

ITEM 22 NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR JESS WHITTAKER - PRUNING OF STREET TREES BY ENDEAVOUR ENERGY

Councillor Jess Whittaker has submitted the following Notice of Motion –

“I formally move that Council –

- 1 Requests the General Manager write to the NSW Minister for Climate Change, Energy, Heritage and Environment, The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, to raise that in relation to pruning of street trees on council verges by energy company contractors, residents have reported repeated instances of non-compliance with the *Electricity Supply Act 1995 (NSW)* and Standards Australia (2007) AS4373-2007 Pruning of amenity trees.
- 2 Requests the General Manager write to Endeavour Energy to raise ongoing dissatisfaction with tree pruning practices in relation to Council's goals in the Climate Change Mitigation Plan, Wollongong Transport Strategy, Urban Greening Strategy and Urban Heat Strategy. Endeavour Energy should be formally notified that arborist contractors regularly prune well beyond the companies' own guidelines, and this is inconsistent with other energy providers.”

Background provided by Councillor Whittaker:

The benefit of shady trees to our suburbs cannot be understated. Our city has committed to increasing tree canopy across the Local Government Area from 17% to 35% by 2046. Our Transport Strategy recognises trees as essential infrastructure for active transport due to their positive effect on amenity and reducing urban heat, and our Urban Heat Strategy also emphasizes the importance of canopy cover in reducing the effect of extreme heat on our residents.

There have been multiple observations of aggressive pruning practices by Endeavour Energy contractors, going well beyond the 2-meter clearance for vegetation with 4 low voltage cables on a 50-meter spread. This has led to poor outcomes for our street trees, increased urban heat and community dissatisfaction with tree management practice.

Wollongong Council's Urban Greening strategy identifies one issue for increasing tree canopy in the city is that trees under powerlines are being heavily pruned by contractors working for utilities, risking damage to their root systems and limiting the tree's ability to provide benefits.

The perception among residents is often that Wollongong Council has undertaken the aggressive pruning, also leading to damage of Wollongong Council's reputation.



Image: Recent example of poor pruning practices by Endeavour Energy at Storey Street, Fairy Meadow