

## **RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WHY DO I NEED TO CONSIDER RETAINING TREES ON MY PROPERTY**

- Initially, retention of existing trees is sought in accordance with the principles of Environmentally Sustainable Development, Council's Local Environmental Plan an (LEP) and Council's Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

### **DO I NEED TO SUBMIT A TREE REMOVAL APPLICATION FOR REMOVAL OF TREES WITH MY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION?**

- Applications for tree removal or pruning in relation to Development Applications are dealt with as part of the Development Assessment Process.

There is no need to submit a separate application form under the Tree Preservation Order. However, you do need to mark trees proposed for removal on your plans.

### **CAN I GET AN OPINION OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF TREE REMOVAL PRIOR TO LODGING A DA?**

- No assessment of the trees in relation to a development application will be made until an application is lodged and all circumstances of a proposed removal can be assessed.

You may, however, seek to opinion of a qualified Arborist in relation to the health of a tree in support of an application for removal.

In addition to this, you may check the list of Exempt Species listed in Council's Tree Preservation Order, which do not require approval for removal.

### **IS AN EXOTIC TREE MORE LIKELY TO BE APPROVED FOR REMOVAL OVER A NATIVE TREE?**

- Retention of locally occurring trees may be given more importance than exotic trees in consideration of the local ecology, though the significance of all trees will be assessed on their merits in relation to the application.

The LEP makes provision for retention of significant landscape features, which can include exotic trees.

**CAN APPROVAL BE GIVEN FOR REMOVAL OF A TREE IN RELATION TO A DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION THAT HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN REFUSED FOR REMOVAL BY COUNCIL UNDER THE TREE PRESERVATION ORDER?**

- Approval for removal of trees does get granted in relation to Development Applications for trees that would not be approved for removal under a simple TPO application.

However, assessment of impacts and alternatives to retain trees are still undertaken as part of the assessment and may result in approval, approval with conditions or refusal, depending on the circumstances.

**WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT REMOVAL OF A TREE THAT WE CONSIDER ILL OR UNSAFE ON THE SITE?**

- If you feel that a particular tree is in poor health or structurally compromised and should be removed irrespective the works, an Arborist's report should be submitted with the application identifying the issues relating to the tree.

**WHAT IF THERE ARE TREES ON THE MIDDLE OF THE SITE THAT WOULD PREVENT DEVELOPMENT IF RETAINED?**

- Consideration is given to removal of trees and the available space for the new dwelling and the requirements of the LEP in relation to front, side and rear setbacks.
- It would not be unreasonable to approve removal of a tree within the available building envelope, assuming residential dwelling is permissible in that locality in the LEP. However, consideration must also given to other factors such as Bushfire Planning, Threatened Species Legislation, Wildlife Corridors, Local Amenity, Heritage, building design and alternative solutions.

**WILL APPROVAL BE GRANTED FOR REMOVAL OF TREES TO ACCOMMODATE ANCILLARY ITEMS SUCH AS DETENTION TANKS AND DRIVEWAYS**

- Ancillary works to the dwelling construction such as new driveways and stormwater pipes/detention tanks will also often impact on trees by way of removal of primary and critical root zones of the tree. Council will generally seek to have these elements relocated to avoid the need for tree removal.

## **WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A LANDSCAPE PLAN SUBMITTED WITH A DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION?**

A Landscape Plan should incorporate the following information (7 copies + 2 x A4 copies):

- All existing trees and vegetation proposed to be removed and retained on the subject site
- Location of trees on adjoining properties within 5m of the boundary or within 5m of the proposed works
- Location of proposed additional planting or regeneration areas
- Species lists of proposed trees, shrubs and ground covers
- Proposed densities of planting
- Graphic indication of location of proposed trees shrubs and groundcovers
- Location of building footprint
- Surfaces and materials for driveways, carparks, footpaths, fences, retaining walls, lighting, seating, garden edging, irrigation,
- Location of sewer and drainage including location of pits and pipes.
- Relative levels at all proposed changes of level including retaining walls, footpaths, raised planters, turfed areas and features to be retained.
- Drawing Scale 1:100
- North Point
- Title Block containing name, date, drawing number and revision number

## **WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BE INCLUDED IN AN ARBORISTS REPORT?**

The following items must be addressed in the report;

- \* Who commissioned the report?
- \* Why the report was commissioned.
- \* What the report examines.
- \* The address of the site containing the trees.
- \* The methods or techniques used in the inspection.
- \* An abstract or synopsis of the inspection.
- \* The date of the inspection.
- \* A map of the site showing the location of the trees and the trees numbered to correspond with the text.
- \* For each tree give the scientific name, common name, height, canopy spread, trunk diameter at breast height form and Safe Useful Life Expectancy rating (SULE) or similar.
- \* A discussion of the data collected – this may include but is not limited to detailed information regarding wounds, cavities, cracks, splits, forking, rootzone, pests and diseases, suitability of tree/s for retention and potential impacts from proposed developments.
- \* Supporting evidence such as photographs where appropriate.

- \* Do not list references unless they are referred to in the report.
- \* Do not include data unless it is used in the report to lend weight to a contentious issue.
- \* A discussion of all the options available – why they are recommended or why they are not recommended Eg, can the building or structure be repaired/modified and the tree retained?
- \* A recommendation as to the preferred option and the reasons therefore.
- \* In the case of developmental impacts a list of Tree Protection Measures for any trees deemed appropriate for retention.

The report must also contain the name, address and telephone number of the person or company carrying out the report.

The above list is not exhaustive and there may be other site considerations necessary to ensure adequate information is supplied to Council.

As professional reports will cost you money, Council recommends that you choose an arborist that has the Certificate in Tree Surgery AND a certificate in Horticulture or Landscaping, or higher, plus at least 5 years' post graduate experience. Membership of a professional association as the National Arborists Association of Australia is also recommended.

TAFE NSW and Warringah Council regards graduates who hold the Certificate in Tree Surgery only as their qualification as a "Tree Worker", not a professional arborist for report preparation.