



THE INSTITUTE OF FORESTERS OF AUSTRALIA & AUSTRALIAN FOREST GROWERS

Submission to National Capital Authority

Tree Management Policy

31 March 2020

The Institute of Foresters of Australia & Australian Forest Growers (IFA/AFG) is pleased to make this submission to the National Capital Authority.

About the IFA/AFG

The IFA/AFG is the professional body representing over 1000 members who are forest scientists, professionals and managers operating in all aspects of forest and natural resource management, including forest conservation, throughout Australia.

Forestry professionals, informed by the science of natural resource management, play a crucial role in shaping the future of forests, including plantation forests and farm forestry projects. We advocate balanced land use that meets society's needs for sustainable forest management, timber supply, and conservation outcomes.

The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) and Australian Forest Growers (AFG) merged in early 2019. This new merged identity represents all segments of the forestry profession, including public and private practitioners and growers. Members are engaged in many aspects of forestry, nature conservation, resource and land management, research, administration and education.

Many members of the ACT and Region Division of the IFA/AFG have professional experience or conduct research relevant to the management of Canberra's urban trees

Submission

The IFA/AFG welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the development of the NCA Tree Management Policy. We are encouraged to see the value the NCA is assigning to the trees for which it is responsible, and the "stretch" goals identified in the draft Policy. We also complement the NCA on its promotion of citizen science engagement and improved information handling and governance in the context of the Tree Management Policy.

The IFA/AFG supports the policy objectives outlined in the strategy; we suggest that it would be appropriate and helpful to explicitly add "social" to the list of values which the Policy recognises: "collective heritage, environmental, *social* and economic values."

We are concerned about the feasibility of some of the policy targets, and about possible tradeoffs between them. Specifically:

Policy 1.3 includes a goal to increase canopy cover from 33% to 40% by 2030 - ie within the next 10 years. That is an increase in canopy cover of 21% over the current (mostly) mature canopy. If no current trees died and you could plant new trees of the same average size as the current estate (ie very advanced plantings), that would require about $(21\% \times 18,000)$ 4,000 trees or 400 trees/year. Of course, it is unlikely you could plant anything larger than something like the advanced plantings used in the light rail (2-5 m tall), but these would have 2 or 3 orders of magnitude less canopy cover than mature trees - although they may approach the size of mature canopies over 20-30 years. So, to



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reach your 40% target by 2030, you'd need to plant thousands of trees per year (and then either thin them out or significantly over-achieve your targets by 2040+). We question whether that is a feasible scenario?

Policy 2.5 Maintaining a 1:1 removal:replant ratio. As above, replantings will have substantially less canopy cover compared to a mature tree, so the ratio of 1:1 will lead to a reduction in canopy cover (which may reverse over the decades depending on the health/vitality of the replacements). You may need to consider something more like 1:1:10 - one removal:one replacement on site:ten additional plantings (i.e.as an offset)

In this context, we suggest that the NCA should have a policy on removals - some commitment to the "highest" or "best" use of removed tree / wood, especially uses that acknowledge the history and context of the removed material.

Policy 2.6 and the promotion of species and environments that enhance wildlife. We agree that this is a generally positive objective, but local native wildlife are most likely adapted to eucalypts, which already exceed your recommended percentage thresholds, so it is unlikely that (m)any of the new planting could include these local tree species. We think it is worth considering further how to balance the need for tree species diversity with planting that enhances wildlife and contributes to the canopy cover?

Section 5 policies acknowledge the importance of the treed landscape with its stories and shared values. However, none of the policies mention the value that the colourful deciduous species have in the overall landscape or the role of colour in the original landscape plans submitted by the Griffins. Although the application of Policy 5.4 may result in a mix of colourful deciduous trees and evergreens, it may be helpful to include an explicit reference to mixes of evergreen, deciduous, native and exotic in Policy 5.3

Further comment and contacts

If you have any queries on this submission, please contact Assoc Prof Cris Brack, a member of the ACT and Region IFA/ACT Committee who prepared this submission on behalf of the IFA/AFG: p 0437 796 600; e Cris.Brack@anu.edu.au.

The ACT and Region Division of the IFA/AFG would be pleased to contribute further to the development of the NCA Tree Management Policy. We look forward to continuing dialogue about the Policy.

Yours sincerely

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Co-Chairs, ACT & Region

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