

Media Release

20 April 2018

Fig Tree Risk Too Great

Ballina Shire Council has confirmed they will progress with plans to remove the fig tree located on Castle Drive at Lennox Head.

After significant consideration, Councillors resolved to remove the tree in November last year. This difficult decision was made in response to the ongoing damage to adjoining properties, along with the significant insurance risks to the public.

"Council did not make this decision lightly, and a range of alternatives have been examined. However, due to the age of the tree, our understanding of the risks and the exhaustive investigation into alternative options, the only reasonable solution is to remove the tree," said Ballina Shire Mayor, David Wright.

"No one wants to see the removal of a beautiful tree but after thorough investigation and specialist reports we believe it's the right decision for the community" Cr Wright explained.

Another key factor is Council's insurers have advised they can no longer provide insurance coverage for damage caused by the fig tree roots. This now means any future claims will be made directly against Council, with any successful claims being funded by the ratepayers of the shire.

Council's specialised arborists have been involved in the management and care of this tree for many years but several reports indicate its removal is the only viable option. These assessments have been carried out by AQF level 5 arborists – internally and externally of Council.

Council has also commissioned independent specialist reports. Copies of these reports can be found on Council's website *ballina.nsw.gov.au*.

Council proactively manages fig trees throughout the shire, as part of an overall plan. In this instance Council has investigated and exhausted all options to retain this tree, as all identified options presented to Council were cost prohibitive and provided no assurance of success.

A suitable tree species will be planted to replace the fig tree on Castle Drive. Works are scheduled to commence on 30 April 2018.

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