

Urban Tree Canopy Off-set Scheme

What is Urban Tree Canopy?

The Urban Tree Canopy Overlay (the Overlay) in the Planning and Design Code promotes preservation and enhancement of urban tree canopy through the planting of new trees and/or the retention of existing trees.

What is an Off-set Scheme?

The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the Act) allows the Minister administering the Act to establish an off-setting contributions scheme.

The Urban Tree Canopy Off-set Scheme (the Scheme) supports the desired outcome of the Overlay by allowing payment into the Urban Tree Canopy Off-set Fund (the Fund) under the Scheme in lieu of planting and/or retaining the required trees on-site in “designated areas”. This ensures that, in cases where tree planting may not be feasible with new housing due to soil type or limited building setbacks, money can instead be invested in tree planting and greening of public parks and reserves.

What areas are designated?

While the Overlay affects most residential areas in metropolitan Adelaide, the Scheme only operates in a few zones or areas where tree planting is less feasible as follows:

- Housing Diversity Neighbourhood Zone
- Urban Renewal Neighbourhood Zone
- City Living Zone
- any site with a ‘Designated Soil Type’ as described in the Scheme.

See Figure 1 below which illustrates the location of the Urban Tree Canopy Overlay and Zones where the Scheme applies.



Figure 1. Indicative location of the Urban Tree Canopy Overlay and Zones where the Scheme applies

Do I have to pay a contribution?

No contribution is payable into the Fund if the development:

- is not in a designated area for the purposes of the Scheme
- is in a designated area, but does not propose a new dwelling
- is in a designated area and incorporates dwellings, but sufficient trees are being planted and/or retained on site in accordance with the Overlay criteria.

Essentially, the Scheme operates on a flexible arrangement whereby an applicant can elect to pay into the Fund in lieu of providing the required number of tree(s) on-site, but this option is only available in designated areas.

How much is payable under the Scheme?

The amount payable to the Fund is based on the extent of any shortfall in the provision of trees on the development site multiplied by the contribution rate assigned to a tree under the Scheme).

The [Scheme](#) sets out different rates based on tree size which, as at March 2021, are:

Tree Size	Rate (\$ per tree)
Small	\$300
Medium	\$600
Large	\$1,200

The Overlay includes specifications about tree size (e.g. mature height and canopy spread).

How are contributions made and when?

Contributions under the Scheme are paid into the Fund via the PlanSA portal [Online Payments](#).

The amount payable will be charged through a relevant condition on the planning consent, and must be made any time before development approval is issued.

Who can access funds and how are they used?

The Fund can be accessed by a council within a designated local government area up to the amount paid into the Fund for the relevant council in the previous financial year.

The Fund can only be used by a council for certain purposes including:

- the planting, establishment and maintenance of trees within reserves and public land
- for the purchase of land to:
 - preserve trees
 - accommodate tree planting in an area with a low urban tree canopy level or demonstrated loss of canopy.