



## PIN OAK TREE UPDATE

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **Why is Council assessing trees across Tenterfield?**

Following concerns raised in 2024/2025, Council recently engaged an independent arborist to undertake assessments of 203 trees across Tenterfield township to ensure they are safe, healthy and appropriate for their location.

These assessments help inform balanced tree management decisions that consider public safety, environmental outcomes and the important character and community value that our trees provide.

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#### **Who carries out the assessments?**

A qualified, independent arborist has been engaged to assess trees recently in Logan St, Cowper St, Clarence St and Casino Road (Bruxner Highway). They use industry standards and professional judgement to provide recommendations.

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#### **What does an arborist look for?**

Not all issues are visible from the outside. Some trees may appear healthy but have underlying structural weaknesses or disease. Some issues are not visible externally and require expert assessment.

Arborists assess:

- Tree health and condition
- Structural stability (roots, trunk and branches)
- Signs of disease, decay or damage
- Risk to people, property and infrastructure
- The tree's expected lifespan

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#### **How are recommendations made?**

Each tree is assessed based on its individual condition and location. Recommendations may include:

- **Monitoring** – ongoing observation over time
- **Maintenance** – pruning or other works to improve safety or health
- **Restricted access** – temporary measures where needed
- **Removal** – only when a tree is no longer safe or viable

**Tree removal is always a last resort.**

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## **Why are some trees being removed?**

We understand that tree removal is concerning for the community. Tree removal is only recommended when absolutely necessary to protect people, property and infrastructure.

This may include situations where:

- A tree poses a safety risk
- Disease or decay is advanced and cannot be treated
- The tree is structurally unstable
- The tree is unlikely to recover or has reached the end of its safe life
- There is a risk of failure that cannot be managed through pruning or other treatments

In this case, the decision is based on expert recommendations. Each tree has been assessed based on its individual condition and location. **Removal is considered a last resort but in this case these trees pose a significant and unacceptable risk to our community.**

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## **Why remove a tree that still looks healthy?**

Some trees may appear healthy but have internal decay, root damage or structural weaknesses that are not visible.

Some of the trees recommended for removal have hollow trunks / large cavities. Cavities located at the base of the tree or near the root flare are the most dangerous because they compromise the entire foundation. A tree canopy acts like a giant sail in the wind. If the trunk is hollow or has large cavities, it cannot withstand the massive twisting force (wind load) during weather events, causing it to snap without warning.

Decisions are based on professional assessment, not just appearance, though many of our trees have visible signs of disease / structural issues. Photos have been provided for the community on Council's website, and in the 10 detailed assessment reports.

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## **Can the tree be saved instead of removed?**

Where possible, Council will retain and manage other trees through good practice maintenance works and ongoing monitoring. Many of the assessed trees have been recommended for reassessment over the next ~five years due to their age, health and environmental issues.

If a tree cannot be made safe or is unlikely to recover, removal may be the only option.

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## **What diseases are affecting trees in our area?**

Some trees in our area are affected by naturally occurring pathogens that live in soil, roots and decaying timber. The most significant examples identified include [Phytophthora Dieback, Armillaria Root Rot and Ganoderma Fungus](#).

These diseases:

- attack roots and reduce a tree's ability to take up water and nutrients
- cause internal fungal decay that weakens structural strength
- spread through soil, water or root systems, depending on the pathogen
- often difficult to detect early and may not be treatable once established

The presence of one of these does not automatically mean a tree is unsafe or must be removed. Decisions about management are based on the tree's overall condition, structural integrity, location, and the level of risk to people, property and infrastructure.

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## **Will the trees be replaced?**

Council is committed to replanting and proactive management to protect and preserve Tenterfield's unique character and streetscapes for generations to come. Trees will be replanted where suitable (site dependent).

Council has already purchased 54 advanced Pin Oaks, with replanting to commence along Casino Road and Logan Street.

Opportunities to establish new avenues in suitable locations are also being explored, supporting the long-term renewal and preservation of Tenterfield's famous autumn colours.

Some of our giant oaks were planted in 1930's, and since then development has occurred around them, not leaving adequate space around the trees. Any replanting of trees needs to consider the future development/growth of trees and ensure the environment is adequate and appropriate for a healthy tree to exist and flourish.

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## **Was the community consulted by Council about this decision?**

Tree risk management is part of Council's responsibility to maintain safe public spaces.

In cases where there is an identified safety risk, action needs to be taken based on professional advice to protect our community, visitors, property and infrastructure.

After some concerns were identified with the trees, the community was consulted regarding possible options for replanting of other species of trees. Where trees are identified as critical and necessary to remove, Council is committed to replanting with the same or similar species (community preference has been noted from previous engagements) wherever suitable – dependant on each site conditions.

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## **Where can I find more information?**

Updates are provided on:

- Council's Website (Pin Oak Tree Update)  
[www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/community/pin-oak-tree-update](http://www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/community/pin-oak-tree-update)
  - Council's Facebook page:  
[www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil)
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## **Important information:**

- Safety risks are addressed as a priority.
- Trees are not removed without professional assessment / advice. These decisions are based on evidence provided by a qualified arborist.
- Some decisions cannot be delayed due to Council's responsibility for public safety.