

# Canopy Cover in Unley

April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018 Councillor workshop Civic Centre

30 visitors were in the gallery.

Michael Hewitson

**The aim of this workshop is**

- 1. to understand why we are losing our tree cover and**
- 2. to give our staff ideas to be developed into a report to council to enable tree cover on private land to be a feature of Unley.**

# Benchmark

## 26% canopy cover in 2013

Based on national survey

Includes public and private land

Highest canopy of any urban council without hills face zone



# State Government Policy

- The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide (2016) has a target to increase green cover by 20% across metropolitan Adelaide by 2045.
- For The City of Unley with a benchmark of 26%, this means an increase to 31.2% by 2045.

## 30-YEAR PLAN FOR GREATER ADELAIDE

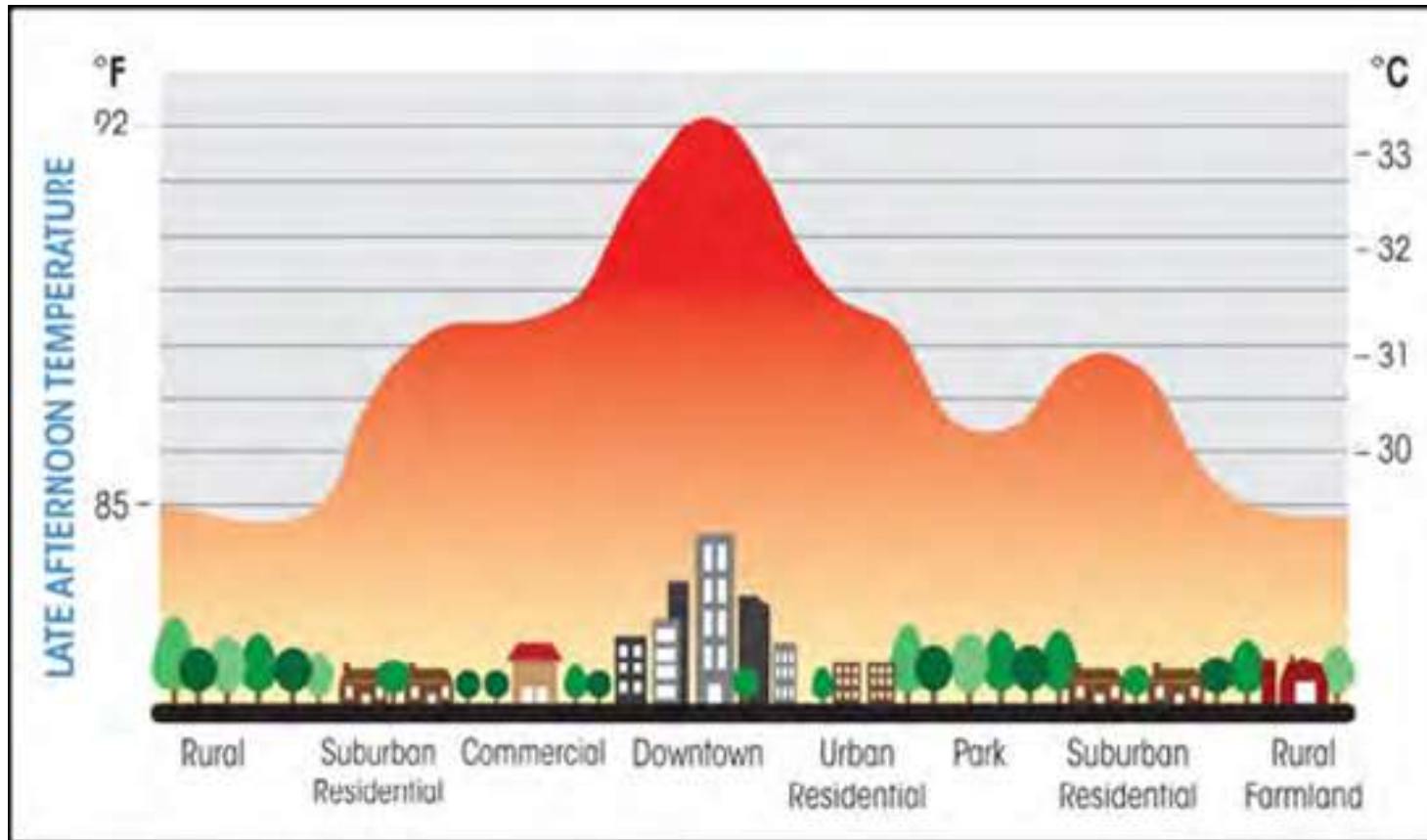
Draft for Consultation | 2016 Update



Government of South Australia  
Department of Planning,  
Transport and Infrastructure

# We know we need Trees

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## To clean and cool air. OUR AIR CONDITIONERS

Increasing canopy cover around a house reduces cooling costs and reduce watering costs in the hotter months.

I would estimate a reduction of hundreds of dollars per annum for an average house.

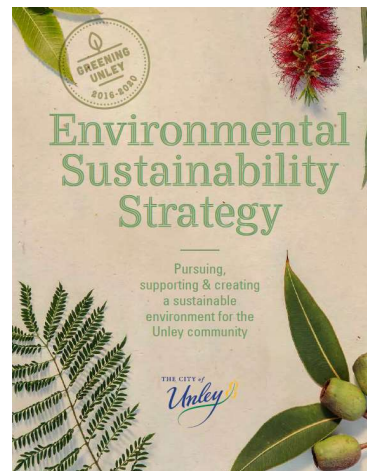
Impact on the valuation of a house. An absence of trees certainly will reduce the value of a house - by tens of thousands of dollars. [Landscape and Urban Planning Research Paper \(2012\). The effect of street trees on property value in Perth, Western Australia](#)

Michael Hewitson



# City of Unley we have the words in plans

- Four Year Delivery Plan 2017 – 2021
  - Objective 2.1 : Unley's urban forest is maintained and improved
    - 2.1a **Maintain at least 26% tree canopy cover in the city.**
    - 2.1b **Advocate for development controls that support the protection of significant and regulated trees.**
- Supported through the Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Tree Strategy



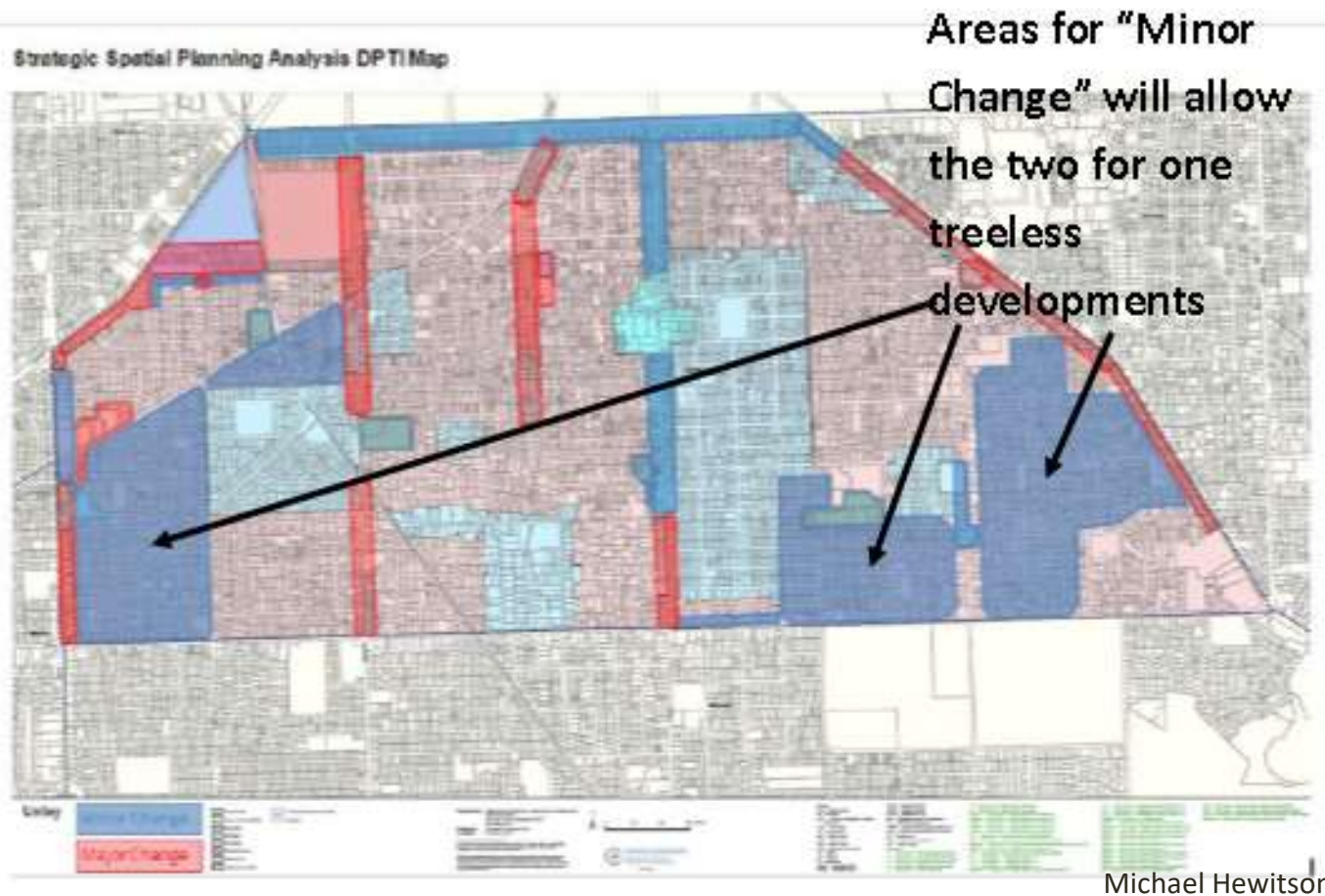
# Losing Canopy

- National Survey repeated in 2017
- City of Unley now with 22% canopy cover
- Indicates 4% loss over last 4 years



*A Perth example showing the loss of vegetation through urban infill*

# Unley has DPTI change now!





# Fullarton 2018 not just Perth

All the  
fine  
words in  
our  
planning  
rules  
mean  
nothing  
in  
practice



2018



2017

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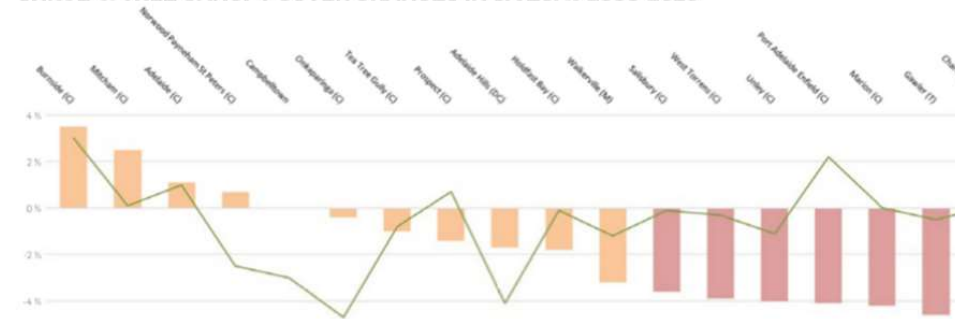
# Unley loses -4% Tree cover but

Mitcham  
Burnside  
Adelaide  
Norwood-  
Payneham-  
St Peters

All Gained  
**1-4%**  
Increase  
Tree Canopy  
Cover

KEY STATISTICS	2009*	2016	
Tree Canopy Cover	21.37%	19.45%	1.92% Loss
Shrub Cover	5.92%	5.23%	0.69% Loss
Grass Cover	32.08%	32.1%	0.02% Gain
Hard Surface	40.63%	43.2%	2.57% Increase

SHRUB & TREE CANOPY COVER CHANGES IN SA LGAs 2009-2016



GREEN COVER GAIN & LOSS IN SA LGAs 2009-2016



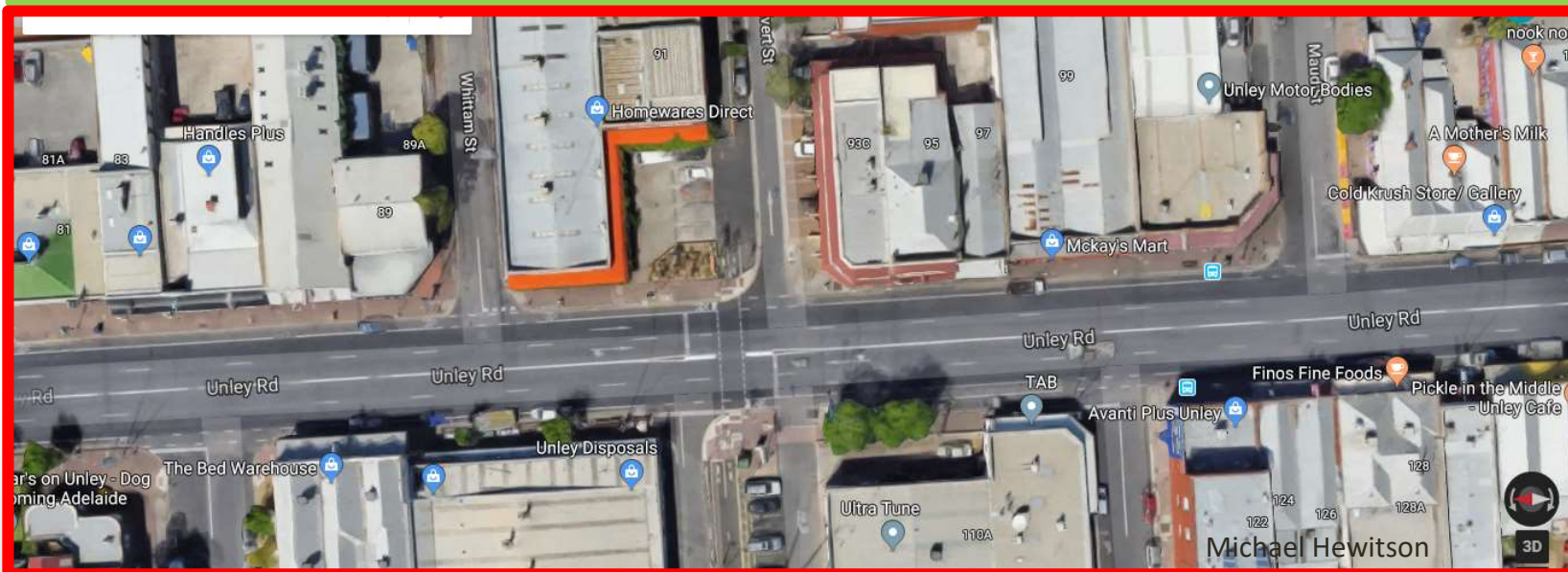
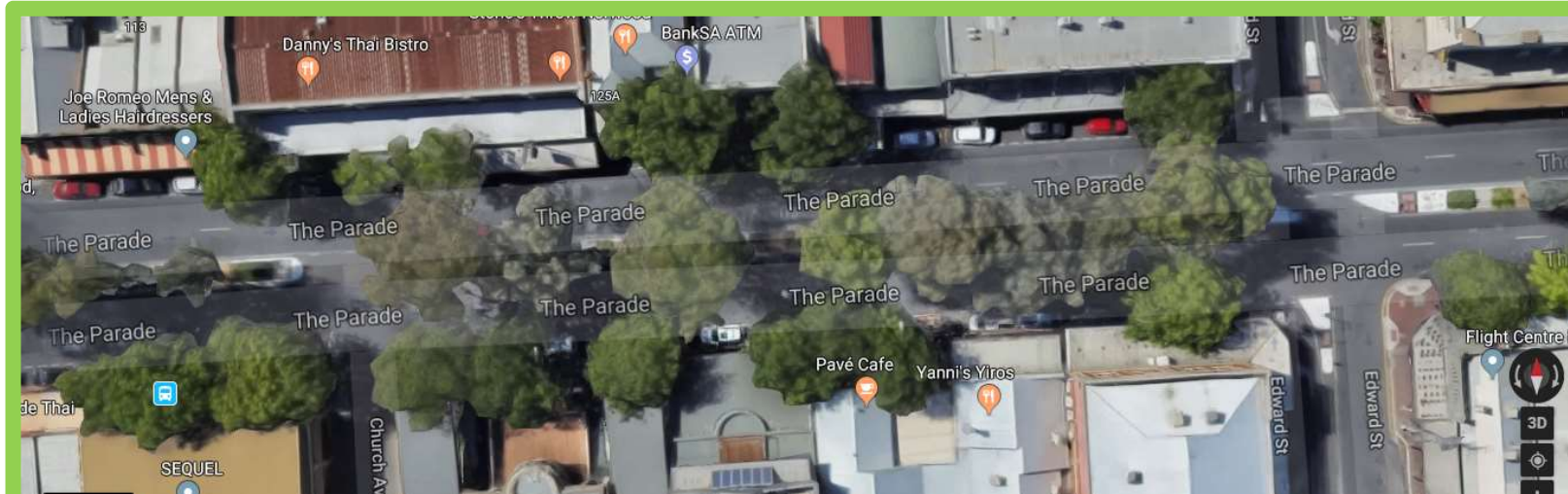
\* From 'Benchmarking Australia's Urban Tree Canopy: An i-Tree Assessment'

STRALIA

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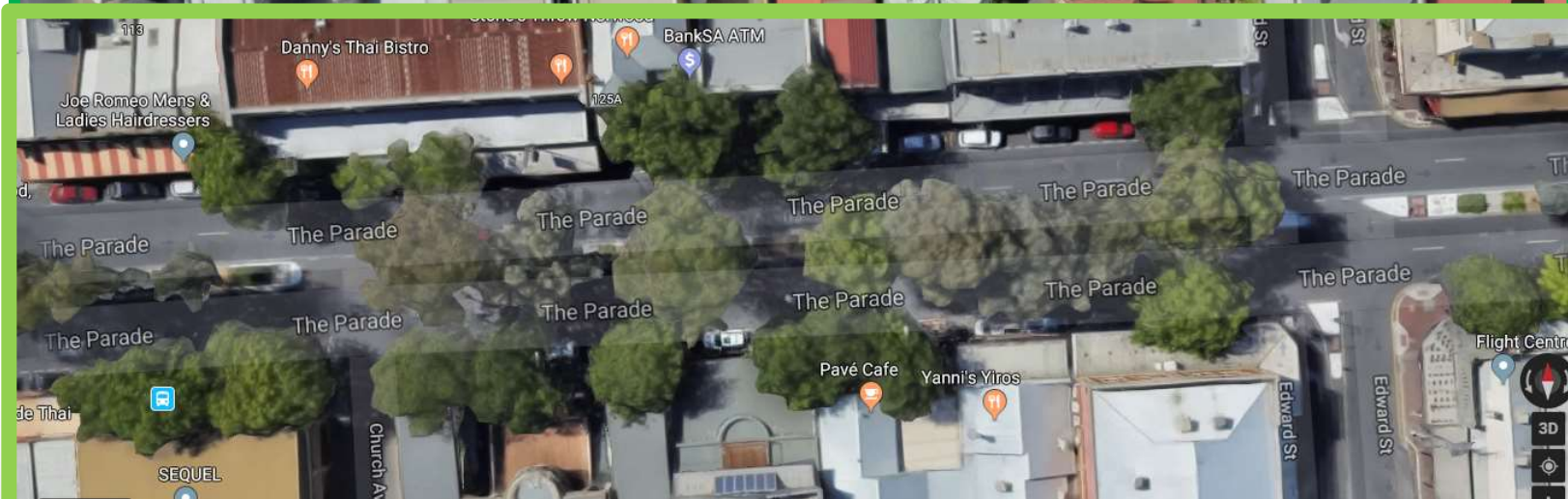
# Lets Compare

## Which is Unley & Norwood Pde?





# Norwood The Parade 3 rows of trees



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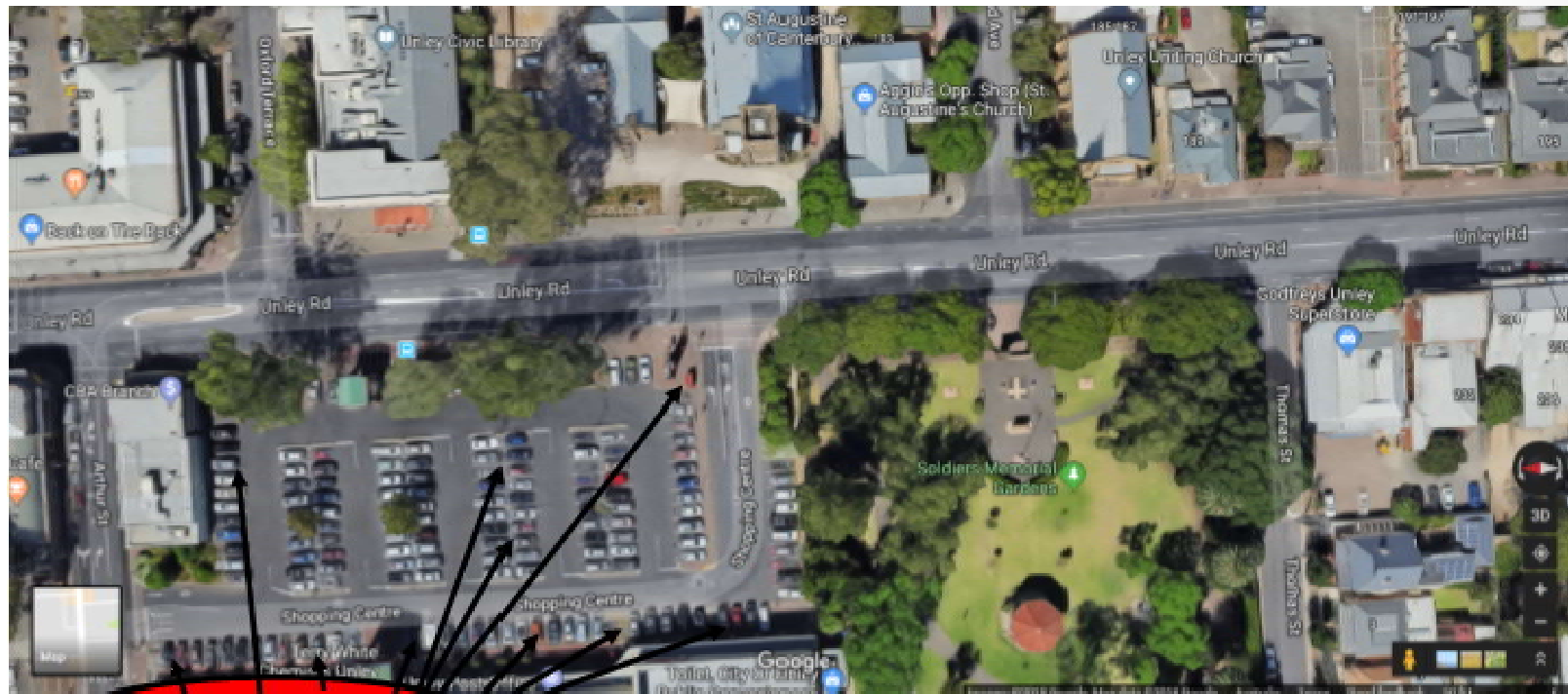
# Unley Road We plan to do better



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# Our Best Look at Private Land!



Car Park could be shady

**Private Land**

**Public Land**

# Council Action on our land

- Street Tree Replacement Program
  - Proactive and strategic
  - Does create a time lag in canopy recovery
- Planting more than removing

## STREET TREE RENEWAL PROGRAM YEAR 1 - 5 (2016-21)

Year 1 - 2016/17		Year 2 - 2017/18	
Removals	Replace	Proposed Removals	Total Replace
361	576	340	594

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# More Council Action.. or just words?

- **Investigating shared streets**
  - We were doing this when I joined Council in 2006
  - **Action:.....** In 2018 we still have one! (Cambridge Tce 1900's)
- **Detailed study of changes over time between private and public land and across suburbs**
  - Better understand, plan and prioritise effort.
  - **Report April/May 2018**
  - **Action: We are acting to actually measure our performance against our targets.**

Michael Hewitson

# We have failed

- **In both of our stated objectives.....**
- Four Year Delivery Plan 2017 – 2021
  - Objective 2.1 : Unley's urban forest is maintained and improved
    - **2.1a Maintain at least 26% tree canopy cover in the city.**
    - **2.1b Advocate for development controls that support the protection of significant and regulated trees.**



# Concern is wide spread

“The time has come for me to say how absolutely appalled I am with the whole process of the tree removal and pruning of the second tree at 47 Fairford Street.” Anne Wharton...



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## 2.1b **Advocate for development controls that support the protection of significant and regulated trees.**

Our existing controls actually encourage the destruction of future trees and we have voted against change..... for example.....

- ITEM 566 MOTION ON NOTICE FROM COUNCILLOR HEWITSON RE FUTURE GREENING MOVED
- Councillor Hewitson SECONDED Councillor Palmer
- **That: The City of Unley notes the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide Update 2015 is contemplating a tree canopy cover target of 20%, acknowledging Unley Council maintaining its target of 26%. Further to this, Unley wishes to seek a meaningful level of green infrastructure in new development as a key contribution with wider Council public realm initiatives in the overall future greening of all our suburbs, centres and city.**
- **To support these outcomes, the State Government be encouraged and Unley Council staff be asked to investigate, as part of the development of the new Planning and Design Code, the inclusion of design principles and mandatory criteria to underpin attainment of desired greening targets. The resources and expertise of Unley Council be invited to contribute to the development of an effective new sustainable and green development policy, for at least, but not exclusive to, the City of Unley. Unley Council staff to report progress in the October meeting.**
- The MOTION was put and LOST DIVISION
- A Division was called and the previous decision set aside. Those voting in the affirmative Councillors Smolucha, Palmer, Hewitson and Hughes.
- Those voting in the negative Councillors Schnell, Boisvert, Salaman, Hudson, Koumi, Lapidge, Sangster and Rabbitt. The MOTION was declared LOST



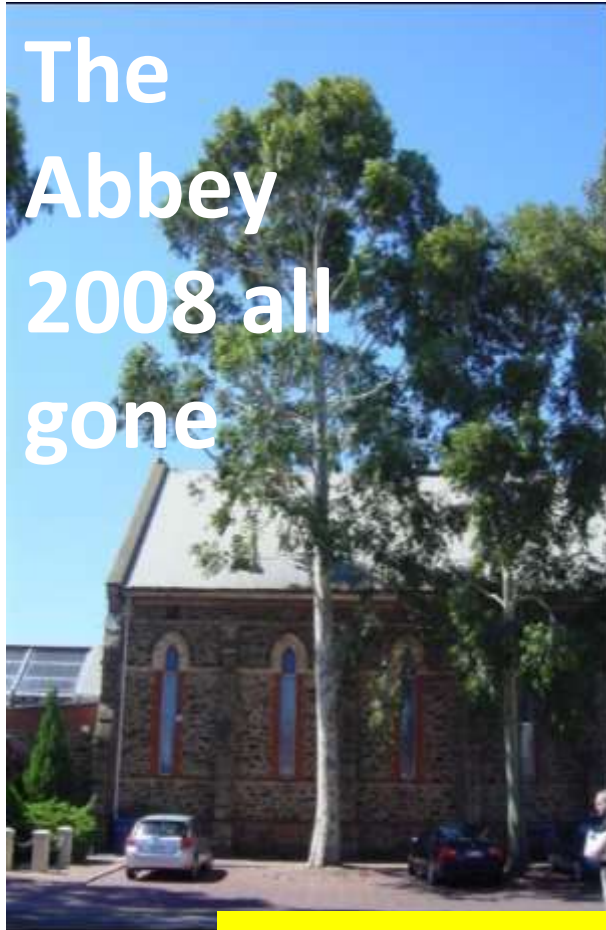
# Forget the trees?....other people's trees give you value!



"I am less than enthused about so-called 'green walls'. They may be fine in principle, but in practice there must be regular care and maintenance. I've seen a few around Adelaide that have simply died " Anne C

# Existing Commercial Properties

**The  
Abbey  
2008 all  
gone**



## **Problem**

If owners kept these trees they would become significant.... The root area is valuable land

They must cut them down now

And they did...three months before they became significant.



**We are ensuring private land owners chop the future trees down.**

Michael Hewitson



# Private Land - Ideas to Grow

## How can we support private commercial and residential land owners to retain and plant trees?

On new developments ?

On Existing?

Commercial Property?

Residential Property

High rise?



Michael Hewitson

# Idea 1: Pre-significant Tree Register

## •Potential Significant Tree Register. A win/ win

- Why not enable people with potential significant trees to retain control if they register them before they are significant?
- People who have a potential significant tree can register it for 10 years and retain their control of the tree for this time. The tree must not be significant at the time of registration. This would encourage owners worried about the future to have 10 years grace. After this time it becomes significant unless registration is formally extended for the next ten years.
- The owner wins because they can retain the tree without risk.
- The community wins because the tree would otherwise have been removed. The owner who bothered to register it was already thinking about future liability.
- A small fee e.g. \$10.00 should easily cover the cost of keeping a computer register of potential significant trees and provide a receipt of the trees' registration.

ISSUE..... should it be 20 years or more?

## Solution: 2 Existing Commercial

**When private individual land owners are better off financially, we can expect these trees to be kept.**

**If all new developments were required to have half of the overall city target of 26% tree canopy cover then these trees would have commercial value on all existing properties as pictured!**



# Ideas: Using Rates: idea 3

- New Developments

- Mandatory 13% tree cover for planning approval
- Rates increase by the % below 13% while the newly planted trees grow.

- Existing properties

- If a property has more than double our eventual target of 30%, 60% they receive a 10% ? Rate remission...



# Ideas you want to be explored

Cr Michael Rabbitt Michael Hewitson Luke Smolucha

- Ideas from the workshop that we would want staff to consider when developing a paper for Council to increase and maintain tree canopy on public land for both
- New developments..... issues for our planning rules
- **mandatory percentage of tree cover for planning approvals.** Also MGH
- better design rules and increased penalties for those who do not adhere, or blatantly damage/destroy regulated/significant trees.
- 
- Existing properties
  - Pre significant tree register
  - Commercial
- rate remission for planting trees in private car parks
- Free trees provided by Council in commercial car parks
- 
- 
- Residential
- Rate reduction for properties with over 52% tree canopy cover
- Free trees provided by Council for ratepayers to plant.

# More ideas slide one

- Three areas that do present themselves for action by councils are as follows:
  - 
  - **Car parks in shopping centres, hotels, ovals etc - these could be planted with shade trees which enhances their attractiveness and makes for cooler cars. I have spoken with the management of the Unley Shopping centre about the loss of one of their trees out front and they didn't seem to be aware of it. The Council should be reminding them of their obligations for trees and make this a requirement.**
  - Main roads - as well as Unley Road, what about King William Road, Goodwood Road, Fullarton Road, Greenhill Road, Glen Osmond Road etc? These should all be lined with trees.
  - Parks and ovals - there is often opportunity to plant more trees in the parks and ovals to provide shade and enhance their appeal.
  - **In addition, Council could encourage householders to plant trees. They need to be mindful of shading solar panels of course in their selection of species and their positioning.**
  - Regarding your proposal of a Potential significant tree register, I am not clear what this will achieve. If it only applies to owners of trees which may become significant in the future and they have no intention of removing them, then why register them? It may be more beneficial for Council to provide them with some rate remission as a reward for retaining significant trees with the requirement that they be kept for perpetuity. If they are removed for development, then the remitted rates would have to be re-paid.
- 
- I hope and trust your workshop will produce good ideas.
  - Best regards
  - Andrew Lothian

# More Ideas

- ? Combine idea 1 and 2 POWERFUL

- ?

- ?

- ?

- ?

- Thank you

Will future children see trees like  
this on private land?





# Notice of Motion

- Councillor Hewitson has given notice of intention to move the following motion at the Council meeting to be held on 23 April 2018:
- **MOTION**
- **That staff develop a paper exploring options to enable Council to achieve its tree canopy objectives as set out in Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy, and the target defined in the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, with a particular focus on strategies related to private land.**
- This paper should include, but not be limited to, ideas suggested at a Council workshop on 3 April 2018, such as:
- Mandatory percentage of tree cover for planning approvals;
- Better design rules and increased penalties (for noncompliance and/or damage to regulated/significant trees);
- Establishment of a pre-significant tree register;
- Rate remission for planting trees on private land (commercial);
- Rate reduction for properties with over 52% tree canopy cover (residential);
- Provision of free/subsidised trees for planting on private land (commercial & residential)