

Exmouth Landscaping

The effect of Cyclone Olwyn on Exmouth Street trees

On 13 March 2015 Cyclone Olwyn moved through the Exmouth region with great force and damaged trees in our streets and parks. The result of this has been highly visible throughout Exmouth with many street trees severely damaged or uprooted and a massive pile of green waste collected at the town Ovals.



Soon after the event a tree audit was undertaken on 24 and 25 March to quantify the actual tree damage. This revealed that the majority of the town's river gums (over 700) should be considered for removal as a result of wind damage caused by Cyclone Olwyn.

Tree Audit

Many trees fell over and more lost several of their primary branches. Even a lot of the trees that are still standing have been severely affected by the strong winds. The integrity of their branch structure has been compromised and they may have lost their secure footing into the soil.

In more detail, the Audit has identified that:

1. Tree defects caused by the wind will increase future hazards and any regrowth will be typically epicormic (see picture right). This type of growth

is low in strength and by nature increases the risk of future branch drop.

2. Some trees have severe structural damage. Branch shear, tear damage and buckling will compromise the ability of those trees to fight back disease, decay or any other dysfunction within the plant tissue.
3. The wind loading on other trees has left the primary branch structurally damaged. These trees will never have a defined main stem, bearing branches and secondary branching. The natural form and beauty has been destroyed and in most situations investing resources in these trees should be carefully considered.
4. Numerous trees no longer have strong footing for their roots due to wind loading and will be a future hazard.
5. Many of the damaged trees are under power lines and inappropriate for the location damaging footpaths, kerbing, crossovers and road surfaces.
6. A wide range of existing trees will be in the alignment of any future proposed underground power network which would necessitate removal in the future.



The next Ordinary Council Meeting will be held on Thursday 30 April

Based on this information, Council considers it imminent that action is undertaken regarding the above identified trees to:

- ensure safety for the public,
- prevent future damage to properties,
- avoid major infrastructure damage to roads, footpaths, power lines, water mains and telecommunication lines, and
- Reduce future costs of tree maintenance and cyclone preparations & recovery.

Tree Replacement Programme

With the findings of the Audit in mind, Council of the Shire of Exmouth proposes to develop and implement a *Tree Replacement Programme*, which is to be rolled out over the next 3 years.

This Programme will include:

- Identification and removal of trees that are deemed in-appropriate for reasons of safety, provision of shade, aesthetics and/or future maintenance costs.
- Development of a replanting schedule to be rolled out in conjunction with the removal.
- Development of Landscaping Enhancement Guidelines, including a proposal for trees and vegetation appropriate for the Exmouth climate and landscape.
- Develop a Policy for verge enhancement, and scope for community members to have some ownership over verge planting and maintenance.
- Investigate the opportunities for the community to be involved in the replanting process, possibly through a Tree Planting Day.

Individual properties and tree maintenance

Many trees on private properties fell down or lost some sizeable branches during the Cyclone; they damaged fences and roofs and there have been some lucky escapes for some people and their neighbours. All households need to have a serious look at trees on their property and make sure that they are kept trimmed and at a reasonable height to limit risk during strong wind events. There are businesses in

town who can assist with advice or if the job is too big for you. Remember, it is about the safety of your family and of your neighbours.

Green Waste

The collection of green waste from the verges has finished and the drop off point near the Ovals has also been closed.

From now on you will need to take your green waste directly to the tip.

If you have other waste (non green) that is still lying on the verges, please remove it to the tip so it doesn't become a hazard.

Mulch

You can pick up free mulch from behind the southern oval near the tennis club. The Shire is trying to continue to provide more in coming weeks but need heavier equipment for this. The public can help themselves, please be aware of large vehicles moving in the area.

Caltrop weed

All residents are urged to be vigilant regarding the growth of Caltrop weed within their property boundaries, verges and public spaces. Plants grow rapidly, flowering and forming new burrs within three to five weeks. A heavy infestation after summer rain can produce an abundance of spiny burrs, which make it very uncomfortable for people and animals alike.

Residents are urged to remove the weeds from their properties and verges and dispose of accordingly. If infestations are found in public spaces such as parks and along footpaths please contact the Shire Depot on 9949 1699.



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