

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 9

05 September 2025

Question No. 572

Thomas Emerson MLA: To ask the Minister for Economic Development

1. Why has the practice of Australian sports stars being recognised through the planting of dedicated trees in their honour at the National Arboretum ceased, and will the Government consider reviving this tradition as a way of honouring local sporting heroes.
2. What is the Government's process for identifying and replacing dead trees in the Arboretum, given it is one of the most visited destinations in the ACT and visitors have flagged that there are a large number of dead trees, particularly on the back (Western) side of the Arboretum.

ANDREW BARR MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. Aligned with the Arboretum's master plan, the Central Valley features ceremonial trees planted by national and international leaders. Adjacent grass terraces host Hoop Pines (*Araucaria cunninghamii*), designated for Australian Hero Tree dedications.

There are approximately 15 places remaining within the grass terraces where Hoop Pines can be planted. The Arboretum intends to complete the plantings within the next 12 months. The dedication of these planted trees will occur over a much longer timeframe as suitable candidates are identified.

The ACT Government has several avenues to recognise Canberrans, including sporting heroes. These include the ACT Honour Walk, which celebrates individuals who have helped shape Canberra as we know it, and the Canberra Citizen of the Year Award, which acknowledges those who have made a significant contribution to the Canberra community.

2. The Arboretum is supported by a skilled team of horticulturists and arboriculturists who oversee the care, maintenance, and cultural needs of each forest. From its inception, tree selection has focused on rare, endangered, threatened, and symbolic species from Australia and abroad, presenting unique challenges in achieving consistent success across the 250-hectare site. Unfortunately, some trees, including on the western side, have not survived.

Despite these challenges, the most recent third-party assessment, conducted in April–May 2025, confirmed that the majority of forests are in good health.

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Decisions about tree replacement are based on a range of factors, including ability to source suitable stock, feasibility of propagation if stock is unavailable, alignment with the Arboretum's original vision and the availability of resources. Each forest is considered on a case by case basis. Where entire forests require renewal, decisions are made in consultation with external experts, giving consideration to species selection criteria and environmental factors such as soil type and site orientation.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



**Andrew Barr MLA
Minister for Economic Development**

Date: 3.10.25

This response required 2hours and 7mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$263.21.