

HAZARDOUS TREES

Thousands of trees have been damaged or destroyed in the Longwood Berry's Lane Fire. Many of the damaged trees remain standing and pose a significant risk of serious injury or death. Hazardous trees are a danger during every stage of operations.

WHAT IS A HAZARDOUS TREE and WHAT ARE THE MARKINGS?

A hazardous tree is typically defined by one or more of the following characteristics:

- Dead and / or decaying tree or major branches
- Suspected loose or broken branches
- Significant lean with recent cause or indicators of failure
- Evidence of longitudinal cracking
- Evidence of roots lifting, or an undercut or disturbed root system
- Other indicators of serious weakness based on local knowledge.

Strathbogie Shire Council's secondary impact teams have visited properties across the Shire. You may notice white markings on trees near your driveway or property entry, as well as on trees close to dwellings or other structures. These markings indicate that the assessment team has identified trees that may pose a *potential risk* to buildings, sheds, or safe access to your property.

Other agencies may also have assessed trees on your property (e.g., AusNet). Strathbogie Shire Council markings will be in **white**. These assessments are provided as recommendations and safety information for property owners and

occupants. The list below explains the markings. These assessments are provided as recommendations and safety information for the property owner and occupants. There is no requirement for the property owner to act on these assessments, however we strongly recommend speaking with an arborist if you have trees near your primary residence that could affect:

- the safety, condition, or security of the primary dwelling
- the access to the primary dwelling

Marking Definitions

- X – Whole Tree Removal
- X – Single Stem Removal
- H – Hanger
- P – Prune off Road
- D – Debris

WHAT ABOUT HAZARDOUS TREES ON MY PROPERTY?

Managing hazardous trees on your property is the responsibility of the property owner. It is important to be aware of the condition of trees before you, or anyone working on your property, operates near them. Large trees that have been burnt by fires are likely to have some level of impact that may put them into a hazardous category.

An arborist or qualified tree assessor is someone who can help you assess the risk posed by trees because of fire damage.

As part of the State led Clean-Up Program, the contractors providing this service, Forge Solutions, will assess, manage and may remove

hazardous trees where it is necessary for the safe clean-up of destroyed buildings.

WHEN SHOULD I CONSIDER USING AN ARBORIST?

Property owners should consider engaging an arborist if trees have sustained significant damage and appear unstable, or when the tree has been affected by some other factor and appears likely to fail if works are undertaken within the tree fall zone.

WHAT IS AN ARBORIST AND HOW DO I FIND ONE?

A qualified arborist has a minimum qualification of a Certificate 5 (Diploma) of Arboriculture. An arborist's training enables them to assess the health and stability of a tree and to safely prune, fell and remove trees. You can search online for arborists who can service your area.

DO I NEED A PLANNING PERMIT FOR NATIVE VEGETATION TO REMOVE HAZARDOUS TREES ON MY PROPERTY?

A planning permit is not required to remove any native vegetation (including trees) that presents an immediate risk of personal injury or damage to property (including internal and boundary fences). The risk is only considered immediate when the danger can only be managed by removing the native vegetation faster than the time it would take to apply for and receive a permit. It is important to note only that part of the vegetation that presents the immediate risk may be removed, destroyed or lopped under this exemption.

Where practical, a qualified arborist should assess whether the native vegetation presents an immediate risk of limb or trunk failure. Where other means exist to address the risk, the exemption should not be relied on.

If there are concerns about future injury or damage from native vegetation, a planning permit can be sought for its removal if the exemption is not met.

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT DOING ABOUT HAZARDOUS TREES ON PUBLIC LAND?

Depending on the road, Council or VicRoads are responsible for the removal of hazardous trees within the road envelope that are damaged by bushfires and pose a safety risk for road users.

Council has assessed all Council managed roads and identified more than 2000 hazardous trees. Work is underway to manage and remove these trees, with priority given to locations that present the highest risk.

THERE ARE HAZARDOUS TREES ON THE ROAD ACCESS TO MY PROPERTY, WHO CAN I CONTACT TO REMOVE THEM?

You can contact Council who will arrange for an inspection and organise any necessary work to make the access safe.

CAN I COLLECT THE WOOD FROM HAZARDOUS TREES THAT HAVE BEEN FELLED ON ROADSIDES?

For safety reasons, VicRoads and Councils do not permit the removal of fallen timber from roadsides. Where feasible, Council will consider options to make timber from tree works available to local communities via stack sites, depending on the quality of the timber.

CAN I COLLECT WOOD FROM HAZARDOUS TREES THAT HAVE BEEN FELLED ON PUBLIC LAND?

Timber cannot be removed from public land. Where feasible, Council will consider options to make timber from tree works available to local communities via stack sites, depending on the quality of the timber.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT HAZARDOUS TREES ON PUBLIC LAND ADJOINING MY PROPERTY?

You can contact Council in the first instance on info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au or via customer service on 1800 065 993

