

Lesley Mackillop



To the Expert Review Panel,

Dear Panel Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about the loss of trees in the Mitcham Council area.

My key concerns are the loss of both large and small trees and the effect of this loss on birds and other wildlife.

When we bought this property in mid 2017 we could barely see another house from our balcony. The garden was busy with birds, brush tail possums, ring tail possums and even a koala who visited us regularly. Within a year of our arrival the house at the bottom of our garden was sold and the new owners decided to remove a magnificent gum tree in order to put in a swimming pool. The environment changed for all the surrounding properties; we became more exposed to the sun, the birds and animals slowly disappeared. Since then several properties in the area have been sold. On both sides of us the houses were demolished and every tree, bush and blade of grass was removed.

Slowly but steadily the trees that made Blackwood a delightful place to live, where we could walk in the shade and enjoy being so close to wildlife has disappeared as new houses appear which are built with no thought to sustainability or the environment.



2017. Trees on adjoining property with visiting koala.



2022. All trees removed from neighbouring properties. There is now a swimming pool behind the fence.

I urge you to reconsider the 10 metre and 20 metre Rules to better protect trees.

Heritage places and objects are protected by law; the appeal and the value to the public of a man-made structure is considered carefully before any alteration or repair can be undertaken. Yet a magnificent old tree can be removed at the whim of the house-owner with no consideration to its value to the environment, wildlife, adjoining property owners or the value to the area.

Please reconsider the definition of a regulated tree. A tree with a trunk circumference of 50 cm is a substantial tree. It is host to many birds who live below the canopy. If such trees are thoughtlessly chopped down, they will never grow into big canopy trees, or even much needed smaller trees.



This medium size tree offers shade and food for birds.



This seedling will take many years to be achieve the same goal.

Please introduce strict rules that require homeowners and developers to pay a substantial financial contribution for the loss of each tree (over 50 cm circumference) that they remove, including for tree species that are presently exempt.



This tree provides much needed shade, cools the street and is a habitat for birds.



This tree will eventually be of interest to insects and birds, but will never provide shade.

If homeowners and developers are instructed to replant, they will simply plant a small tree which will, if it is cared for and survives, take decades to grow into a tree that offer the same benefits as the one that was chopped down.

The published evidence is clear; we need to protect both large and smaller plants and we urgently need to increase the tree canopy that we have. Refer to links below for more information:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-06/sa-adelaide-tree-canopy-shrinking/100886770?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-02/adelaide-tree-canopy-subject-of-new-parliamentary-inquiry/101723682?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web

For these reasons I urge the panel to make recommendations that match interstate practice. Allowing councils greater say over protecting trees would also meet community expectations for their local area.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Mackillop