OLDMEADOW ARBORICULTURE

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PROFESSIONAL TREE CARE

ARBORICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

Hollonds Street and Kiewa Crescent, Mt. Beauty street tree assessment.

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In conjunction with Arboressence.

Thursday 26th February 2015

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Alpine Shire Council commissioned an assessment of street trees in Hollonds Street and Kiewa Crescent to:

i.) Identify any damage caused to, or by the trees

ii.) Assess the trees' health and structure and provide a useful life expectancy of the trees within the current growing conditions.

1.2 This report found that any damage caused to or by the trees was insubstantial and that provided the trees are maintained with appropriate arboricultural practices they will have a useful life expectancy of 20+ years in the current growing conditions.

2. Scope

2.1 To assess street trees on Hollonds Street and Kiewa Crescent, Mt. Beauty[1] by performing a non-invasive Arboricultural Assessment, to establish the following.

2.1.1 The health and structure of each tree including a ULE (Useful Life Expectancy[2]) within the context of the current site conditions.

2.1.2 Identify and discuss any damage done to, or by, the trees.

2.1.3 Based on the above, what if any, arboricultural works could be undertaken over the next 5 years to mitigate damage to trees or property, and extend the ULE of the trees.

2.1.4 Discuss whether the current street trees are appropriate for this streetscape environment and if not, recommendations on a suitable replacement species.

3. Method

Field Assessment

3.1 A site visit and tree inspection was conducted on Monday February 24th 2015. The tree assessment consisted of a visual inspection of the nominated trees. The assessment was undertaken with regard to modern arboricultural principles and practices, did not involve a detailed examination of below ground or internal tree parts and was undertaken from the ground to determine health, structure, ULE and age class with measurements taken to establish trunk dimensions using a diameter tape; crown height was estimated, and canopy spread determined by pacing the canopy width on the widest axis.

Property Damage

3.2 The site and surrounding infrastructure was inspected for obvious signs of damage that may have been caused/contributed to by the trees. Any structures or services located below ground level were not assessed. Anecdotal evidence was provided to the assessor on the day of assessment and where discussed is noted as such.

[1] Please see Figure 1 Illustrating tree numbering and positioning – photo provided by
[2] See Appendix 3: Arboricultural Descriptors

Aerial Overhead

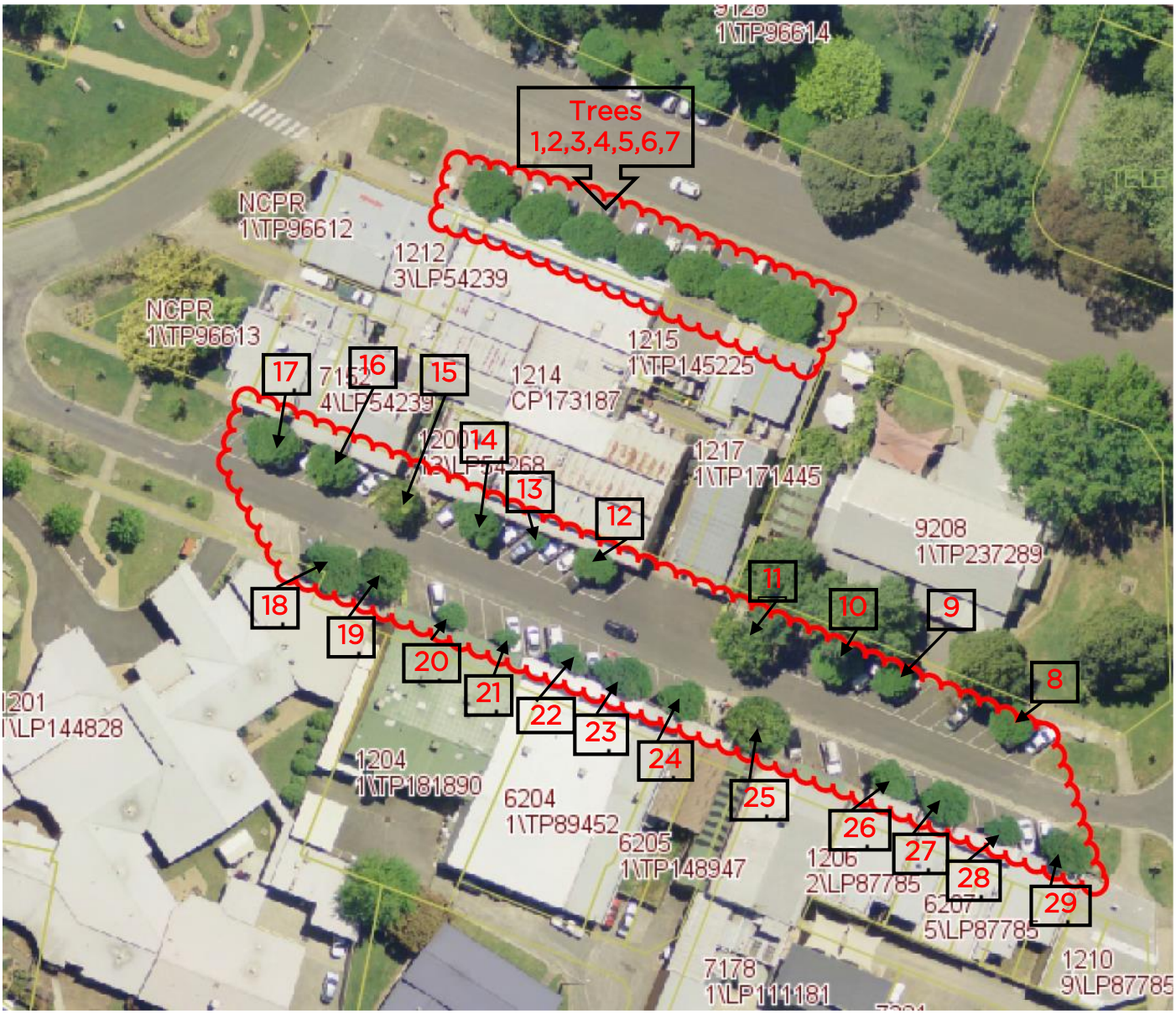


Figure 1 Illustrating tree numbering and positioning – photo provided by the Alpine Shire.

4. Species Overview

4.1 *Robinia pseudoacacia 'inermis,'* Mop Top, is a cultivar that has existed for well over 100 years. It is a thornless, weeping cultivar that grows in a ball shape with a finely branched canopy. Typically the cultivar is grafted onto *Robinia pseudoacacia* at 1.8m to 2.4m and reaches a height of 6m with a 5-6m canopy.

4.2 Anecdotal evidence from Mathew Davies, Established Tree Transplanters (as discussed on 25/02/2015) suggests that there exist specimens in Melbourne that would be 60+ years of age.

5. Site Observations and Findings

Health, structure and ULE

5.1 There were a total of 25 *Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'* (Mop Top) and 4 *Celtis australis* (European Nettle Tree) within the nominated zone.

5.2 All nominated trees displayed fair health with typical leaf colour, size and shape for trees of these species within the current growing conditions.

5.3 The majority of Mop Tops all displayed large canopies with several approaching over extension in their lateral limbs. Over extension of lateral limbs can result in limb failure as the end-weight significantly increases the static load on the union. The species is tolerant of canopy reduction pruning provided it is done at an appropriate time of the year (when the tree is out of leaf and several weeks prior to bud burst) and they are provided with sufficient water to support new growth. Reduction of the canopy will also assist in keeping the root mass in check. Reduction of canopy will result in reduction in root mass (over time), ensuring a root mass/ crown mass ratio is maintained.

5.4 Tree 3, Mop Top, had a basal trunk wound on the south western side extending to a height of approximately 1.5m. The wound is consistent with mechanical impact damage, eliciting a pronounced wound response from the tree illustrative of fair tree health. A sounding mallet confirmed the presence of decay, however the risk of failure can be addressed through arboricultural pruning practices to reduce the size and weight of the canopy and therefore the load at the point of decay.

5.5 Tree 18, Mop Top, had an accumulation of frass (refuse left behind by boring insects – in this circumstance a sap borer) at the base of the trunk on the north eastern side and the presence of decay was detected with a sounding mallet. The risk of failure can be addressed and mitigated through arboricultural pruning practices to reduce the size and weight of the canopy. Systemic insecticides are not typically effective against borer. A surface sprayed insecticide during winter can have an impact, however improving tree health through mulching and watering is the most effective way to combat the insect. The tree should continue to be monitored to ensure that future borer damage does not compromise the trees structure.

5.6 Trees 20-22, Mop Tops, have all undergone recent pruning to reduce the canopy away from the adjacent guttering. The pruning does not appear to be the work of council staff members, but will suffice in keeping branches away from gutters in the short term.

5.7 Tree 24 recently had a branch fail in the upper central canopy, causing other minor breakages and leaving a substantial hole in the canopy exterior. The failure was an isolated occurrence as a result of decay in the stem. The increased risk of further branch failure due to changed exposure to wind to the remaining canopy can be addressed through arboricultural pruning practices; namely reducing the canopy all over by 1m-1.5m.

Damage caused by, or to, the trees.

5.8 Hairline cracking in the asphalt was visible around the base of every Mop Top. The fine cracking was not necessarily consistent with radial cracking typically associated with root damage and as hairline cracks were present elsewhere in the asphalt they appear consistent with normal degradation of the road surface through use over time. At this stage the hairline cracks do not impede upon the function of the asphalt as there was no heaving present.

5.9 Almost all Mop Tops (those located in the proximity of buildings) were rubbing on adjacent roof guttering. In all circumstances the size of the branch contacting the gutter was less than 40mm ⌀ and was not causing substantial damage (no bending or cracking was evident).

5.10 A staff member from Food Works provided anecdotal evidence suggesting that the drainage from the building and the internal structure of the exterior walls had been compromised by tree roots. This claim was unable to be substantiated with any physical evidence.

5.11 The same staff member from Food Works also claimed that leaves and other debris drop into the gutters was causing substantial damage and was expensive to clean. This is plausible given the adjacent location and height of the tree canopies. Arboricultural practices, pruning/hedging the tree canopy away from the gutters annually will help to mitigate this issue, however it is unlikely to resolve the issue entirely unless the canopy height is below gutter height.

5.12 It was noted on the day of assessment that the canopy of tree 11, a European Nettle Tree, was rubbing on the Food Works delivery truck. Appropriate street clearance can be achieved through arboricultural pruning practices.

5.13 It was noted that several of the bollards around the trees were now rubbing, or in close proximity to the tree trunks. If the trees are to be retained then the bollards should be moved, or expanded to allow trunk diameter to continue to expand without causing damage. Removal of the bollards entirely is not recommended as they prevent vehicular damage to the tree trunks.

Trees in the current landscape

5.14 There is no evidence that the trees are entering into or about to enter into senescence.

5.15 In the current streetscape environment and with appropriate arboricultural maintenance pruning the Mop Tops will have a ULE (Useful Life Expectancy) of 20+ years.

5.16 Similarly the European Nettle Trees, if maintained with appropriate arboricultural practices will have a ULE of 20+ Years.

5.17 The use of responsive design to improve the growing environment may further increase the useful life expectancy of both species. This could include

i.) Expansion of the growing area by removing the asphalt between the planter beds and the pavement

ii.) Installation of a curb and channel system that catches and stores water for the trees.

5.18 Any streetscape re-development may also adversely affect tree health and therefore future life expectancy if undertaken insensitively. Changes in natural grade, or any digging, cutting or boring may impact upon the tree root system reducing the trees' capacity to uptake water and nutrients and potentially destabilising them.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 There is no evidence that the trees are entering into or about to enter into senescence and both the Mop Tops and the European Nettles Trees have a ULE of 20+ years in the current growing conditions provided they are maintained with appropriate arboricultural practices.

6.2 Any physical damage to buildings or infrastructure as identified on the day were insubstantial.

6.3 Alleged damage reported anecdotally on the day (damage to walls and drainage) could not be substantiated.

Recommendations

6.4 All Mop Tops undergo regular (every 2-3 years) canopy reduction pruning to reduce over extension in the lateral limbs and to a produce a more uniform shape. Furthermore the Mop Tops should undergo annual pruning/hedging to reduce the canopy away from gutters.

6.5 Bollards should be expanded or moved to prevent rubbing on tree trunks and to allow for future trunk expansion.

6.6 Those trees with canopies overhanging the carriageway should be pruned to uplift the canopies to Alpine Shire Council's minimum requirement to prevent contact with vehicles.

6.7 Any future streetscape development be undertaken sensitively to increase the longevity of the trees as described above.

7. References

Spencer, R (2002). Horticultural Flora of South-Eastern Australia. UNSW Press

Appendix 1: Tree Data.

Tree No	Species	Age	Health	Structure	Height	Width	DBH	Comment	Type
1	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	6	48	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
2	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	7	35	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
3	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	7	35	Basal trunk wound with decay from ground to 1.5m, sustainable with arboricultural pruning to mitigate risk of failure. Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
4	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	6	37	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
5	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	7	38	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
6	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	7	33	Poor attachment in some primary limbs. Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
7	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	8	42	Previous limb failure North East side approx. 200mm ⌀. Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
8	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	6	25	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt.	Exotic deciduous
9	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair	5	5	18	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt.	Exotic deciduous
10	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair	5	8	31	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt.	Exotic deciduous
11	Celtis australis	Maturing	Fair	Fair	10	9	34	Possum grazing.	Exotic deciduous
12	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	6	33	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
13	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Semi-mature	Fair	Fair	3	3	9		Exotic deciduous
14	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	6	7	35	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous

15	Celtis australis	Maturing	Fair	Fair	8	7	26		Exotic deciduous
16	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	6	7	35	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
17	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	6	8	30	Minor lifting of asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
18	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	8	51	Decay present North East basal trunk. Presence of frass. Decay above graft on South west side. Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
19	Celtis australis	Maturing	Fair	Fair	6	8	28 at.1.2	Minor canopy dieback South East crown	Exotic deciduous
20	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	4	29	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Recently pruned to clear building. Asymmetrical canopy.	Exotic deciduous
21	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	4	4	24	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Recently pruned to clear building. Asymmetrical canopy.	Exotic deciduous
22	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	7	35	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Recently pruned to clear building. Asymmetrical canopy.	Exotic deciduous
23	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	9	27	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Asymmetrical canopy.	Exotic deciduous
24	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	6	24	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Recent branch failure 100mm ⌀ has left hole in canopy. Presence of decay in remaining stem.	Exotic deciduous
25	Celtis australis	Maturing	Fair	Fair	8	10	31 at.1.2		Exotic deciduous
26	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	7	31	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
27	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	7	32	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
28	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	4	5	20	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof.	Exotic deciduous
29	Robinia pseudoacacia 'Inermis'	Maturing	Fair	Fair to poor	5	8	42	Minor hairline cracks in asphalt. Minor rubbing on roof. Minor dieback in upper canopy	Exotic deciduous

Appendix 2: Photos

Tree 9: Illustrating the size and shape of the planter boxes.

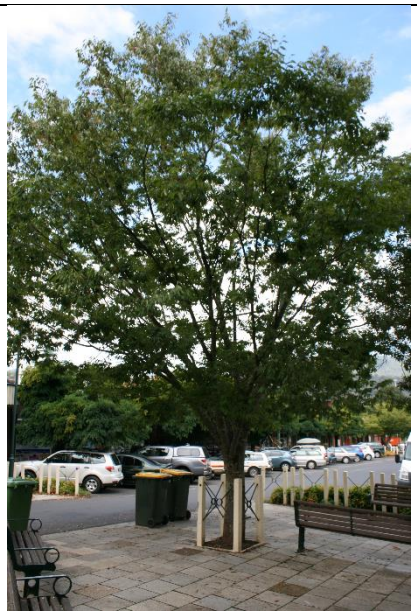
Tree 4: Basal trunk wound

Tree 8: Previous branch failure

Tree 16: Canopy overhanging the gutter

Tree 19: Basal decay and frass

Tree 21: Asymmetrical canopy.

 *Tree 23: Extensive canopy.*	 *Tree 24: Recent branch failure and associated hole in the canopy.*	 *Tree 11: Celtis australis, illustrating size and location.*

Appendix 3: Arboricultural Descriptors.

(January 2015)

1. Tree Condition

The assessment of tree condition evaluates factors of health and structure. The descriptors of health and structure attributed to a tree evaluate the individual specimen to what could be considered typical for that species growing in its location. For example, some species can display inherently poor branching architecture, such as multiple acute branch attachments with included bark. Whilst these structural defects may technically be considered arboriculturally poor, they are typical for the species and may not constitute an increased risk of failure. These trees may be assigned a structural rating of fair-poor (rather than poor) at the discretion of the author.

Diagram 1, provides an indicative distribution curve for tree condition to illustrate that within a normal tree population the majority of specimens are centrally located within the condition range (normal distribution curve). Furthermore, that those individual trees with an assessed condition approaching the outer ends of the spectrum occur less often.

Figure 2 Tree condition\ (Health & Structure) Indicative normal distribution curve for tree condition

2. Tree Name

Provides botanical name, (genus, species, variety and cultivar) according to accepted international code of taxonomic classification, and common name.

3. Tree Type

Describes the general geographic origin of the species and its type e.g. deciduous or evergreen.

Category	Description
Indigenous	Occurs naturally in the area or region of the subject site
Victorian native	Occurs naturally within some part of the State of Victoria (not exclusively) but is not indigenous
Australian native	Occurs naturally within Australia but is not a Victorian native or indigenous
Exotic deciduous	Occurs outside of Australia and typically sheds its leaves during winter
Exotic evergreen	Occurs outside of Australia and typically holds its leaves all year round
Exotic conifer	Occurs outside of Australia and is classified as a gymnosperm
Native conifer	Occurs naturally within Australia and is classified as a gymnosperm
Native Palm	Occurs naturally within Australia. Woody monocotyledon
Exotic Palm	Occurs outside of Australia. Woody monocotyledon

4. Height and Width

Indicates height and width of the individual tree; dimensions are expressed in metres. Crown heights are measured with a height meter where possible. Due to the topography of some sites and/or the density of vegetation it may not be possible to do this for every tree. Tree heights may be estimated in line with previous height meter readings in conjunction with author's experience. Crown widths are generally paced (estimated) at the widest axis or can be measured on two axes and averaged. In some instances the crown width can be measured on the four cardinal direction points (North, South, East and West).

5. Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)

Indicates the trunk diameter (expressed in centimetres) of an individual tree measured at 1.4m above the existing ground level or where otherwise indicated, multiple leaders are measured individually. Plants with multiple leader habit may be measured at the base. The range of methods to suit particular trunk shapes, configurations and site conditions can be seen in Appendix A of Australian Standard *AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development site*s. Measurements undertaken with forestersø tape or builders tape.

6. Health

Assesses various attributes to describe the overall health and vigour of the tree.

Category	Vigour/Extension growth	Decline symptoms/Deadwood	Foliage density, colour, size, intactness	Pests and or disease
Good	Above typical	None or minimal	Better than typical	None or minimal
Fair	Typical	Typical or expected	Typical	Typical, within damage thresholds
Fair to Poor	Below typical	More than typical	Exhibiting deficiencies	Exceeds damage thresholds
Poor	Minimal	Excessive and large amount/size	Exhibiting severe deficiencies	Extreme and contributing to decline
Dead	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. Structure

Assesses principal components of tree structure (Diagram 2).

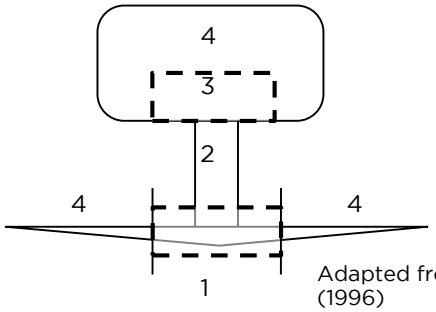
Descriptor	Zone 1 - Root plate & lower stem	Zone 2 - Trunk	Zone 3 - Primary branch support	Zone 4 - Outer crown and roots
Good	No damage, disease or decay; obvious basal flare / stable in ground	No damage, disease or decay; well tapered	Well formed, attached, spaced and tapered	No damage, disease, decay or structural defect
Fair	Minor damage or decay. Basal flare present.	Minor damage or decay	Typically formed, attached, spaced and tapered	Minor damage, disease or decay; minor branch end-weight or over-extension
Fair to Poor	Moderate damage or decay; minimal basal flare	Moderate damage or decay; approaching recognised thresholds	Weak, decayed or with acute branch attachments; previous branch failure evidence	Moderate damage, disease or decay; moderate branch end-weight or over-extension
Poor	Major damage, disease or decay; fungal fruiting bodies present. Excessive lean placing pressure on root plate	Major damage, disease or decay; exceeds recognised thresholds; fungal fruiting bodies present. Acute lean. Stump resprout	Decayed, cavities or has acute branch attachments with included bark; excessive compression flaring; failure likely	Major damage, disease or decay; fungal fruiting bodies present; major branch end-weight or over-extension
Very Poor	Excessive damage, disease or decay; unstable / loose in ground; altered exposure; failure probable	Excessive damage, disease or decay; cavities. Excessive lean. Stump resprout	Decayed, cavities or branch attachments with active split; failure imminent	Excessive damage, disease or decay; excessive branch end-weight or over-extension

Structure ratings will also take into account general tree architecture which considers aspects of stem taper, live crown ratio, branch distribution or bias and crown position such as tree being suppressed amongst more dominant trees.

The lowest or worst descriptor assigned to the tree in any column could generally be the overall rating assigned to the tree. The assessment for structure is limited to observations of external and above ground tree parts. It does not include any exploratory assessment of underground or internal tree parts unless this is requested as part of the investigation. Trees are assessed and the given a rating for a point in time. Generally, trees with a poor or very poor structure are beyond the benefit of practical arboricultural treatments.

Diagram 2: Tree structure zones

1. Root plate & lower stem
2. Trunk
3. Primary branch support
4. Outer crown & roots



Adapted from Coder (1996)

The management of trees in the urban environment requires appropriate arboricultural input and consideration of risk. Risk potential will take into account the combination of likelihood of failure and impact, including the perceived importance of the target(s).

8. Life Stage

Relates to the physiological stage of the tree's life cycle.

Category	Description
Young	Sapling tree and/or recently planted
Semi-mature	Tree rapidly increasing in size and yet to achieve expected size in situation
Maturing	Specimen approaching expected size in situation, with reduced incremental growth
Over-mature	Tree is senescent and in decline

9. Useful Life Expectancy

The sustainability of the tree in the landscape, calculated based on an estimate of the average age of the species in an urban area, less its estimated current age. The life expectancy of the tree is further modified where necessary in consideration of its current health and vigour, condition and suitability to the site.

Bibliography:

Coder, K D. (1996) Construction damage assessments: trees and sites, University of Georgia, USA

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Gooding, R.F., Ingram, J.B., Urban, J.R., Bloch, L.B., Steigerwaldt, W.M, Harris, R.W. and Allen, E.N. (2000) Guide for plant appraisal, 9th edition, International society of Arboriculture, USA

Pollard, A. H. (1974) Introductory statistics: a service course, Pergamon Press Australia, Australia.

Standards

AS 4373—2007. Australian Standard. ®. Pruning of amenity trees

AS 4970---2009. Australian Standard. ®. Protection of trees on development sites

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