

Councillor Couros - QoN - Tree Martins - first identified as significant problem

Tuesday, 13 May 2025
Council

Council Member
Councillor Mary Couros

Public

Contact Officer:
Tom McCready, Director City
Infrastructure

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Councillor Mary Couros will ask the following Question on Notice:

'Can Administration advise of:

1. Provide an approximate date where the birds were first identified as a significant issue on Leigh Street, and what actions were taken in response to them at that time?
2. How many Motions with or without notice, if any, have Administration received in relation to the birds and trees on Leigh Street? Be it this Council or previous Council.
3. Did former Councillor Houssam Abiad, who concluded his term in 2020, submit any Questions or Motions, with or without notice, relating to the bird issue on Leigh Street?
4. Were current elected members advised of the decision to install nets on trees along Leigh Street? If so, when did this take place?
5. Were any formal objections or concerns raised by elected members in relation to the installation of the nets, and if so, can Administration provide details of those objections?

REPLY

1. In response to question 1. the following advice is provided:
 - 1.1 The earliest documented evidence of Tree Martins in Leigh Street (reported on the Green Adelaide website [Green Adelaide tree-martins leigh-street](#)) dates back to 2015. The issue of cleanliness, smell and the impacts of Tree Martins roosting escalated in May 2020 with property owners and businesses asking for increased cleaning due to bird faeces. As a result, the Administration intensified cleaning of the street.
 - 1.2 In March 2021 a property owner (major) contacted the Administration again asking for urgent action pertaining to the roosting of the birds. The following items were considered as a potential solution, with continued dialogue with Leigh Street stakeholders, Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and Green Adelaide.
 - 1.3 Measures taken to improve outcomes:
 - 1.3.1 Consulted with Green Adelaide and the DEW (about the habits of the Tree Martins) on several occasions to inform decision making.
 - 1.3.2 Investigated bird control for commercial buildings, including sonar, ultra sonar and laser technology.

- 1.3.3 Additional tree pruning to minimise overhang above dining areas, undertaken by Councils Senior Arborist and an independent Arborist as a result of inspections of all trees on the street.
 - 1.3.4 Increased, detailed scrubbing and pressure washing of the pavement and urban elements.
 - 1.3.5 Additional cleaning during migration season from daily to three daily visits in total to remove bird droppings.
 - 1.3.6 Development Assessment approval of canopy for Shobosho bar and kitchen.
 - 1.3.7 Investigated the appropriateness of netting trees.
 - 1.3.8 Investigated alternate tree species.
 - 1.3.9 Investigated removal of the trees.
 - 1.3.10 Regular monitoring and spot cleaning in addition to the three daily visits.
 - 1.3.11 Informed Green Adelaide and the Department for Environment & Water of the proposal to install netting on the trees, noting that it was still possible that Tree Martins would migrate to another location within the city.
 - 1.3.12 Engaged a specialist contractor to install bird netting on all trees on the street which occurred in August 2024.
2. A search within Council meeting documents and decisions databases has only found two items relating to the subject birds and trees on Leigh Street.
 - 2.1. Cllr Abrahamzadeh – Question on Notice – Seasonal Bird Nesting – 26 March 2024
 - 2.2. Cllr Davis – Motion without Notice - Tree Martin Management and Support Measures – 22 April 2025.
 3. There is no record of former Councillor Abiad raising either a Question or Motion, with or without notice, relating to the bird issue on Leigh Street.
 4. Council Members were provided with updates on the migrating Tree Martins within Leigh Street
 - 4.1. [E-News- Tree-Martins in Leigh-Street February 2024](#) - general update,
 - 4.2. [E-News- Leigh-Street Update May 2024](#) - update on meeting with Property Owner - Leigh Street and next steps.
 - 4.3. [E-News - Leigh-Street Tree Netting August 2024](#)- information provided highlighted the installation of tree nets, ongoing dialogue with traders and proposed dates of installation.
 5. In response to question 5. the following advice is provided:
 - 5.1. There is no record of any objections received from Council Members relating to the installation of the nets in Leigh Street.
 - 5.2. The only contact from Council Members was in the form of email and telephone enquiries seeking to understand how the Administration would seek to resolve the issue and support Leigh Street property and business owners relating to the impacts of Tree Martin roosting within the street.

Staff time in receiving and preparing this reply	To prepare this reply in response to the question on notice took approximately 5.5 hours.
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