

**OFFICERS' ADVICE****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.*

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The amenity value of the tree has been assessed by councils Arboriculture Co-ordinator Rob Mineo. The value of the tree has been listed as \$80,930 which includes costs for removal and replacement of an appropriate street tree.

The solutions proposed can be funded by existing maintenance and capital works budget allocated to both trees and road reserve works. The estimated cost of these works is \$25,000.

**IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES**

It would be expected that as a result of an approval there would be an increase in the number of Notice of Motions submitted by Councillors which would in turn require officers to complete tree assessments, notice of motions and supporting officer advice reports. An increase in community feedback and discussion is also forecast which may have an impact on Council officers resources especially in Horticulture and Communications departments.

An increase in approved tree removals would also have an impact on Council's budget allocated to reactive tree works with a forecast increase expenditure expected.

**COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES**

One of Council's 4 strategic objectives is to provide 'A Liveable and Sustainable City'. Underpinning this objective is ensuring our tree canopy is not only preserved by proactive maintenance and planning controls but also enhanced via Council's street tree replanting program and street tree strategy implementation.

At its meeting on 27 June 2017, Council passed a resolution in relation to the implementation of the street tree strategy that provides criteria a street tree must meet for it to be considered for removal.

The recommendation states 'that only trees that are dead, dying, (assessed as having less than 2 years useful life, for example diseased) or dangerous (pose an inappropriate level of risk to people or assets which cannot be reasonably be managed ) will be removed as soon as practical and replaced based on a site assessment and consultation with residents directly affected'.

The tree is located within an area of the municipality covered by a Vegetation Protection Overlay as part of the Monash Planning Scheme.

**RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES**

The Sydney Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) is a mature specimen with a height of approx. 21 meters and spread of 17 meters. Council's arborist along with an independent arborist (Arbor Co) have assessed the tree on a number of occasions. The assessments including an aerial climbing inspection have noted that the tree displays a high level of vitality and is in good structural condition. The assessments have identified a series of tree management and civil engineering solutions to implement to maintain the trees integrity and address the resident's concerns.



#Area marked in red identified for pruning to reduce overhang by independent arborist report.

A medium size limb from the tree fell on 23 February. The tree was further assessed with the branch failure attributed to the very strong wind event that had occurred the previous day and night.



#Fallen branch from recent high wind event.

A root barrier has previously been installed on the footpath side to prevent further disruption to the path.

The resident raised the following concerns with the tree:

- Branches overhanging to close to property with concerns about safety due to falling branches
- Excessive leaf litter in gutters of property
- Surface roots in nature strip
- Regular damage to kerb and channel from tree roots and trunk.

The street tree is well established and is being maintained within all parameters for councils street trees.

As part of the ongoing consultation with Mr Dukes a series of tree management and civil engineering solutions have been proposed. The options include:

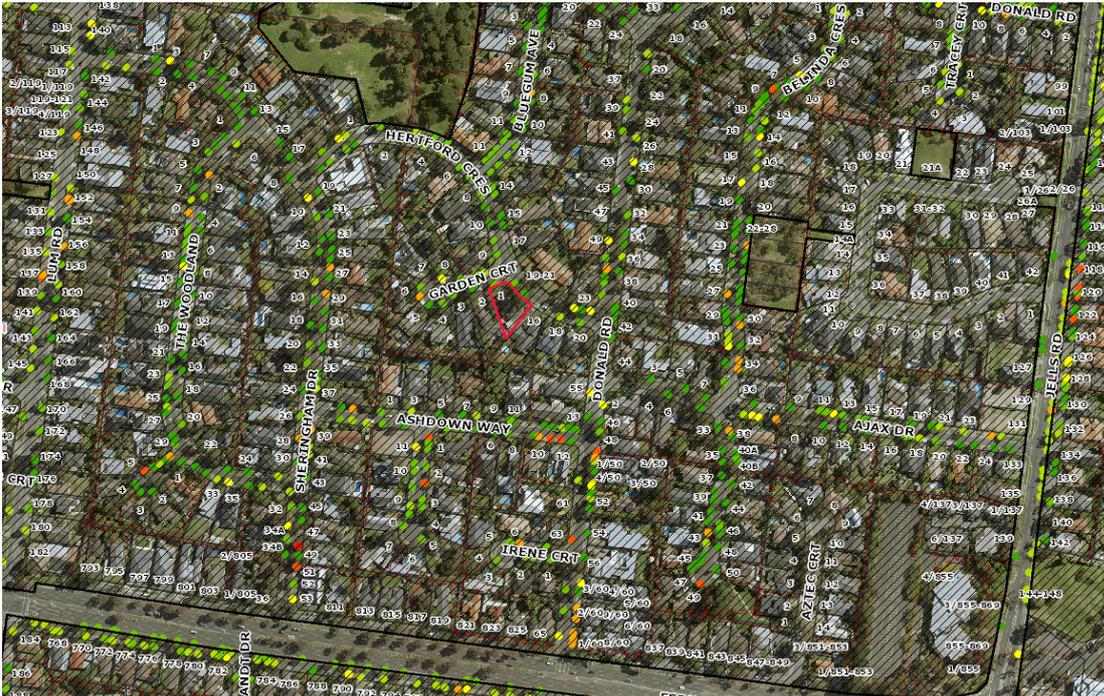
- 6 monthly inspection frequency (currently in place)
- Selective pruning as part of each inspection to maintain property clearances and reduce leaf litter. (currently in place)
- 50% cost contribution by council to install gutter guard to the affected gutters on property to prevent the need for frequent cleaning of gutters.
- Remedial nature strip works to improve condition and amenity of nature strip.
- Programmed road resurfacing and kerb and channel works are required in street. Works would make allowances for area in front of 1 Garden Ct and tree base.

#### ***FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS***

The resident at 1 Garden Court, Wheelers Hill contacted Council to request the removal of the street tree. A series of assessments and site meetings have occurred to determine the condition and structure of the tree as well as identify solutions to address the concerns of the resident. It should be noted that this species of tree exists elsewhere in the local area with approx. 20 specimens throughout the neighbourhood.

The street tree (Sydney Blue Gum) at 1 Garden Court, Wheelers Hill should be retained as it does not meet Council's criteria for tree removal, which would have otherwise exempted it from requiring a planning permit given the tree is in the Vegetation Protection Overlay area. Proposed tree management and civil engineering solutions should be re-visited and implemented once agreement on detail is reached with resident to address their concerns.

The extract below from Councils GIS system shows the property within the VPO.



# 1 Garden Court, Wheelers Hill within Vegetation Protection Overlay areas.

### **CONCLUSION**

The tree should be retained based on the tree is in good condition and does not meet councils tree removal criteria. The proposed solutions should be scoped in detail and implemented in consultation with Mr Dukes and residents of 1 Garden Ct and adjoining Hertford Crescent as soon as is practical.