

### **13.3.5. AVOCA CAR PARK EXTENSION PROJECT**

**Presenter:** Jim Nolan - Chief Executive Officer

**Declaration of Interest:** As presenter of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

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**Declaration of Interest:** As author of this report, I have no disclosable interest in this item.

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#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from Council about the future of five trees in the vicinity of the proposed carpark extension in Avoca.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Council has set aside funds to construct an extension of the southern car park in the central median in Avoca and to install an EV charging station there following community engagement on the matter.

A design to achieve that objective has been prepared based on the concepts outlined in the previously adopted Avoca Streetscape plans. Works are scheduled to be undertaken in the current financial year.

The proposal identifies five trees to be removed from the site. There has been some concern raised in the community about the removal, and this report is to bring the concerns to Council's attention and seek direction on the matter before any work commences.

#### **ISSUE / DISCUSSION**

The five pine trees comprise three semi-mature trees (approximately half the size of a fully mature tree or more) located on the east side, and two smaller trees on the west side located under an existing overhead powerline.

At the time of the preparation of the streetscape plans, the tree species was considered to be inappropriate in this location due to the size and potential to impact on road assets in particular concrete kerb, road pavement and utilities. The plans recommend the removal and replacement of scarlet oak and silky oak trees sited to accommodate the future car park.

Notice of the proposed removal was given and feedback expressing concern has been provided through a letter to the editor and verbally at the community information session on 8 August and directly to the Mayor. Those opposed to the removal state that the trees add value to the streetscape, provide habitat for birds and provide shade and cooling. Any replacement trees would likely require many years to reach the same level of maturity.

The matter has been discussed through a Councillor Briefing and before any works commence, Council direction is sought on the following options:

1. Proceed with the tree removal and construction as planned, and plant replacement tree species in suitable locations within the precinct.
2. Progressively remove the trees over several years, modify the construction plans to suit, and plant replacement tree species in suitable locations within the precinct as other trees

are removed. Potentially removing the two smaller trees and one or two of the larger trees now leaving one or two larger trees for removal at a later time.

3. Remove only the two small trees and retain the three larger trees making the changes necessary to the construction design to suit which may include not laying concrete kerb in this or pavement within the immediate vicinity of the trees to avoid expected damage. Plant oak trees to replace the pine trees to be removed.
4. Retain all existing trees, and modify the construction plans to suit. Undertake any necessary pruning to accommodate car parking and tree health and community safety.

### **COUNCIL PLAN / LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE**

#### Priority 1 - People

1c. Improve accessibility and inclusivity.

#### Priority 2 - Place

2a. Sustain and enhance unique character of our communities.

#### Priority 3 - Environment

3a. Continue being an environmentally progressive organisation.

#### Priority 4 - Economy

4b. Invest in road infrastructure to improve connectivity for commerce and community.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Avoca Streetscape Amended Concept Plan adopted by Council [**13.3.5.1** - 1 page]

### **FINANCIAL / RISK IMPLICATIONS**

There is a cost to remove the trees which has been provided for in the project budget. Retaining these trees in this location will inevitably cause damage to the built road infrastructure requiring repair and replacement. The trees will likely also require pruning and maintenance in future and there will be a significant cost to remove in years to come.

### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Proceed with the tree removal and construction as planned, and plant replacement tree species in suitable locations within the precinct.
2. Continue to provide information to the community throughout the construction about the works and the reasons for Councils decision to remove the trees.

