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No: 166

Subject SUBMISSION TO THE USE OF CROWN LAND AND
PUBLIC AUTHORITY LAND

To Whom it may Concern.

**SUBMISSION TO THE USE OF CROWN LAND
AND PUBLIC AUTHORITY LAND IN KNOX**

This is a general submission and examples from this area will be included in the Planning Backlash Submission by Convenor, Mary Drost.

Crown land and public authority land are fortunately, not the only land available in the City of Knox at present however, in other areas it may well be the only land available.

People identify with the "borrowed landscape" view and feel it belongs to them because they can see it. In some cases it is actually used by them in others it is simply viewed. It engenders a feeling of space and well being in people and there have been many studies into how it enhances people's mental health and general outlook on life.

An example of this is in a recent Petition carried out in the Knoxfield area many who were bike riders reported they were unhappy with the large scale removal of trees on this type of land. In some cases they were very annoyed that the landscape they rode through was being changed.

In the light of the urgency of climate change it is so important that this land be vegetated as much as possible with preferably large indigenous trees and under-story and that existing vegetation be protected and enhanced. Not only to protect wildlife and biodiversity (wildlife in Knox is enhanced by its close proximity to the Dandenong Ranges) but also to produce rain and keep water levels stable so salinity does not become an even bigger problem in the City of Knox.

Research in New South Wales shows that salinity damage shortens the life of urban infrastructure such as roads, buildings, water and sewage pipes. This leads to costly maintenance and repair by homeowners and councils.

The movement of excess water and salt in parks and gardens can affect plant growth and cause plant death. Sports grounds and recreation areas affected by urban salinity may become bare, unattractive and unusable. Soil properties can be altered significantly making it harder to re-vegetate these areas.

In the USA studies show that when impervious land area exceeds just 10% of the total landscape, water quality and the health of urban streams starts to decline rapidly. One example of such decline is an increase in urban stream water temperatures, which degrades the habitat for fish.

Acknowledged tree expert, Dr Greg Moore, from the University of Melbourne's Burnley College, says that preserving trees is essential to our successful management of carbon emissions. Large trees are significant users of carbon dioxide and their large structures store tones of carbon. CO2 is a problem because it adds to the greenhouse effect and global warming. Trees can store carbon for perhaps many hundreds of years.

Mature trees reduce wind speed, help reduce stress on buildings, and help control air pollution by acting as filters. Trees can also help prolong the life of roads and other asphalt surfaces in towns and cities.

The shade provided by trees is really important. It prolongs, by three or four times, the life of materials like asphalt.

(You will notice that most people park their cars in the shade of a tree if available to keep it cool.)

Because Australia is one of the driest continents in the world rainfall is extremely important. While the CSIRO is currently working on adding Australian trees to a USA-produced modeling software package which will predict the value of urban forests there are no Australian figures available yet. Thus, I will finish this Submission with another USA example to show why it is so important to produce an inventory of what crown land and public authority land is currently available and what can be done with it to enhance rainfall, reduce salinity, reduce the effects of climate change on the population of Knox and enhance people's wellbeing, liveability and natural values.

“Boulder's urban forest - cataloguing tree species and grasses, measuring trunks, determining the health of the city's vegetation - and then calculating their contribution to a wide range of city functions.

The results of that study, released in 2002, showed the average canopy cover across the city of 23 per cent significantly reduced stormwater run-off, kept the city cooler and its power bills down, and soaked up dangerous greenhouse gases and car pollution.

The report estimated that during a 50-millimetre storm event Boulder's tree canopy retained stormwater roughly equivalent to the volume of a 20-storey building the size of a football field.

City-wide, the energy saved by tree shade and its effect on temperatures was worth \$US1.65 million or enough to power 4500 typical homes for a year. The trees also saved more than \$US525,000 a year in pollution removal and health care costs, while soaking up 2000 tones of carbon, the equivalent of driving about 16.1 million miles each year.

Not surprisingly, the report's authors recommended Boulder's urban forest be not just maintained but increased.”

There is also the possibility of introducing rain-gardens (another USA concept) on some of this land to reduce storm water run off which could increase sea levels.

Irene M. Fullarton