

Removal of two Old and Valuable Trees in Southern and Tai Po Districts by LCSD

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will remove two Old and Valuable Trees (OVT) at South Bay Beach in Southern District and the Hong Kong Railway Museum in Tai Po District on July 22 (Monday), in view of their poor health and structural conditions.

The tree at South Bay Beach is a *Casuarina equisetifolia*, listed on the Register of OVTs (registration number LCSD S/16).

The tree is around 15 metres tall. Its health and structural conditions have been deteriorating since 2023, showing signs such as an imbalanced crown, sparse crown density, splitting of co-dominant stems, and wood decay at the trunk base and limbs. The LCSD has carried out regular inspections and maintenance of the tree, including application of fungicides, cabling, and pruning and removal of decayed branches to alleviate the tree risk. Despite the implementation of various measures thus far, the health and structural conditions of the tree were found to be deteriorating, and it is considered irrecoverable.

The tree at the Hong Kong Railway Museum is a *Ficus microcarpa*, listed on the Register of OVTs (registration number LCSD TP/9).

The tree is around 17 metres tall. It was confirmed to have brown root rot disease (BRRD) infection in July 2020. Despite immediate tree management work carried out by the LCSD, including regular inspections and specific maintenance work, a crown reduction, cabling and application of fungicides, the health condition of the tree has been deteriorating since 2023. Decreasing foliage density and obvious signs of wood decay at the roots and trunk base have been found, indicating that the BRRD infection is becoming worse, causing irreversible health and structural damage to the tree.

Considering the heavy visitor traffic at the trees' locations, they will be removed by the LCSD for protection of public safety.

To facilitate the removal of LCSD TP/9, the Hong Kong Railway Museum will be temporarily closed on July 22 (Monday) and reopen on July 24 (Wednesday). Please note that Tuesday is the museum's closing day.

The LCSD has consulted and obtained the support of the Urban Forestry Advisory Panel through the Tree Management Office on the proposed removal of the two trees. The LCSD will replant *Terminalia catappa* or *Barringtonia acutangula* at the nearby locations.

A spokesman for the LCSD reiterates that the department will continue to

adopt a prudent approach in inspecting and managing trees under its care. Removal of problematic trees will be considered only when no other viable risk mitigation measure is available.