

Guildford Progress Association
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Incorporation no: A0001580L



12 October 2015

Mr Stewart Campbell (via email)
Parks Superintendent
Mount Alexander Shire Council
27 Lyttleton Street,
Castlemaine VIC. 3450

Dear Stewart,

Thank you for your letter dated 9th of October with reference to the proposed works at The Big Tree in Guildford

We remain concerned and wish to make the following points:

1. The Big Tree was very effectively made safe by the rare Category 2 cyclone that passed through Guildford 9 months ago. Nothing has fallen since that time even though we have had some very strong winds since. Why prune when there does not even appear to be anything that is dangerous?
2. The Big Tree is big, not only because of its girth but because of its height and huge spread - a spread that has developed over a very long period of time and has not fallen. Why then is it necessary to reduce the height and the spread and convert our tree into 'The Smaller Tree' - or a tree with what you consider to be a more 'well-shaped' tree?
3. You have no basis of saying that the limbs are '**over**-extended'.
4. You have no basis of saying that the tree has been 'damaged'. The rare occasion of a fallen limb is not evidence of damage. Indeed, the tree has in fact repaired itself!
5. Pruning does not necessarily promote 'tree health'. The Big Tree has grown and flourished without your interference since before white occupancy.
6. The nature of *Euc. camaldulensis* is to have hollow limbs. This does not mean they are weak. In fact they are lighter and strong - as is evident by the enormous size to which this tree has grown.
7. Trees of this age with hollow limbs are rare and so it fills the role of a precious 'habitat tree'.
8. There is no evidence that you have taken into consideration the small population of Guildford, the few number of folk that may pass under the tree and the risk (or lack thereof) of someone being injured. Indeed we believe that neither the arborist nor anyone else within the Shire is properly qualified to undertake this risk analyses.

9. And if The Big Tree presents the danger that you evidently think it does, then clearly the Shire would have taken steps to exclude persons from beneath it or done something about the situation earlier. It is for these reasons that we fear the Shire's action is born more out of a fear of liability and not for any sound reason to prune the tree. We suspect that the Shire merely wants to be seen to be doing something. The Shire should be more concerned to properly assess the tree and the risk.

In all the circumstances, and given your acknowledged importance of The Big Tree, we ask that you answer our concerns and provide us with the arborist's written assessment and the risk analyses for consideration, BEFORE you take any further action.

You have advised that the appearance of the tree after it is pruned will hardly be noticeable. We have recently documented the size and shape of the tree as it now exists and will look to hold the persons responsible if it is damaged or needlessly pruned.

Yours faithfully,



Bob Forde
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Ms Gaynor Atkin
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