



6 December 2018

Scott Cavanagh
Director, City Infrastructure
Warrnambool City Council
PO Box 198 Warrnambool 3280
scavanagh@warrnambool.vic.gov.au
cc: wbool_city@warrnambool.vic.gov.au

6 Parliament Place
East Melbourne
VIC 3002

Email: conservation@nattrust.com.au
Web: www.nationaltrust.org.au

T 03 9656 9818

Re: Removal of two Moreton Bay Figs, Warrnambool

Dear Mr Cavanagh,

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) objects to the removal of two Moreton Bay Figs in the Raglan Parade media strip, Warrnambool. The Expert Significant Tree Committee of the National Trust has been consulted on this issue and have provided the advice informing this submission.

This avenue of 36 Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) is included in the National Trust Register of Significant Trees (file no. T11234). This avenue is significant for aesthetic and social reasons at Regional level. These trees form a fine avenue with a spreading canopy which interlocks to completely shade the media strip. The trees are generally considered to be in a good condition.

It was noted at the time of their registration in 1986 that the two trees at the Banyan Street intersection had been heavily lopped to clear powerlines and traffic lights, and that this detracts to some extent from the uniformity of the avenue. Therefore the issue of the aesthetic effect of pruning due to powerlines is not a new issue, and has been a known condition of these trees for some time. While we recognise that heavy pruning on these trees due to powerlines has significantly reduced the canopy of these Moreton Bay Figs, our preference is that all efforts are undertaken to ensure that they are retained in this location.

It is likely that the two trees on the Banyan Street side are well suited to the climatic conditions of this location, and have grown resilient to strong winds and storms. As such we have concerns that the removal of these two trees could expose the remaining trees in the avenue to weather conditions that they are not well adapted to. This may lead to damage or structural failure of the remaining trees.

In October 2018 the National Trust requested copies of any arborist, engineer or other reports that have informed this proposed removal. We also asked for further documentation of any other options explored to avoid this tree removal, along with the documentation prepared for the permit. To date we have not received this information. We have received a copy of an arborist street tree condition audit and a copy of the permit. Specifically we would expect to see an independent arborist report that provides a recommendation for removal and subsequent management of the remaining trees.

In the view of the National Trust, the most satisfactory long-term solution would be for the Council to request Powercor relocate the power lines underground, or to a safe distance away

from the tree canopies. This would provide a positive outcome for all involved. We note that Moreton Bay Figs are a resilient species, and the figs in this location would likely respond well to formative pruning to restructure the tree canopy and overall landscape impact over time. A joint advocacy approach to a similar issue was taken by the National Trust and a local council in the 1990s which led to the successful relocation of powerlines around a significant tree in Guildford. The National Trust encourages the Warrnambool City Council to consider this option in retaining and improving these trees which are landmarks in the Warrnambool landscape.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact me on 9656 9823 or jessica.hood@nattrust.com.au.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Hood', written in a cursive style.

Dr Jessica Hood
Community Advocate Environmental Heritage
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)