

4 March 2010

Alex Jones

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Town of Cottesloe

109 Broome St.

Cottesloe, WA 6011

Dear Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and Staff,

**Re: Moreton Bay Fig Tree on the verge at 75 Curtin Avenue, Cottesloe.**

I have been a resident of the western suburbs for 28 years and I am the promoter of the [www.saveourtrees.net](http://www.saveourtrees.net) website. The website was established in 2008 primarily to draw attention to two issues involving local governments and state authorities: the loss of our mature trees due largely to council Tree Removal or Replacement Policies and the poisoning of land, water, wildlife, pets and people due to the widespread use of herbicides and pesticides.

I refer to the scheduled destruction of the large, iconic fig tree at 75 Curtin Avenue on the 9<sup>th</sup> March at 7:00am and I urge Councillors to rescind this decision for the following reasons:

1. There is a wide network of residents in Western Australia who are keen to see the preservation of our urban forests and our wonderful iconic trees such as the Curtin Avenue Ficus Tree referred to in the Post Newspaper article, Page 6, February 27, 2010.
2. Although we understand the concerns of some councillors and residents about damage to footpath and other infrastructure and the ongoing maintenance costs of large trees, the many health and environmental benefits of retaining trees, as well as the community, heritage, local amenity and real estate values, by far outweigh any inconvenience or cost involved in the maintenance of the tree.
3. In regard to the problem of "roots seeking water in drains and lifting the footpath", there are many examples both locally and interstate, of such trees living in harmony alongside heritage buildings and old infrastructure. Best practice tree maintenance by such arboriculturists as Jonathan Epps (Arboriculturist, Ph: 0402221517) who saved the Carr

Street Cape Lilacs in South Perth when he was independently engaged by the residents, as well as the award -winning technology used by such companies as [www.repipeservices.com](http://www.repipeservices.com) (Ph:1300737473), provide excellent alternatives to the wood-chipping of these majestic healthy trees.

4. Another Western Suburbs council has wood -chipped approximately 200 ficus trees in only 10 years, effectively destroying 10,000 years of cumulative tree growth in just one decade. This behaviour by one council is tantamount to environmental vandalism and yet the town of Claremont recently supervised the preservation of two iconic Moreton Bay Fig trees alongside development works at the St. Louis Estate, Stirling Hwy. These magnificent large trees have been treated with the care and respect that they deserve as protectors of our health and environment and they now adorn the new development and continue to preserve local heritage values and the leafy character of our suburbs. Councils make decisions about preserving or destroying trees based on whether they regard trees as an asset or a liability. Negative perceptions about trees and a lack of understanding of tree benefits often lead to tree removal and negative health and environmental outcomes.
  
5. Another example of councils and communities valuing these majestic trees is in the yearly Moreton Bay Fig Festival in the Town of Victoria Park. This town also has some of these ficus trees as street trees. Whilst there are ongoing financial costs to the community in maintaining these trees, the broader health and environmental benefits to the community by far outweigh the disadvantages. Added to the financial cost of destroying these iconic trees (\$5,000+, a sum that is generally accessed from council Street Tree "Management" funds) one needs to add the ongoing financial costs of trying to grow saplings in a drying climate, in areas that have had shade and moisture retaining trees stripped away.

It may be relatively easy to approve the destruction of a tree for those who only see a tree as a liability, however, a community's trees are assets when properly managed and vital not only to our good health but also to the health of our environment and all the wildlife and insects that rely on these trees for their survival. Tree Management funds must be used for the good management of trees and not for their destruction. Furthermore, any issues relating to complaints from residents about the seasonal fruit or leaf litter can be easily resolved if councils assist with sweeping of verges. We urge all Cottesloe councillors to protect this tree as a matter of urgency before the 9<sup>th</sup> March when it is scheduled to be destroyed.

Yours sincerely,

Deleted

Alex Jones