Writing Tree Risk Assessment Reports

25 May 2018

Hong Kong

David Galwey

TREE DIMENSIONS
TREES IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Land and Environment Court

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What I will take you through today:

- Content of a report
- Format of a report
- Language – grammar, syntax

What I won't teach you today:

- Assessing risk

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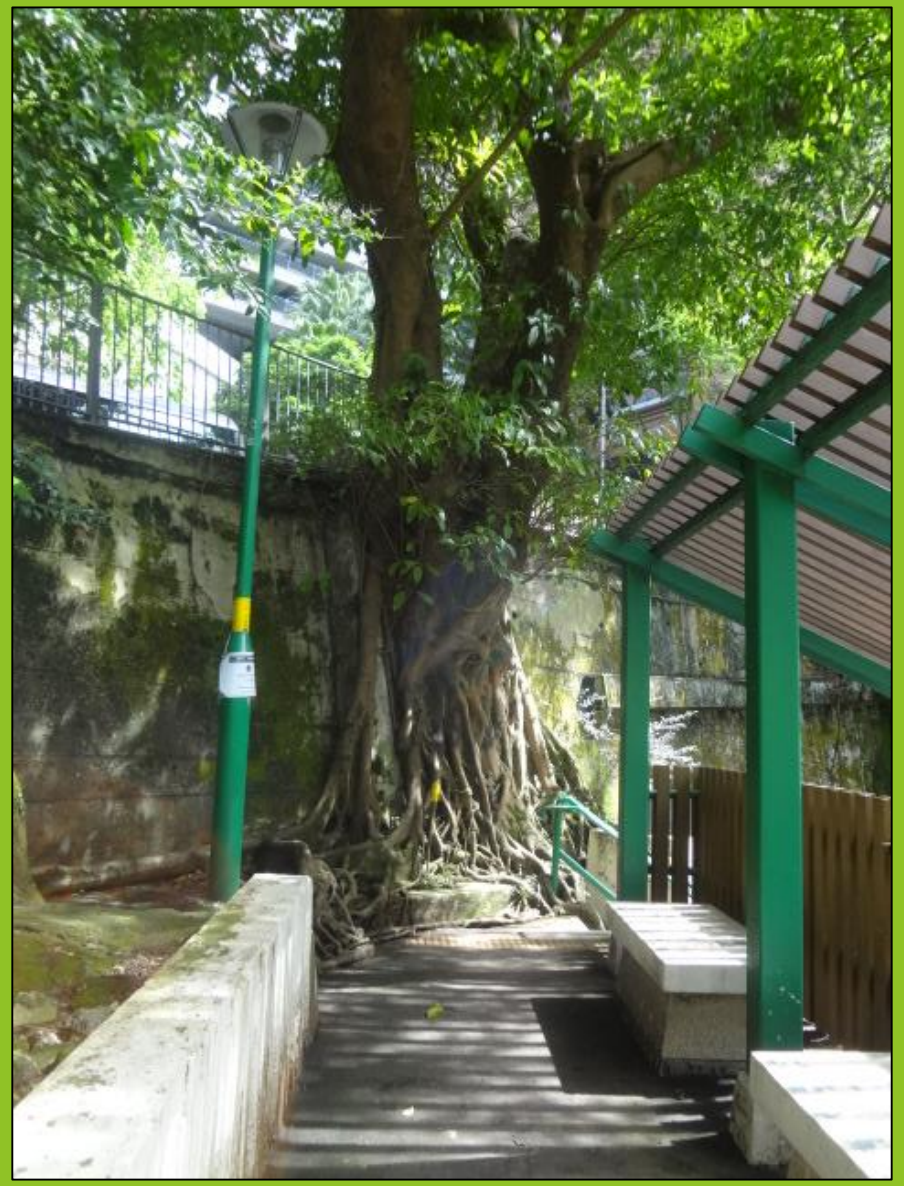

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Bodrum, Turkey

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TRAQ

QTRA

ISA 1991 (Matheny & Clark)
A Photographic Guide to the Evaluation of Hazard Trees in Urban Areas

Others

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TRAQ

QTRA

ISA 1991 (Matheny & Clark)
A Photographic Guide to the Evaluation of Hazard Trees in Urban Areas

Others

- Likelihood of tree or tree part failing
- What part of the tree – its size
- What might it hit
- How much damage will it do

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How many calories in a bowl of rice?

0.0719056 calories in one grain of rice

Estimate the number of grains of rice in a bowl

… if 1,000 = 71.9056 calories
… if 5,000 = 359.528 calories

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A report must

tell a story.

Fiction v non-fiction

Bagheera woke to the sound of Mowgli's screaming. "Mowgli is in danger!" he said in a panic. "We have to save him." But how? Baloo and Bagheera could not take on the monkeys alone. "I've got it" Baloo shrieked happily. "We will set a swarm of bees onto the monkeys." Quickly, Baloo went to all the bees' nests that he knew. "Come and help our friend Mowgli!", he said to his bee friends. Together they went on their way to Monkey City.

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Things to think about before you write

Who is the report for?

What do they need?

Who else might read it?

Tell the truth – don't lie.

Are you required to say everything?

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Things to think about before you write

Who is the report for?

What do they need?

Who else might read it?

Tell the truth – don't lie.

Are you required to say everything?

- Verbal advice
- Letter
- Brief report
- Informal report
- Formal report
- Expert witness statement

Content

1. Introduction
2. Brief (Instructions)
3. Methodology
4. Findings
5. Discussion
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations

Content

Content

Sets the context by giving relevant background that explains what the issue might be, or why you have been asked to assess the tree.

Who might read the report?

Content

Who asked for the assessment and report?

What did they ask for?

How was the brief modified?

Content

Who did the assessment?

What did you do?

How? When?

What tools did you use?

Repeatable

What other information or tests? Who?

What *didn't* you do?

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1st person

I assessed the tree.

I collected samples.

3rd person

The arborist assessed the tree.

She collected samples.

Active

The arborist used microscopy to identify the fungus.

Passive

The fungus was identified by the arborist using microscopy.

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Active

I assessed the tree on 19 August. Possums have grazed the foliage. Arborists recently removed two branches from the tree. Many dead leaves were on the ground.

Passive

The tree was assessed by Jane Smith, consulting arborist, on 19 August. The foliage had been grazed by possums. Two branches have recently been removed from the tree by arborists. There was a fairly significant number of dead leaves on the ground.

Content

I assessed the tree on 5 July 2017. I used a laser device for measuring tree height and crown spread, and a diameter tape to measure DBH at 1.4 metres.

I used a mallet to sound the tree's stem. I then used a Resistograph to test three areas of potential decay.

Content

I climbed the tree and inspected scaffold limbs, their unions with the stem and any wounds and areas of damage.

I assessed the tree from the ground, inspecting the crown from all sides except from the south, where dense understorey limited access.

Due to heavy fog I could not see the tree's top branches.

Content

Location of the tree.

Describe what you found.

Be methodical and concise.

Present data in tables.

Insert photographs.

Try to avoid elaborating too much.

Content

Identify the key findings.

Explain why they are important.

Use references to provide further context.

Show a logical chain of reasoning that will lead to your conclusions.

Content

Draws together your discussion.

No new material, but may provide some context for the outcome.

Content

Recommend any actions clearly.

Ensure they cannot be misunderstood.

Set priorities or timeframes.

Content

Use a standard referencing method.

List every reference in your report, including websites and personal communication.

Content

Photos if too many for the report body

Large amounts of data

Risk methodology

Content

Executive Summary

1. Introduction
2. Brief (Instructions)
3. Methodology
4. Findings
5. Discussion
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations
8. References
9. Appendices

TRAQ Content

1. Name of the tree risk assessor, company and the date of the assessment
2. Statement of the scope of work
3. Location or identification of the tree assessed
4. Level of inspection and details of the method
5. Targets, occupancy rates, likelihood of impacting the target, and potential consequences of failure
6. Site factors considered, site history
7. Likelihood of failure, such as a list of tree conditions, structural defects, and response growth that were observed
8. Risk assessment and conclusion
9. Options and or recommendations for mitigation
10. Residual risk
11. Recommendations for reassessment
12. Limitations of the assessment

Apostrophes

The branches foliage was chlorotic.

Apostrophes

The branch’s foliage was chlorotic.

Apostrophes

The branch’s foliage was chlorotic.

The branches’ foliage was chlorotic.

Apostrophes

Its difficult to know when the tree might shed its limbs.

Apostrophes

Its difficult to know when the tree might shed its limbs.

It’s difficult to know when the tree might shed its limbs.

- Possessive *its* does not get an apostrophe
- It is = it’s

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Using templates

Keeps you to your formal structure

Set up styles (MS Word)

Editing

Proof-reading

2nd set of eyes

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Everything you say and write may end up in a court of law.

Keep good records.

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Report 1

Report 2

Report 3

Report 4

Report 5

Report 6

Report 7

Report 8