

6.4 STREET TREE REMOVAL – 1 GARDEN COURT, WHEELERS HILL

Submitting Councillor: Cr Davies

MOTION

That Council:

- 1. Supports in principle the removal of one nature strip street tree at 1 Garden Court, Wheelers Hill.*
- 2. Directs officers to prepare and submit a planning application proposing the removal of the tree within the Vegetation Protection Overlay.*

INTRODUCTION

The resident contacted both myself and council to request the removal of the street tree *Eucalyptus saligna* (*Sydney Blue Gum*) due to the following issues the tree has caused;

- Overhanging branches into property and close proximity to house causing concerns about the danger to life and property from falling branches.
- Excessive leaf litter falling into property including roof gutters.
- Significant tree roots in nature strip causing damage to paths and roads.

The Sydney Blue Gum is not a native species to Victoria; the tree is a large Australian hardwood tree common along the New South Wales seaboard and into Queensland, which can reach a maximum of 65 metres (213 feet) in height. It is a common plantation timber in Australia and South Africa.

BACKGROUND

The resident has requested the removal of this tree on a number of occasions dating back to November 2009. The residents have been concerned by the danger to life and property, the size of the tree and the amount of material it sheds into their front lawn area. The tree has also caused issues with the footpath with council installing a root barrier in 2009 and repairs to the footpath in 2014. It appears that more repairs will be needed.

Both myself and Council reviewed this tree with the resident in the previous term and we re-engaged last year after further discomfort and aggravation experienced by the resident. After some remedial action by Council management last year, in February this year, the tree had an episode of falling branches into the residents' driveway, property, and onto the nature strip (see pictures).

DISCUSSION

The street tree is not suitable for the location and is causing a number of concerns for the residents. The residents are elderly and find the constant need to clean up debris from both the ground and the gutters difficult. They are concerned that not being able to keep up with this maintenance will cause damage to their property and create safety issues. E.g. flooding from blocked gutters. They are also concerned about the danger to life and property, with their bedroom area close to the tree. Property damage includes significant previous works by Council to repair roads, paving, driveway, and curb will undoubtedly be required in the future.

The Australian National Botanic Gardens website describes the Sydney Blue Gum with the following below description (reference: <https://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/trainees-2016/eucalyptus-saligna.html>): *“...larger species such as E. saligna (Sydney Blue Gum) should not be planted so that they will overhang dwellings”*.

Hornsby Shire Council, in an area of NSW where the Sydney Blue Gum is native, describes the Horticultural Merit and Uses of the Sydney Blue Gum as follows: *“A tree for planting only in large parks and open space”*.

FUNDING IMPLICATIONS

The cost to remove and replace the tree is estimated to cost \$3,000.

CONCLUSION

The street tree at 1 Garden Court, Wheelers Hill is not an appropriate tree for the location and should be removed and replaced with a more suitable street tree or trees to ensure our residents peace of mind.

ATTACHMENTS



