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I have read and acknowledge how Council will use and disclose my personal information.

Name: *

Ray Cowling

Phone number: *

[REDACTED]

Email address: *

[REDACTED]

Date of Council meeting: *

Tuesday 12 December 2023

Agenda item title: *

Re 6.2 Open Space and Tree Maintenance and Management Contracts

Alternatively you may attach your written submission by uploading your file here:



[contract_to_include_longer_grass.docx](#) 441.81 KB · DOCX

Do you also wish to attend the Council meeting in person, noting that there is no provision to make verbal submissions at Council meetings? *

No

Re 6.2 Open Space and Tree Maintenance and Management Contracts: No 3676, 3677 and 3678 Council Meeting 12 December 2023

This year, of course is the hottest year on record and scientists state that the recent bush fires have been made worse by a lack of moisture at night. Council House 2 was built on a design of night time cool air cooling the refrigerant in the basement, but that source of cool air on a hot night is now often so brief as to be ineffectual.

Yet I suspect that the **Open Space contracts Item 6.2** still specify a 50 year old height of grass "maintained as 'General Lawn' - Turf length that should not exceed 60mm and should be no shorter than 35mm (after mowing)". If we are to maximise the cooling effect of grass in the city, and to better protect the ground with grass to stop the ground drying out, this contract should be changed to increase the height of the grass especially during summer. Second, it needs a clause **to require the contractor to raise the blades of the mower over sparse grass, and to not mow at all when the grass is short.** (When the wheels of the mower ride over a thick cushioning of grass, both the wheels and the blades are higher, and on sparse grass the wheels ride on the dirt and the blades are much lower, but no contractor has ever changed the height of the blades on sparse grass and yet this is the grass most needing protection.)

Please note in the median below the sparse grass is cut well below the 35mm because the wheels are on sparse grass, and by mid November 2023, the median looked like that on the right (as it has most Januarys in the last 10 years despite several letters to affect change.)

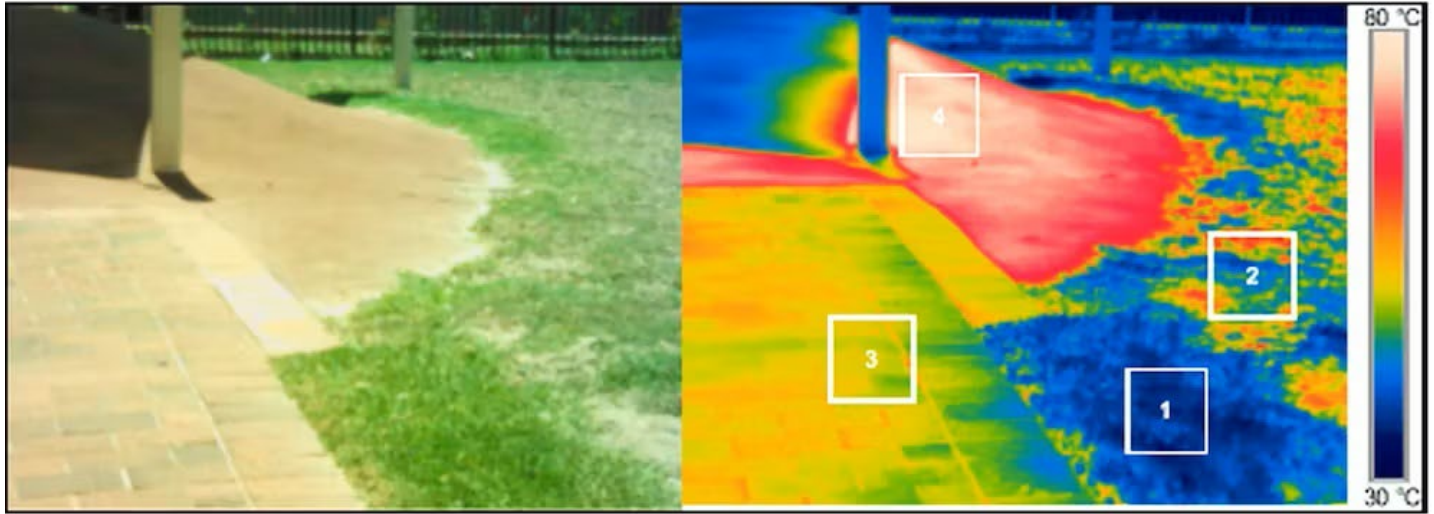
If we expect any bird life to browse on the grass for insects, worms, then obviously we need to maintain a much longer blade of grass to keep the soil healthy. (I have heard of a street in Kensington where residents were so frustrated at Council mowing in their street that they stopped contractors from mowing and took over the task themselves.)



The cost to the cooling effect is shown in these thermal images:

"Surface temperatures on a typical summer day (January 18 2018) in a Western Sydney early learning centre. Left: normal view; right: infrared view (surface temperatures are colour-coded). Average temperatures within boxes shown (approx. 0.3m sq):

1 = thick grass, 39°C; 2 = patchy grass 51°C; 3 = bricks, 53°C; 4 = soft fall 74°C.
from the Conversation 11/4/2018



Hoping you can convert this direct feed back into a valuable change in city cooling.

Am most grateful for all Council's many environmental initiatives – I have watched Council for 30 years and the last two Council terms have done so much more than any other - if this Council does not act on this obvious need for longer grass, no group of Councillors ever will.

Sincerely

Ray Cowling