



Arborists caring for Canberra's trees

Hear from a tree expert about the benefits of new tree protection laws

Canberra's landscape is enhanced by the trees and plants in public spaces and in our gardens. Our majestic eucalypts, beautiful autumn leaves and spring blossoms are part of our identity as the bush capital.

What we enjoy today is the result of a century of care and investment. But Canberra's landscape is facing new challenges. Our trees are aging, our population is growing, our weather is changing, and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and intense.

In the face of a changing climate, trees in our cities are more important than ever. New tree protection laws have been developed to ensure all Canberrans can enjoy the benefits of trees and to make our city more resilient to the effects of climate change.

The challenge

Urban areas that are sparsely vegetated experience hotter temperatures during the day and at night. This is known as the "urban heat island effect". In summer, the night-time temperature can be around 8°C warmer in Canberra's built-up areas than in surrounding rural areas.

As Canberra's population grows, more houses need to be built within the city's existing footprint. Without the right rules in place, a more densely populated Canberra could end up with fewer trees. This would increase the urban heat island effect and make our community less resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The action

New laws have been developed to protect the trees that protect us. Arborists will be essential to the success of our new tree protection measures.



Ryan, an ACT Government Tree Protection Officer with twenty years of experience as an arborist in the private sector, is well qualified to speak about the new laws.

"The new rules say that you can't remove a tree over a certain size without approval. Basically, by reducing the size of the trees that are now protected, more trees will be protected," said Ryan.

"People often assume that if they are going into a tree protection zone, that's it – you can't do it. But if you're using tree sensitive measures, you can do it. We can make minor encroachments on the tree protection zone and have both – have the house and have the tree.

"Hopefully people will start realising that trees aren't an obstacle – we can do things around the trees and enjoy the benefits they bring.

"Whether it be developers, whether it be builders, whether it be the homeowners, the new rules will make people stop and think. Can they remove that tree if they want to, or can they just prune it? If they really must remove a tree, how can new trees enhance their project?"

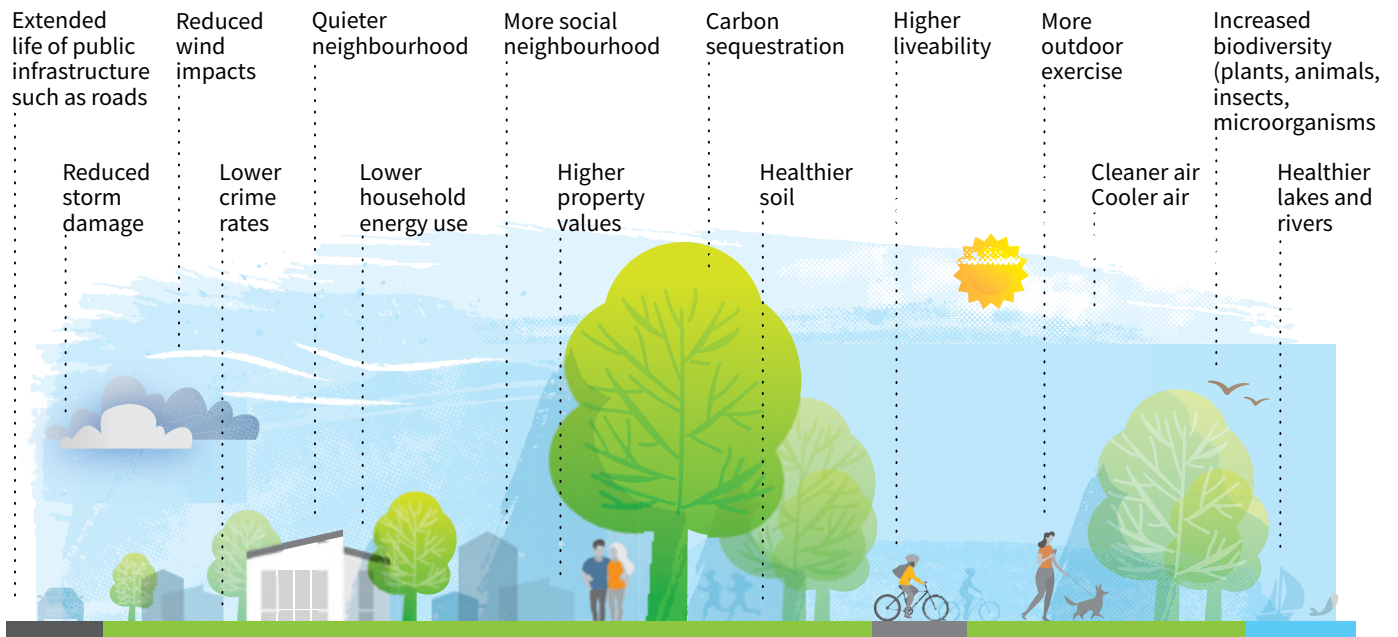
"I think generally Canberrans are going to appreciate the impacts of the new tree protection rules. The rules are going to allow us to stay the Bush Capital."



The benefit

The new laws will increase the number and size of trees in our urban environment.

Benefits of trees in the urban environment



Help protect trees, so they can protect us

From 1 January 2024, the [Urban Forest Act](#) will be in place to ensure our city's trees are protected as Canberra continues to grow.

This new legislation will more than double the number of protected trees on private land, and provides increased protection for both private and public trees. You cannot do work to or around a protected tree that may cause damage to it and must get approval for work such as tree removal and pruning, utility maintenance or installation and building or landscape construction.

Protected trees

A tree on private land is protected if it:

- is 8m or taller
- has a canopy 8m or wider
- has a trunk circumference of 1m or more at 1.4m above natural ground level
- is a registered tree – that is, the tree has been identified as being of exceptional value and is listed in the ACT Tree Register
- is a dead native tree on leased land that at 1.4m above natural ground level has a trunk circumference of at least 1.88m
- was planted in the last five years as part of a Canopy Contribution Agreement.



Trees approved for removal must be replaced or, where new planting is not possible, a financial contribution must be made to plant more trees. A qualified arborist will be able to advise you on your tree options.



Find out more www.act.gov.au/treeprotection

