

## 6. HUNTSBURY AVENUE WALKWAY – TREE REMOVAL REQUEST

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager City Environment
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Michael Aitken, Greenspace Manager
<b>Author:</b>	Tony Armstrong, Arborist, DDI: 941 8578 and Ann Liggett, Parks and Waterways Area Advocate, DDI: 941 5111

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to remove four wattle trees (*Acacia* spp.) located adjacent to the entrance of Huntsbury Walkway, Centaurus Road and replace with appropriate planting for this site. The attached photographs refer.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. In October 2005, a request was received on behalf of the residents of 120 Centaurus Road, to remove four wattle trees on their northeast boundary, being on Huntsbury Walkway.
3. The reason for the request is owing to nuisance caused by the overhanging canopy and shading.
4. The trees were pruned in 2002 to address overhanging branches, however in 2004 another request was assessed as having no health and safety issues with limited pruning options. The trees were neither pruned ('topped' as requested) or removed on that basis.
5. In 2005 the residents approached a contractor to prune back overhanging branches, and it was recommended to them that the trees should be removed, hence the current request.
6. After inspection of the tree, three options were presented to the residents:
  - (a) Option A - Trees be pruned back further to the boundary.
  - (b) Option B - Trees be left in the interim and removed by the following year.
  - (c) Option C - Trees are removed as soon as possible.
7. The resident's preferred option was Option C.
8. The four wattle trees are approximately 8-10 metres in height with a canopy spread of 12 metres plus. They have grown on an embankment beside a public walkway and elevated above the adjacent property to the south west. Root growth is therefore restricted but does not appear damaged or unstable. The trunks appear to have some structural weakness but which is not atypical for the genus. The canopy form appears slightly unbalanced, due to previous pruning, but the health is not affected other than some evidence of gall/canker, which again is not atypical of the genus.
9. The benefits or positive features of the trees are shade/screening/shelter, evergreen and lowering canopy. Also the location is quite prominent in the streetscape. The adverse effects or negative features include some risk of branch failure and canopy decline. The trees are also not large in stature or significant in being a specimen type planting. There is also a history of ongoing complaints regarding nuisance.
10. A full investigation of nuisance was not carried out as evidence was not apparent at the time of inspection, ie there was no apparent damage and the trees had been pruned back from the property.
11. There is an outstanding and ongoing issue with trees in the public space and conflict with private properties the nature of which is claimed to be a nuisance but not proven. Given the low amenity value and limited maintenance options of the trees in question, removal is supported with replanting as a mitigation for any loss of amenity value. The planting site is restricted but given its location this is relevant for renewal planting.

#### **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

12. The cost of the work will be covered under the existing city-wide arboricultural operations budget.
13. These trees are not protected under the City Plan.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve the removal of four wattle trees located adjacent to the entrance to Huntsbury Walkway, Centaurus Road and replaced with appropriate planting in consultation with the resident of 120 Centaurus Road.

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION**

For discussion.