

REPORTS FROM DIRECTOR ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONS

a15 [EO] Weeping Figs - Cudgen Village

ORIGIN:

Recreation Services

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

As a result of a large limb tearing off a fig tree located on the corner of Cudgen Road and Crescent street on 23 November, and concerns from other residents whose properties are effected by the fig trees in this area trees, Councils arborist inspected the trees and presented recommendations on their future management.

In summary, to preserve the trees and minimise risk, a 60% reduction in canopy height is recommended. This will reduce the weight of the larger limbs and reduce stress on the lower branches.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:-

1. The fig trees in Cudgen Road and Crescent Street, Cudgen undergo remedial pruning, removing approximately 60% of the canopy.
2. The Cudgen Progress Association, the Kingscliff Ratepayers Association and the RSL be notified in writing of the proposal and an article be placed in the Tweed Link.

ADDENDUM

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REPORT:

On 23 November 2004, a large limb tore off a fig tree located on the corner of Cudgen Road and Clarke Street Cudgen. As a result of this occurrence and the concerns of residents affected by other fig trees in Crescent Street and Cudgen Road, Councils arborist undertook an inspection of the trees to asses their condition.

Background:

The streets of Cudgen were planted with trees to honour soldiers from the area that did not return from World Wars 1 and 2. Collier Street is planted with Norfolk Island Pines dedicated to World War 1 and Crescent Street and Cudgen Road have fig trees dedicated to World War 2.

The fig trees are *Ficus benjamina* (weeping fig). These trees are one of a large genus of about 8000 species. The weeping fig is a large tree with a broad spreading crown and a prodigious root system. There are seven trees of concern, 3 in Crescent Street and 4 in Cudgen Road.

Report:

All of the figs have a healthy appearance, with full canopy coverage and lush green foliage. However, as evidenced by the limb failure of 23 November, there are concerns with the structural stability of the larger branches. Examination of the wound from the failure identified further weak sections at the base of large branches, including sections of decay leading to basal cavities.

In order to maintain clearance around powerlines and remove limbs overhanging residences and roadways, the growth of these trees has been forced unnaturally upwards. As a result, they have a heavily weighted upper canopy, increasing the risk of limb failure.

Due to the required pruning regime, the soft wooded nature of the trees and their age, the trees display poor branch attachment in the canopy and are likely to have internal weaknesses.

Due to the historical significance of the trees, all efforts to extend their life span should be pursued. In order to reduce the weight of the larger limbs and stress on the lower limbs, it is recommended the canopy height be reduced by 60%.

Whilst this will serve to lessen the risk of large limb drop, it should be noted that this type of lopping may increase the risk of decay and insect attack of cut sections of branches, and there will be a loss of amenity. Additionally, an annual pruning regime will be required to maintain the trees at this height.

ADDENDUM

Consultation:

Due to the significance of these trees, both from a historical perspective and an amenity perspective, it is recommended the Cudgen Progress Association, the Kingscliff Ratepayers Association and the RSL be notified in writing of the proposal, and an article be placed in the Tweed Link.



Figure 1: Fig trees in Crescent Street



Figure 2: Fig trees in Cudgen Road

ADDENDUM

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Figure 3 Wound in fig tree Crescent Street as result of limb drop, 23 November showing evidence of decay



Figure 4: Evidence of decay and cavities.

ADDENDUM

LEGAL/RESOURCE/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

UNDER SEPARATE COVER:

Nil.

ADDENDUM

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CHAIRMAN