

Reduction in environmentally sustainable development and tree canopy coverage due to planning reforms

Planning amendment VC267 has 'turned off' City of Whittlesea planning policies which will result in reduced tree canopy coverage, reduced sustainability outcomes and poor infill housing outcomes.

In response to loss of tree canopy coverage and poor infill housing outcomes, the City of Whittlesea undertook strategic research to provide for more trees, landscaping and environmentally sustainable development (ESD) outcomes.

Total urban tree canopy cover for the established areas of the municipality in 2017 was 7.97%, well below the target set by Plan for Victoria of 30% by 2050.



We are calling on the Victorian State Government to:

- ▶ Reverse recent changes to planning provisions that remove the ability for councils to achieve good design outcomes in development approvals (such as the deletion of tree and landscaping controls in the schedules to the City of Whittlesea's residential zones)
- ▶ Ensure greater tree canopy coverage in open space and private developments is achieved in densifying established areas, growth areas and activity centres
- ▶ Strengthen sustainability standards for townhouses and low-rise residential development by reinstating ESD provisions

BENEFITS



More sustainable housing,

leading to longer-term energy and water cost savings for residents



Mitigate the impacts of climate change

through the reduction of urban heat island effects and construction of high-quality homes



Increase canopy tree coverage

in urban areas



City of Whittlesea

Case study 1:

Reduced tree canopy coverage for infill housing

- The City of Whittlesea's schedules to the General Residential Zone included local variations to increase landscaping and tree canopy coverage
- These variations have been removed as part of Amendments VC267 and VC282



Townhouse development to the left (8 Wattle Street, Thomastown)

- Approved in accordance with the City of Whittlesea's local policy
- Consistent 5-metre setback along the rear boundary allowing for a 'green spine' of open space and greenery
- Each secluded private open space (backyard) is larger with a minimum 5-metre setback to the side or rear boundary and a minimum 40 square metres
- Light colour roof to reduce urban heat island effect
- Space in the front of the site for canopy tree planting
- Development allows for more tree-planting and open space, while allowing for an increase in much-needed housing

Townhouse development to the right (10 Wattle Street, Thomastown)

- Approved before implementation of the City of Whittlesea's local policy
- Four dwellings constructed on a larger lot
- Inconsistent rear setback and impermeable roof structures
- Minimal space along the side and rear for tree canopy planting
- Small secluded private open space (backyards)
- Dark colour roof

Figure 1: A comparison of two developments, Wattle Street

Case study 2:

Reduced environmentally sustainable development outcomes for infill housing



Figure 3: Endorsed plans and environmentally sustainable development initiatives for a townhouse development at 5 Plane Street, Thomastown

Example of initiatives that could be negotiated under Clause 15.01-2 and now removed by Amendment VC267 are:

- Water-efficient gardens (irrigated by rainwater)
- External lighting sensors
- Double-glazed windows
- Solar photovoltaic systems (solar panels)
- Bicycle spaces
- Light colour roof
- Rainwater tank connection to toilets, laundry and gardens
- Higher Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) rating