

TREE REMOVAL FOR PEST & DISEASE

SAWFLY DAMAGE – RODEN STREET, WEST MELBOURNE

Prepared by Tree Dimensions, February 2023

In developing the Street Greening Proposal for Roden Street, the City of Melbourne engaged Tree Dimensions as an independent arborist in September 2022 to undertake an arboricultural assessment of all public trees on Roden Street, between King and Spencer Streets.

Executive statement

The arborist found that many of the Callistemon street trees on Roden Street, between King and Spencer Streets, have a short useful life expectancy (ULE) due to their health, structural condition and damage from sawfly larvae.

Removing and replacing these trees would improve the streetscape and urban forest benefits of Roden Street.

Assessment

During this assessment it was noted that the Callistemon street trees on Roden Street have been damaged by Callistemon sawfly (or Bottlebrush sawfly), *Pterygophorus cinctus*.

In late summer, the female sawfly uses a 'saw-like' egg-laying tube, called an ovipositor, to cut slits in leaves and stems and then lay eggs.

The larvae that emerge from these eggs then feed on the leaves by stripping, or 'skeletonising', them. This intensive feeding stresses the trees because the leaves produce the trees' 'food' in the form of sugar (glucose), by converting sunlight, oxygen and water through the chemical process called photosynthesis.

The trees become further stressed when the larvae stop feeding on the leaves and seek soft timber to bore into where they can transform into the adult form (pupate) without a cocoon.

Holes created by wood-boring larvae are apparent on many of the Callistemons on Roden Street. With time, this damage weakens the tree, potentially resulting in broken branches or trunks. In extreme cases, the larvae may even ringbark the tree. The holes also allow the entry of fungal pathogens that can cause decay and further weaken the wood.

As many of the trees have fair to poor structure and may no longer respond well to injuries or stress – including insect damage and pruning – the arborist concluded the trees have a short ULE and should be replaced.



Image above: A row of black sawfly eggs



Image above: Sawfly larvae feeding on leaves



Image above: Borer holes and bark damage



Image above: Sawfly adult