

# Media Release

**The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP**

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change  
Minister for Solar Homes



Thursday, 13 May 2021

## 500,000 TREES FOR A COOLER, GREENER WEST

The Andrews Labor Government will build green canopies with 500,000 new trees in Melbourne's west – creating cooler spaces for families in the western suburbs to enjoy for generations to come.

The Labor Government will invest \$5 million to plant the new trees in growth areas across six councils providing more shade and green spaces, driving down pollution and improving air quality.

Importantly, the trees will help reduce the urban heat island effect which leads to higher temperatures and lower air quality in those urban communities without enough vegetation.

In 2018, Melbourne's west had just 5.5 per cent canopy cover in urban areas compared to 17.4 per cent in the inner south-east and 25.9 per cent in the east. The western suburbs experience the greatest urban heat island effect across metropolitan Melbourne.

The Labor Government will work with experts to make sure the right trees, ranging from saplings to more mature trees, are being planted in the right spots. Funding will be available through grants to community organisations and local councils, and organisations with projects already underway will be able to apply for funding to scale up those projects.

The trees bolster Victoria's efforts to tackle climate change, helping meet our ambitious targets to cut greenhouse gases by 45-50 per cent by 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050. They will also help us realise the goals of *Plan Melbourne 2017 to 2050* by greening and cooling our city.

The new trees, which will begin going into the ground in September, will also provide vital new habitats for urban biodiversity, increasing links between existing trees and connections between parks.

They will add to the thousands of hectares of new open space and parklands delivered under the Labor Government's \$154 million Suburban Parks Program, which is providing up to 6,500 hectares of parkland, walking trails, bike trails, pocket parks and dog parks – including 22 new and upgraded parks in Melbourne's west.

### Quote attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

*"The pandemic reminded us how important it is for our physical and mental health to have green open spaces close to home. These trees will mean more families in the western suburbs can enjoy a cooler, cleaner environment around them."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

*"These trees, together with our investment in suburban parks, will help Victoria tackle climate change and support our goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Tarneit Sarah Connolly

*"No matter where you live, every family should have green spaces close to home to enjoy together. We're investing in the physical and mental health of families across the west – as well as the quality of the open spaces around them."*

**Media contact:** Jamila Fontana 0409 741 279 | [jamila.fontana@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:jamila.fontana@minstaff.vic.gov.au)