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ASSESSMENT OF TREE NOS. 248 & 251

Platanus x hybrida
London Plane Tree

NEWCASTLE EDUCATION CAMPUS
PARKWAY AVENUE
HAMILTON SOUTH

Prepared for

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING
SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE NSW

07th JUNE 2024

By
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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this assessment is to inspect and provide comments on the suspected poisoning of Tree Nos. 248 & 251 (*Platanus x hybrida* - London Plane Tree).

The contractors have raised concerns that the trees may have been poisoned after it was reported that numerous holes have been drilled around the base of the trunk at the root crown.

It has been confirmed to the arborist by the Hansen Yuncken, SINSW and the school that no actions such as pest control or for any reason associated with construction / development has been undertaken that would involve drilling into the trees.

The assessment is based on visual inspection only and does not include any laboratory testing such as leaf or soil analysis or any other more advanced assessment.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report refer to the tree's condition on the day of inspection only.

2. OBSERVATIONS

A site inspection was undertaken on the 07 June 2024 to inspect the trees. Upon inspection it was observed that:

- Approximately 15 holes around 1cm in diameter have been drilled around the entire base of the trunk of Tree No. 248 and browned-off leaves still attached to branches (Photo's 1, 2, 3).
- Approximately 21 holes around 1cm in diameter have been drilled around the entire base of the trunk of Tree No. 251 and browned-off leaves still attached to branches (Photo's 4, 5, 6).

3. DISCUSSION

The drill holes observed around the base of the trunk at their root crowns and browned-off leaves still attached to branches would indicate that the trees have been poisoned.

As the trees are deciduous at this time of year canopy density and signs associated with dieback and decline are not as obvious as would be on evergreen trees.

However whilst the trees are deciduous and leaf colour at this time of year (at / or towards the end of the deciduous stage) is typical and not unusual, browned-off leaves are still attached to branches rather than have fallen as would be more typical for this species at this time of year. This is particularly noticeable when compared to other *Platanus x hybrida* within the site that have not been affected.

Based on the results of observation, it appears that the trees have been poisoned affecting the essential life process required for the trees to function properly in a manner that is likely to result in their decline and probable death.

4. REMEDIAL ACTION

Platanus x hybrida are a relatively hardy tree and with some remedial action to try and lessen the effects of poisoning they may be able to recover.

At this stage as most branches are still relatively 'green' and not completely dead and decaying the risk of branch failure is considered low and as such they can be retained whilst remedial action is applied.

However it should be kept in mind that due to their deciduous status the trees are relatively dormant at this time of year and treatment may not be as effective.

The type and strength of poison injected and the tree's susceptibility to cope may also be a limiting factor in the tree's ability to recover and may be ineffective regardless of any remedial action.

To assist the tree to recover initial treatment should include:

- An application of Seasol or other similar product at the recommended rate. Seasol is safe to use and amongst other things is beneficial in:
 - Enhancing root growth & health & vigour
 - Help tree cope with stresses
 - Help increase nutrient uptake
 - Increases beneficial microbial activity in the soil
- Unless rain fall is not upcoming water as much as the root zone as possible taking care not to overwater or flood the root zone.
- Much root zones up to 50mm in depth with a fine organic mulch
- Closely monitor health & vigor for any signs of improvement
- Reapply Seasol in the spring when new growth should be beginning to form. This can be ascertained by monitoring other unaffected *Platanus x hybrida* within the school grounds for signs of new growth
- If no improvement is noticeable and monitor for another two weeks and keep watering.

5. CONCLUSION

The drill holes observed around the base of the trunk at their root crowns and browned-off leaves still attached to branches would indicate that the trees have been poisoned.

It may be possible that with some remedial action to try and lessen the effects associated with poisoning the trees may be able to recover.

However, despite remedial action it is possible that the effects associated with poisoning may be irreversible and the trees may need to be removed.

If litigation action is to be pursued either or tissue / leave / soil analysis to confirm or eliminate the use of chemicals.

The services of a consulting arborist experienced in preparing documentation and representation in lawsuits should be sought.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of a visual inspection of the tree the following outcomes are recommended:

1. Retain trees for now and undertake remedial action as outlined
2. Undertake remedial action again in the spring when the trees are no longer dormant and new growth would be expected to form.
3. Monitor health & vigour closely for signs of new growth & improvement
4. Remove trees if remedial action is not affective and trees are dead
5. If litigation action is to be pursued either tissue / leave / soil analysis should be undertaken, and the services of a consulting arborist experienced in preparing documentation and representation in lawsuits sought.

Report By



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APPENDIX 1 - PHOTOS



Photo 1 – Leaves retained on branches

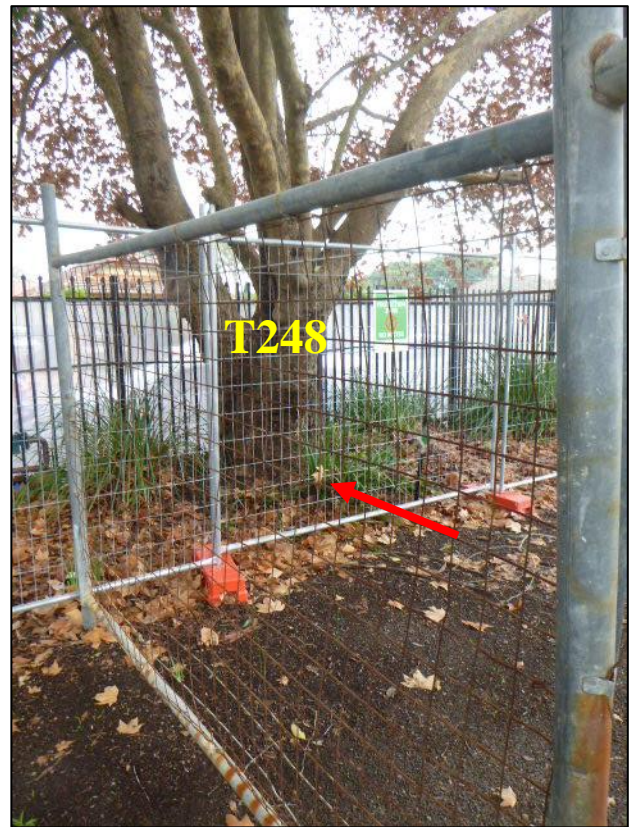


Photo 2 – Holes drilled around the entire base of the trunk



Photo 3 – Holes drilled around the entire base of the trunk



Photo 4 – Leaves retained on branches



Photo 5 – Holes drilled around the entire base of the trunk



Photo 6 – Holes drilled around the entire base of the trunk