



# Mount Hawthorn Primary School

## Fig tree relocation funding outline

Prepared by the MHPS Grounds Committee

August 2017

### Context:

- A new seven classroom two storey build has been approved for the school for construction during 2018. It is of critical importance to the school community that this build is not delayed. However, the current plans for the building footprint overlap the position of a large Jackson Bay fig tree (**Figure 1**).
- Based on current build plans and the rationale outlined in the Grounds Committee Fig Tree Statement, the Grounds Committee view the only viable option as conservation of the fig tree by moving it to a new location as part of the new build landscaping.
- The Arbor Centre have provided a quote of \$45,000 + GST to relocate the tree to a location c. 15 m from where it currently stands (final location to be determined). An initial fee of \$7,900 + GST will be required up front to cover the tree preparation work. If the tree dies within 3 months of the transplant (the usual period by which it can be determined if the transplanting process itself has been successful), the Arbor Centre will either refund the money or replace the tree as per their warranty.
- It is our opinion that the funds required for relocation of the fig tree are not something that should be borne by the School, the P&C or the Department of Education, nor should they come out of the landscaping budget for the new build.
- Any funds raised to relocate the fig tree could not be “better spent elsewhere”, because the money would not be raised but for the tree.



**Figure 1.** The MHPS fig tree in question

### Rationale:

- This proposal to conserve the fig tree is being made because we genuinely believe that this will provide the best outcome for the school and students, both in the short and long term. It is a viable compromise that does not hold up building works, which the School and Board have been lobbying for many years.
- We are absolutely committed to working with, and for, the school community to improve the school environment for teachers and students. This is clearly evident in the Grounds Committee led work done on the oval renovation, which has gained widespread recognition both within and outside the school.

### Fund raising solution:

- We propose that the fund raising is a community driven activity, not a P&C or School initiative.
- We propose the following solution for raising the funds required to relocate the fig tree:
  - Initial preparation works completed and paid for by private individuals\* through donations to an online fund raising campaign (e.g. [GoFundMe](#)) set up for the tree relocation project.
  - Fundraising activities to be led by community champions and groups such as [Trees4Vincent](#), targeting special interest groups outside the school in the wider Mount Hawthorn community and beyond.

- First priority to reimburse individuals who have provided financial support for the preparation works.
- If sufficient funds are not able to be raised to move the tree, the raised funds would be used to assist in the purchase of advanced tree stock to try and provide some natural shade for the students.
- If funds in excess of those required to move the tree are raised, these will be used to further enhance the vegetation and landscaping of the school grounds with a focus on the new build.

\* *We have been approached by several individuals who are passionate about saving the fig tree and who have stated that they would be prepared to put in their own money as a loan to allow us to proceed rapidly with starting the initial preparation works. These people understand that if the funds required for this work are not subsequently raised through fund raising they would lose their money. These people feel, however, that for all the reasons outlined in our fig tree position statement, that the tree is worth conserving for the school and wider community.*

### New build landscaping:

- In addition to the issue of the fig tree, we have some serious concerns about the \$50,000 budget for the soft landscaping of the new build. We estimate that there is c. 1500m<sup>2</sup> of area that will need new landscaping related to the build. The current budget represents an allowance of c. \$35 per m<sup>2</sup>.
- To put the likely outcome in perspective, the commercial cost to prepare, irrigate and turf an area is c. \$30 per m<sup>2</sup>, gardens are c. \$38 per m<sup>2</sup>, and a 100L tree is c. \$300 installed.
- Our fear is that without the fig tree we are going to end up with grass and some small garden beds with a few scattered 100L trees in the middle, as the budget will accommodate little more. Such an outcome (**Figure 2**) is not what we believe any member of the school community would be satisfied with.



**Figure 2.** A recent pre-primary build in Landsdale.



**Figure 3.** The newly developed [West Leederville PS](#) play area underneath their iconic fig tree.

### Conclusion:

- Given that a limited budget exists for landscaping within the new build project, this external investment in conserving the fig tree, as well as the relative benefit it provides to the design, significantly raises the notional value of the project to the school with a legacy value of many decades.
- We have an opportunity to keep utilising the fig tree as a resource to create an amazing outdoor play space for future generations to explore nature and enhance their learning. Given the current plans for the new build, the relocation of the tree via this funding proposal represents a win-win for all concerned:
  - It costs the school nothing, enhances the area, creates immediate shade in a new build with a limited landscaping budget, and won't delay the build if a decision is made promptly.
  - If we don't raise the full amount to save the tree, we will use whatever funds are raised to enhance the new build landscaping with better gardens and larger replacement trees for the future.
  - We also have an opportunity to reinforce the idea that large iconic trees can be [saved and valued as a part of new builds](#) (**Figure 3**) with innovative, progressive thinking and a little hard work.

Revision	Purpose	Author	Reviewers	Approver	Date
0b	Initial issue	T. Lithgo	T. Swart & B. Webber	T. Lithgo	31 Aug 2017