

Mr David Williams
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Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.

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Dear Mr Williams,

Draft Street Tree Strategy 2008

Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc. (BCS Inc.) has considered the [draft Street Tree Strategy document](#) that you sent it with your letter dated 23rd January 2008, and it offers the comments set out below.

General Comments: The draft Strategy is well conceived and set-out. It is far more systematic and based on stated rationales than the [1997 version](#), and is therefore a substantial improvement upon it.

Beaumaris Character: An important consideration for BCS Inc, which was founded in 1953 as the Beaumaris Tree Preservation Society (BTPS), and changed to its present name in 1970, is the need to protect the distinctive treed character of Beaumaris. That special treed character of Beaumaris arose from a very different history and attitude from the history and attitude that led to the character imparted to other areas of Bayside municipality by the quite different pattern and types of street trees in those areas.

Bayside's suburbs other than Beaumaris became well-established before the Second World War, whereas that was largely not the case with Beaumaris. As the [zoomable 1951 Lands Department aerial photograph](#) of Beaumaris shows, very few streets other than Beach Road and Balcombe Road were paved at that time, and nearly all of what are now paved, tree-lined streets were then either bushland or bushland with narrow [informal sandy tracks](#) through it. The pre-war attitude to suburban development, which was given free rein in Bayside's other suburbs - whose land use before suburbanization had tended to be more blandly agricultural than Beaumaris ever was - was to eradicate as much as possible of the indigenous and other vegetation of the area so that a totally new artificial landscape could be imposed on the area.

That disposition is evident from the appearance of those suburbs today. In contrast, the generation of post-war people seeking to build a house in Beaumaris from the early 1950s onwards was the first generation where a substantial number of its members felt, and acted upon, the potential for keeping as much as they could, consistent with suburban requirements, of the appealing indigenous coastal vegetation they found awaiting them in an area that had largely been too dry, sandy and undulating for agriculture. The result is reflected in the relative prominence - compared to much of the older more northerly parts of Bayside - of indigenous and native Australian trees in the landscape of reserves, residential land and streets. The BTPS reflected that attitude and worked successfully to further it.

BCS Inc. submits that those early conservationists left a special and worthwhile suburban environment that is of high value and appeal, and has great significance as an example, for others and the future, of the charm, suitability and sustainability that results from emphasizing the use of a locality's characteristic indigenous plants as a dominant aspect of its well-noted and highly regarded signature and ambience.

Need for Strategy to Maintain Beaumaris Character: The Species Selection Method outlined on Page 21 explains the concept of Character Areas defined geographically in Appendix 1 'Character Area Map'. BCS Inc. is pleased that all of Beaumaris is within Area H on that map as well as most of the three golf links and Cheltenham Park. Area H also includes the treed part of Cheltenham north of that park, and areas of Black Rock closest to Beaumaris, all of which act as transition and buffer areas for Beaumaris, but it appears to be anomalous that the northern half of the municipal golf links is left outside the area.

BCS Inc. notes the mention of Beaumaris on Page 21 in relation to the desirability of discretion being given to an appropriate Council Officer to exclude exotic trees that might score highly enough in the aggregate of the Criteria Weighting calculation required in Appendix 3 to outweigh the contribution made to that aggregate by the high individual weighting given to an otherwise lower-scoring indigenous tree.

The sentiment expressed there is appreciated, but it needs to be expressed in a more explicit, tighter and binding way that provides confidence that the process will result in the maintenance and strengthening of the indigenous vegetation character of Beaumaris rather than the reverse of that, or even being neutral.

An attempt, for instance, at determining the ranking score of one of Beaumaris’s quintessentially indigenous trees, the Drooping She-oke (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), and comparing it with the docile, stunted import from Queensland rainforests, the Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*), endless rows of which have been brought in to specialize in infesting vast areas of Melbourne streets, produces results of concern. A calculation conducted by BCS Inc. showed each scoring about the same value of 335.

BCS Inc. considers that it is not enough to rely on present good but vague intentions to guard against an increase in the eclectic nature of the trees chosen in a few of our streets, and that an additional prior test using a priority list is needed to ensure that the appropriate indigenous origin of the trees proposed for street planting is given adequate priority so that the choice of trees in Beaumaris is more rigorously governed by that primarily, and by the aggregate weighting score secondarily.

It is thus proposed, to ensure the continued emphasis on and predominance of indigenous trees being planted in Beaumaris streets that, within Area H, there be added a preliminary **Priority Test** to determine the selection pool for Beaumaris street trees whereby, for each proposed planting, the species to be recommended for planting would, in the first instance, have to be a species in Category A below.

If the appropriate Council Officer recommends for a particular Beaumaris street site that no tree in Category A would be suitable, that officer would then need to recommend a tree from the next category, Category B, in Table 1 below. Likewise, if no tree in Category B was recommended as suitable, a recommendation could be made from Category C with, as a last resort, a final recommendation being made from Category D. A requirement is also proposed that, where an officer recommends that a tree of a lower category than Category A is to be planted, the officer must both report the recommendation and detail the reason for it to the Council, and have the full report placed on the Council’s Web site on a page established for such reports, and not implement the recommendation until it has been on that page for at least four weeks. No other species of tree must be recommended for Beaumaris streets. For the choice of tree within each category, the Species Selection Method outlined in the draft Strategy would apply.

Table 1: Priority Test Categories for the Tree Species Proposed to be Planted in Beaumaris Streets

Category	Definition of the Category
A	Trees of a species that is indigenous to Beaumaris
B	Trees of a genus that is indigenous to Beaumaris, but where the species is not
C	Trees of a species that is indigenous to Victoria
D	Trees of a genus that is indigenous to Victoria, but where the species is not

References & Minor Changes Suggested: The inclusion of references is a good feature of the draft, but it is noted that none of the references relates specifically to Bayside. BCS Inc. considers that this omission should be remedied by including one or more specific references. One reference it recommends is “The Sandringham Environment Series No. 3 – Second Edition – LIST OF LOCAL NATIVE PLANTS” by Dr James Willis 1989. Table 2 appended lists some minor changes suggested.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Cerbasi,
 President
 Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.

Table 2: List of Minor Changes to Draft Suggested

Page	Line	Change
19	7	"genera" should be "genus" TWICE
20	7	"dependant" should be "dependent"
35	5	"... Greater at the ..." should probably be "... Greater Melbourne at the ..."
37		<i>Cupressaceae</i> is listed TWICE
44		<i>Viminaria juncea</i> should be shown as being indigenous to Bayside.
47		"small road" should be "narrow road" TWICE
47		"large road" should be "wide road" TWICE