



# **Media Release**

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**News Release**  
20 June 2011

## **Removal of Ailing Moonahs from Point Lonsdale Playground**

After reviewing the advice from the two professional arborists and receiving information and approval from the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Council has taken action today to coppice the three trees that present a public safety risk due to their age, previous failing and significant structural deterioration.

Coppicing and protection of the trees will allow new growth to generate from the existing root system, similar to other neighbouring trees in the playground reserve.

Public safety was the key concern in taking the decision to apply to the responsible State Government department for approval to take this action. As the Committee of Management for this area of coastal Crown land, Council has to place public safety as its paramount consideration.

From time to time these decision by Council will generate contrasting views in the community. In this instance Council has had to consider the two arborist report findings with the community concerns regarding public safety and vegetation protection. The action taken by Council will include coppicing the trees and undertaking additional replacement plantings to create two new Moonah reserves in the near vicinity.

Mayor, Councillor Bob Merriman said: "Whilst recognising the concerns of many people as to the coppicing of these trees, Council is charged with the responsibility to ensure as far as possible safe environment. When considering the two arborists reports and the view of some members of Council's vegetation reference group it is clear that one arborist highlights the potential safety issues and that immediate action should be taken.

The second arborist although not as precise as to the safety issues concludes that all three trees are unlikely to improve in form or structure and their removal would be an appropriate response. This arborist goes on to state that these three trees form a natural 'clump' that can be removed with minimal effect on surrounding trees and provide an opportunity to improve the age class distribution.

Given the clear findings and recommendations of the arborists, Council's decision to coppice the trees was the only prudent action that could be taken given the significant potential liability we could face."

There are stringent requirements and processes under the federal Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, and particularly in this case, the state administered Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and Coastal Management Act.

The responsible authority has approved the coppicing of these three trees.

Mayor, Councillor Bob Merriman added: "A very important consideration in the management of significant vegetation must be to protect the whole population — not just focus on individual trees. Removing these trees will give us the opportunity to replant and develop a more sustainable Moonah reserve together with the establishment of a second Moonah reserve. Council will be developing a plan for the Playground Reserve and will be seeking input from the Point Lonsdale Main Street Community Reference Group. Concurrently public submissions should be made to assist this important development."

**ENDS**

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