



Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc

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The General Manager,
Lane Cove Council.

16th September 2013

Review of Tree Preservation Controls.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Review of the Tree Preservation Controls.

This Society has a fundamental problem with one aspect of the new controls, namely the self assessment in determining which controls apply to any particular tree or vegetation. Self assessment of built elements is usually made under measurable controls, but in the case of trees this is more subjective and prone to misinterpretation. This could be very serious in the case of interpreting the height and species of trees under this review.

Notwithstanding the Note 2 in the Controls, some form of expert assessment is necessary to ensure that the removal of trees and other vegetation is not purposely, or accidentally, abused by not assessing the height or species correctly.

We do not agree with the increase in the minimum height limit from 4m to 6m for allowable removal without a permit being necessary. This figure may be included in the Complying Development Code, but Councils should have the ability to have more stringent controls in their own area given the character of that area. Assessing a 6m high tree is far more difficult than assessing a 4m high tree and there could be many more trees in excess of 6m removed by the owners not being able to accurately assess the height.

The 4m minimum height should be retained as well as a dimension on the diameter of the tree trunk as it is in the existing controls.

We agree with the restriction on the pruning of *eucalyptus*, *angophora*, *corymbia* and *syncarpia*, but it again raises the question of who determines the actual species before pruning occurs.

The wording of allowing pruning of overhanging branches should be clarified to ensure that it means the branches and not the trees' proximity to the building. Maybe word like *..of houses to provide 2m clearance from the building..*

As mentioned in the Fact Sheet, there is a need for experts to decide whether a tree is dead or is deciduous – not left to self assessment by the owner.

We also think that given the nature of our older suburbs, that jacaranda and liquidamber trees should be covered by the normal controls and not have their minimum height allowance increased to 10m, which is most difficult to determine by a lay person.

We disagree with the extension of the validity of the permit to 12 months. Most owners want the tree dealt with immediately and therefore the permit should be for a very limited time.

Doug Stuart, for the Committee, Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society Inc