



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Tree to be Removed From George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens

A large tree near the Children's Playground in the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens is set to be removed tomorrow for safety reasons.

Another tree nearby will require significant surgery in November to prevent its removal.

Botanic Gardens Curator Dave Griffiths said a routine inspection in September of the trees by Gardens staff and a second opinion from an independent expert confirmed these actions are necessary in the interests of safety.

"While all our trees are very important to us, safety in the Gardens is paramount," Mr Griffiths said.

"The Gardens attract thousands of visitors each year and in the interests of public safety, we have decided to remove one of the trees and perform surgery on the other one.

"The trees, one believed to be about 50 years old, are fast growing *Enterolobium cyclocarpum* from South America, which are also known as Monkey Ear.

"The inspection of the tree now requiring removal found large cracks on its main branches with similar cracks beginning to appear on others.

"Wet wood fluid is leaking from multiple small places on the main trunk of the tree requiring removal while other large branches show abnormal growth.

"As we approach the wet season, with strong wind, rain and cyclones a regular feature, we have no other option but to remove the tree as the Gardens attract thousands of visitors each year. Staff and visitor safety has to be our number one priority."

Mr Griffiths said the majority of the children's playground including the tree house is still accessible although a portion of the playground surrounding the tree set for removal has been roped off.

He said the decision regarding the trees was not taken lightly because both trees are used by the Gardens' resident Rufous Owls, which attract birdwatchers from around the world.

"A hollow in one of the trees used for nesting is being preserved, while the other tree is used as a roosting area," he said.

"A bird specialist from the Territory Wildlife Park was called to the Gardens to assess how this safety measure would impact on the birds.

"He advised us the owls will continue to breed at the Gardens if the tree hollow and its surrounds are preserved."

Ends

**Media Note – For more information contact Dave Griffiths on 0401 115 712**

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