

**At any one time the Belmont Council is working on a range of projects designed to improve the health & well-being of its residents. Part of this process involves community consultation. It needs an informed and responsive citizenry to do this effectively. Part of our role is to monitor this process and provide feedback.**

**Congratulations on yet another milestone?** In a recent article by Benedict Brook featured on news.com.au (Jan 5, 2019) it was reported that the City of Belmont was the most heat-vulnerable local government authority in WA.

We risk becoming an urban heat island (UHI) ...“where the surface and air temperatures can rise substantially higher than other areas and stay hotter for longer due to human impact”. Being surrounded by airports, freeways and industrial zones contributes greatly to this; as does the unabated depletion of green infrastructure that has been occurring in our suburbs thanks to unbridled residential in-fill development. Reclaiming more street verges in our commercial zones for extra car parking doesn't help either!

We made headlines back in 2014 when, according to a report by UTS: Institute for Sustainable Futures and the ‘2020 Vision’, Belmont came last behind Fremantle in terms of tree canopy cover out of 29 Local Government Areas. (see p25 below) [http://202020vision.com.au/media/7141/final-report\\_140930.pdf](http://202020vision.com.au/media/7141/final-report_140930.pdf) Of course, thanks to the cooling effect of sea breezes it is usually 6-8 degrees cooler in Freo on a hot summer's day.

Our Council commendably produced an ‘Urban Forest Strategy’ in 2014

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but the recommended implementation of an Urban Forest Canopy Plan has been delayed due to the drafting of an Urban Forest Policy, which is due for release this year, 2019.

For further information visit the 202020 Vision website and read the “Where should all the trees go?” report, focussing on Western Australia. Here you will see a nice little pie chart of heat vulnerability from 0 to 5 (most vulnerable to least vulnerable). Town of Claremont rates **4.5**; City of Belmont **0.5**.

Interestingly, Bassendean, Swan & Wanneroo rate much higher at **2.0**.

On page 7 of the WA report you will find a rather extraordinary headline that states that ... ‘The City of Belmont has also undergone an **Increase in Tree Canopy by 3.1 %**’. (This refers to the period 2011-2016.) Surely a typographical error or a statistical fudge?

During this time Gateway WA was completed and residential infill was at its peak. Much loss has occurred on airport land but that is not included in our tree canopy, though the impacts on heat vulnerability are grave. Certainly the council has been doing more street verge planting but of those trees that actually survive the following summer it can take 5-10 years before they provide significant shade canopy!

[http://202020vision.com.au/media/162690/wsattg\\_wa\\_fa3.pdf](http://202020vision.com.au/media/162690/wsattg_wa_fa3.pdf)

**What's your drain look like?** Belmont has a large number of open drains which are controlled and managed by the Water Corporation. They are part of a network designed to capture storm water runoff from our roads and direct it to compensating basins (ornamental lakes in parkland). They would

provide an ideal space for increasing our tree canopy but some initiative is needed from our council.



Mine's full of smelly, stagnant, mosquito infested water and the occasional football. The rats love it. Take a peek over the back fence and see what yours looks like.

**In the news again ...** Traffic chaos on Boxing Day as DFO shoppers inadvertently delayed access to Perth domestic airport due to lack of parking availability. Fortunately local residents opened up their hearts and allowed parking on their verges and footpaths. This relieved the stress of missing out on a well-earned bargain or not making that Bali flight. This community minded response should be rewarded with an extra fireworks display this year by the council.

**Recommended reading:** *BULLSHIT JOBS – A Theory*, David Graeber, 2018, Penguin.

**Your feedback.** If you would like to submit an article that is relevant to the residents of Belmont, or you would like to join our group, refer contact details below.