

## **RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCIL**

---

**FILE:** S123181 **DATE:** 12 September 2017  
**TO:** Lord Mayor and Councillors  
**FROM:** David Riordan, Director City Operations  
**THROUGH:** Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Information Relevant To Item 7.3 – Streetscape Improvements – Bowman Street Pyrmont – Approval of Project Scope – At Council – 18 September 2017

---

That the Lord Mayor and Councillors note the information contained in this memo.

### **Purpose**

At the Environment Committee on 11 September 2017, a scoping report was presented to Council seeking endorsement of the Concept Design for Streetscape Improvements at Bowman Street, Pyrmont. This proposal includes removing the existing Fig trees planted on the footpath which are causing damage, planting Sydney Red Gum trees in the street further away from properties as replacement trees, and repairing pavements.

At this meeting Councillors requested:

- that there be consultation with the local Landcare Group and residents on the species of trees to replace the Figs and that feedback be provided;
- information on the bio-diversity of the area versus the other benefits, ie. which species provide which benefits; and
- information on the number of damage complaints arising from tree roots damaging drainage, and any other legal issues.

### **Background**

In 2011, Council adopted the Street Tree Master Plan which supports the City's target to increase tree canopy cover by 50 per cent across the local government area. The Master Plan includes the planting of Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*) as the species for Bowman Street, as it is endemic to the area, suited to the local environmental conditions, a more appropriate size and has a more open canopy (in comparison to the Fig trees) which provides filtered or dappled light to adjoining properties.

In May and June 2017, as part of developing this streetscape proposal, the City distributed letters to 850 local residents and businesses, providing details of the proposal and requesting community feedback in relation to the replacement tree species. The letter noted that although the Sydney Red Gum was outlined in the Master Plan, the City also provided Tulipwood and Cottonwood as suitable alternative species should deciduous species be preferred by the residents.

The City received 18 submissions in favour of the Sydney Red Gum, three in favour of Tulipwood, nine in favour of a range of other tree species and five objections to the Sydney Red Gum.

Three residents also spoke to the Bowman Street item presented at the Environment Committee on Monday 11 September. One resident was in favour of the Sydney Red Gum, one requested either Jacaranda or Claret Ash, and another requested a mix of native species, noting that if a mix of species would not be considered, then their preference was the Sydney Red Gum. This resident also represented the Pymont Ultimo Landcare community group.

### **Further Community Consultation**

Following the Environment Committee meeting, City staff met on site with three residents to listen to their proposals for replacement trees. It was noted by all that there were opposing views with one focused on native species to attract wildlife and the other to have deciduous (and therefore exotic) species for thermal comfort and to create a grander avenue.

Staff considered resident requests for Claret Ash and Scarlet Ash at the meeting and confirmed that in the Sydney conditions, the desired autumn colour would not be achieved. As Ash trees are deciduous, they would also be less effective in replacing the evergreen canopy in the street which would be temporarily lost following the removal of the existing Fig trees. Further, it was considered the change to the Ash would not respond to the majority of responses from other residents on the street, who supported Sydney Red Gum.

### **Biodiversity and Species Mix**

In response to the request for a mix of native species, staff confirmed the background to the adopted Street Tree Master Plan, the Urban Ecology Strategic Master Plan and the biodiversity achieved across the area (including the 20 species of street trees in the Pymont Peninsular, plus park and private vegetation), and advised that a mix of native shrubs and groundcovers could be provided in the footpath verges and new garden beds constructed as part of the proposal. The Pymont Ultimo Landcare community group were also invited to assist in determining the species of these plants with the aim of encouraging biodiversity, and they were satisfied with this outcome.

### **Damages Claims**

The City has received four claims from property owners relating to damage allegedly caused by street trees in Bowman Street. Of these, three have been finalised with compensation paid in two cases. In the fourth matter, the City has accepted responsibility for the claim, but is waiting on adequate and appropriate substantiation of the loss incurred from the strata plan.

**David Riordan, Director City Operations**

Prepared by: James Lawton, Project Manager  
Andrew Methven, Manager Risk and Assurance

TRIM Document Number: 2017/307255

---

approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.M. Barone', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer**