Arborist Network

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# Arboricultural Aerial Assessment Report

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| **Site Address:** | 32 Malton Road<br>Beecroft |
| **Prepared For:** | Scott Wilkie<br>Hornsby Council |
| **Prepared On:** | 28th February 2020 |
| **Report Number:** | ST2122 |
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## Brief

The author has been asked to;

- visit the site,
- Inspect one *Eucalyptus pilularis* growing on the council verge in front of 32 Malton Road, Beecroft and,
- Perform an aerial assessment of the entire canopy and the broken branch stub from the recent branch failure and,
- Comment on the trees overall current condition and,
- Provide any further management recommendations.

## Background

This tree was initially assessed by The Arborist Network in June 2015 (document # ST1054), at which time it was recommended that a cobra tree bracing system be installed to act as a fall arrest system for some parts of the tree. The cobra tree bracing system was installed in December 2015.

A second aerial assessment was carried out by The Arborist Network in November of 2018 (document #ST2108).

## Method

A site inspection was carried out on the 5th February 2020 and the site related observations contained in this report arise from the inspection on that date.

The inspection included the performance of Step 1 of a Visual Tree Assessment (**VTA**)[1,2] and climbing of the tree to perform an aerial assessment as part of an advanced VTA. In addition, the broken branch end that had been left at the base of the tree was examined.

This inspection did not include any invasive, diagnostic or laboratory testing.

## Observations

The tree is a large *Eucalyptus pilularis* that is approximately 29m tall and has a stem diameter of 1.45m measured at 1.4m above ground level. The tree has co-dominant stems arising near ground level. The tree forms part of a row of large trees of the same species, and this tree is at the eastern end of the row.

The tree appears to be in good health and is of typical appearance for this species growing in an urban environment.

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[1] **VTA** – Visual Tree Assessment, as referenced below, is a systematic inspection of a tree for indicators of structural defects that may pose a risk due to failure. The first step of a VTA is made from ground level and no aerial inspection is undertaken unless there are visual indicators to suggest that this is merited. Details of the visual indicators are contained in *The Body Language of Trees* by Mattheck & Breloer (1994). The use of a Visual Tree Assessment is widely used and standardised approach. Invasive and other diagnostic fault detection procedures will generally only be recommended when visual indicators of potential concern are observed.

[2] **Mattheck, C & Breloer, H** 1994 *Field guide for visual tree assessment (VTA),* Arboriculture Journal 18:1-23

There are three significant cavities in the tree, and a cobra bracing system has been installed. Details of these cavities and bracing is covered in the two previous reports (document numbers - ST1054 and ST2108).

Upon inspection of the broken branch end, evidence of termite activity was observed. There was no other direct evidence observed of further, active termite activity in the tree.

# Discussion

### Branch failure

Either during or soon after a recent inclement weather event, a branch 350mm diameter branch failed and impacted the resident's front fence.

There is evidence of termite activity in the broken branch end that was still at the base of the tree, however, there was no indication of further, active termite activity in the tree. Interestingly, it appears that there has been a previous part failure of the branch, causing some separation of the wood and outer bark.

It appears the primary cause of the failure was likely a result of the pre-existing fault in the branch and the damage caused by the termites, exacerbated by the inclement weather event.

### Remaining parts of the tree

The condition of the remaining parts of the tree remains similar to that of the inspection in 2015 and 2018. The tree is in good health, and no major changes were observed.

The cobra bracing system appears to be in good condition, and no adjustments to the system are required.

### Pruning work

Some minor pruning work could be performed to reduce the already low likelihood of another branch failure. There is a 200mm diameter branch that extends over the resident's property with wound at the branch crotch that could be reduced.

# Recommendations

### Pruning

- Reduce the length of the 200mm diameter branch that extends over the resident's property shown in image 8

- Remove the broken branch stub back to the branch collar. The climbing arborist should provide photographs of the final pruning cut to the council, so that an assessment can be made concerning the entry point of the termites into the branch.

### General

- Re-inspect the tree in 12 months to inspect the cobra tree bracing system. It makes sense to inspect the cavities at the same time.
- All pruning and remedial work should be performed by a minimum AQF level 3 arborist, but preferably by an AQF level 5 arborist.
- Work should be performed to comply with or exceed all relevant codes of practice and industry best management practice guidelines.
- Tree pruning work must be performed in accordance with AS4373 – 2007 *Pruning of amenity trees.*

## Conclusion

A recent branch failure approx. 350mm diameter damaged the resident's front fence. An inspection of the branch revealed evidence of previous partial branch failure and also of termite activity in the branch. The combination of these two defects combined with the recent inclement weather event has ultimately caused the branch to fail.

The broken branch stub should be pruned back to the branch collar. The climbing arborist should take photographs of the final pruning cut and provide those photos to the council so that a further assessment can be made to determine if the termites entered the branch from the stem as would typically occur.

There has been limited change in the condition of the tree since the 2015 and 2018 inspection, the tree remains in good health, and none of the three cavities appear to have increased in their severity.

The cobra tree bracing system appears to be in good condition and does not require any adjustment.

The council should consider the recommendation to reduce a 200mm ø branch, which extends over the resident's property.

The tree should be re-inspected in 12 months to assess the cobra bracing system; and to assess the three cavities at the same time.

Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to call our office for assistance.

**Shaun Talent**

**Consulting Arborist- AQF Level 5**

Dip Hort (Arboriculture) with distinction
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# Appendix 1:

# Images

**Image 1:** view of tree from street

**Image 2:** broken branch end showing internal defect

**Image 3:** evidence of termite activity in branch that failed

**Image 4:** evidence of termite activity in branch stub

**Image 5:** small opening in branch that failed indicating existing internal defect

**Image 6:** remove first order branch (approx. 380mm in diameter) with poor attachment point adjacent cavity #3

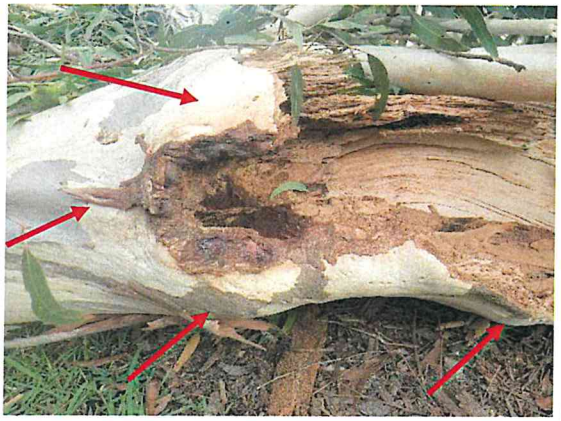

**Image 7:** significant growth response to internal defect

**Image 8:** remove first order branch (approx. 380mm in diameter) with poor attachment point adjacent cavity #3