



30 April 2019

Jacinta Allen
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By Email: jacinta.allan@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Minister Allan

Tree removal around Moreland and Coburg Stations as part of Moreland Rd/Bell St Level Crossing removal

We are a group of people who live near and use the Upfield bike path and trainline. Our members have been involved in tree planting along the line, in some cases, for decades. Most weekends we have activities mulching trees, collecting rubbish, planting, watering the vegetation at the Stations and along the trainline. We have over 150 local people on our email list and many more on our facebook page.

We are deeply concerned about the planned removal of the beautiful, well established gum trees in Gandolfo gardens and around Moreland and Coburg Stations. From our understanding, these trees will be removed as part of the construction 'lay-down' areas for trucks and equipment as part of the Moreland Road Level Crossing removal.

Many of the beautiful gnarled old trees in these locations have been there over 45 years. The sugar gums have deep hollows that house many birds, provide homes for bees and provide shade and shelter. It will take half a century for any trees planted now to reach this level of maturity. As the number and duration of droughts increase, trees will grow much more slowly. As planters we are keenly aware that even the hardiest of trees in the area have been struggling to grow over the last few years. This makes these mature trees even more valuable.

The Gandolfo Gardens are used nightly and on weekends by residents and families to play and picnic in. The well-established trees in this area the upmost priority. The same is true for the old, established trees around Coburg and Moreland Stations.

As concerned residents we have tried to engage in the consultation process and gain further information about the plans for the trees but have been given conflicting information. The

level crossing removal team said that no decision had been made regarding the tree removal and that it would be a joint decision between council and the level crossing removal team. However, council have said they have no say and people who have spoken to the project team say they have heard the trees will be removed as an arborist said the trees were 'non-significant'. We do not understand how these old trees providing homes for wildlife and a high degree of local amenity within an urban area can be classified as non-significant. We have just noticed a honeybee colony inside one of the trees. We include council's significant tree criteria below. This issue needs urgent clarification.

We are deeply concerned that there is no transparency around the process, consideration of the benefits of the large, well established trees or how local residents can get involved.

We would like to clarify who is making the decision and what consultation process will occur specifically regarding the tree removal. We are seeking reassurance that as many trees as possible around Moreland Station and Coburg Station (particularly those well-established) will be preserved and that tree preservation will feature as part of the planning and construction process of the skyrail.

We look forward to hearing back from you as soon as possible.

Your sincerely

Upfield Urban Forest

www.upfieldurbanforest.org

Signed:

1. Miguel Cochofel (Coburg)
2. Daniella Morales (Coburg)
3. Tamar Hopkins (Coburg)
4. David Balaban (Coburg)
5. Jana Favero (Coburg)
6. Ben Rodgers (Coburg)
7. Fiona Thiessen (Brunswick)
8. Christina Laught (Brunswick)
9. Philippa Jolliffe (Brunswick West)
10. Drew Echberg (Coburg)
11. Rebecca Newman (Coburg)
12. Denise Whimpey (Coburg)
13. Madeleine Turner (Coburg)
14. Edward Taylor-Milne (Coburg)
15. Chris Lynch, (Brunswick East)
16. Anna Sinn (Brunswick)
17. Jo Connellan (Brunswick)
18. Madeleine Turner (Coburg)
19. Edward Taylor-Milne (Coburg)
20. Nicholas Hansen (Coburg)
21. Kate Lahiff, Coburg
22. Michael & Radhika Santhanam-Martin, (Brunswick)
23. Matt Forbes (Brunswick)
24. Fiona Negrin (Brunswick)

Here is council's significant tree criteria. We highlight in bold the features we are aware of that make these trees significant:

Significant trees have special qualities and make a contribution to the amenity of the area and will not be removed unless they are dead, diseased, dying or dangerous. Generally these trees are mature, large in size, of good health and form and provide landscape continuity and high aesthetic, cultural and physical amenity values. Significant trees are defined as having one or more of the following noteworthy features:

- **Trees that are taller than 6 metres or have a trunk diameter of at least 300mm measured 1.2 metres from the ground**
- A species or variety of tree that is rare in cultivation, or unusual in Moreland
- **A tree of outstanding aesthetic significance**
- A tree that forms part of an avenue of consistent size, form and variety
- **A tree that contributes to a closed canopy over a street or pedestrian path**
- A tree that was once contemporary with remaining heritage listed buildings
- A tree that is an outstanding example of the species or variety
- Trees that listed of heritage value
- A tree that commemorates a particular occasion, event or activities
- A remnant indigenous species tree
- Any tree associated with aboriginal activities
- **A large, healthy tree or collection of trees in a high profile location**
- Trees that may indicate or provide evidence of a previous use of the land
- **Trees that provide habitat for native fauna as evidenced by the presence of a nest or a hollow or from a confirmed sighting of native fauna species that is unusual or rare**
- Trees on any Council significance register (including landscape citations) or National Trust Register