

## Cool It Street program

### Sunraysia lowers the temperature, creating an urban forest.

Located in the northwest of Victoria, the urban areas of Mildura, Red Cliffs, Irymple and Merbein are known to locals as “Sunraysia”, a term coined in 1919. This reflects higher than average sunny days, summer temperatures and regular heatwaves through the summer months – we really are the “sun-raised” part of the state.

As the urban footprint of these localities has significantly expanded over the last two decades, our urban areas are experiencing increased night-time temperatures caused by trapped heat and increased air pollution, reducing the livability of the community.

Mildura Rural City Council saw the need for healthier and greener neighbourhoods through its Cool It Street Tree Program. The Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit partnered with council to expand the program, providing \$100,000 in funding to plant an urban forest across the municipal area.

Nominated streets underwent a transformation, which aimed to provide quality tree canopy cover by planting semi-mature trees in areas of need. Long-term objectives for the program also include;

- improving the street scape
- walkability
- enhancing biodiversity
- enhancing stewardship about the importance of urban greening within our community.

Forty-Six residential streets were nominated for “Cool It” street trees in the 2023-2024 planting season. In total, 870 trees have been planted in urban streets across the municipality. Nominated streets identified as being in neighbourhoods with higher rates of social and economic disadvantage also received a tree planting care package. This created engagement for our community to continue to care for our urban forest.

A community event ‘It’s easy being green’ brought together 120 community members to discuss climate change and participation in Greening Mildura’s tree planting forum. School holiday activities also engaged our youngest citizens in environmental activities and education about climate change.

Ongoing support is being provided to tree planting locations through watering programs and tree maintenance as part of Mildura Rural City Councils parks and gardens management.

The council has a long-term program where residents can continue to nominate and request tree plantings in their streets and urban areas.

**Think about partnering with your local council to create an urban forest in your street today.**

