



2011 Residents' Association Inc.

ABN 78 862 101 665

PO Box 1513
Potts Point NSW 1335

22 February 2022

Dear Councillor,

As you may be aware, pollen from London plane trees can be a potential health hazard for people who suffer from respiratory problems such as asthma, and it can trigger certain allergies that cause hay fever, sinusitis and allergic rhinitis. In worst case scenarios, these conditions can develop into serious chest and lung infections requiring antibiotic treatment and sometimes hospitalisation.

Over recent weeks the streets and footpaths of Potts Point have been covered with what can only be described as a thick carpet of plane tree pollen. For example, see the photos (at the end of this letter) of the footpath near the Fountain Cafe, Macleay Street, Potts Point which were taken on 16 February and on 21 February.

This is what we are breathing in every day as microscopic pollen drops from the plane trees, with hooked barbs that get caught in our mouths, throats and lungs and hook into eyes, noses and ears. In some places this bed of compacted pollen is more than an inch thick on the ground - and you can see from the attached pictures where it is, right next to/above the Fountain Cafe tables and chairs, so this is what customers are breathing in and eating and drinking as it floats down from the tree canopy and branches above.

This scenario is repeated throughout Potts Point wherever plane trees are planted - locals are very familiar with the scratch/rub/cough/sneeze reactions that used to be limited to spring, but due to global warming and generally rising Sydney temperatures are now year-round afflictions.

Council has recently for its own reasons voted against the progressive removal of plane trees. However, at the very least the pollen should be removed on a very regular basis to protect the health of Potts Point's vulnerable citizens.

Council supports protection of the environment. However, it is permitting layers of pollen to remain, which we see as a toxic environmental pollutant.

We call for daily street sweeping of the Potts Point area. Why? Because the plane trees don't choose to drop their pollen just once a week or every three days to fit in with Council cleaning schedule - the trees now drop their pollen all year round. A revised cleaning schedule may not stop the pollen from floating down from these trees, nor protect people from breathing it in, but it will at least clean up the mess they leave once it has gathered in the gutters and on the footpaths.

Council should also prioritise giving serious consideration to the phasing-out of plane trees and replacing them with less toxic native species, as other councils have done (e.g. City of Melbourne).

Individual Council street sweepers such as Rifal do a sterling job in Potts Point. But since the onset of the pandemic, Council seems to have reduced the rosters for street cleaning, and now that COVID-19 regulations are being lifted this is an opportunity to restore those hours and staffing levels.

We have no criticism of individual manual workers who keep our streets clean but pollen, leaves and other detritus need regular removal, a workload that is too great for the workers provided.

One final point: we draw attention also to the leaves that accumulate on the footpaths and above the street drains. These become dangerous during wet weather as the streets are not being swept often enough.

Yours faithfully,

Carole Ferrier

Convenor

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<https://2011residentsassociation.org.au/>

**Two photos of London plane tree pollen in Potts Point (16 and 21 Feb. 2022)
SEE FOLLOWING PAGES**



