

Please see our responses to questions on notice:

Green Star Certification

Question:

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: *Thank you so much for coming and for your submission. I'm curious about the final substantive paragraph in the Randwick submission. It says, "By encouraging Green Star certified buildings, research has shown these developments typically use 66 per cent less electricity" et cetera, which sounds very positive. I wondered what the source for that research was, and if you don't know, you can take on it on very positive. I wondered what the source for that research was, and if you don't know, you can take on it on notice.*

Response:

I can confirm that the comment relating to 66% reduction in electricity was from Page 9 of the document titled 'Green Star in Focus: The business case' prepared by the Green Building Council, Australia. This document also contains other additional facts:

- 36% of final energy use comes from construction and operation of buildings
- 39% of greenhouse gas emissions are generated by the world's built environment
- a Green Star rated building produces 55% fewer greenhouse gas emissions

The information portal of the Green Building Council contains a [project directory](#) which shows 4,609 certified projects across Australia (accessed 20.4.24)



Compliance with Tree planting requirements

Question

The Hon. Anthony D'Adam: *The trees that ultimately get planted might be saplings, and there is no way of assessing, I suppose, the viability of those. After 12 months, they might comply. They put a sapling in and it dies in a heatwave, and then there's no follow-through, is there?*

Whilst development consent conditions often require landscaping and tree planting to be completed prior to occupation of a building (in accordance with submitted landscape plans), there is no current legislative process that authorises inspections by Council officers after occupation certificate is issued, to validate future compliance with landscaping or any other conditions on an approval. In many instances, a private certifier inspects and issues the occupation certificate and Council would not be aware if conditions have been complied with, or trees removed or have not survived after occupation certificate, unless it has come to Council's attention. Council will follow up any breaches of development consent conditions if it becomes aware of any non-compliances and will contact the owner/applicant. In the case of Complying Development, it is a private certifier who undertakes the inspection before issuing an occupation certificate and Council is not involved at any stage. In limited

circumstances where replacement planting is critical – such as to compensate for the loss of large trees, in environmentally sensitive zones, or, when trees have been illegally removed, Council has customised conditions that require either a site inspection/certification of re-planting prior to occupation certificate is issued by a certifier– or, applicants are required to submit written reports with photos to Council (for periods of say 3-5-10 years) proving that the planting is being maintained in the correct manner for the specified time frame, before the condition is deemed to have been satisfied.

In order to address this issue appropriately, it is necessary first to establish what the data shows in relation to either removal of trees or trees not surviving after development approval is issued, so as to justify policy or regulatory actions. It is also relevant to consider the extent to which there is significant tree removal prior to an application for new development being lodged with Council or a certifier.

Given that mature tree growth can take upwards of 5 years, appropriate resourcing and funding would be required to ensure sustained and regular inspections can be carried out by councils where appropriate. Depending on further examination of data in this area, possible future policy approaches could include:

- application of a security bond via a condition of consent, refunded after a specified timeframe once a tree has reached a specified height (noting potential for ownership changing hands)
- require private certifiers to inspect properties 12-24 months after occupation certificate is issued in relation to tree growth/presence
- introduce legislative provisions giving power to councils to require tree planting when trees have been removed or have not survived
- introduce a rebate system for tree purchases on any land (like the sustainability rebates) to encourage tree planting on private property
- improving community awareness and education on environmental benefits of tree planting and suitable species selection for different environments
- increase fines for tree removal

Randwick City Council has recently strengthened requirements within its development control plan (DCP) in relation to tree planting in the front and rear of land. However, with increased housing growth and reduced subdivision size, significant tree planting will be harder to achieve in the future on private land and council's/state agencies will need to divest more and more resources on tree planting on public land.

Information provided on the Randwick Council website includes how Council protects trees, how to report tree vandalism and protecting trees during development. In circumstances where there is insufficient space for mature tree planting, offset planting may be required on public land as a condition of development consent. To help co-ordinate and facilitate the proper management of trees on both public and private property and to ensure that appropriate tree care standards are complied with in the maintenance and management of tree assets, Council has produced a [Tree Management Technical Manual](#).

Tree Canopy Data

PHILIPA VEITCH: *At Randwick council, we are trying to monitor tree canopy. I believe we do have some type of software in place. I would have to take that question on notice.*

Response: Council has access to Nearmap which provides aerial imagery including vegetation cover at reasonably high resolution. All councils in NSW can obtain tree canopy data from the Central Resource for Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data in NSW ([SEED](#)). The current dataset and imagery shows the percentage of canopy cover by LGA and suburb 2019 and 2022. Council is focusing on increasing tree planting on public land and investigating other suitable methodologies and services to assist in tracking tree canopy over time and to inform future planting priorities and locations. More regular tree data updates and information on tree species would greatly assist councils in monitoring, enforcement/regulatory actions, statutory assessments and undertaking urban forest strategies, masterplans and precinct plans. The NSW Government's SEED resource should be enhanced to allow for identification of tree species and provide information on tree health. This would be of value to all councils in NSW.

Please let me know if further information or clarification is needed.

Regards

Stella Agagiotis
Manager, Strategic Planning
Randwick City Council

