

SPECIAL ELECTORS MEETING 21/11/07

To:-

The Mayor and Councillors
of the City of South Perth,
fellow electors, and other interested people

Joint presentation by:-

- Greg Benjamin
Carr Street Resident's Representative
42 Norfolk Street (corner Carr Street), South Perth. 6151.
phone 9367 7269
gregbenj@iinet.net.au

- Jonathan Epps, Dip Arb, IACA
Arboriculturist
phone/fax 08 9314 5102 mobile 040 222 1517
arboriculturist@iinet.net.au

Introduction

- Welcome and many thanks to the **204** people and 191 South Perth Electors, who signed the petition to call this meeting this evening to discuss “Local residential community desire to change the City of South Perth Street Tree Policy to retain the Cape Lilac tree as a designated street tree”.
- The matter is of principal interest to the residents of Carr Street, and other scenic Cape Lilac lined streets such as River View Street, Hopetoun Street, Alexandra Street, Hovia Terrace, and Gladstone Avenue.



Democratic Votes by Carr Street residents

The reason for the meeting has been prompted by the frustrated experience of Carr Street residents, who during the past two years, in response to consultation by the City of South Perth, have overwhelmingly voted on two occasions, for Cape Lilacs to be maintained and continued as canopy in their scenic street.

- The first vote in favour of continuing Cape Lilacs was in 2005 at a street meeting called by the City of South Perth to discuss the perceived 'issues'; there were 35 signatures representing 23 of 27 houses or **85%**.
- The second vote was conducted by the City by post in 2007 when there were 19 out of 22 or **86%** in favour of continuing Cape Lilacs.

The overwhelming result of the votes where made in the full knowledge and appreciation of the so called 'issues' associated with Cape Lilacs.

Council Decision 26 June 2007

- Despite the overwhelming votes which had been called for by the City of South Perth, influenced by a City of South Perth Street Policy which did not include the Cape Lilac as a designated street tree, and its Street Tree Management Plan to progressively replace the Cape Lilacs, on the 26 June 2007 the City of South Perth Council approved **Jacaranda** as the replacement street species for Carr Street.
- The Council decision to approve Jacaranda is now in conflict with the City's Plan to have common street themes and the letter 25/09/07 from the City of South Perth stating:-

“The City is working with consultant Arboriculturist Jonathon Epps on a preservation strategy for the remaining Cape Lilac street trees as agreed with the majority of the residents of Carr Street. No trees will be removed unless they represent an immediate hazard as identified by Mr Epps and the City;”

Jonathan Epps

Carr Street residents have over the past two years consulted the expert arboriculturist Jonathan Epps who is qualified as follows:-

- Founding member of the Institute of Australian Consulting Arboriculturists and a professional member of the International Society of Arboriculture
- After doing a practical year in West Germany, then gaining a diploma in arboriculture in 1986, Jonathan has had a history of working as a local government Tree Officer in Australia and the UK
- Clients include:-
 - Department of Environment and Conservation
 - Department of Sport and Recreation
 - Rottnest Island Authority
 - Swan River Trust
 - and others
- Jonathan has been invited to take an honours degree at Murdoch University where he will be undertaking research on the health status of Marri/Red Gums

Tree Report from Jonathan Epps

1. October 2005 residents of Carr Street approached me to prepare a Tree Report following a recommendation from the City of Perth to remove all the existing tree stock from Carr Street and replace them with young trees.
2. My report was essentially to make comment on the suitability of the existing tree stock for retention in a public area. Also commenting on management practices to help retain the trees for the near future. I was also asked about the possibility of replanting with the same species.
3. December 2005 a 6 page “Tree Report” and 36 page “Tree Survey Inspection and Maintenance Schedule” was produced citing the existence in Carr Street of 36 trees of which 33 were mature Cape Lilac, 2 others being Queensland Box and one young struggling Jacaranda.
4. Examination of the trees showed that the bad pollarding practices history (as managed by the City of South Perth including response to conflict of tall branches with overhead powerlines), caused detriment to the trees, from which they are now structurally in a better condition.
5. With the majority of the Carr Street tree population recommended for pruning works to increase public safety, I recommended 5 Cape Lilac trees to be removed immediately due mostly to poor pollard or branch attachments: since a brief inspection in July this year, another Cape Lilac is due to be removed.
6. August 2006 City of South Perth accepts Tree Report and permits myself to supervise the tree pruning to the Australian Standard for the Pruning of Amenity Trees (since revised on March this year).

Tree Report from Jonathan Epps continued

7. I believe that with the management practices it is acceptable to retain an aging tree population for the foreseeable near future. Many of the Cape Lilacs of Carr Street potentially have lives of up to another 10 to 20 years.
8. An ideal street tree population would have a mixture of age classes this simply means young, semi-mature, mature and senescing trees. Unfortunately Carr Street seems to have mostly the latter.
9. A problem often arises with the choice of the replacement trees. Name any tree and I can provide negative comments about it. However my job is to provide the client with independent, impartial advice.
- 10.* A nursery in Victoria is growing a selected cultivar of Cape Lilac called 'Elite'. It is grown to the customer's requirements – in the case of Carr Street it would have a clear stem to 2 metres in height with a well formed crown. In addition this cultivar does not produce fruit, and does not have to undergo any rigorous pruning as there are no overhead power lines.
- 11.* Pests and diseases in my experience do not inhabit healthy and vigorous trees.
- 12.* As reported to the City of South Perth in April 2007, with a few exceptions, the Cape Lilac tree population of Carr Street as a whole appears to be healthy and sound at the present time.

Recommendations from Jonathan Epps

- Continue my annual tree inspections in Carr Street
- Carry out any target pruning or removals as found necessary
- Plant the vacant tree sites with the 'Elite' cultivar of Cape Lilac
 - A WA nursery that I have been in contact with may undertake the costs to import and supply these trees.
 - Cape Lilacs are drought hardy and best suited to a sandy loam but adaptable to a wide range of soils.
- Continue to treat the White Cedar Moth problem with Hessian sacking dipped in Dipel, an environmentally friendly compound which has a very high success rate against any advance of the caterpillars
 - Dipel is a non toxic bacteria called bacillus thuringiensis which is harmless to other animal life, yet in a chain reaction will control the caterpillars
 - The restored health of the trees will minimise any susceptibility from the caterpillars.
- Do not spray trees in public areas
- I do not believe that Jacarandas are acceptable as street trees
 - Jacarandas originate from tropical South America and prefer richer soils and moist atmosphere eg Brisbane and Queensland. They also need to be established in warmer richer soils.

Pruning Proposed 2005

- In the letter received by Greg Benjamin from the City of South Perth in September 2005 it was stated that:-

In their present state, some of these trees pose a considerable risk to the community and if this matter is not resolved in the very near future the City may have to begin an expensive program of pollarding all the Cape Lilac trees in Carr Street, which I am sure you will agree is not an aesthetically pleasing outcome for the community.

- The photographs sent by the City of South Perth of extreme pollard pruning to the trunk of the tree were a tactic intended to shock.

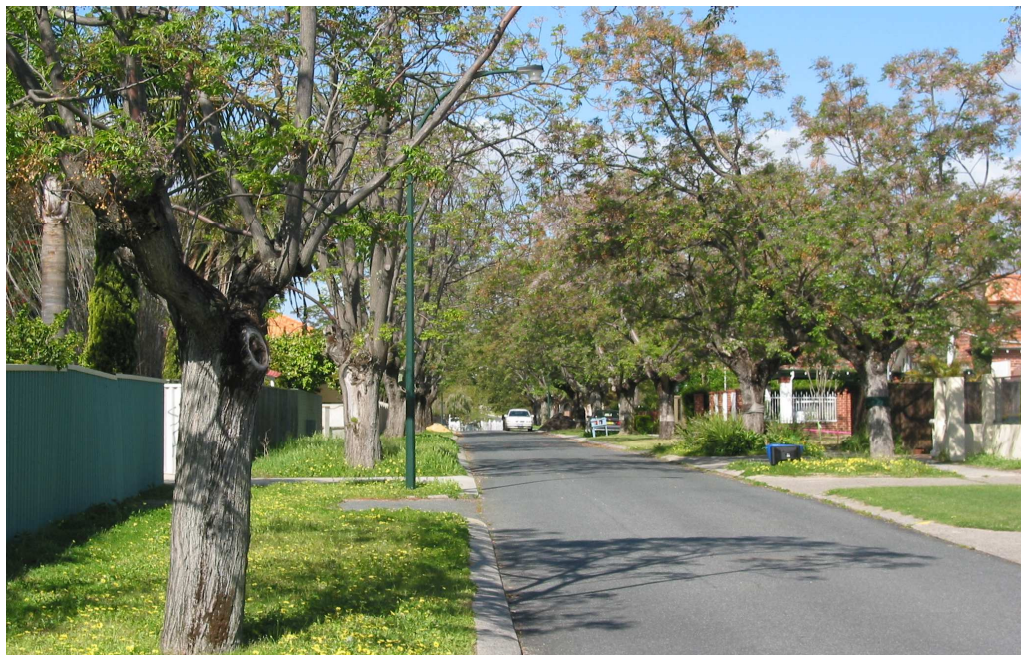


Pruning Outcome 2007

- The trees certainly did not need to be pruned to the extreme extent as suggested by the City of South Perth.
- With the long overdue responsible targeted pruning that was supervised by Jonathan in September 2006, residents are very happy with the outcome that structurally suspect limbs have been dealt with, whilst maintaining an aesthetically pleasing outcome for the community

Pruning by the City of South Perth was said to be expensive at \$7,500 however in view of the cost of bad pruning from the past, this professionally supervised pruning for 30 trees, which hadn't occurred for over 5 years, if split over that period among 27 residents = \$1.85 per tree per annum which is low given the very high rates we pay

- We look forward to Jonathan's continued involvement in the annual review and responsible targeted pruning of the trees.



Historical Heritage

➤ Cape Lilac aka ‘Melia Azedarach’

is derived from the Persian ‘azzadirackt’ meaning noble tree



➤ We believe Cape Lilac trees are worth looking after

- **Cape Lilac trees have heritage value**
being among the first trees to be planted in Perth



St Georges Terrace Perth c1900
Courtesy Western Australia Batty Library

➤ Cape Lilac trees feature in The Historic Gardens of Houghton in the Swan Valley



per www.houghton-wines.com.au/visit_gardens.html
and discussions with their gardener Alan



Cape Lilac Trees (*Melia azedarach* Var *Australasica*)

- “The seeds of the Cape Lilac trees located at the front of the Homestead are thought to have been brought to Western Australia in the mid 1800's by early settlers from the North West of our state”.
- “The Cape Lilac trees at Houghton (of which there are ten) are up to **90** years old”!
- “The trees at Houghton are registered with the National Trust”.

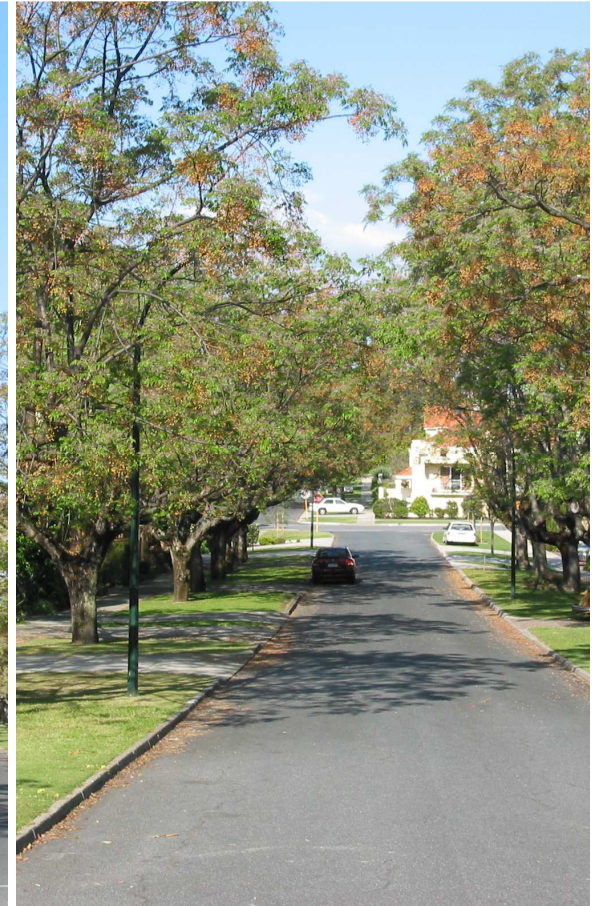
➤ Cape Lilac trees provide valued scenic canopy
with great shade and attracting bird life to our community



Carr
Street



Riverview
Street



Hopetoun
Street

White Cedar Moth

I believe the issue regarding the caterpillars in Carr Street is now under control, as other residents can testify.

- Firstly residents have been using to great effect, Hessian or shade cloth bands, (which can be used with environmentally friendly Dipel) around the trunks of trees, and used to capture adventurous hairy caterpillars who only feed on the leaves of the tree during Spring and into Summer.
- Secondly, annual target and responsible pruning of tree limbs will stop any caterpillars from dropping into the small number of residents who have experienced problems.
- Thirdly the health of the trees will minimise any susceptibility from the caterpillars.

In the City of South Perth's letter April 2007, residents were told:-

“the City is obliged to chemically treat the trees, which is not only costly to ratepayers, but also potentially harmful to the environment and people;”

In my opinion this is part of the beat up that is biased, misleading and unnecessarily alarming, that omits mentioning the use of environmentally friendly Dipel, and the views of Peter Coppin expressed in the following slide.



Civic Centre
Cnr Sandgate St & South Tce
South Perth WA 6151
Tel: 9474 0777
Fax: 9474 2425
www.southperth.wa.gov.au

Peter Coppin, Senior Horticultural Officer, AGWEST Garden Advisory Centre, 06/02/02

In an article on “White Cedar Moth” by Peter Coppin, on City of South Perth letterhead, and reproduced in WA Department of Agriculture “Garden” August 2003, he states:-

- “ there are a number of cheap practical and relatively safe control measures which can be employed to reduce pest numbers to a tolerable level ”
- “ Many people have removed the trees in despair, which is unfortunate as hardy shade trees are a great asset. ”
- “ Control costs little more than \$5.00 per tree per year. ”

Reference: www.southperth.wa.gov.au/docs/infosheets/White%20Cedar%20Moth%20-%20Cape%20lilac%20trees.doc

Berries

- Websites such as the Department of Agriculture in Western Australia includes Cape Lilac as a potentially harmful garden plant, but so too are over 100 other common plants – found in many gardens in South Perth – including:-
 - agapanthus leaves
 - azalea
 - dumb cane berries
 - nightshade berries
 - pointsettia
 - toadstools
 - stone fruit kernels (including apricot, cherry, peach and plum) – which contain a compound that releases cyanide when eaten (Source Kidsafe WA website)
 - bay tree berries
 - daffodil bulbs
 - duranta fruit/berries
 - iris
 - oleander
 - yew seeds
 - avocado leaves
 - bird of paradise seeds
 - daphne berries
 - frangipani
 - sweet pea seeds
 - zamia palm seeds
 - The berries of the Cape Lilac tree are unpalatable and indigestible with a consequent low risk of harmful consequences: to my 20 year knowledge, in Carr Street, no one there has had any problems with ingesting the berries.
-
- The WA Department of Health Hospital Morbidity Data System has been searched over the past four years and shows that very few hospital inpatients have been recorded with the condition of ingesting Cape Lilac berries, and “none from the City of South Perth” (per email 16/11/07).

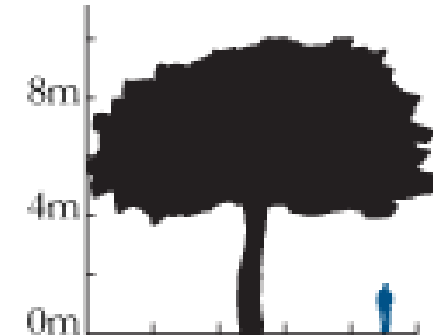
Reference: Rob Maris, Analyst Hospital Morbidity Data Collections, Information Management and Reporting with the WA Department of Health: rob.maris@health.wa.gov.au ph 9222 4222
-
- To further mitigate any risks with the berries, it is recommended that the replacement species for Carr Street (and any other Streets) be the Cape Lilac cultivar *Melia Azedarach* ‘Elite’ as mentioned by Jonathan Epps.



Metropolitan Tree Growers Pty Ltd is a grower of high-quality trees for Councils and Public Authorities throughout south-eastern Australia. We specialise in the production of suitable species and selections for streetscape and other public open space.

Melia azedarach 'Elite'

Metro Trees is a wholesale nursery at 2 Wingrove Street, Alphington, 3078.
John Fitzgibbon ph 03 9499 9913 from Metro Trees has advised:-



- “The *Melia azedarach* ‘Elite’ has neither fruited or properly flowered in the 6 years I have known the parent plant”.
- “There appears to be a genetic idiosyncrasy in the tree preventing proper flower formation”
- “I have roughly 200 number available in 40 Litre for next March/April 2.4 – 2.6m height”
- “The tree is an excellent plant and will grow to 10m height and 8-10m spread”

Reference: http://www.metrotrees.com.au/treehandbook/page-listings/melia_azedarach%20elite.html

Summary

1. The City of South Perth has asked Carr Street residents for their democratic vote. On two occasions **85%** or more residents voted to continue Cape Lilacs as the replacement species in their street (**not jacarandah**). Surely it is false representation to ask for a **vote**, if you are not going to act on it?!
2. The Council decision to approve jacaranda is now in conflict with the hard won commitment by the City of South Perth on a preservation strategy for the remaining Cape Lilac street trees, and the City's Plan to have common street themes.
3. A major reason why the City wants to replace Cape Lilacs is conflict with overhead power lines. Use of underground power lines removes this argument.
4. Expert arboriculturist Jonathan Epps has shown that the mature Cape Lilac trees can be target pruned to be **safe** with an aesthetically pleasing outcome for the community.
5. The Cape Lilac tree population of Carr Street as a whole, now appears to be **healthy** and **sound**, thus mitigating problems with caterpillars and any diseases. Ongoing annual review is required.
6. The caterpillar issue is **under control** in a low cost and environment friendly way.
7. The berries of the Cape Lilac tree are unpalatable and indigestible with a consequent very low risk of harmful consequences: no known ingesting problems in Carr Street
8. Cape Lilacs offer a scenic diversity throughout the year, as well as being **drought hardy**, offering good shade, welcoming bird life, and adding value to the community.
9. The 60 year old Cape Lilac trees in Carr Street should be protected by heritage listing, (and any other streets that request similar action) just as they have been at Houghton.
10. The Cape Lilac replacement species recommended is the cultivar Melia azedarach '**Elite**' which does not produce fruit.

Alex Jones

SAVE OUR TREES

phone 9389 6023 0409 291 398

alx_jones@yahoo.com.au

PETITION FOR THE PROTECTION OF MATURE TREES ON PUBLIC LAND IN URBAN AREAS

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia, are opposed to the removal of mature trees from public land in urban areas. We believe that this practice has a negative impact on:

air quality, wildlife habitat, landscape values, local amenity, protection from the sun, mental and physical health, soil salinity, climate change, financial costs to communities and real estate values.

Your petitioners therefore respectfully request the Legislative Council to support both a moratorium on the removal of such trees and their protection as a public asset for the benefit of present and future generations by measures such as:

1. Promoting a better understanding of their benefits and the negative impact of removal;
2. Promoting better management by means of height control and root surgery to reduce liability risks;
3. Resolving the public liability issue so as to avoid the perceived need for removal;
4. Discouraging their removal from public land; and
5. Reconsidering replacement policies by local governments that allow removal without environmental assessment of the cumulative effects of removal and replacement.



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ms Alexandra Jones
97 Clifton Street
Nedlands WA 6009

Dear Ms Jones

Petition No 34 – Protection of Mature Trees on Public Land in Urban Areas

extract



The Committee recommends that the Minister for Local Government with the support of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure in conjunction with local governments develop a model tree policy for protecting mature trees in urban areas.

The Committee thanks you and your fellow petitioners for your contribution to the debate, and believes that the issues raised in the petition have been brought to the attention of Parliament, by the tabling of the petition in the Legislative Council.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Louise Pratt".

Hon Louise Pratt MLC
Chair

27 June 2007

Motioned to be Moved and Seconded

Mr Mayor,

I move the motion to change the City of South Perth street policy to retain the Cape Lilac as a designated tree, and per the next slide, the details of the matters (a) thru to (i) as contained in the REQUEST FOR SPECIAL MEETING OF ELECTORS dated 4 September 2007 and lodged on 1 November 2007 with the City of South Perth.

Could I have a second for that motion?

Thankyou for your attention.

Greg Benjamin.

I would be glad to respond to any questions.

The details of the matters to be discussed at the special meeting are:

- (a) Altering the Street Tree Policy to include Cape Lilacs as a designated street tree where residents vote to retain them.
- (b) Protection to (heritage list) the existing 60 year old Cape Lilac trees in Carr Street, and any other street that requests similar action
- (c) Replant empty verges in Carr Street with cape lilac saplings ~ ie 5 m trees, and any other street that requests similar action
- (d) Replace Cape Lilac trees with fatal stem decay with cape lilac saplings ~ ie 5 m trees
- (e) The city plant nursery begin an immediate program to propagate Cape Lilac trees for Carr Street and any other street that requests Cape Lilac trees, for planting out as mature saplings.
- (f) The City undertake annual pruning/ branch removal using target pruning methods as stipulated in Australian Standard 4373 (2007) "Pruning of Amenity Trees".
- (g) The city to work with residents to coordinate and maintain white cedar moth reduction strategies (hessian skirts around tree trunks etc).
- (h) The City to spray for white cedar moth only as required.
- (i) Will the Council assure residents of South Perth that it will provide meaningful answers to these questions at the meeting?