

# New by-laws considered

CAITLAN CHARLES



Significant tree register on table

TOWNSVILLE City Council will look into developing bylaws to protect significant trees.

The Townsville Tree Advocacy Group wants the council to introduce vegetation protection orders to provide protection for significant trees. This comes after three trees were cut down in Anzac Park earlier this year.

The Office of Australian War Graves (OAWG) identified an issue with three weeping fig trees that were causing damage to the surrounding garden infrastructure, including the memorial wall at Anzac Park.

The council took it upon itself to tell the community about the removal of the trees, one of which was 80 years old.

However, the advocacy group did not believe this was good enough.

The Department of Environment and Heritage gave approval for the trees to be removed, with the assurance the trees would be replaced.

But the tree advocacy group has taken the fight to the council to make sure trees of such significance are preserved into the future.

Tree group member Bernadette Boscacci spoke at the Townsville City Council meeting on Wednesday, and said the council was behind the times on protecting vegetation. "This petition was triggered by the removal of large trees from the heritage listed park without community consultation," Ms Boscacci said.

She said many of the old trees had cultural, historical, community and environmental significance.

"In regards to the vegetation protection laws and by-laws, I wanted to say Townsville is behind the times and needs to step up," Ms Boscacci said.

"There are numerous examples that could be adopted around the country and fine tuned to work for us in the dry tropics.

"Developing a significant tree register would be an important step in the right direction, and register should form part of the new protection bylaws and should be developed with community and professional input.

"Council really needs to take lead on this.

"There is plenty of community support for this proposal and we want to see serious and immediate action on this."

The Townsville Tree Advocacy Group has been pushing for vegetation protection laws since the trees were removed in March.

The group held a vigil for the trees after they were removed. The council will now consider the proposals put forward in the petition and come back to the group.

DEVELOPING A SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, AND REGISTER SHOULD FORM PART OF THE NEW PROTECTION BY-LAWS AND SHOULD BE DEVELOPED WITH COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL INPUT.  
BERNADETTE BOSCACCI