

MEDIA RELEASE

De Luca moves to make dangerous tree removal easier

21 March 2013

Warringah Councillor Vincent De Luca has called for urgent changes to the way Warringah Council handles applications for the removal of trees in Warringah following the falling of a tree at Allambie Heights last months which caused great trauma to residents.

Cr De Luca has submitted a Notice of Motion to next Tuesday night's Council meeting calling for a full investigation by Council's General Manager into Council's current planning rules regarding removal and the specific case involving the tree falling at Allambie Heights on 23 February 2013. Cr De Luca also calls for Warringah Council to extend its formal sympathy to Mr and Mrs Davis-Bogan for what has occurred.

"I am all about practical and common sense approaches to protect our community and hope that my actions in seeking the current system be reviewed will ensure reform of the system and that residents and their properties will always be put first when it comes to considering applications to removing dangerous trees" Cr De Luca state.

"There is nothing more important than the safety of people and their residences and we as decision makers must ensure that this matter is reviewed and that a tragic situation as that witnesses at Allambie Heights last month does not occur again" Cr De Luca stated.

Councillor De Luca has raised a number of questions in relation to tree applications, which Warringah Council Deputy General Manager, Malcolm Ryan advising that 729 applications were received for the period 2011/12, 683 applications were approved, 14 were refused, 26 were rejected and 2 were withdrawn and 4 were cancelled. 507 applications were received since 1 July 2012. 2 Refused, 12 Rejected, 5 Withdrawn, 448 Approved, 5 Cancelled. 35 remain undetermined to date. Since the commencement of the 2011 financial year 729 applications were received by

Warringah Council, the application fee is \$110. This equates to approximately \$80,000 received through application. Note that some refunds are given on withdrawn or rejected applications.

“The process must be made clearer and easier for residents to have trees removed that could cause harm to people or damage to property, this is why I am seeking Councillors to support my Notice of Motion for a full review”.

“At the moment, many residents are not aware that if they obtain an Arborist’s Report confirming that a tree is dying or unsafe, Council must allow it to be removed. I also think residents are unaware of their rights to have Council Staff’s decision in refusing applications for tree removals reviewed.”