

MEDIA RELEASE

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True beauty of Sacred Heart Cathedral to be revealed

Residents and visitors to Bendigo will finally enjoy unimpeded views of the Sacred Heart Cathedral.

This week five aging cypress trees and three elm trees will be removed from the Cathedral's forecourt, highlighting the magnificence of the building.

Gordon McKern, Chairman of Aspire Cultural & Charitable Foundation welcomed the development: "There is much affection for the beauty, grandeur and history of this iconic cultural asset, and we're delighted that more locals and visitors will now be able to enjoy the shared spaces that will start to emerge onsite".

Mayor Cr Barry Lyons said this was another step towards to realising a new urban vision for the Cathedral.

"Great cities have great cathedrals and Bendigo is no different. By having removed the Yamaha motorcycle building and now these aging trees, our city will have one of the finest Cathedral vistas in Victoria," Cr Lyons said.

"By clearing the area in front of the Cathedral it will progress the development of the planned public piazza and beautiful shared spaces. The next steps will be for the Aspire Cultural & Charitable Foundation and the City of Greater Bendigo to work collaboratively to plan for the forecourt.

"The City looks forward to continuing to work with the Aspire Cultural & Charitable Foundation to ensure the Cathedral and its surrounds reach their full potential."

Heritage Victoria has supported and authorised the removal of the trees, which were coming to the end of their life, but recognised the significance of the Golden Cypress to the local area and asked the City to take cuttings and collect seeds for propagation.

The Golden Cypress, best identified as *Hesperocyparis macrocarpa* 'Lutea', dates back to the 19th Century and staff from the City's Parks and Natural Reserves Unit have collected cuttings and seeds from a tree so it can be propagated at the City's Nursery.

Manager Parks and Natural Reserves Simon Harrison said the aim of the propagation is to replicate the genetic diversity of the historic species.

"These trees can no longer be found in plant nurseries, as they are too big for most gardens and therefore not widely available," said Mr Harrison.

"This work will allow us to replant the species in one of our public gardens as a reference to some of the original plantings in this area. Our Nursery team will also take tip cuttings once the trees have been felled, in order to further improve our chances of success."

Stage One of development – a 3-metre statue to honour Saint Mary MacKillop's work in the Diocese – will be unveiled this Friday, along with plans for the wider precinct development.

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