

**Item 7.2 Petition - Retain BEE Garden at Ludwig Stamer Reserve**

A Petition containing 64 signatures was received from local residents.

**The Petition states the following:-**

*To the Mayor and Councillors of the Port Phillip City Council*

*The Petition of the following named citizens draws the attention of the Council of the proposed removal by City of Port Phillip (CoPP) of the "BEE" garden on Cobden St between footpath and fence of Ludwig Stamer Reserve, South Melbourne.*

*This small garden is an attractive addition to the reserve, replacing what was just granitic sand and weeds, and is now attractive native flowering plants, which adds to the streetscape. It is not a trip hazard, as the bushes in Moray St extend beyond the fence line and the raised bed follows along the fenceline. In addition, an extension of this raised garden bed along the fence line on Cobden St, Ludwig Stamer Reserve would improve the streetscape further and prevent runoff of granitic sand onto the footpath - itself a trip hazard.*

*The following Petitioners hereby request:*

- 1) *that COPP does not remove nor request residents to remove the above said garden*
- 2) *agree to modify the corner of the garden bed to remove any perceived trip hazard at the corner, by modifying the corner from 90 to 45 degrees and*
- 3) *work with residents to establish raised garden beds along the fence line on Cobden St, Ludwig Stamer Reserve, up to the second gate on Cobden St (nearest 111 Cobden St)*



**OFFICER COMMENT**

The 'BEE' gardens of South Melbourne are a series of community gardens installed at the intersection of Moray and Cobden Street adjacent to Ludwig Stamer Reserve. There are 10 gardens in total.

Council supports the installation of street gardens on nature strips and we admire the energy and support these gardens have created our local South Melbourne community. Council's Nature Strip Guidelines provide guidance to residents wishing to undertake plantings. While these gardens are not strictly covered by these guidelines (as they are not directly on land outside residents' properties), we have used these guidelines to work with the community to

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ensure the gardens are safe. Council has also been responding to a number of complaints around some trip hazards with the BEE Gardens.

The Nature strip guidelines attempt to balance community safety requirements and Council's duty of care to people using public spaces while encouraging and supporting nature strip plantings and the benefits these bring, including community building and increased bio diversity. In doing this, the Guidelines establish requirements for setbacks from footpaths and kerbs in order to avoid tripping and injuries.

We would like to acknowledge the extensive work by the designer and creator of these beautiful spaces for her work within the community and thank her for engaging with officers on her vision which also includes addressing the safety concerns.

Since becoming aware of the works not being in compliance with guidelines and the safety hazards, Council has worked with the developer of the Bee Gardens to find a solution that addresses the risks and enhances the gardens and community spirit. We have used the Nature Strip Guidelines as the basis for this.

Of the 10 gardens that have been planted, four required no action as they were assessed as being compliant with the Guidelines, five required modifications and one required removal (the subject of this petition). This specific garden is not compliant with the Nature Strip Guidelines, it has resulted in reported trips by our community, is situated on a pedestrian 'blind' corner and it presents an ongoing risk for further incidents. This was discussed with the developer of the Bee Gardens who agreed to remove it in September 2020. This has not happened.

Ludwig Stamer Reserve is identified as an upcoming park renewal in the near future, it is proposed during the community engagement for this project we design sections of that park to cater for further community planting.

Since the determination to remove this garden Council;

- Has endorsed the extension of one garden that is in accordance with current nature strip guidelines.
- Has suggested an opportunity to expand an existing garden that could reduce risks further.
- Is considering a community budget submission for the extension of the gardens along Moray Street (noting the adjacent residents of this proposal have not yet endorsed this proposal)

Council will be reviewing its Nature Strip Guidelines over the coming months and we will be engaging widely with the community on these. This will be an opportunity to ensure the guidelines encourage and support nature strip plantings while also protecting public safety and amenity.



Modifying the corner of the garden does not fully mitigate the trip risks as a raised bed of that height still presents trip hazard at this location. It is also noted modifying the corners would have a significant impact on the current vegetation within this small garden.

Installing a garden, the length of the reserve is not supported as capital works is planned that could safely build community gardening into the park upgrade.

#### OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1 Receives and notes the Petition.
- 2 Thanks the community for their petition and acknowledge the community benefits and social connectiveness these gardens have provided the South Melbourne community.
- 3 Endorses the removal of the garden as it is not in accordance with nature strip guidelines and deemed unsafe.
- 4 Notes the resident that installed the garden agreed to remove this garden in September 2020.
- 5 Does not support an extended garden as the Ludwig Stamer Reserve design will propose a section for community gardening.

**TRIM FILE NO:** F21/1

**ATTACHMENTS** Nil