



**Item 4.2 Petition requesting defensive root barriers on Nimmo Street, Middle Park**

A Petition containing 10 signatures was received from residents of Nimmo Street, Middle Park.

The Petition states the following:-

*The invasive roots from Plane Trees which has already caused undermining problems to the house at No. 49 Nimmo Street, Middle Park (and been attended to by Council) and problems evident at No. 47 (also brought to Council's attention) along with the very evident surface tree root leading to No. 43. Given the very large tree roots that were discovered and removed from their path to No 49 it is extremely likely that the damage to No 47 and 43 are from the Plane Trees in the street. This damage is likely to continue to ultimately affect other properties in the street if not already having that affect.*

*The following Petitioners hereby request that:*

- 1. Council install defensive root barriers or other effective defensive method on the grassy verge between the kerb and channel and the edge of the footpath to both sides of Nimmo Street in the section of Nimmo Street between Richardson Street and Neville Street.*
- 2. This work could be advantageously undertaken simultaneously with the proposed drainage works scheduled to be commenced on April 1, the benefit being that there would be economies of input from machinery, labour and making good to the area on completion.*
- 3. To interrupt the relentless movement of these undermining roots with barriers will demonstrate to the community that the Council is committed to protecting the assets of its citizens and ratepayers.*
- 4. Under no circumstances do we wish to have the Plane Trees removed.*

**OFFICER COMMENT**

Trees and other vegetation in public and private spaces can be thought of as an urban forest that provides shelter, shade, beauty, cleans the air, regulates the temperature, reduces energy needs of nearby spaces, treats and cleans stormwater, reduces loads on stormwater drains, protects and increases the life of infrastructure and provides habitat.

Council's 'Greening Port Phillip' Strategy supports retention of trees and protection of tree root systems where possible and to only consider removal of trees or works to tree roots if there are no other viable options. It is noted and appreciated the petition and residents support the retention of these trees.

The Plane trees are planted within the roadway and naturestrip, approximately seven metres from the property boundaries. The trees both sides of Nimmo Street, between Richardson and Neville Streets were inspected on Monday 8 April 2019, and found to be in good health, structurally sound and providing significant canopy cover for the immediate area. There was no notable lifting or damage observed to the footpath nor obvious surface roots within the grassed naturestrip.



At the time of the inspection movement of brick pavers within the property of no.47 was noted; there was no evidence this was caused by tree roots. There is no direct correlation that if one tree's roots enter a property, that all others will react the same and it is our policy that evidence of tree roots physically causing damage is required before a root barrier will be considered. Assessment of a property at this site has also occurred in April and December 2018 with communication to the resident at that time consistent with the current assessment.

Notwithstanding, if Council did implement tree root barriers at this location the estimated cost of a 120m long (i.e. both sides of Nimmo Street, between Richardson and Neville Streets) 2m-deep root barrier (at \$1,000 per l/m) is \$120,000, not including possible variations; this single job would expend over 15% of Council's total annual budget for tree root management.

There is no benefit in conducting root barrier works simultaneously with drainage works; tree root works are done by a separate contractor and any tree root barrier would be installed as far away from the tree as possible, within the naturestrip adjacent to the footpath or within the footpath directly adjacent to the property boundary, and would therefore not impact on the current kerb and channel works being delivered.

Officers propose to continue to monitor this location and consider future requests if evidence is provided and in accordance with our Greening Port Phillip Strategy.

#### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- Receives and notes the Petition.
- Notes that Council policy is retain trees and protection root systems and to only consider removal or remedial works if there are no other viable options and evidence is provided of damage to private property.
- Does not install a tree root barrier as requested in the petition.
- Notes that officers will continues to monitor the trees and assesses alleged root damage upon request from property owners, and undertakes any tree root pruning or barrier installation when provided with physical evidence of damage.

**TRIM FILE NO:** F19/1

**ATTACHMENTS** Nil