

## File Note:

**Date:** 31 March 2011

**Subject:** Arborist Dave Williams Response to Management of Point Lonsdale Playground Moonah trees

**Responsible Officer:** Foreshore and Caravan Parks Coordinator

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*Below is an extract of the email confirmation of the advice received and responses to supplementary questions re Risk Management of Point Lonsdale Playground Moonah trees following an onsite inspection on Thursday 10 March 2011.*

**From:** Garry Purton [mailto:garry.purton@queenscliffe.vic.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 March 2011 4:40 PM  
**To:** Dave Williams.

Dave,

Thanks for the advice in relation to the four Moonahs at the Point Lonsdale playground area that were inspected on Thursday 10 March.

Following our discussion my summary in relation to the trees inspected is as follows:

### **Planter Box Moonah**

- No evidence that tree root invasion or uplifting is the cause of the brickwork damage on the surrounding planter box, and similarly there is no evidence of soil disturbance at the base of the tree trunk that might mean movement of the tree. I note your comments that observation of the soil around the tree during periods of high winds may be a useful in order to detect any unusual stability issues.
- Overall this tree is a significant specimen in the area and is relatively sound.

### **Trees 196, 197 and 198**

- Close inspection and various tests carried out on the trees showed that each had varying levels of integrity issues, however each tree was perhaps significant to the others in providing a level of support and protection from wind effects and overall stability.
- Removal of any or all trees could perhaps be considered in the context of an opportunity to revegetate or replant the area.

Please correct me on these fairly broad assessments if necessary, likewise feel free to add any other key points that I have missed.

From a risk management point of view could you please comment on the following:

- Is the placing of a prop under the Planter Box Moonah, or any other measure, a necessary action at this time?
- What management actions might be considered for Trees 196, 197, 198 at this time?
- In addition to the above point are there any other measures that you consider to be necessary, given the location context of the trees?

Message from "Dave Williams" <Dave@arbecology.com.au> on Thu, 17 Mar 2011 17:07:51 +1000

To: "Garry Purton" <garry.purton@queenscliffe.vic.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Point Lonsdale playground Moonahs

Hi Garry,

Sorry it has taken so long to reply.

In general I agree with your statements, however I would make the following comments:

#### Planter Box Moonah

- I have attached a photo taken of the trench we excavated showing no root activity in the vicinity of the observed damage
- If soil movement is observed then I would remove the target (ie. prevent pedestrians from accessing the area) and arrange an urgent inspection by a qualified arborist to advise on potential removal

See below for the answers to your specific questions:

#### **Is the placing of a prop under the Planter Box Moonah, or any other measure, a necessary action at this time?**

While I have not completed a formal risk assessment, in my opinion this tree presents a low risk of harm to people and property. I would not consider the installation of a 'prop' necessary due to this low risk.

Some other points to note are:

- A 'prop' should not be considered as a means to prevent failure of the tree as this interferes with the normal adaptive growth of a tree;
- Any 'prop' must be installed with care not to avoid damage to tree roots when establishing the footing (if the tree were to fail the footings must be able to bear the weight) and to avoid damaging the trunk of the tree (including allowances for normal movement of the tree);
- From a liability perspective, if the tree were to fail and the 'prop' does not prevent harm occurring to people or property there is an implication that it was "known" that tree would fail which is not the case.

#### **What management actions might be considered for Trees 196, 197, 198 at this time?**

The current structure of this group of trees is a result of adjacent trees that have presumably been removed for the development of the playground. This leaves the trees exposed to conditions that they have never been required to tolerate before, and while I do not think they currently present a high risk or require urgent removal, they are very unlikely to improve in form/structure and their removal to facilitate replacement trees would be an appropriate response.

In addition to the above point are there any other measures that you consider to be necessary, given the location context of the trees?

It is worth noting that the remaining trees surrounding the playground are all of a similar age class, a scenario that often results in large scale removals required within a short time frame.

The above trees (Trees 196, 197 & 198 and an unlabelled one) form a natural 'clump' that can be removed with minimal effect on surrounding trees and provide an opportunity to improve the age class distribution.

**Dave Williams**

BSc (Bot), BForSc (Hons), GDipHort (Arb), MUrbHort (Arb)