

CBD and South East Light Rail Project UNSW Campus and Adjacent Trees

Client: University of New South Wales

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Chapter 1

Tree Statement

The interfaces to both the Anzac Parade and High Street stops as proposed in TfNSW's EIS is strongly characterised by its significant tree cover.

Mature Fig plantings, particularly to Anzac Parade, High Street and Wansey Road create a distinct gateway character to the Health and Education Precinct of UNSW and the Randwick Hospitals Campus. The UNSW Significant Tree Plan identifies that the majority of the significant trees that interface with the proposed light rail stops along the boundaries of High Street and Anzac Parade have long life expectancies.

These character defining mature trees are also recognised in the Randwick City Council (RCC) Significant Tree Register.

The RCC Street Tree Master Plan (RCC STMP) locates the UNSW Kensington Campus within the Plateau, Northern Leeward Slopes and Northern Swamp Valley Floor Precincts. The Randwick Hospital Campus is located on the Plateau. The RCC STMP proposes diverse tree plantings to express each of these Precincts.

The proposed TfNSW light rail stops at UNSW High Street and UNSW Anzac Parade require the removal of several historic and significant trees. The landscape impact assessment (Hassell and ARUP) has deemed that the construction and operation of the CSELR will have high adverse landscape impacts on Wansey Road at the proposed High Street Stop. Anzac Parade and the UNSW Kensington Campus is deemed to be of regional sensitivity, due to its visual prominence in the locality of Randwick. Due to the required vegetation offset (as per the Vegetation Offset Guide by TfNSW in the EIS), a number of street trees will be removed and thus the character of UNSW's Anzac Parade frontage will change drastically. The construction and operation of the CSELR will have a high and moderate adverse landscape impact on both the Anzac Parade street trees and the UNSW Pool Lawn and University Mall. We request that the proposal be reviewed to minimise the adverse effect that the CSELR may have on its immediate surrounds.

TfNSW has committed to replacing every tree lost with eight replacement trees in the local area. We support this commitment; however, consideration must be made in regards to the replacement tree species, pot sizes and location. Where the landscape and public domain character has been disturbed as a result of the CSELR and tree removal, mature trees should be installed in the immediate vicinity and species selected which are reflective of the surrounding character and uplift the public domain. We support the landscape strategy's recommendation of planting replacement trees as close as possible to their original locations to mitigate adverse effects.

The landscape strategy in the EIS proposes several key principles for the extent of the CSELR to minimise adverse impacts on its surrounds by minimising and mitigating the loss of existing trees, promoting the use of native trees in accordance with local plans, providing improved streetscapes and enhanced public open space, and using the landscape elements as way finding elements.

The landscape strategy as compiled by Hassell lacks detail in regards to the stop character at UNSW High Street and UNSW Anzac Parade, however provides recommendations in regards to tree replacement strategies. No trees have been proposed for the UNSW High Street stop, as the Park typology planting palette consists only of grasses/tufted plants, sedges and groundcovers.

The proposed UNSW High Street stop requires the removal of historic Fig tree plantings within the Racecourse to enable the circulation of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular traffic with the proposed CSELR. The Fig trees along this boundary provide the majority of shade to the western footpath of Wansey Road, and their removal will drastically change the streetscape as well as the quality of pedestrian and cyclist journey. The strategy references the Randwick City Council Street Tree Master Plan, which has developed planting palettes based on a series of precincts, defined by landscape topography. We support the proposed use of species such as *Angophora costata* and *Eucalyptus haemastoma* or *Lophostemon confertus* as street tree planting on Wansey Road. Whilst the use of *Agathis robusta* would certainly create a distinct avenue for

the CSELR, its form and habit would not provide the amenity offered by the other species proposed.

We also support the recommendations to protect the existing Figs at the Australian Turf Club (Randwick Racecourse) and that whilst the Fig species are not referenced in any Randwick City Council STMP, that any trees requiring removal should be replaced with trees of the same species.

The Boulevard typology proposes only *Livistona australis* (Cabbage Tree Palms), with a palette of grasses/tufted plants, sedges and groundcovers which is an identical palette to that of the Park typology. The proposed species will create a clear link between the stops and throughout the CSELR corridor, however the proposal should be reconsidered to better reflect the diverse character of the landscape in which the Boulevard typology traverses. Prominent tree plantings of Figs extend from The Parklands through to the Racecourse and UNSW. We request that TfNSW consider that the use of a Palm is not an accurate reflection of the landscape, nor does it provide any amenity for pedestrians or cyclists. We support the potential use of Figs and Brush Box on the street verges, as these species would be reflective of the existing landscape character and provide amenity for both pedestrians and cyclists.

ASPECT Studios, 13th December 2013