

David **SOUTHWICK MP**

MEMBER FOR CAULFIELD

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY



25 January 2022

Ms Lily D'Ambrosio
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Via email: lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of residents to express my deep concern about the recent removal of trees and significant buildings at Caulfield Racecourse and the role of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in greenlighting it without community consultation.

For years, there have been community concerns about the lack of transparency in the management of Caulfield Racecourse Reserve. The Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust (CRRT) was designed to allay these issues and oversee a community-inclusive redevelopment of this historic site.

Since the establishment of the CRRT in August 2018, there have been numerous forums, community consultations and information sessions to keep the community abreast of the redevelopment plans.

However, it appears that at this critical decision-making point, no community consultation was sought.

On Christmas Eve, many locals were enjoying their holidays, you and the Department exercised significant ministerial power under cover of darkness to remove trees at the racecourse without consultation.

Having been unaware of the impending plans, even a month later, many locals were left shocked when several trees – some over 100 years old – were swiftly cut down on January 20. As a result, residents have expressed their anger that you gave approval for both the felling of these trees and the demolition of heritage buildings, without any proper community consultation.

Of particular significance to many in the community is the Aleppo Pine, grown from the seed of Gallipoli's Lone Pine. As a gift from Legacy, a standing testament to the sacrifice and values of ANZACs and a tree of substantial historical importance, the Government ought to do everything it can to prevent the Pine from being lost.

Further still, given the historical, social, and environmental significance of the land management plan of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve, I believe our locals deserve to be included at every step of the process.

It is therefore profoundly disappointing that the CRRT, which was established by your government to oversee the management of the land, did not play a more active role in the decision-making process.

Tragically, it is too late to stop the destruction of these significant trees and heritage buildings.

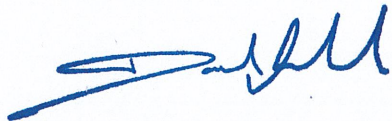
I am writing to implore you to provide assurance that work is ceased until heritage significance is properly assessed by Heritage Victoria.

I also ask that you meet with locals to explain what has happened in this case and provide reassurance as to what protections will be provided in the future.

Minister, I support the land management plan to upgrade the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve, especially given the community benefit provided by using this valuable open space. It is incumbent on us, however, to protect this land's heritage, and ensure that the community are properly consulted on any plans going forward.

I look forward to your response on this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Southwick', written over a horizontal line.

David

David Southwick MP
Member for Caulfield
Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party

Cc: Mr Jared Newton – General Manager, Corporate Affairs – MRC
Ms Rebecca McKenzie – CEO, Glen Eira City Council