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## A green solution for hottest days

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Page 1 of 1

# A green solution for hottest days

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TREES, grass and other plants can lower the land-surface temperature by up to five or six degrees during a heatwave, Adelaide research has shown.

The AdaptWest consortium of Charles Sturt, Port Adelaide Enfield and West Torrens councils worked with Smart Green Cities at Macquarie University to study a series of heat maps.

AdaptWest regional co-ordinator Jeremy Miller said the aim was to better understand and quantify the role of trees in cooling the environment around homes on hot days.

"The trees we have in our front and back yards are really important," Mr Miller said.

"The cooling effect occurs where it is needed most; it helps keep our homes cool."

Knowing more about the beneficial effect of trees, grass and other plants can help guide urban planning as heat becomes increasingly intense.

Private yards and gardens provide more than 40 per cent of the tree cover and 30 per cent of grass cover across the western suburbs.

"The problem is we're los-

ing a lot of those trees through urban infill," Mr Miller said.

"We need to think about how we conserve, protect and retain as much of that canopy as possible, rather than clear-felling the site and filling it up with hard surfaces."

Using data from the Bureau of Meteorology, the report shows Adelaide is warming

faster than other capital cities. Lead author and research co-ordinator Alessandro Ossola said Adelaide had an opportunity to use trees in private yards to cool suburbs.

"We measured that in some parts of Adelaide, if you green your property, you can actually have this five-to-six-degrees benefit in cooling extreme events," Dr Ossola said. "We knew trees were important but now we have numbers, and with numbers you can better inform policy-making and planning and you can convince communities."

The next step is to identify the best trees to plant now, placing priority on fast-growing species that are better able to survive recurrent extreme heat and drought.