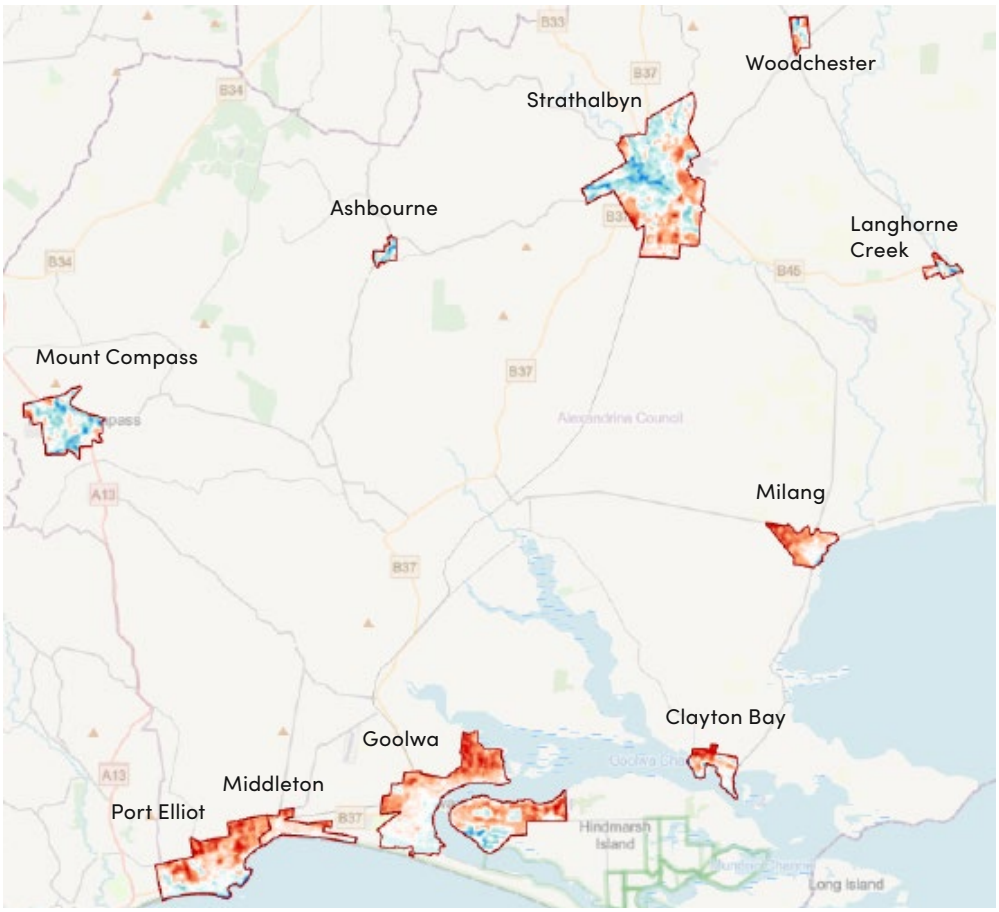
Whereas the coolest areas coincided with increased canopy cover and well watered vegetation (see map below). Outputs from this report include the current canopy cover proportions for each of our townships and note the increasing temperatures likely to be experienced due to climate change-induced temperature increases coupled with the urban heat island effect.

This demonstrates the importance of trees and irrigated vegetation in mitigating these impacts.

The data from this project serves as a vital tool in guiding our decision-making processes regarding urban greening priorities, directing our focus toward areas most in need of greening initiatives

Alexandrina Council urban heat data

- +/- 4°C
- 4 to 10°C warmer
- 10 to 14°C warmer
- 14 to 19°C warmer
- >19°C warmer



Current township tree planting and management

Council currently plants an average of 300 trees per annum, varying each year in line with budget allocation. Trees are planted within our township urban parks and reserves, on streets and other public spaces.

Managing and maintaining our urban tree canopy and green spaces occur in accordance with, and subject to, adoption of Council's Annual Business Plan and Budget.

Tree management within Alexandrina is undertaken in accordance with Council's Tree Management Policy and Procedures.

Council partners with the community on a range of initiatives to help increase greening across our townships:

We also acknowledge the significant work undertaken by community groups across Alexandrina to increase greening within and outside our townships.

Private land incentives:

- Supporting the community through subsidised local native plants for their backyards
- Actively restoring Council land which buffers or connects remnant vegetation on private land
- Promoting and supporting programs delivered by community organisations and other levels of government
- Educating and providing information to help guide private investment, such as strategic revegetation priorities and species lists
- Backyards for Bushyards initiative, providing plant packs to households.

Public land activities:

- Supporting the community through an annual Environmental Community Grants Program
- Initiate community planting days on township reserves
- Greening on public land through guidance and encouragement of Council volunteers and community groups.



Where do we want to be?



Our vision

In A2040 we heard that our community envisages a walkable, liveable, vibrant, and accessible environment and community.

Recognising this, this draft Strategy sets out our vision for protecting, managing, and increasing Alexandrina's urban tree canopy and greening. We will achieve this vision by increasing resources with a dedicated focus on planting more trees and vegetation, whilst maintaining, protecting, and retaining our existing tree canopy.

Our townships are vibrant, walkable communities, characterised by tree-lined streets and shady, green parks and reserves that enhance liveability, promote wellbeing, and foster biodiversity.

Together, our green townships create inviting spaces for residents and visitors to gather, play, and connect with nature.



What canopy target should Alexandrina aim for?

Our A2040 identifies increased tree canopy cover as a success indicator, but what rate of increase?

The Greater Adelaide Regional Plan[9] (GARP) outlines the long term growth of metropolitan Adelaide and its surrounding peri urban areas for the next 30 years. Alexandrina Council falls entirely within the Greater Adelaide (GA) regional area.

The GARP includes a range of targets including Target 4, which aims for a 30% tree canopy cover for metropolitan Adelaide by 2055, requiring a 2% tree canopy growth every five years.

While this target has not been assigned to the peri-urban Councils in the greater Adelaide region, it provides a relevant benchmark and has informed the development of this strategy by considering how a similar level of cover could be achieved locally.

Of most relevance to Alexandrina's future growth areas is the GARP target for new master planned greenfield development and strategic infill sites to achieve a 30% tree canopy cover once landscaping has matured. This target reinforces the importance of integrating greening outcomes into the planning and design of new urban areas from the outset.

While the GARP's 30% canopy cover target can be applied to new development areas, Council recognised the need for a locally appropriate canopy target for Alexandrina's existing townships.

Council commissioned a study to determine evidence based targets for each township. The 'Setting Canopy Targets, Greenprint for success' study[10], ('Greenprint for Success') recognises there is no one size fits all when identifying targets for Alexandrina's 11 townships and settlements, as each has different characteristics, land use patterns and existing levels of canopy cover. The study modelled a number of scenarios to identify evidence based canopy targets that are both ambitious and achievable. It also recommends annual planting programs for each township to improve canopy cover and provide more equitable access to trees and green spaces across Alexandrina. Council's Climate Emergency and Environment Committee helped to determine the right approach.

Addressing the challenges of urban greening, expanding canopy cover and protecting biodiversity requires a coordinated, place based and future focused approach.

Based on the modelling, Scenario 1 is recommended as the minimum target (refer to Table 1) for both individual townships and Alexandrina as a whole. This scenario is based on **doubling Council's current planting program** to approximately 600 trees per year through to 2055.

Under Scenario 1, the minimum 2055 canopy cover targets are:

18.6% total canopy cover across all township land tenures, an increase from the current 17.6%.

25% canopy cover on Council controlled land across all townships, an increase from the current 19.0%.

Refer Page 24, **Table 1**



Table 1: Presentation of current township canopy cover and expected increase of canopy cover by 2055, **Scenario 1**

Township (Scenario 1)	2025[1] Total Canopy Cover	2055 Total Canopy Cover	2025[1] Council Canopy Cover	2055 Council Canopy Cover	Trees per year[4]
Across all townships	17.6%	**18.6%**	19.0%	**24.9%** (rounded to 25% for the purpose of this document)	591 (rounded to **600** for the purpose of this document)
Ashbourne	49.3%	**49.3%**	70.2%	**70.2%**	0
Clayton Bay	14.3%	**173%**	10.8%	**22.8%**	100
Goolwa	14.3%	**15.7%**	16.0%	**21.4%**	200
Hindmarsh Island	19.9%	**20.0%**	11.7%	**12.9%**	20
Langhorne Creek	19.9%	**20.8%**	26.5%	**31.8%**	10
Middleton	14.1%	**16.2%**	11.6%	**17.3%**	65
Milang	11.7%	**14.1%**	20.2%	**28.5%**	75
Mount Compass	23.4%	**23.5%**	25.9%	**26.5%**	6
Port Elliot	13.9%	**14.3%**	16.4%	**18.0%**	60
Strathalbyn	19.4%	**19.6%**	26.6%	**28.0%**	50
Woodchester	13.1%	**13.6%**	11.2%	**19.3%**	5

Total canopy cover increases by 1%, from 17.6% to 18.6%, and on Council land canopy cover increases by 5.9%, from 19% to 25% by 2055 with Council's investment prioritising street tree plantings.

The 2025 township canopy cover extent is based on Alexandrina's 2022 Tree Canopy Report

1. Total Canopy Cover = Canopy cover percentage of townships by 2055 across all tenures (Council, Crown, and private)
2. Council Canopy Cover = Canopy cover percentage of townships by 2055 on Council land
3. Trees per year = Trees to be planted annually up to 2055.

Source: Setting Canopy Targets – A Greenprint for Success

While Scenario 1 represents the lowest canopy increase of the 79 scenarios modelled, it is considered the most achievable under current funding conditions. Greater canopy outcomes could be realised through increased planting on private land, accelerated planting in the early years, or additional investment. However, these options would require substantially higher upfront funding at a time of significant budget constraints.

Prioritising Alexandrina's most vulnerable areas

A central focus of this draft Strategy is ensuring our efforts are directed to where they are needed most.

This draft Strategy recognises that we can't do it all at once and so we need to prioritise. The Strategy provides a pathway for Council and the community to take positive actions to address inequities in canopy cover and the quality of township greening.

Priority should be given to areas with:

- lower existing tree canopy
- social vulnerability and inequality
- greater exposure to urban heat
- increased vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Finding suitable locations that meet all of these criteria can be challenging. Many parks and reserves serve multiple functions, and planting, particularly along foreshore areas, can be constrained by competing uses and community expectations around views and open space.

Open, constructive conversations with the community will be essential to balance these competing priorities and create green, shady spaces that everyone can enjoy.

Some areas within townships are not in proximity of parks and reserves. In order to ensure that households where this is the case have access to shade, Council will focus its investment in street tree planting programs. Street tree planting programs will be prioritised in order of township with lowest canopy cover first and then streets identified as being the hottest in the most disadvantaged areas within those townships, using the maps in Appendix A. Noting that a street tree planting priority map has already been prepared for the township of Milang (refer Appendix A), being the lowest canopy cover township.

The Greenprint for Success study identified priority parks with social value by targeting areas of high public use and exposure, lower canopy cover, as well as those with social vulnerability, such as schools. The priority locations are identified in Appendix A.

Council will actively investigate grant funding opportunities and will partner with community groups to deliver canopy and biodiversity outcomes in parks and reserves.

Responding to our key challenges



Responding to our key challenges

The benefits of trees and green spaces are well documented, so it might seem simple – Council should just plant more trees and plants! But there are lots of challenges to achieving our target of 25% canopy cover on Council managed land and 18.6% canopy cover across all township land.

The following pages identify the actions that we can undertake to respond to the challenges and achieve these targets.

Noting that some of the actions identified in the following Strategic Action Tables are relevant to more than one challenge but are not repeated.



Strengthening community involvement

While we know that many in our community want to see more township greening, there are also members of the community who hold concerns about the impacts that trees can have. These concerns include: falling branches, root intrusion into drains, disputes with neighbours, allergies to pollen, leaf litter, obstruction of views, and potential bushfire risks.

These perceptions often result in strong opposition to Council's street and reserve planting campaigns including the illegal removal of trees.

But there are things that we can do to improve these perceptions including education regarding the benefits of trees and township greening and importantly partnering with community and community groups to both help increase the level of understanding of the values of greening and to help with the practical side of growing and planting the right types of trees and vegetation.

We are fortunate to have many dedicated community groups already leading greening activities independently of Council. Council's Climate Emergency and Environment Advisory Committee will also play an important role as respected community champions, helping to support and advocate for the Greening our Townships Strategy 2026–2036 and its actions.



Alexandrina Council

Strengthening community involvement:		
Strategic Action	**Strategic Alignment: A2040[+] or EAP[++]**	**Timing/ Priority[+++]**
Council Led Actions		
Deliver education activities that build understanding of township greening in priority parks.	A2040 3.1.13	2026 - 2035
Develop a **communications plan to promote tree benefits**, address barriers and recognise community champions.	A2040 3.1.13	2026 - 2035
Create **incentives for private land planting** to increase township greening and canopy cover.	A2040 4.1.1	2026 - 2035
Community Led and Partnership Actions		
Lean on community groups to assist in increasing our canopy cover by facilitating **community led plantings** in parks and reserves using Appendix A to prioritise.		
Engage First Nations Peoples and Rangers to inform planting, green space design and conservation.	EAP 1.1; 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 3.1	Ongoing
Collaborate with community groups to develop and promote **verge planting guidelines and programs**.	EAP 1.4	High investment required
Use citizen science data to map **Alexandrina's urban biodiversity**.	EAP 1.1	Medium investment required
Use community groups and organisations to help **promote trees and vegetation as contributors to health**, wellbeing, biodiversity and liveability.	A2040, EAP	Ongoing
Support township champions, community and environment groups through information sharing, coordinating and facilitating biodiversity plantings in townships.	A2040 3.1.11 EAP 3.1, 3.5	2025/2026 (also $10k allocated in 2026/2027 ACP)
Using Appendix A as an evidence base to seek grant funding for Council led or community led plantings.	A2040 3.1.13	2026 - 2035
Partner with local nurseries to supply local provenance species.	EAP 1.2	Ongoing
Increase the allocation in Council's Community Grants assigned to Environmental initiatives that improve our greening and canopy cover.	A2040 1.5.1	2026/2027

\+ A2040 Strategic Delivery Plan[3] (A2040)
++ EAP - Environmental Action Plan[4] (EAP)

+++ Note: While some initiatives have been assigned to particular financial years, many are business as usual and ongoing but may require additional budget.

Greening townships where space is limited

Council does not own or control enough land within townships to reach desired canopy cover, and the land that is in Council's control is highly contested by other uses such as community halls, sports fields, libraries, offices, and infrastructure both above and below ground.

Our townships are also expanding and the demand for space for buildings, homes, roads, and infrastructure escalates, exacerbating the loss of urban vegetation.

New developments or rebuilds frequently result in the removal of mature trees to accommodate larger structures, and at the same time diminishing available space for tree planting.

The increasing extent of impermeable surfaces, such as buildings and roads, also amplify urban heat island effects and stormwater runoff, and the retained vegetation can often suffer damage compromising health and longevity.

Even the selective removal of trees within a stand exposes the remaining trees to heightened vulnerability to strong winds and extreme weather conditions, increasing the likelihood of failures and losses.



Alexandrina Council

Greening townships where space is limited:		
Strategic Action	**Strategic Alignment: A2040[+] or EAP[++]**	**Timing/ Priority[+++]**
Council Led Actions		
Create space for large trees in urban places and plan plantings to **maximise available canopy opportunities** (Scenario 1 of the Greenprint for Success study).		High investment required
Improve tree protection in Council's **Tree Management Policy and Permit applications** through stronger compliance assessments, enforcement for vandalised or removed public trees, and prioritisation of tree retention.	A2040 3.1.12	2025/2026
Strengthen environmental input in strategic development processes to **improve tree retention outcomes**.	New	Medium investment required
Include and budget for tree replacements and plantings as mandatory elements within **capital works projects**.	New	High investment required
Collaborate with **utility and service providers** to reduce impacts on and removal of trees, and create opportunities for medium to large trees near utilities, including bundling low-voltage overhead powerlines and undergrounding high-voltage powerlines.		Ongoing advocacy
I**dentify and implement Water Sensitive Urban Design** (WSUD) opportunities in new subdivisions, reserves, public spaces and streetscape plantings.	EAP 2.4	High investment required
Ensure new development or redeveloping areas **meet objectives of IPWEA's Green Infrastructure Management Manual**[11].		Ongoing
Ensure an outcome of **30% tree canopy cover** for vegetation once matured, in new development areas, including where the Master Planned Township Zones are applied (as required under the GARP).		Ongoing
Community Led and Partnership Actions		
Advocate for **stronger planning tools** to improve outcomes for private and public trees, green spaces, deep soil planting, landscaping, biodiversity and water sensitive urban design, through the application of the following overlays to a greater range of zones across the Council Area: - Urban Tree Canopy Overlay - Significant and Regulated Tree Overlay.		Ongoing advocacy
Negotiate where possible with private land owners and developers to **prioritise mature and habitat tree retention** to achieve faster canopy, cooling and biodiversity benefits.	EAP 1.2, 1.3, 1.4	Ongoing
Involve stakeholders in developing and implementing green spaces and increased canopy cover.	EAP 1.2, 1.3, 1.4	Ongoing

+ A2040 Strategic Delivery Plan[3] (A2040)
++ EAP - Environmental Action Plan[4] (EAP)

+++ Note: While some initiatives have been assigned to particular financial years, many are business as usual and ongoing but may require additional budget.

Urban heat, extreme weather and climate change

Alexandrina Council's 2019 climate emergency declaration highlights the need for proactive action to reduce urban heat and strengthen township resilience to extreme weather.

The urban heat island effect is a growing challenge across Alexandrina's townships. As development increases, hard surfaces expand and canopy cover is reduced, creating localised hot spots.

A changing climate adds further pressure, with rising temperatures, drought, intense storms and bushfire risk affecting the health of existing vegetation and the success of new greening efforts. This requires careful decisions about what, where and how trees and vegetation are planted and managed.

Urban greening also depends on choosing species suited to local conditions. Alexandrina's townships extend from the hills to the sea, with varied soils, space constraints, microclimates and exposure to heat, all of which influence plant survival.

A broader and more climate-resilient planting palette will help reduce vulnerability and support healthier, more adaptable urban landscapes.



Alexandrina Council

Urban heat, extreme weather and climate change		
Strategic Action	**Strategic Alignment: A2040[+] or EAP[++]**	**Timing/ Priority[+++]**
Council Led Actions		
Increase the number and diversity of species planted annually across townships within streetscapes, parks and reserves to create a richer mix of trees, shrubs, groundcovers and grasses across townships.	A2040 3.1.10	2025/2026
Select climate-ready trees and species that can tolerate higher temperatures, reduced and unpredictable rainfall, more frequent heatwaves and longer dry periods, as well as site conditions, such as high-traffic areas, compacted soils and constrained environments.	A2040 3.1.13	2025-2035
Maintain and update the public facing Preferred Tree Species list that identifies climate-ready species suited to local site conditions and urban ecology outcomes.	Preferred tree species list for street planting in Alexandrina Council	High investment requires support from local nurseries
Require developers to use climate-ready species and planting practices in new land divisions and development areas.		Ongoing advocacy (input into Land division guidelines)
Prioritise areas with the highest vulnerability, including: • lowest existing tree canopy • higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage and inequality • greater exposure to urban heat • increased vulnerability to climate change impacts. Greening Opportunities by Township are identified in Appendix A .	A2040 3.1.3	2030–2035 draft complete, refer Appendix A
Community Led and Partnership Actions		
Aim for at least 80% survival rate of vegetation after five years of planting on public land through coordinated care, watering and stewardship.		High investment required (Council/private)
Identify external funding opportunities, including incentives and grants, to accelerate and support urban greening on public and private land.	A2040 3.1.11	Grant funding required 2025/2026 (also $10k allocated in 2026/2027 ACP)
Collaborate with local and community environment groups to prepare a recommended species list that identifies climate-ready species suited to local site conditions across Alexandrina and urban ecology outcomes.		High investment required support from local nurseries

\+ A2040 Strategic Delivery Plan[3] (A2040)
++ EAP - Environmental Action Plan[4] (EAP)

+++ Note: While some initiatives have been assigned to particular financial years, many are business as usual and ongoing but may require additional budget.

Maintenance and resourcing

Increasing vegetation and tree cover requires more than planting; it needs coordinated planning, ongoing resourcing and long-term maintenance.

Poorly planned or managed urban trees can create avoidable costs and risks, including cracked pavements, clogged pipes, blocked sightlines and gutters, and restricted access.

Accurate tree records and planning are needed to understand tree type, location, age, condition, risk and expected useful life.

Young trees need intensive care for the first three to five years, while aging trees may require extra maintenance to retain benefits such as shade, habitat, carbon storage and pollution removal.

With the right planning and investment, urban trees and greening can be managed as valuable assets that grow in benefits over time.

This includes suitable species selection, site preparation, establishment watering, formative pruning, regular inspections and succession planning.

Reviewing township specific planting regimes will help establish and maintain healthy, resilient urban trees and green cover.



Alexandrina Council

Maintenance and resourcing:		
Strategic Action	**Strategic Alignment: A2040[+] or EAP[++]**	**Timing/ Priority[+++]**
Council Led Actions		
Allocate resources to **deliver the target increase in canopy cover** to 2055 focussing on street tree planting, prioritised using Appendix A, starting with Milang's targeted street tree planting locations (refer Appendix A, Figure 1).	A2040 3.1.12	High investment required / Grant funding (Council, private)
Undertake an audit public street, public park & reserve trees by township to industry standard. Including an assessment of **township tree diversity and useful life** to guide climate-resilient replacement planting.	A2040 3.4.3	2028-2030
Adopt and implement a **township tree Asset Management System** with inventory, risk, valuation and lifecycle data, to facilitate efficient operational delivery.		High priority investment required
Using our Greenprint for Success evidence **seek funding for priority large scale planting programs.**		
Building on the Milang Street Tree opportunity/planting plan, model the other townships to **identify street tree planting opportunities**.		High Seek grant funding
Review the tree canopy cover progress against the 2022 baseline data, report progress against targets and adjust greening delivery actions as required.	A2040 3.1.2	2028/2029
Allocate resources to **increase nursery capacity for greening program** to grow an additional 250 trees (a 50% increase) for planting and installing of 20 stormwater inlets for improved watering capability.	A2040 3.1.9	2025/2026 and ongoing
Community Led and Partnership Actions		
Facilitate community organisations to plant out, care for and maintain **new and existing planting areas**. Through programs such as 'Adopt a Park'.	A2040 4.1.1 and 4.1.19	2026-2035
Encourage community **co-management of new planting sites**.	A2040 3.1.13	2026-2035
Offer subsidised or free plants to Alexandrina residents and landowners, especially in townships.	A2040 3.1.11	2025/2026 (also $10k allocated in 2026/2027 ACP)

\+ A2040 Strategic Delivery Plan[3] (A2040)
++ EAP - Environmental Action Plan[4] (EAP)

+++ Note: While some initiatives have been assigned to particular financial years, many are business as usual and ongoing but may require additional budget.

This is just the beginning

The time for action starts now. Every tree planted, every green space created and every garden tended brings us closer to creating our cool, resilient, green, and liveable communities.

Our community is aware of the value vegetation and trees provide for health and wellbeing, making Alexandrina a great place to live, work and play.

This draft Strategy plays an important role in Alexandrina's greening journey. We are in this together. No single person, organisation, or sector can achieve success alone. It highlights what is needed to increase canopy cover and importantly the need for a shared ownership to implement the strategic actions.

While Council will lead street tree plantings, local communities have an important role in shaping, supporting and caring for private and our public spaces. Green spaces will provide more vibrant, biodiverse communal spaces for everyone to enjoy. Our Appendix A sets a clear focus for priority parks identified in each township, creating a pathway for collective action and local greening outcomes.

This draft Strategy provides the foundation towards realising our Greening initiatives and invites everyone to be part of the solution.



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Glossary



Alexandrina Council is committed to creating a 'Liveable. Green. Connected' place that provides a high-quality experience for its residents and visitors.

Biodiversity: The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC) defines biodiversity as "...the variability among living organisms from all sources (including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part) and includes... diversity within species and between species; and diversity of ecosystems".

Canopy cover: The proportion of an area covered by tree canopy, typically expressed as a percentage.

Climate change: A long-term change in the average weather patterns that have come to define Earth's local, regional and global climates.

Community: Alexandrina's community is made up of First Nations Peoples, residents, ratepayers, schools, community groups, businesses, and visitors.

Community engagement: A purposeful, planned process of working with identified groups of people, whether connected by geography, demography or interests, to inform decision making, build relationships and strengthen connections with community and First Nations Peoples.

Extreme weather: Unexpected, unusual, severe, or unseasonal weather at the extremes of the historical distribution.

Formative pruning: The process of pruning a young tree to achieve a desired shape as it grows and matures.

Impermeable surface: A surface that does not allow liquid to pass through it.

Landscape character: The distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape. It is these patterns that give each locality its 'sense of place', making one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Liveability: The combination of factors that add up to a community's quality of life, including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment, and recreation possibilities. There is emerging research on liveability indicators through the RMIT Australian Urban Observatory (AUO).

Proactive: Taking action in advance of a future situation, as opposed to responding reactively.

Remnant trees/vegetation: Refers to native vegetation, including individual trees or groups of trees (that provide habitat for wildlife, such as hollow bearing trees and dead standing trees with ecological significance), that have not been significantly cleared or modified, retaining their natural structure, composition, and ecological function, and providing critical habitat for biodiversity

Replacement planting: The practice of replacing trees with new ones when a tree or trees needs to be, or has already been, removed. Selecting suitable replacement trees considers factors like appropriate species selection, spacing, soil conditions, and environmental suitability to ensure the success and long-term health of the replanted trees.

Streetscape: The collective term for the appearance of elements associated with a street that form the street's character. Elements include: the road surface, footpaths, adjacent buildings, street furniture, trees, and adjacent open spaces.

Evapotranspiration: The process of water movement through a plant and its evaporation from aerial parts, such as leaves, stems and flowers. Evapotranspiration by trees provides important air cooling in urban areas.

Tree canopy: The collective terms for multiple tree crowns in an area. It includes trees of all types and sizes across public and private land.

Tree crown: The leaves, branches, and reproductive structures of a single tree.

Urban Greening: The total vegetation cover within an urban area, including (but not limited to): trees, shrubs, grasses, aquatic plants, planter beds, and green walls; all of which contribute to the biodiversity of an area.

Urban heat island (UHI) effect: The phenomenon whereby urban areas are significantly warmer compared to surrounding non-urban areas due to the built environment and human activities.

Urban trees: All trees in urban environments including remnant and planted specimens on public and private land.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD): An approach to urban planning and engineering design that integrates water management practices to enhance the sustainability, resilience, and liveability of urban areas by considering the entire water cycle and its interactions with the built environment.



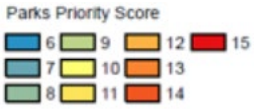
Appendix A

Greening Opportunities in Alexandrina Townships

Introduction

Public parks are shared community places where residents, schools, community groups, volunteers and Council can work together to create greener, cooler and more welcoming townships. Through local knowledge, planting, biodiversity enhancement and ongoing care, communities can help shape shaded spaces where people gather, connect with nature, support local wildlife and strengthen neighbourhood wellbeing. With public parks located across Alexandrina's townships, this appendix helps identify where community priorities and Council investment can come together to deliver the greatest local benefit.

The 'Greenprint for Success' report **identified priority parks for each township** based on socio economic and canopy cover inequities, accessibility, urban heat island exposure, existing canopy cover, and planting potential, expressed as 'heat style' maps. For example, lower priority parks have lower numbers and are shown in cool colours (blue, green) while high priority parks have higher numbers and are shown in warm colours (red and orange),



The priority parks identified for each township are provided below, starting with the township with the lowest through to the highest canopy cover, as identified in Council's 2022 'Tree Canopy Benchmarking Study'.

Milang

In 2022, Milang had the lowest of all township canopies, with a tree canopy cover of 11.7%. Most of the land is privately owned and 46.88% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Targeted street tree plantings

Street tree planting offers an important opportunity to create cooler, more comfortable streets and is particularly important for areas that are not close to parks or reserves. While roadside planting is managed by Council because of safety requirements, local knowledge can help identify where shade is most needed. Due to Milang having the lowest canopy cover of Alexandrina's townships, it was prioritised for this analysis.

The 'Greenprint for Success' study (2026) recommends 575 priority street planting sites in Milang, including 345 street locations and 230 locations within or next to parks (refer Page 4, Figure 1).

Several key road corridors have been identified where additional trees will provide the greatest community benefit by improving shade, reducing heat and making streets more pleasant for residents and visitors. Some of the key streets include:

- **Daranda Terrace**: As the main road through Milang, this high use corridor would benefit from coordinated roadside and park edge planting to cool the street, improve visual amenity and make walking more comfortable.
- **Woodrow Drive**: Additional street trees would help cool this local route and create a more attractive, shaded streetscape for nearby residents.
- **Macdonald Street**: Targeted planting would address limited shade and high heat exposure, improving day to day comfort for people walking, cycling or living nearby.
- **Jupiter and Lyon streets**: The Jupiter Lyon Reserve is located within a high heat exposure zone. Enhancing canopy cover along the road corridors either side of the reserve will provide shaded pathways but also contribute to the planting potential of the reserve itself.

Planting in these streets would help reduce surface temperatures and improve pedestrian comfort. Powerline compatible species must be used where overhead infrastructure limits planting options.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

In Milang, greening priorities for parks and reserves focus on increasing canopy cover along road corridors and in busy pedestrian areas. These locations will provide the greatest benefits for reducing urban heat, cooling road surfaces and improving community wellbeing. Park selections were guided by heat mapping, park hierarchy, community use and biodiversity outcomes (refer Page 4, Figure 2).

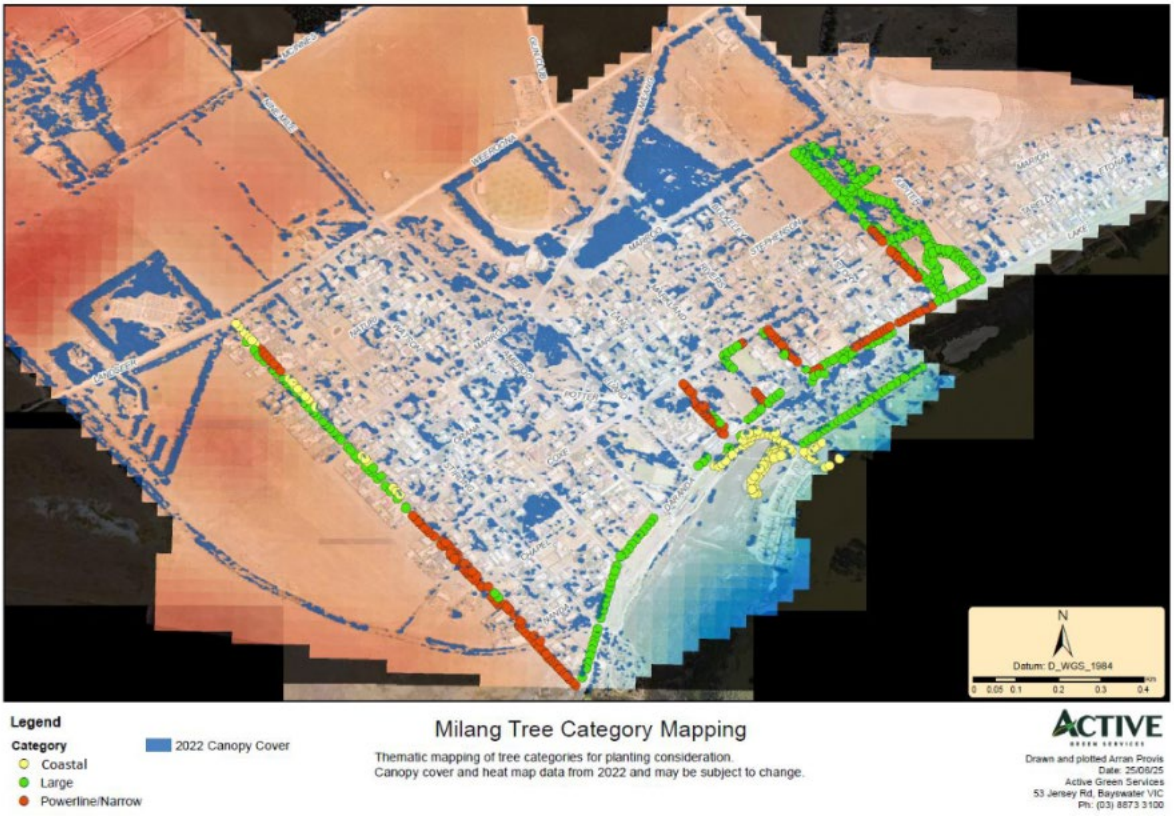


Figure 1: Map showing preferred street planting locations with three tree types suitable for Milang, large, coastal, and powerline friendly tree species. © Active Green Services, 2026

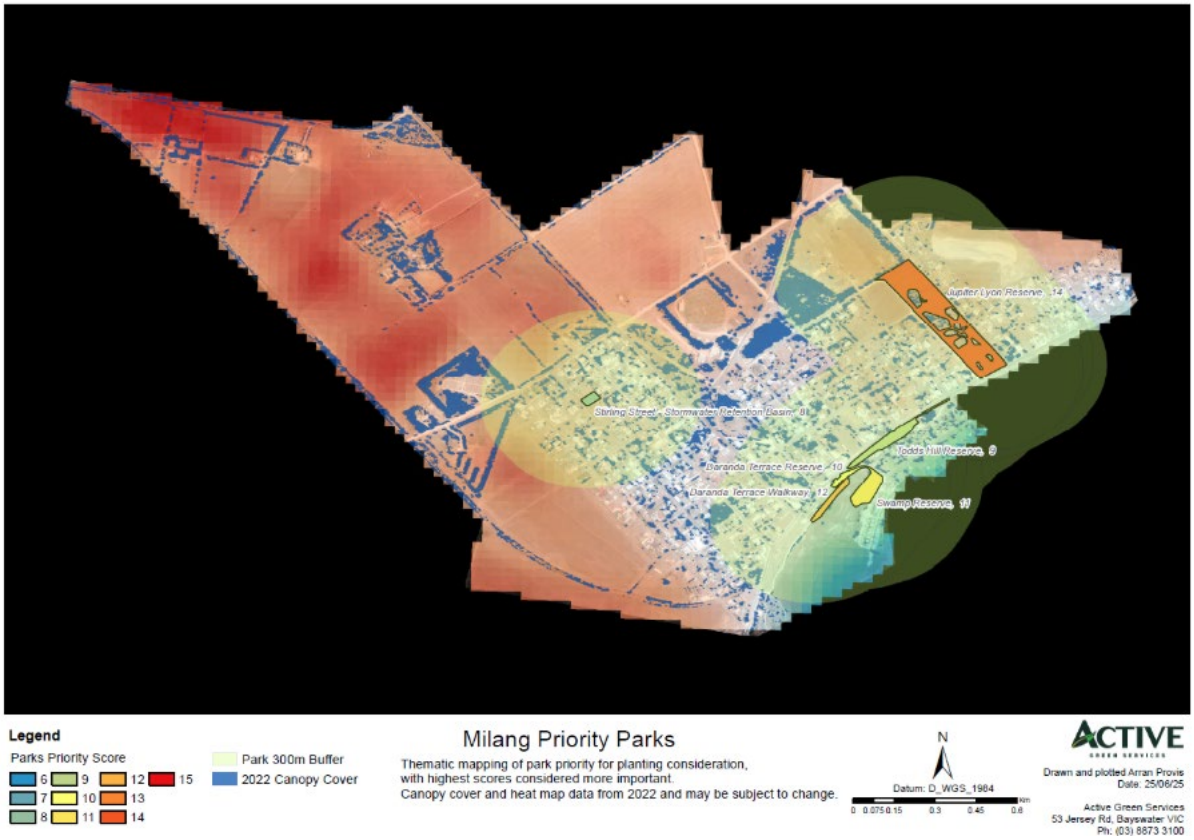


Figure 2: Map showing preferred public park locations in Milang.
© Active Green Services, 2026

The following priority parks and reserves were identified for Milang:

Daranda Terrace Reserve

This reserve, which serves as a connector to the Swamp Reserve, is a key focus area due to its strategic location and linkage function. While not requiring heavy internal planting, the reserve's Daranda Terrace frontage will be enhanced with canopy trees that contribute to roadside cooling in conjunction with the broader street planting program.

Swamp Reserve and Daranda Terrace Walkway

These connected reserves serve as high use pedestrian corridors with currently limited canopy cover. Enhancing shade along the walkway network will improve comfort for walkers and cyclists, encourage increased recreational use, and support active transport within the township.

Stirling Street Stormwater Retention Basin

Stirling Street Stormwater Retention Basin was selected because it can help improve access to green space for residents in the Macdonald Street area while continuing to support stormwater management. If suitable, planting here would transform the basin into a multi functional green space, providing shade, improving local amenity and creating recreational value for nearby residents.

Jupiter Lyon Reserve / Milang Commonage

These sites are situated within identified heat hotspot zones in Milang. This reserve currently includes some biodiversity focused plantings, which will be enhanced by additional canopy trees, particularly adjacent to pathway networks. This will improve shade for users, increase the appeal of the reserves for walking and passive recreation, and strengthen biodiversity outcomes through habitat connectivity.

Woodchester

In 2022, Woodchester had a tree canopy cover of 13.1%. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 94.43% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities

There are no Council managed parks or reserves currently located within the township of Woodchester (Figure 3). Similarly to Ashbourne, this presents a significant challenge for ensuring equitable access to green space.

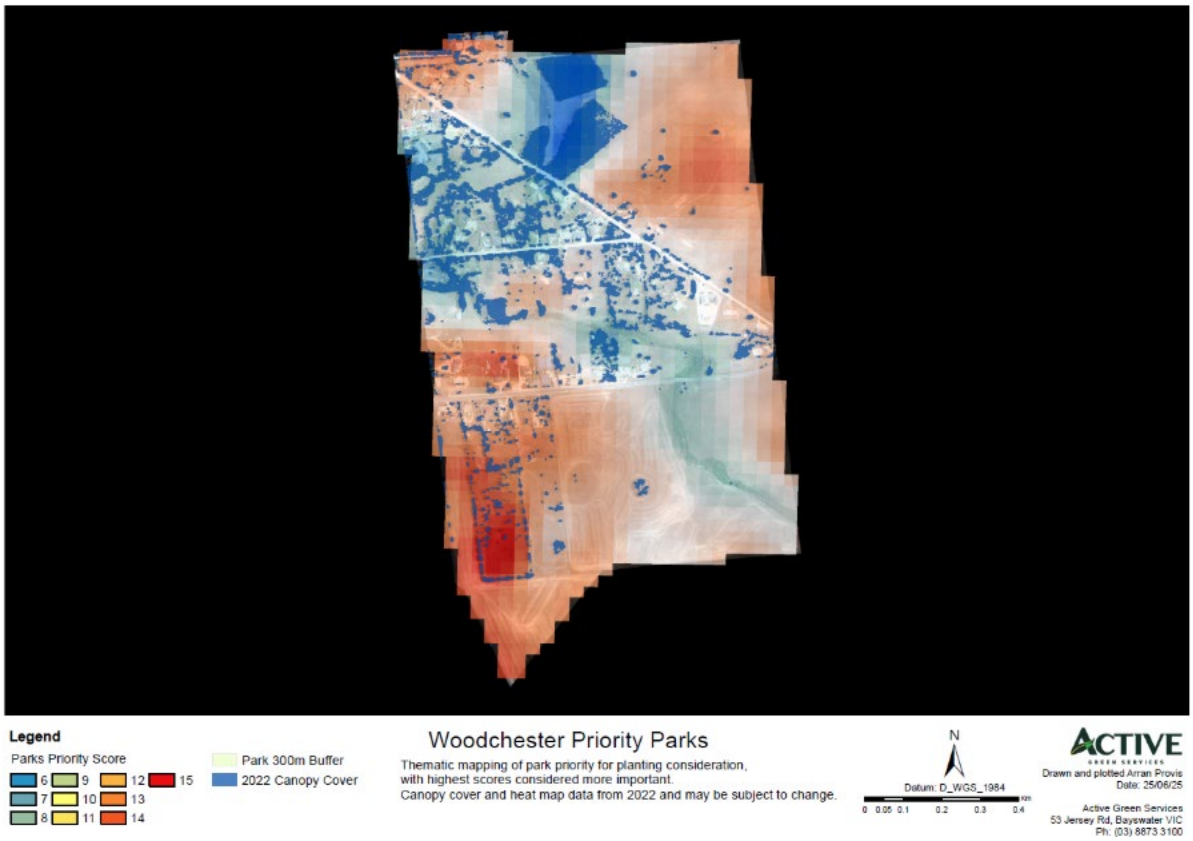


Figure 3: Map showing lack of public park locations in Woodchester while showing areas that would benefit from tree planting (red coloured). © Active Green Services, 2026

Woodchester has low canopy cover, mainly due to past and ongoing land clearing for agriculture. The lack of trees is made worse by the absence of formal public open space. This limits opportunities for recreation, informal gathering, nature play and community wellbeing.

This may be particularly impactful for vulnerable community members, such as children, older adults, and those with mobility constraints, who have limited ability to access green spaces outside the township. There is a clear opportunity to address this gap through the strategic identification, acquisition, or co-management of land suitable for the creation of public green spaces within Woodchester.

Additionally, there is scope to explore partnership models involving private landowners interested in stewardship or shared use arrangements. State government agencies may hold underutilised land suitable for conversion to community open space, while landcare groups or community associations may be able to support revegetation and maintenance programs.

Addressing the green space deficit in Woodchester is seen as a priority for enhancing community wellbeing, improving climate resilience, and supporting biodiversity outcomes. Even modest investments in strategically located green spaces can deliver measurable benefits to the health, liveability, and environmental performance of the township.

Port Elliot

In 2022, Port Elliot had a tree canopy cover of 13.9%. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 66.93% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

Port Elliot shares similarities with Middleton in its coastal township setting but is differentiated by a larger commercial footprint, more extensive agricultural hinterland, and higher concentrations of urban heat hotspots, as indicated by heat mapping analysis. The combination of limited canopy cover, larger areas of sealed surfaces, and increased community vulnerability underlines the urgency to expand the tree canopy within both public open spaces and streetscapes across Port Elliot (Figure 4).

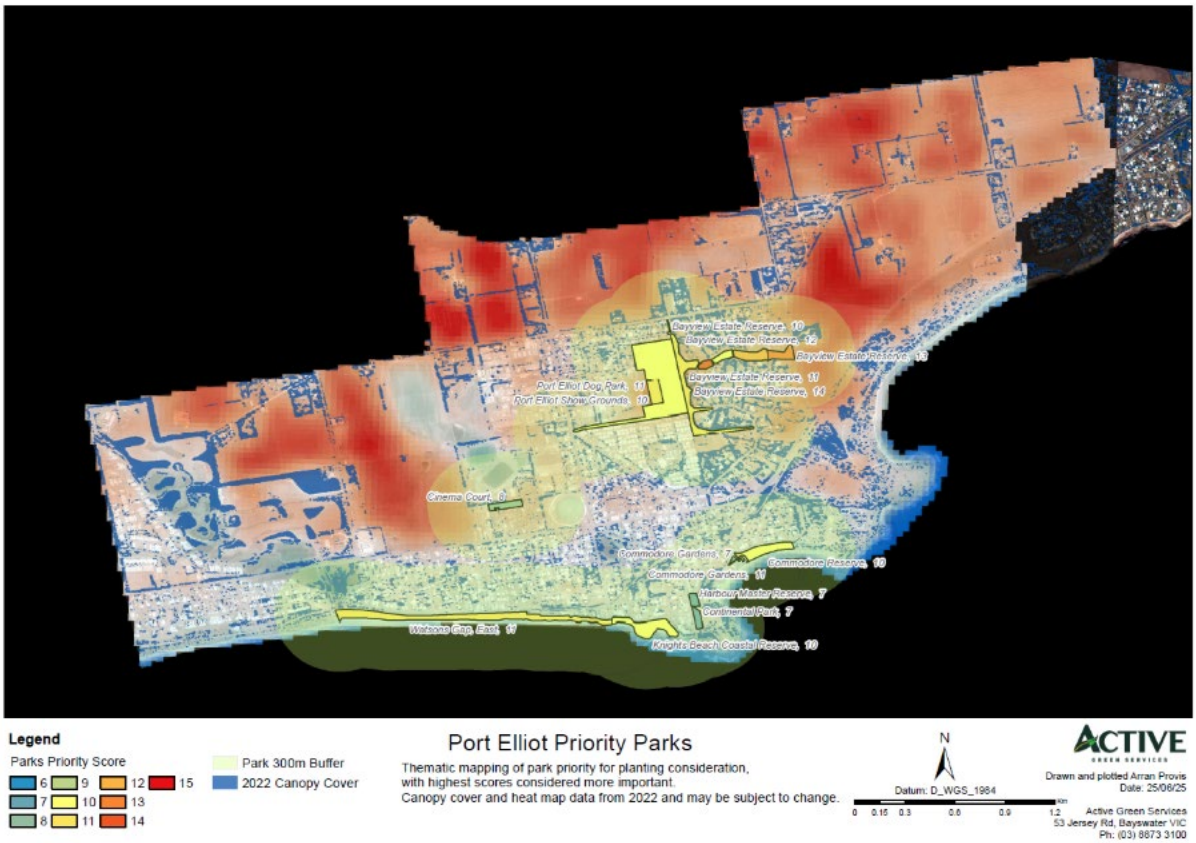


Figure 4: Map showing preferred public park locations in Port Elliot.
© Active Green Services, 2026

The following priority parks have been identified in Port Elliot:

Port Elliot Show Grounds and Port Elliot Primary School Precinct

This precinct represents a high priority location, situated within a notable urban heat hotspot. While the Show Grounds are heavily utilised during major events, the area remains underutilised and sparsely vegetated for the majority of the year. There is significant opportunity to introduce strategically placed canopy trees that provide shade and cooling while respecting event space requirements and infrastructure clearances.

This would deliver dual benefits of improved amenity for the local community year round and enhanced comfort during event periods.

Bayview Estate Reserves

A network of small to medium neighbourhood reserves adjacent to the Show Grounds. These spaces are currently underutilised for canopy planting, despite being situated in a confirmed heat hotspot. Focused planting, particularly along road frontages and within passive recreation areas, will significantly contribute to heat mitigation and improved neighbourhood amenity.

Cinema Court Reserve

A neighbourhood level reserve adjacent to community gardens within a residential area it provides an excellent opportunity for extensive tree planting, as current canopy cover is negligible. This reserve functions as a buffer to nearby heat hotspots and would benefit from shade trees.

Commodore Reserve and Commodore Gardens

Commodore Reserve is a premier open space under Alexandrina's park hierarchy, serving both residents and visitors. It forms a key connection between the Port Elliot Caravan Park and the foreshore, offering a refuge for those seeking open green space and ocean views, without accessing the beach directly. The north side contains Araucaria plantings, but the central reserve offers scope for diversified canopy expansion, particularly with coastal tolerant species.

Commodore Gardens, which adjoins the reserve, is largely devoid of planting and presents a valuable opportunity to introduce shade trees for the adjacent car park and Port Elliot Bowls Club. Car park design adjustments would be needed to allow for adequate soil preparation, root space and long term tree health.

Harbour Master Reserve and Continental Park

Both are designated as premier parks but are currently lacking significant vegetation coverage. As such there is substantial scope for introducing canopy cover along walking paths, road frontages and passive recreation nodes.

Additionally, the nearby Freemans Knob Reserve could benefit from supplementary coastal tree planting, where appropriate, to reinforce shade and habitat values.

Clayton Bay

In 2022, Clayton Bay had a tree canopy cover of 14.3%. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 80.71% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

Several key sites have been identified in Clayton Bay for targeted greening based on a combination of urban heat mapping, existing canopy cover, anticipated public use, and landscape prominence (Figure 5). These sites represent important opportunities to enhance the township's resilience to heat, improve liveability and support biodiversity outcomes.

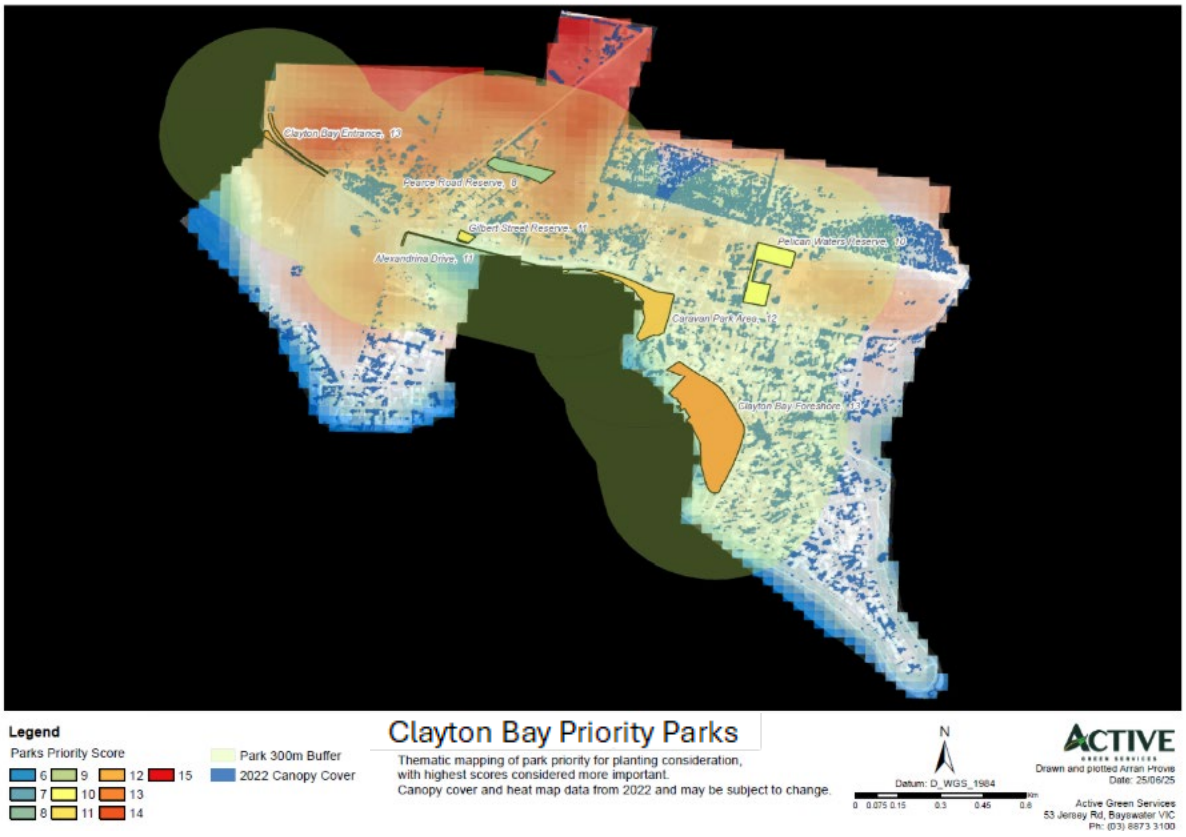


Figure 5: Map showing preferred public park locations in Clayton Bay.
© Active Green Services, 2026

The following priority parks have been identified in Clayton Bay:

Gilbert Street Reserve and Pearce Road Reserve

Both of these reserves are located within the residential heart of Clayton Bay and are characterised by very high urban heat levels and low canopy coverage. Their proximity to housing and high pedestrian activity makes them strong candidates for intensive shade planting and greening treatments. Enhancements to these parks would provide direct health and wellbeing benefits to local residents, while also supporting cooler, more comfortable neighbourhood environments.

Alexandrina Drive Reserve

Situated on the southern side of the township, this reserve includes a walking track that serves as a key link between the Clayton Bay Foreshore Reserve and the Caravan Park area. Although not identified as an extreme heat hotspot, the existing canopy cover along this corridor is limited. Given the pathway's high potential for community use and active transport, targeted shade tree planting would significantly enhance user comfort, promote walking and cycling, and support ecological connectivity. Opportunities for community led biodiversity planting could also be explored to strengthen local stewardship and engagement.

Island View Drive

Strategic verge planting along Island View Drive has been identified as a means to reduce heat absorption on road surfaces and mitigate localised heat island effects. However, the success of this intervention will depend on community consultation and support, particularly due to potential concerns over obstructing scenic views along the "Island View" corridor. A sensitive planting design that balances shade provision with view preservation is recommended.

Pelican Waters Reserve

This reserve is located within a high heat area where significant clearing has occurred in recent years to accommodate new development. As such, it presents a critical site for canopy restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and future open space provision. Establishing a well shaded, multi-functional park in this area will not only help offset the impacts of recent vegetation loss but also provide long term amenity for the growing residential population.

Goolwa

In 2022, Goolwa had a tree canopy cover of 14.3%. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 70.09% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

The township of Goolwa presents multiple opportunities for targeted canopy enhancement to improve community wellbeing, address urban heat hotspots and support biodiversity. Priority reserves have been identified based on a combination of factors including socio-economic need, current canopy gaps, heat mapping, recreational demand and access to green spaces (Figure 6).

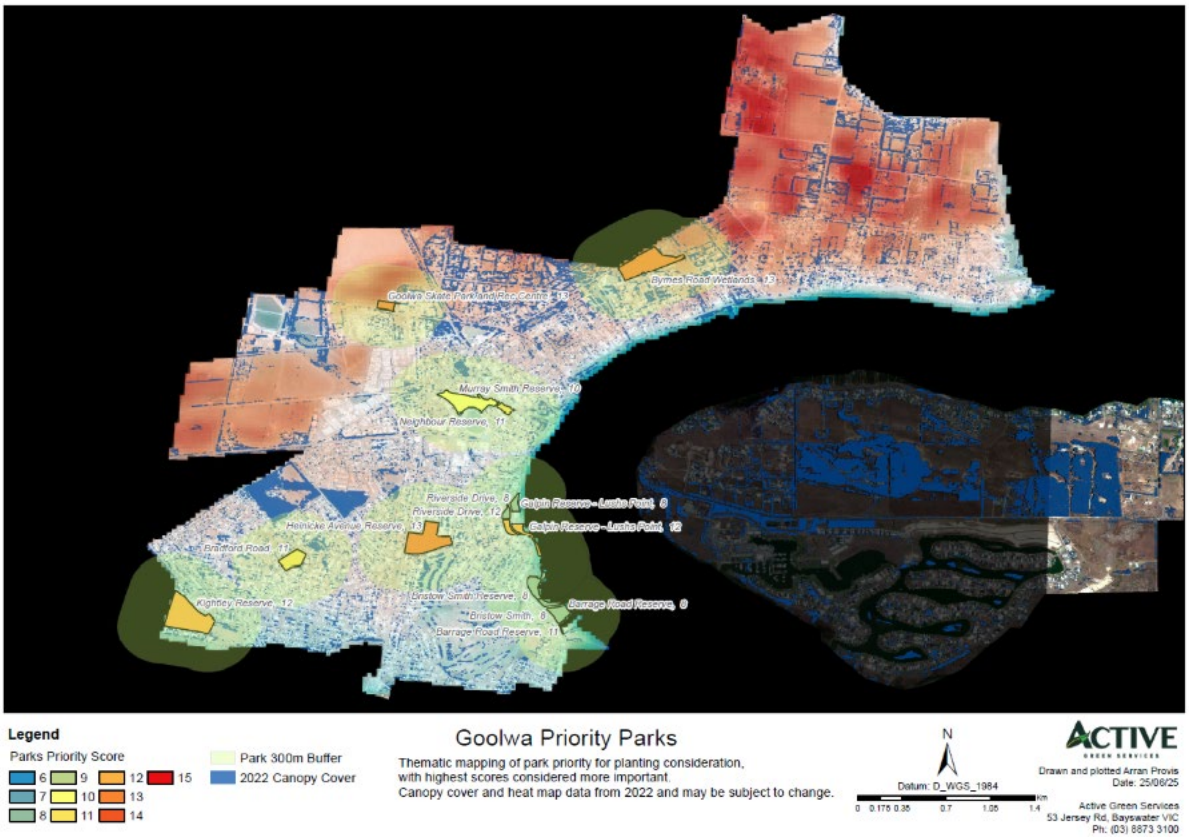


Figure 6: Map showing preferred public park locations in Goolwa.
© Active Green Services, 2026

The following priority parks have been identified in Goolwa:

Heinicke Avenue Reserve

Heinicke Avenue Reserve has benefited from the ongoing greening from our community groups. But due to the size, limited canopy cover and exposed street frontages, this park has been identified as a priority park
that will benefit from continued increase shade to help cool a significant local heat hotspot, create a more comfortable place for nearby residents and visitors.

Bradford Road Reserve

Bradford Road Reserve is a sizeable park with existing recreational use and moderate canopy cover. There is considerable scope to further increase shade, particularly over play areas and high use spaces. In addition, roadside plantings can help to mitigate adjacent road surface heat hotspots. The reserve's 300 metre catchment area complements that of Heinicke Avenue Reserve, providing strategic connectivity in green infrastructure across Goolwa's residential areas.

Kightley Reserve

Kightley Reserve is one of the last major reserves before the beachfront, currently featuring minimal vegetation cover. While the coastal location benefits from natural sea breezes that moderate temperatures, the reserve plays a vital role in delivering accessible public open space for equity, accessibility, urban heat island exposure; existing canopy cover and planting potential. Due to its size, Kightley Reserve offers an opportunity to contribute significantly to local canopy targets and provides a valuable site for community driven biodiversity planting.

Murray Smith Reserve and Neighbour Reserve (Goolwa Oval Precinct)

Surrounding the Goolwa Oval sporting complex, these reserves are located within an important active transport corridor in the town centre. Current vegetation levels appear limited, offering substantial opportunity for increased canopy cover. Enhancing shade in this precinct will not only support sporting and recreation activities but also improve comfort and usability for pedestrians and cyclists moving through the area.

Goolwa Skate Park and Recreation Centre

Both facilities are situated within identified heat hotspots. In particular, the Goolwa Skate Park, would greatly benefit from the introduction of large canopy trees to provide shade for users, who are often exposed to prolonged periods of sun on hard concrete surfaces. Tree planting here will directly support youth wellbeing and active recreation while contributing to broader urban cooling outcomes.

Byrnes Road Wetlands

Byrnes Road Wetlands represents one of the last remaining large reserves leading towards North Goolwa, an area characterised by significant heat hotspots and limited council managed open space. The reserve offers excellent potential for canopy enhancement combined with biodiversity restoration, capitalising on its natural wetland features. Given the scarcity of formal parkland in North Goolwa, consideration should also be given to strategic land acquisition and intensive street tree planting to address the growing demand for green space.

Riverside Corridor – Key Future Focus Area

Through analysis the riverfront reserves from Riverside Drive Reserve to Barrage Road Reserve has been identified as high priority zones for future greening. Despite their prominent location along the river, these reserves currently exhibit very low canopy cover. Given the increasing importance of this corridor as an active transport route for pedestrians and cyclists, enhancing shade provision is critical. Tree planting with large canopy or coastal appropriate species will help reduce heat exposure, improve user comfort, and contribute to the scenic and ecological value of the riverfront.

Middleton

In 2022, Middleton had a tree canopy cover of 14.1%. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 66.79% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

Middleton presents a range of opportunities for targeted canopy enhancement that balances the needs of climate resilience, active transport support, and public amenity with the unique sensitivities of coastal landscapes (refer Page 16, Figure 7).

The township's exposure to urban heat hotspots, particularly along road corridors and high use recreation areas, highlights the need for strategic tree planting despite potential community concerns views preservation.

- Focus on foreshore and road adjacent reserves to maximise cooling and shade outcomes.
- Balance community concerns around views preservation with the need for urban heat mitigation and active transport support.
- Prioritise linear reserves such as Padman Crescent, Offshore Drive, and Surfers Parade Reserves for immediate canopy expansion.
- Leverage existing vegetation in reserves like Middleton Shores, Abbotts Reserve, and Middleton Creek Reserve with complementary planting strategies.
- Use resilient, coastal tolerant species that provide effective canopy without compromising long term maintenance or survival.

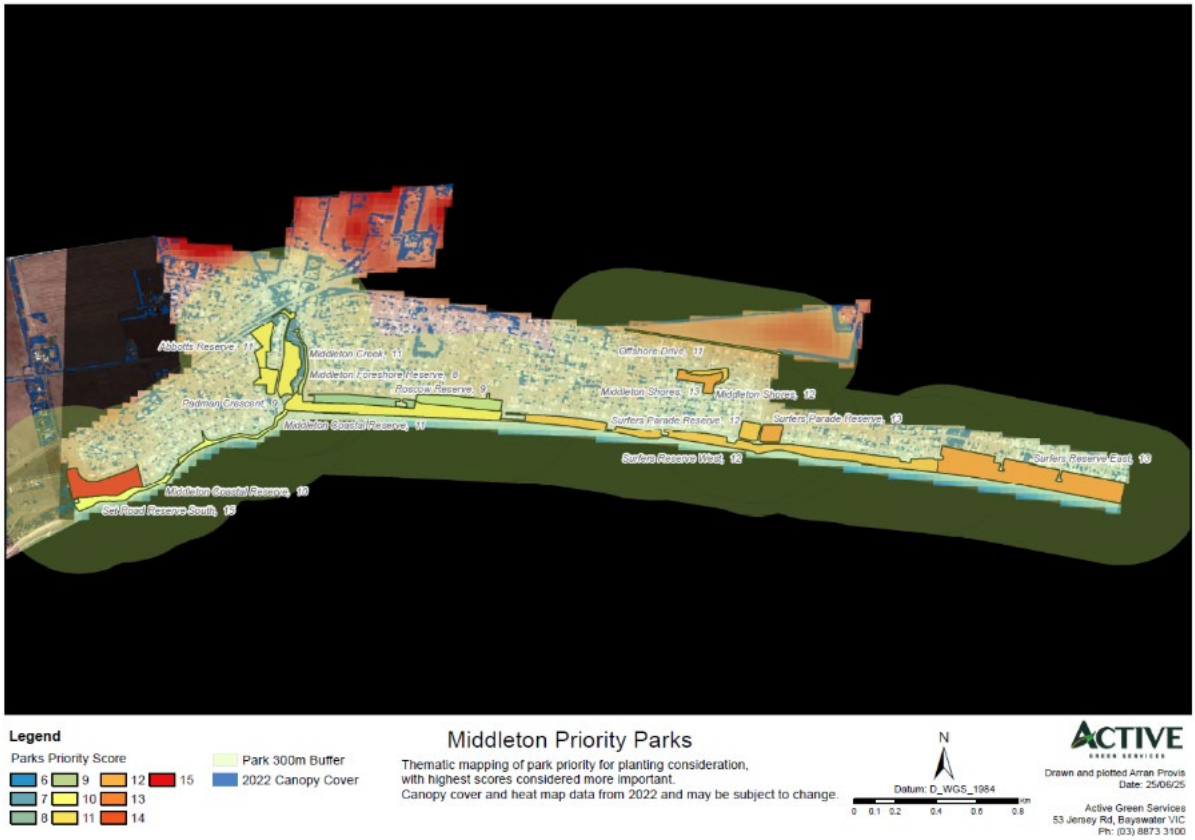


Figure 7: Map showing preferred public park locations in Middleton.
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The following priority parks have been identified in Middleton:

Foreshore Reserves

The primary opportunity for significant canopy enhancement lies along the Middleton foreshore, stretching from Surfers Reserve East to Set Road Reserve South. These reserves currently feature scattered, low density vegetation, particularly where they interface with roads and footpaths. Increased planting along these corridors would serve a dual purpose of mitigating roadside heat hotspots by shading road surfaces and enhancing the amenity and comfort of the foreshore's walking paths and recreation areas.

While the introduction of large canopy trees offers substantial benefits in terms of cooling and urban greening, it is acknowledged that this may be contentious due to concerns over obstructed coastal views. Additionally, coastal soil conditions and salt exposure will limit the planting palette to robust, salt tolerant species. Nonetheless, from an environmental, recreational, and liveability perspective, the foreshore remains the highest priority for tree planting in Middleton, subject to careful community engagement and sensitive design solutions that balance shade provision with view corridors.

Offshore Drive Reserve

This long, linear reserve has a north facing orientation and is located within a significant heat hotspot. The reserve features minimal existing canopy cover, particularly over the adjacent road surface, which contributes to heat retention. This location is highly suitable for tree planting aimed at reducing road surface temperatures, improving comfort along the roadside for both pedestrians and cyclist and contributing to township wide canopy targets. Given its linear form and exposure, planting design here should focus on consistent spacing and species that are resilient to local coastal conditions.

Middleton Shores Reserve

Middleton Shores is a neighbourhood scale reserve that accommodates walking tracks and exercise equipment. While parts of the reserve are densely vegetated, the primary high use activity zones are poorly shaded, primarily due to the prevalence of dispersed Araucaria plantings, which offer a strong architectural character but limited canopy coverage. Strategic infill planting with broad canopy species could significantly improve shade provision for users, enhancing the comfort and functionality of this popular community space.

Surfers Parade Reserves (Twin Reserves)

Located slightly inland from the foreshore, these twin reserves along Surfers Parade are currently underutilised in terms of canopy cover, presenting clear opportunities for planting. Their positioning away from direct foreshore view corridors makes them well suited for large canopy trees, providing shade for recreational users and mitigating nearby heat hotspots without the view constraints associated with beachfront reserves.

Padman Crescent Reserve – High Priority for Active Transport Shading

Padman Crescent Reserve is a long, linear reserve adjacent to a heavily exposed roadside and shared user path. This corridor experiences extensive sun exposure that likely create uncomfortable conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
It represents a high priority site for canopy planting, particularly in providing shade for the footpath, cool the adjacent road surface and improve overall streetscape amenity for local residents. Given alignment with sustainable transport goals, this reserve should be a focal point for the next phase of Middleton's urban greening program.

Abbotts Reserve and Middleton Creek Reserve

These reserves share similar characteristics to Padman Crescent, featuring elongated forms adjacent to key road corridors. While both have a greater degree of existing vegetation, opportunities remain for supplementary planting, especially along road edges to reduce surface heat, over hardstand areas within the reserves to increase shaded recreation spaces and for biodiversity outcomes through species diversity and habitat creation.

Strathalbyn

In 2022, Strathalbyn had a tree canopy cover of 19.4%. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 74.34% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

Heat mapping for Strathalbyn demonstrates a distinct pattern of cooler areas aligned with river corridors and creek lines, particularly around the town centre where dense vegetation is already present. Conversely, areas dominated by agricultural land, large lot rural subdivisions, and the racecourse exhibit significant urban heat island effects (refer Page 19, Figure 8).

The limited distribution of neighbourhood scale parkland outside the township core is a challenge, with larger reserves or open spaces often serving broader landscape functions but providing less direct community access for daily recreation.

Many parcels captured in the supplied reserve dataset contain easements, drainage corridors, and roadside landscapes which may not meet the usable open space for recreation intent locally accessible public parks. This has implications for how canopy targets are applied spatially within Strathalbyn.

There is a critical need to balance biodiversity planting with user amenity, and it is recommended that tree placement prioritises:

- Playgrounds
- Seating areas
- Walking and cycling paths
- Gathering spaces
- As well as habitat corridors where appropriate.

Areas to the south of the cemetery and racecourse demonstrate significant canopy deficits. Given the absence of conventional reserves in these rural fringe zones, a focus on road corridor greening becomes the primary mechanism for delivering shade, cooling and visual amenity.

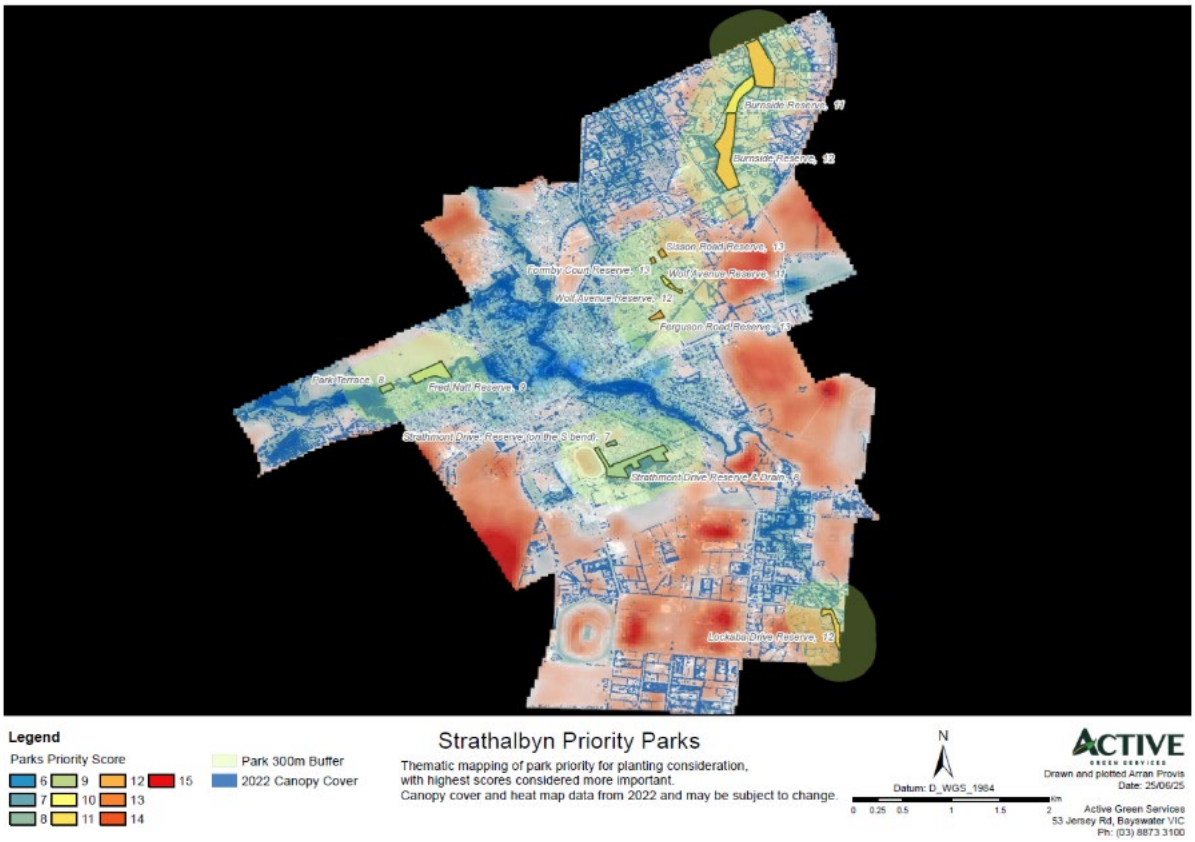

Figure 8: Map showing preferred public park locations in Strathalbyn.
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The following priority parks have been identified in Strathalbyn:

Strathmont Drive Reserve (S-Bend) and Strathmont Drain/Cemetery Precinct

Strathmont Drive Reserve has minimal existing vegetation but is well positioned to serve the surrounding residential catchment as a neighbourhood scale park.
The Strathmont Drain and Cemetery Precinct presents a unique opportunity for greening, albeit with considerations around burial space requirements. The lack of canopy cover around burial plots contributes to heat exposure, impacting visitors and staff.

A review of historical cemetery planting practices could introduce a more contemporary approach. For example, a “memorial tree” program akin to that used at Glenmorus Memorial Park in Albury, NSW, allows families to select memorial trees for departed ones, enhancing the site's amenity and providing shaded spaces for reflection.

The township areas south of the cemetery are characterised by significant heat hotspots and limited park infrastructure. These may want to be considered as part of prioritised roadside tree planting given the constraints around park establishment on large rural lots.

Ferguson Road Reserve and Wolf Avenue Reserve

Both are situated within residential neighbourhoods adjacent to confirmed heat hotspots with Ferguson Road Reserve having capacity for extensive tree planting to create a biodiverse, shaded parkland suitable for passive recreation. Wolf Avenue Reserve appears to function as a pedestrian thoroughfare, offers an excellent opportunity for linear canopy planting along pathways to improve thermal comfort for walkers and cyclists.

Sisson Road Reserve and Formby Court Reserve

These paired reserves serve the northern residential catchments, currently providing important, albeit underutilised, contributions to locally accessible parks. Both reserves lack significant canopy and would benefit from the introduction of large canopy trees, providing shade over open spaces and potential future amenities (playgrounds, seating, paths). A review of current and future recreation needs is recommended to determine whether infrastructure upgrades should accompany greening initiatives.

Fred Natt Reserve and Park Terrace Reserve

These reserves primarily function as bushland or biodiversity reserves, but there is clear potential for boundary edge planting, especially where neighbouring properties are cleared, to enhance canopy and buffer microclimates. Roadside planting around these reserves would further contribute to heat mitigation and urban amenity while supporting ecological connectivity.

Burnside Reserve (Linear Park)

Burnside Reserve benefits from existing canopy cover along its central spine; however, northern and southern sections are more open and exposed. There is scope for supplementary large tree planting to increase shade coverage, biodiversity focused planting, especially in under vegetated areas. Roadside planting along the reserve boundaries to mitigate road surface heat sinks and improve the reserve's microclimate for users.

Hindmarsh Island

In 2022, Hindmarsh Island had a tree canopy cover of 19.9% within the township boundaries. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 90.66% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

Hindmarsh Island exhibits a significant urban heat island profile. Residential development is predominantly clustered along the island's perimeter, particularly adjacent to riverfronts and within the Coorong Quays marina precinct. Notably, much of the island's residential area falls outside locally accessible parks, highlighting a clear gap in accessible public open space that should be addressed in future open space planning and policy (refer Page 22, Figure 9).

Constraints and Considerations:

- A significant proportion of Hindmarsh Island's open space consists of riparian zones, floodplains, or wetland ecosystems, which are either already vegetated or require species with tolerance to such coastal environments where broad scale canopy planting is considered.
- Community expectations, particularly regarding unobstructed waterfront views, may influence planting design in certain locations.
- Future urban development on the island presents an opportunity to integrate new open space provisions that align with the 300 metre proximity principle and support canopy expansion.

A targeted approach focused on infill planting within existing parks, succession planning for aging trees, and strategic open space acquisition in underserved areas will provide Hindmarsh Island with the greatest return on investment in terms of urban heat mitigation, amenity improvement, and biodiversity outcomes.

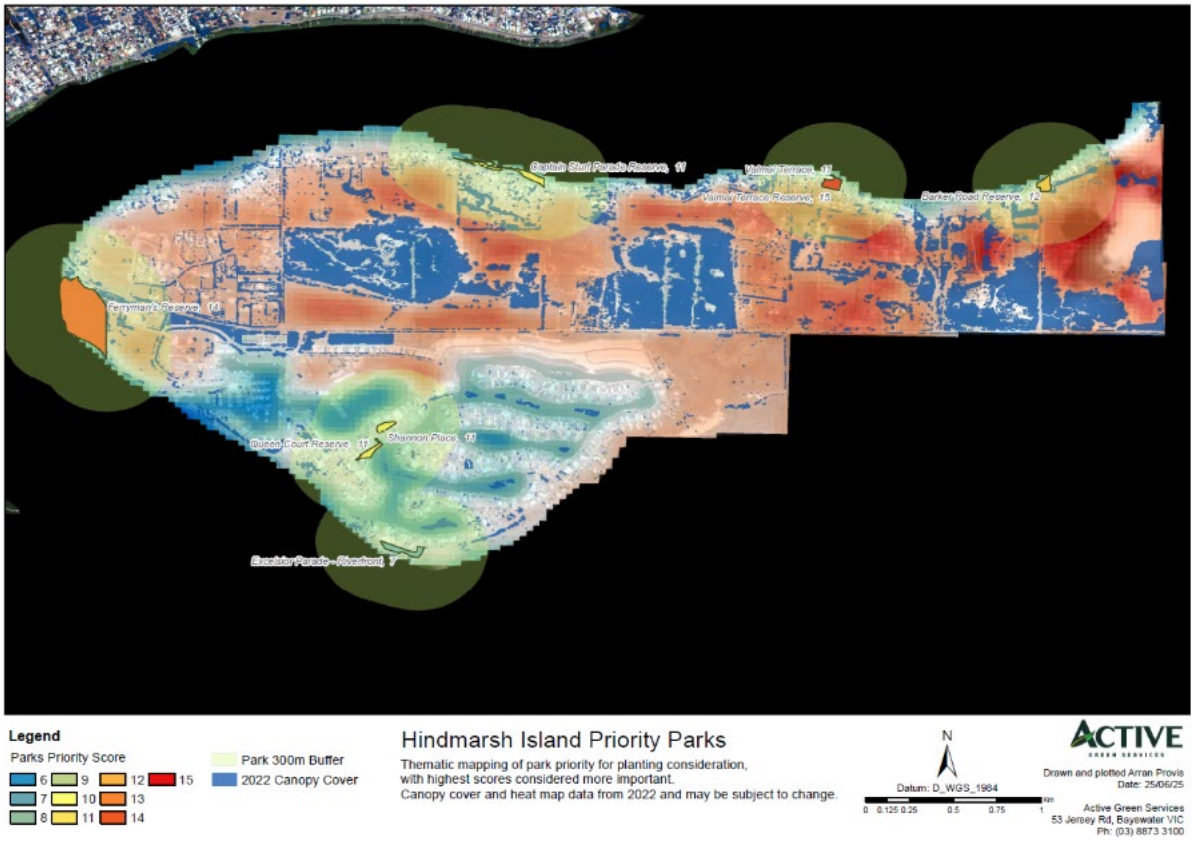

Figure 9: Map showing preferred public park locations within the Hindmarsh Island township boundary. © Active Green Services, 2026

The following priority parks have been identified in Hindmarsh Island:

The following reserves have been identified as priority locations for tree planting, primarily aimed at enhancing public amenity, shade provision, and microclimate cooling. While the primary focus is on community use and comfort, biodiversity outcomes can also be achieved through appropriate species selection and planting design.

Valmai Terrace Reserve

A largely open and minimally vegetated space with high potential for canopy enhancement. Despite its proximity to the waterfront, this reserve functions as the primary open space for both the immediate residential catchment and surrounding neighbourhoods, some of which are located up to 700 metres away. Increasing canopy cover here will provide essential shade, improve thermal comfort, and enhance recreational amenity.

Barker Road Reserve

This reserve shares similar characteristics with Valmai Terrace, with slightly higher existing vegetation cover. However, much of the tree stock appears to be mature and aging. A program of succession planting will support the long term sustainability

of this space, improve shade coverage and preserve its ecological and recreational functions.

Coorong Quays Reserves – Queen Court, Shannon Place, and Excelsior Parade (Riverfront)

Located within the Coorong Quays residential marina, these reserves are currently characterised by limited shade and minimal canopy cover. Targeted planting within these spaces will improve thermal comfort for users, enhance local amenity, and contribute to the island's broader canopy targets. However, given the riverfront orientation and premium on open water views, it will be essential to engage with the local community to address potential concerns regarding views preservation. Thoughtful species selection and strategic planting design can balance the need for shade with maintaining desirable sightlines.

Captain Sturt Parade Reserve

A linear reserve complex that separates residential properties from the river frontage, this contains vegetation where infill is appropriate to enhance canopy cover. The site appears to have frequent use for car parking and river access, with tree plantings on the southern side facilitating shade of the roadside and local hot spots. There are limited other reserves within the residential area, indicating that this may be opportunity for enhancement for use.

Ferryman's Reserve

Ferryman's reserve is adjacent to Kumerangk Hindmarsh Island Landcare Group Nursery and a site is continued to be restored by this Landcare Group following its historic use as a stock hold waiting for the ferry. The reserve is now a large public space. Although recent plantings have occurred within the reserve, there is a strong case for densifying the canopy. The site features walking tracks through the natural area that appear largely uncovered as the site contains minimal canopy cover, although current plantings will have already a positive impact in the near future.

This reserve provides a great opportunity to increase the overall canopy cover for Council managed land within the Hindmarsh Island township boundary, which is significantly lower than canopy cover from private land.

Langhorne Creek

In 2022, Langhorne Creek had a tree canopy cover of 19.9%. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 78.09% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

Langhorne Creek is a small township with comparatively high existing canopy cover relative to other settlements in the region. As such, the greening focus for Langhorne Creek is directed toward infill planting, aimed at enhancing shade over community facilities, pathways and adjacent roadsides, rather than large scale new canopy establishment (Figure 10).

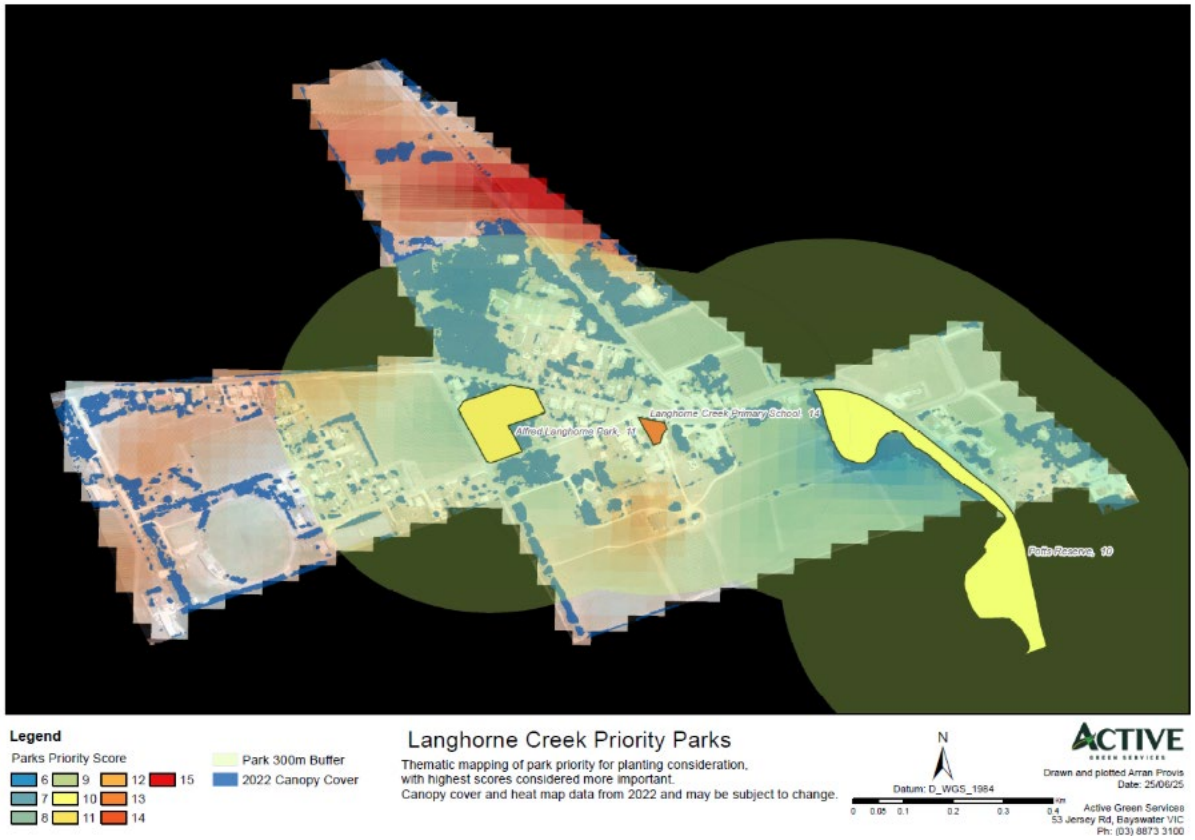

Figure 10: Map showing preferred public park locations in Langhorne Creek.
© Active Green Services, 2026

The following priority parks have been identified in Langhorne Creek:

Langhorne Creek Primary School Reserve

This smaller reserve, which includes play equipment and high use recreation areas, presents an opportunity for targeted planting to improve shade and comfort, particularly during the hotter months. Currently, the reserve contains several large ornamental trees concentrated along the southern boundary, which do not provide effective shade for the playground and key use areas.

- Planting along the northern boundary with larger, broad canopy trees would significantly improve sun protection for the play area.
- Selection of deciduous ornamental species would align with the existing landscape character, offering summer shade while allowing for winter sun, enhancing year round usability and comfort.

Alfred Langhorne Park

This park features moderate canopy cover, with potential for minor infill planting, particularly along road verges, pedestrian paths, and seating areas. Enhancing tree cover in these locations will improve both the amenity and microclimate of the park, benefiting regular users and contributing to town wide heat mitigation.

Potts Reserve

Potts Reserve is a mature, heavily treed park, offering significant shade and habitat benefits. However, there is potential for additional planting along the northern roadside boundary, where existing vegetation is sparse. This area is currently characterised by limited tall vegetation, likely influenced by powerline constraints.

Where feasible, planting with indigenous, powerline compatible species or the use of offset plantings (set back from the powerlines) could provide valuable roadside shade without conflicting with infrastructure. This approach may be coordinated with the broader roadside planting program, particularly where gaps exist in the township's canopy network adjacent to residential properties.

Mount Compass

In 2022, Mount Compass had a tree canopy cover of 23.4%. Most of the land in Mount Compass is privately owned. This means that 88.39% of the total canopy cover is found on private land.

Greening opportunities in public parks and reserves

Mount Compass displays a mosaic of heat and cool zones, as revealed by urban heat mapping in 2022. These patterns closely correlate with recent land clearing and development activities, contributing to heat hotspots, while areas with retained vegetation offer cooler microclimates.

The township's existing park network is primarily concentrated within the eastern portion of Mount Compass, servicing high use areas such as the retail precinct and school zones. In contrast, there are limited public open spaces within the rural living areas, industrial precinct, and mining zones, which impacts accessibility to green spaces (Figure 11).

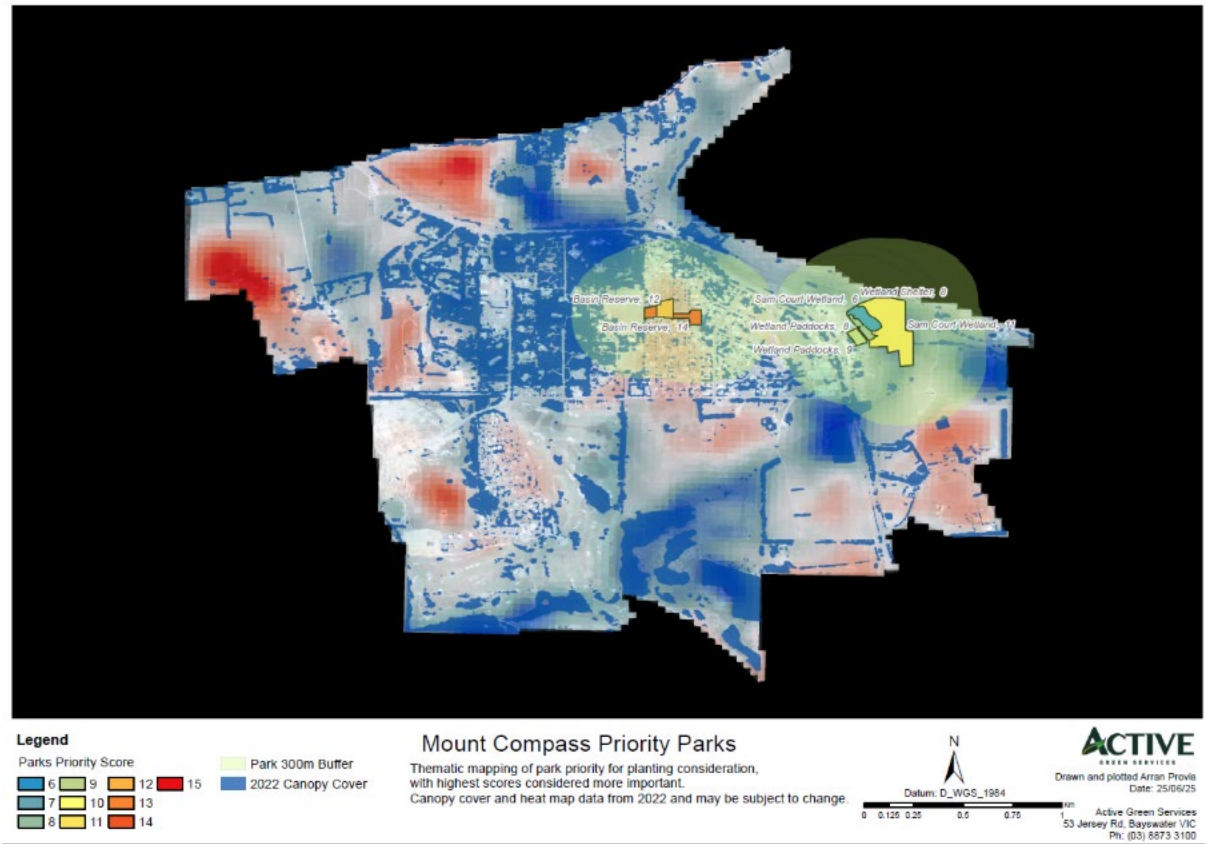

Figure 11: Map showing preferred public park locations in Mount Compass.
© Active Green Services, 2026

The following priority parks have been identified in Mount Compass:

Basin Reserve

Basin Reserve is a three part, multifunctional park that includes Mount Compass Recreation Park and forms part of an active transport corridor linking residential areas with Burgess Oval and the broader school precinct around Mount Compass Oval.

Although recent plantings have occurred within the reserve, there is a strong case for densifying the canopy, particularly to offset ongoing vegetation loss from adjacent private development, including areas like Slater Avenue, which have recently experienced significant clearing. As a heat hotspot, Basin Reserve represents a high priority site where expanded planting will deliver immediate benefits for urban cooling, recreation amenity and biodiversity support.

George Francis Drive Precinct

This residential area has limited access to nearby formal parks or reserves. While golf course vegetation and quarry easement plantings provide some landscape value, they do not function as public open space. Targeted roadside planting would help reduce heat hotspots and improve shade along the rural residential edge.

Sand Mine Road – Industrial Estate

While the industrial estate sits within a relatively cool microclimate, the absence of formal green space remains notable. Although the immediate priority for this area is lower compared to residential zones, strategic streetscape planting should still be considered to support worker wellbeing, improve amenity, and contribute to the township's overall canopy targets.

Ashbourne

In 2022, Ashbourne had with 49.3% the highest canopy cover of all townships. Most of the land is privately owned. This means that 86.43% of the total canopy cover is found on private land. There are currently no Council managed parks or reserves in Ashbourne.

Greening opportunities

While the overall tree canopy cover in Ashbourne is comparatively high, reflecting the rural and vegetated character of the area, there remains a gap in formalised recreational open space. The absence of designated parks and reserves limits opportunities for structured recreation, passive use, and community gathering, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children and older adults who may have limited mobility (Figure 12).

Alexandrina Council will explore partnerships with private landholders, schools, or state agencies in the delivery of green infrastructure in the short to medium term. Establishing even small scale reserves or green corridors could provide measurable benefits to community wellbeing, climate resilience and biodiversity.

A tailored approach is required for Ashbourne, recognising both its high canopy baseline and the current lack of accessible public open space.

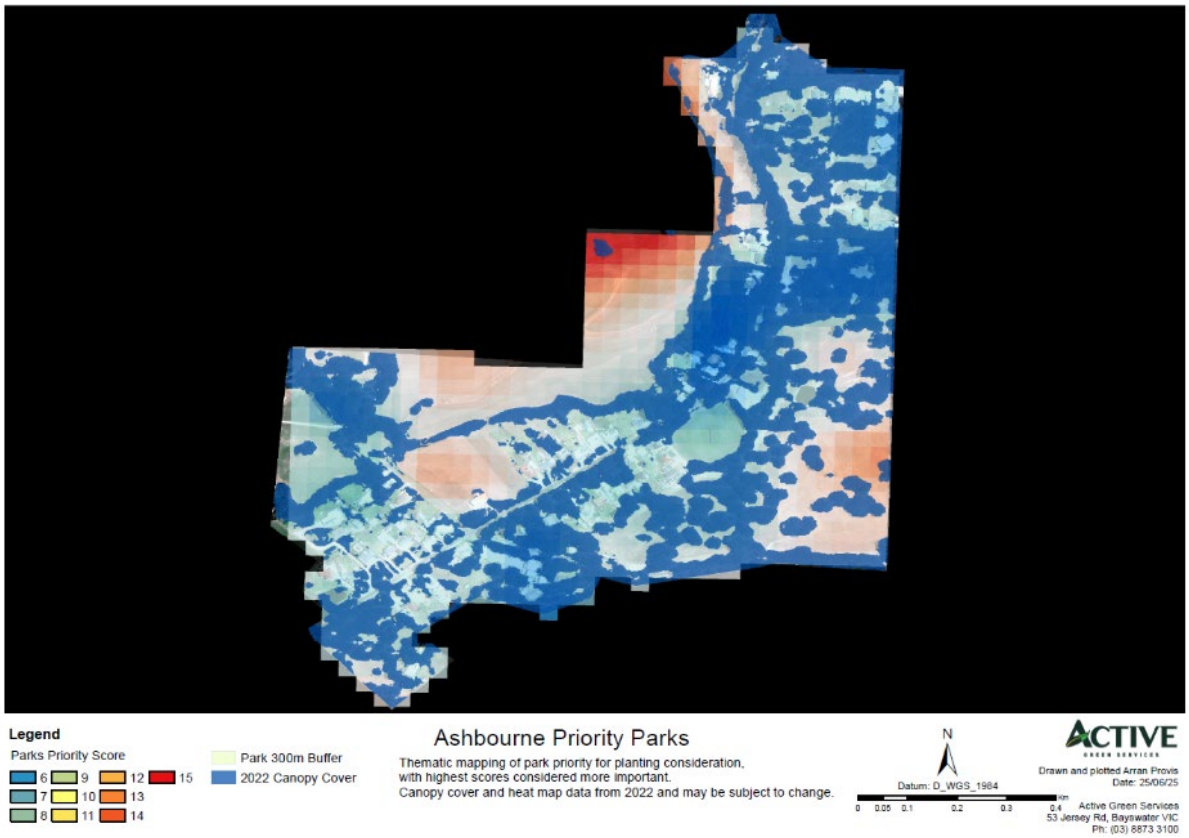

Figure 12: Map highlighting the lack of public park locations in Ashbourne.
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