

ADDISON ROAD COMMUNITY
CENTRE ORGANISATION PRESENTS



Rethinking The Urban Forest.

INAUGURAL
CONFERENCE

24TH MAY
2019



SKETCHNOTES

We acknowledge that the Addison Road Community Centre is on the land of the Cadigal people of the Eora Nation and pay our respects to elders both past and present.

In partnership with



A collective thank you to the presenters, the organising committee, participants, sponsors, moderators and the staff and volunteers of the Addison Road Community Centre Organisation. A grass roots organisation such as ours, relies on the support and cooperation of our whole community. Each and everyone of you made the Conference compelling, as the following pages attest.

ARCCO's environmental and social justice programs have naturally informed the Rethinking the Urban Forest conference. Our article, 'Can a Dying Tree Save a City', chronicles our Conference's evolution.

We remain committed to innovative, creative and collaborative ways of moving forward.

Rosanna Barbero
CEO ARCCO

CAN A DYING TREE SAVE A CITY?

The Hollow Tree by Mark Mordue, ARCCO Media

The origins for the 'Rethinking the Urban Forest' sprung from the story of one dying Sydney blue gum tree – and how fighting to preserve this tree has helped provide a habitat and home for birdlife, lizards, insects and microbats, many of whom are under increasing duress and threat as the city grows ever bigger and denser. It's a situation not so different from a more human story as people try to hold on to, or find a home of any kind for themselves in Sydney. Nature's problems and ours are not so far apart.

Addison Road Community Centre Organisation is the force behind the Rethinking the Urban Forest conference. On its grounds, right by the main carpark, stands the old Sydney blue gum that inspired them. Rather than cut it down, Addi Road worked with an arborist and Inner West Council to lop off any branches that might drop, or cause the dying tree itself to become dangerous and topple over.

Hollows were then cut into the tree, along with those that had naturally formed (this can take more than a 100 years), creating a much-needed home for birdlife and myriad other creatures. The tree is now a showpiece for visiting school children interested in studying habitats that allow living things to survive the city.

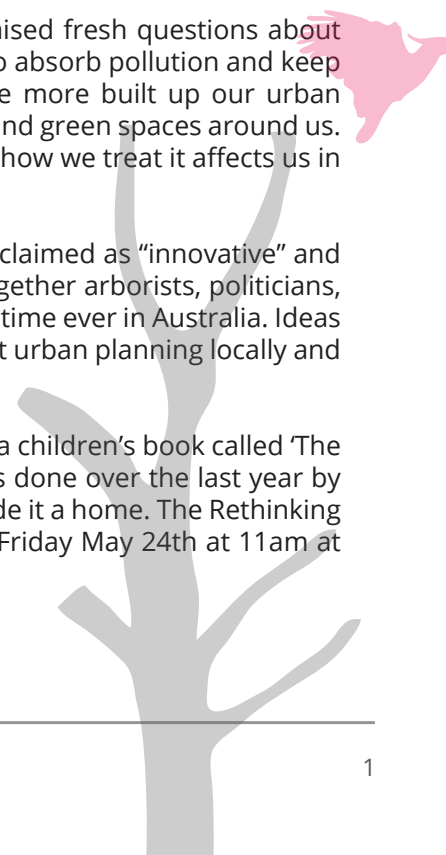
It was this experience with old Sydney blue gum and its newly created hollows that awakened an even greater awareness of the role of tree management in the local area. Addison Road Community Centre Organisation has almost 170 trees on its grounds, making tree maintenance a major activity for the Centre along with its evolving social justice, arts and broader environmental activities.

Addi Road's experience with its trees, and the Sydney blue gum especially, raised fresh questions about what is called 'the urban forest', which does everything from support bird life to absorb pollution and keep us cool in summer, enhancing our health and happiness along the way. The more built up our urban environment becomes, the more critical it is we increase the numbers of trees and green spaces around us. We are part a natural community we don't always see or fully understand, and how we treat it affects us in return. Effectively, this is what the conference is all about.

Rethinking the Urban Forest is being described as a "cross-disciplinary" and acclaimed as "innovative" and "visionary". It has over 30 presenters and nearly 220 participants, gathering together arborists, politicians, architects, ecologists, lawyers, urban planners and decision makers for the first time ever in Australia. Ideas and models for action stemming from its panels and presentations could affect urban planning locally and nationally for a long time to come.

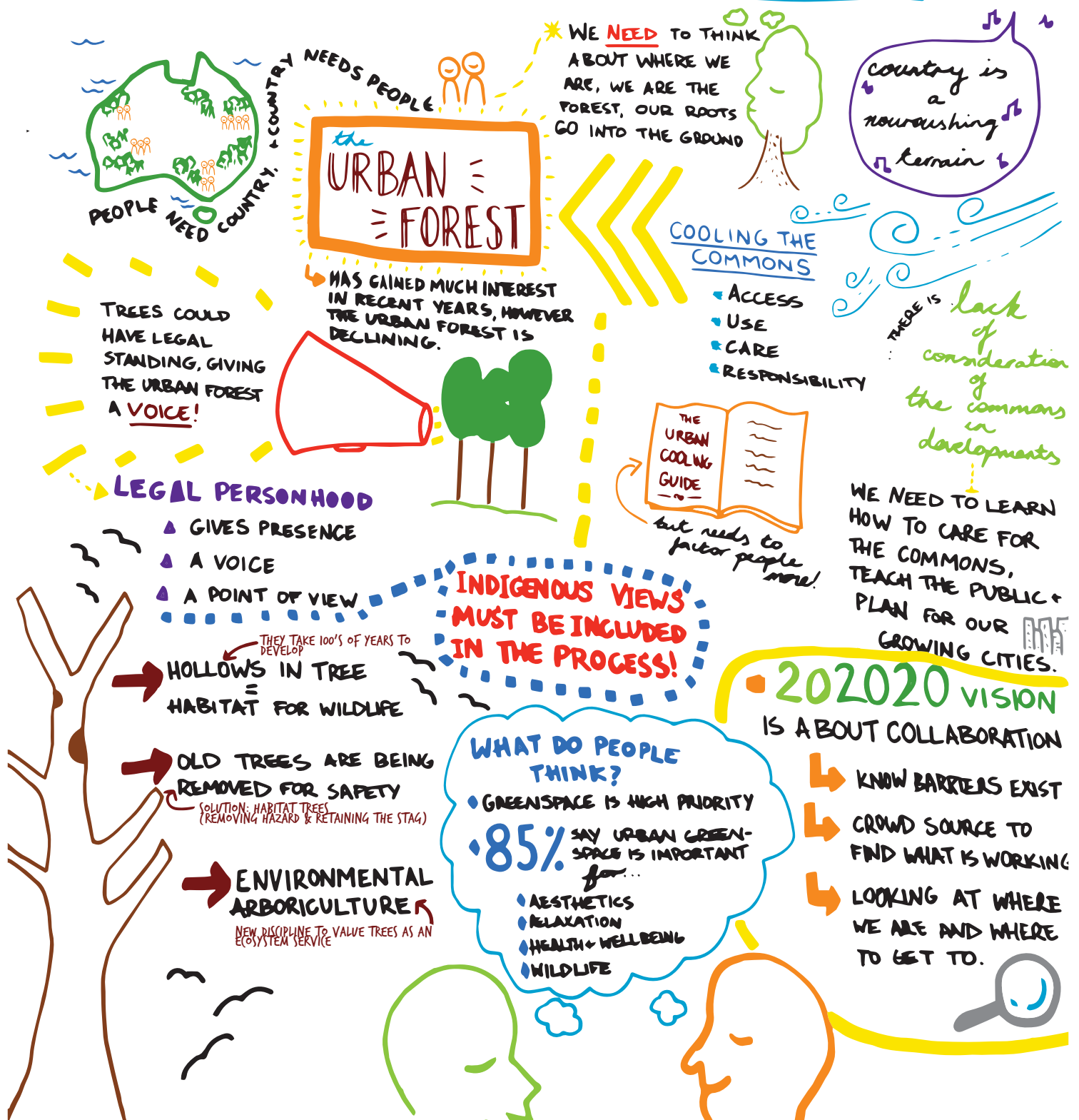
As part of the event, Addison Road Community Centre Organisation published a children's book called 'The Hollow Tree'. It tells the story of our Sydney blue gum – and features drawings done over the last year by school children who observed the birds, lizards, insects and microbats who made it a home. The Rethinking the Urban Forest conference hosted the book launch for The Hollow Tree on Friday May 24th at 11am at Addison Road Community Centre

For more information visit www.addiroad.org.au.



RETHINKING *the* CONTEXT of URBAN FORESTS

THE THREATS + THE OPPORTUNITIES



TAKING ROOT

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE LOCAL COUNCIL LEVEL + WHAT DO WE NEED FROM OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT?

81.9% OF SYDNEY HAS **NO** CANOPY COVER

THERE IS A DISTURBING TREND OF HEATWAVES

↑ 3.1°C BY 2070
IN CITY OF SYDNEY

we have to do something to build resilience for people + plants!



SOME SOCIAL CHALLENGES

- "I LIKE TREES BUT..."
- ✗ MANAGING TREES ON PRIVATE LAND
- ✗ TREE VANDALISM
- ✗ INSURANCE LIMITATIONS
- ✗ TREES BLOCKING VIEWS + DROPPING LEAVES

- ✗ EVERYONE WANTS TO PARK IN THE SHADE
- ✗ POOR SOIL OR LACK OF IT



the **URBAN forest** STRATEGY TO ENSURE SYDNEY HAS A SUSTAINABLE + RESILIENT URBAN FOREST

WE NEED...

- GOOD PLANNING + USE OF DATA
- EDUCATION + SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT
- TREES IN STREETS
 - = SHADE
 - = COOLING
 - = REDUCED POLLUTION
 - = BETTER PUBLIC HEALTH
- COUNCILS NEED GOOD PROGRAMS
- STRATEGIC PLANNERS (WORKING WITH THEM FOR A GREENER CITY)

PEOPLE POWER!

COLLABORATION IS VITAL!



GOVTS - FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL & COMMUNITIES



THERE IS ENOUGH RESEARCH + KNOWLEDGE OUT THERE!
WE KNOW THE VALUE OF TREES



THERE ARE MANY DISCIPLINES TO GET TO WORK TOGETHER + WE NEED TO MAXIMISE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO GROW OUR URBAN FOREST.



THINK EQUALITY!



WIDE + DEEP CONSULTATION

← *important* →

TO SAFEGUARD THE **VALUE + INTEGRITY** OF PROJECTS

INCLUDING + MAKING SURE THAT

- ▲ FIRST NATION LEADERS
- ▲ LOCAL PEOPLE +
- ▲ ALL PARTS OF RELEVANT COUNCIL

ARE **INVOLVED**

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE LOCAL COUNCIL LEVEL + WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COMMUNITY?

TAKING

ROOTS

Addison Road Community Centre Organisation published a book called 'The Hollow Tree'.

Telling the story of our Sydney blue gum + features drawings by school children who observed the birds, lizards, insects and microbats who made it a home.



— **PARKS ~~ARE~~ PEOPLE** —

WORKING TOGETHER *with*

- ▣ DESIGNERS
- ▣ ARCHITECTS
- ▣ BUILDERS + PLANNERS

to **DIRECT** OUR FUTURE TOWARDS A **SOCIETY** THAT IS **SOCIALLY JUST,** **CULTURALLY RICH +** **ECOLOGICALLY RESTORATIVE**

CEMETERY CRISIS

→ MANY CITIES FULL

BURIAL < --- BECOMES DIFFICULT

LLF HAVE WORKED WITH CHEMISTS + BIOLOGISTS TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS

HUMAN *ashes* TOXIC PLANT GROWTH

↑ HIGH LEVELS OF PH
↑ POISONOUS SODIUM LEVELS


WORKING WITH LOVED ONES TO PLANT TREES USING TREATED ASHES

linking ART, DESIGN PLANNING, ECOLOGY + PSYCHOLOGY


TREES REMOVED
DUE TO RISK
DEVELOPMENT +
RENEWAL



WE NEED A
LOT OF TREES
TO REDUCE AIR
POLLUTION

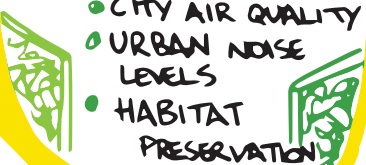


POLICIES ARE
NOT ADDRESSING
ROOT CAUSES




ACTIVE GREEN WALLS
CONTRIBUTE TO:

- CITY AIR QUALITY
- URBAN NOISE LEVELS
- HABITAT PRESERVATION



SCIENTISTS +
POLICY MAKERS
MUST:


- INVOLVE
THE COMMUNITY
+
VALUE WHAT
THEY VALUE



DIGGING DEEPER

CHALLENGES TO
REGROWING THE
URBAN FOREST
— TECHNICAL CHALLENGES —

CREATE CONFIDENCE
+ SUCCESS
SELECT PLANT
SPECIES THAT WILL
THRIVE UNDER
FUTURE CLIMATES




URBAN GREEN
SPACES PROVIDE:

- RANGE OF SERVICES
FROM TEMP MODERATION
TO FLOOD MITIGATION
- HABITAT FOR
BIO DIVERSITY
- IMPROVEMENT FOR
HUMAN HEALTH




FIND WAYS TO
CONNECT PEOPLE
TO NATURE -
REDUCES FEAR




HABITAT
CLEARING -
A MAJOR
THREAT FOR
CITIES




WHICH PLANT
WHERE PROJECT

- TESTING HORTICULTURE
SPECIES THAT CAN
WITHSTAND EXTREME
HEAT + DROUGHT
- 

SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL
+ WESTCONEX & LARGE
SCALE DEVELOPERS ARE
DESTROYING OLD +
HISTORIC TREES + FORESTS
- DESPITE COMMUNITY
PROTESTS



POTTED PLANTS +
THEIR SUBSTRATES HAVE
THE NATURAL ABILITY TO
REMOVE MANY OF THE
MOST DANGEROUS POLLUTANTS
FROM THE AIR.



SERIOUS & IRREVERSIBLE IMPACTS !

RISKS OF THREATENED SPECIES + ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES BECOMING **EXTINCT!!**

THERE ARE TOO MANY EXEMPTIONS FROM PROTECTING NATIVE **VEGETATION** FROM CLEARING

PLANNING LAWS SHOULD CHANGE TO CONSIDER



CLIMATE CHANGE

ROCKY HILL CASE APPLIED CLIMATE CHANGE TO **STOP** A COAL MINE

WHAT'S WORKING?

NOT MUCH...

BUT...

SOME COUNCILS HAVE A GOOD CULTURE FOR TREE PROTECTION & INDUSTRY IS WORKING TOWARDS INNOVATION



VARIATION RULES ARE

'SHIFTY'

ARE **NOT** OFFSETTING

IT HAS TO BE LIKE FOR LIKE

END ^{THE} EXEMPTIONS FOR **BIG** UGLY DEVELOPMENTS AND STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT

IT'S **TOO EASY TO REMOVE TREES!**

eg: EXEMPT + COMPLY DEVELOPMENT ALLOWS FOR TREES TO BE CUT DOWN IF THEY GET IN THE WAY OF



AVERAGE CANOPY COVER IN URBAN ^{currently} N.S.W. IS **26.64%**
↓ FROM **27.47%** IN 2009

DIGGING DEEPER

CHALLENGES + REGROWING ^{THE} URBAN FOREST

— law + regulation —

IF WE WANT TO **RETAIN URBAN FORESTS** IT IS CRITICAL THAT COUNCILS UPDATE THEIR D.C.P. TO ACCOUNT FOR THESE NEW LAWS



CLOSING

CREATING
A UNIFIED APPROACH

WITH
PLANNERS, ECOLOGISTS

→ ARBORISTS WHILE ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

TO SUPPORT SCALING UP

→ SPEEDING UP URBAN FOREST

the

CANOPY

CROSS -
DISCIPLINARY
ACTIVITIES ARE
IMPORTANT -
TEACHING +
LEARNING
EG. INCLUDING
ECOLOGISTS IN



WE NEED TO BE
TRAINING FUTURE
DECISION-MAKERS
→ BETTER ADDRESS
→ CONTRIBUTE → URBAN
ECOLOGICAL OUTCOMES



WE WANT THE ASSET
OF A TREE TO BE RECOG-
NISED + THE RISK ASSESSED

→ THIS REQUIRES WELL
TRAINED ARBORISTS
WORKING WITH LOCAL
COUNCILS

WE CAN ARM THE
COMMUNITY WITH
BIOPHYSICAL INFO

- RAINFALL
- CANOPY COVER
ETC.

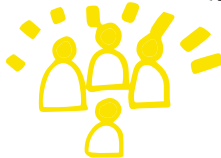


MAIN BLOCKAGE:

HOW DO WE MOVE PEOPLE TOWARDS
UNDERSTANDING + VALUING THE
AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE + IT'S
NEEDS?

- ONE WAY THIS IS ACHIEVED IS BY
WORKING AT LOCAL LEVEL

COLLABORATIVE PLACE-BASED
APPROACH AT A SUB-CATCHMENT
LEVEL IS GREAT TO ACHIEVE
OUTCOMES + ENGAGE LOCAL
COMMUNITIES



GATHER DATA ABOUT
THE LOCAL AREA ATT-
ITUDES + VALUES OF
LOCAL COMMUNITY +
INVITE THEM TO
PARTICIPATE IN
PLANNING



IT CAN BE SO HARD TO PURSUADE
PEOPLE THAT CUTTING DOWN A
TREE WILL CAUSE A LOSS OF
SHADE + PRIVACY



THINKING OF THE
FOREST AS BIO DIVERSITY.
NOT JUST TREES BUT ALL
OF THE ANIMALS, BIRDS,
INSECTS + PLANT LIFE



GARDENS ARE IMPORTANT
IN URBAN AREAS



THE RISK OF
ACTUALLY BEING
HURT BY A TREE
WANES IN COMPARISON
TO INJURIES CAUSED
BY FOOTBALLS, KID'S
SWINGS + WHEELIE BINS!



- NOT ALL THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT US. SOME COMMUNITY MEMBERS SEE TREES AS PESTS DANGEROUS + DIRTY



- WHEN THE COMMUNITY IS CALLED TO ACTION TO **STOP** THE CUTTING **DOWN** OF TREES EVERYONE JOINS THE STRUGGLE

but THEN THE TREES ARE CUT + PEOPLE LOOSE HOPE

PLANNING LAWS + PROTECTION LAWS

FLORA + FAUNA ARE **NOT** CLEAR + DEVELOPERS CAN GET

IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF NSW THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS TREES ARE DIFFERENT

YOU HAVE TO BE A **NUISANCE** TO GET AN APPOINTMENT WITH COUNCIL

MANY TALENTED PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY THAT PROVIDE HELP + SUPPORT TO CAMPAIGNS AND MOVEMENTS

COMMUNITY GROUPS ALSO MUST *educate the community* OF THE **IMPORTANCE** OF TREES + BIODIVERSITY

COMMUNITY WELLBEING IS INTEGRATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL + SOCIAL RIGHTS + JUSTICE

THEM COMMUNITY VOICES ARE **NOT** HEARD + DEVELOPERS HAVE MORE POWER

IMPORTANT TO ACT *LOCAL* BUT THINK GLOBAL

WE NEED TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER + STOP DOING THE SAME OLD THING... IT'S BEEN DONE + NOW IT IS OBSOLETE

CLOSING THE CANOPY

HOW TO GET THE COMMUNITY ON BOARD WITH THE URBAN FOREST

THOUGHT-PROVOKING PRESENTERS



DR FRASER R TORPY

Senior Lecturer and Director, Plants and Environmental Quality Research Group, UTS



CHARLES CASASELLI, RFD

CEO, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)



JEMIMAH HALLINAN

Environmental Lawyer; Outreach Director, NSW Environmental Defender's Office



DR CARAGH THRELFALL

Project Leader, Clean Air and Urban Landscapes (CAUL) Hub



MICHAEL SULLINGS

Consulting Arborist; Tree Management Officer, City of Sydney



ABBY MELLICK LOPES

Senior Lecturer in Design, Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) at Western Sydney University



GWILYM GRIFFITHS

Urban Forest Manager, Inner West Council



PROFESSOR MICHELLE LEISHMAN

Distinguished Professor; Head of Department of Biological Sciences, Macquarie University



DR PETER DAVIES

Head of Department of Environmental Sciences; Executive Member, Centre for Smart Green Cities, Macquarie University



DR ADRIENNE KEANE

Associate Dean (Education), Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning, University of Sydney



JEAN BRENNAN

Senior Lecturer in Design, Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) at Western Sydney University



KAREN SWEENEY

Urban Forest Manager, City of Sydney Council



DR MARCO AMATI

Environmental Scientist; Associate Professor in International Planning at RMIT University



JOHN DOUGLAS

Head Teacher, Arboriculture, Ryde TAFE; Acting Commissioner, Land and Environment Court



MARGARET HOGG

Founding Member and Chairperson, Saving Sydney's Trees Inc.



LAURA HAMILTON-O'HARA

Chief Executive Officer, Living Future Institute Australia



DAVID CALLOW

Team Leader - Urban Forest and Ecology, City of Melbourne



GRAHAM CHALCROFT

Public Artist, Designer and Director, Vertebrae



WARREN ROBERTS

CEO & Founder, Living Legacy Forest



JENNIFER NEWMAN

Academic



JESS MILLER

Program Manager, 202020 Vision



GUST

Grow Urban Shade Trees



JUDY FINLASON

Wollie Creek Preservation Society



DAVID SHOEBRIDGE
MLC NSW

NSW Greens MP



ABBI

Addison Road Community Centre Organisation, Public Schools Festival, Hollow Tree book contributor + IWV school student

Conference Planning Group:
Tom Axford, Consultant Arborist ArborSafe
Rosanna Barbero, CEO ARCCO
Jean Brennan, Urban Ecology Manager Inner West Council
Gwilym Griffiths, Urban Forest Manager Inner West Council
Bruce Knobloch, Manifesto Media
Michael Sullings, Tree Management Officer City of Sydney Council
Colleen Sutherland, Conference Manager ARCCO

Thank you to our major
sponsor Andreasens Green



ADDISON ROAD

Community Centre
Organisation

www.addiroad.org.au



Illustrations and designs by Jeyda Bicer - www.jeydab.com

© Addison Road Community Centre Organisation 2019

Except as permitted by the copyright law applicable to you, you may not reproduce any of the content of this report without the permission of the copyright owner and without acknowledging its source.