



Chris Steel MLA

Minister for City Services
Minister for Community Services and Facilities
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Minister for Roads
Member for Murrumbidgee

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter 19 March 2019 regarding petition Nos 1-19 and 7-19 lodged by Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA regarding tree decline.

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) is responsible for the management and maintenance of more than 760,000 trees on public land and streets within urban areas of the ACT. Street trees are a significant part of the public urban landscape of Canberra and provide many benefits, including reduced cooling costs, increased property values, reduction in glare and the effects of wind and solar radiation, stormwater management, reduction in air pollution, improvement of biodiversity, natural beauty, visual interest and public and private amenity.

Tree removals from the urban forest in the 2017-18 financial year consisted of approximately 3,000 trees. These included some 2,000 juvenile trees identified as dead or missing (removed by persons unknown). Approximately 1,450 plantings were undertaken in the same period, and it must be considered that the juvenile tree losses are from three years of planting programs and did not represent the loss of a mature canopy.

As part of the 2019-2020 ACT Budget, the Government has committed funding to undertake the largest tree planting of the century with more than 17,000 trees to be planted across our city over the coming years.

This will renew and enhance our urban forest, and fill the gaps in our city's canopy coverage.

The Government will begin these plantings while we prepare an Urban Forest Strategy to be developed within 12 months, which will set out a pathway to meet canopy targets, build the resilience of Canberra's green canopy and ensure that Canberra remains a liveable city in the future.

The ACT Government places great value on the role of trees in the urban environment and takes a very conservative approach to requests to remove a tree located on public land. Trees that appear to be healthy and sound or that can be appropriately managed through selective pruning will be

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retained where possible. However, ensuring public safety is not compromised by the presence of trees within the urban areas is a high priority and decisions relating to the management of trees are based on meeting this objective. TCCS employs a team of skilled and experienced staff to undertake tree assessments and determine the appropriate management action.

The ACT Government is committed to replacement planting programs and is investigating options for increased planting, including opportunities for greater community involvement to leverage the enthusiasm and energy of many residents to assist with this important task.

Thank you for raising this matter. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Chris Steel MLA
Minister for City Services

18 JUN 2019