

## Dead Stringy on Ethel road

by Tiago Miranda

As we are approaching wintertime, the day starts with a crispy hit and hands take a while to warm up as usual. This time I knew what the job was about. I met with the Council Officer days before to discuss possibilities in how to remove this dead tree confined within a private property and council land. This area is invaded by noxious species (*Pinus radiata*) and other exotic shrubs, contributing to even more flammable matter in case of a fire. Debris can't be left on site. First of all, the job was allocated to be done in half-day, which with further discussion, convinced to make as a full day giving more time to do a proper setup and avoid damage, especially to the old gazebo located below the tree. Arrived on site at 8 am and the first thing out of my van are the throw cubes.



Source: T. Miranda 2020



Source: T. Miranda 2020

Two reasonably tall radiata pines were located almost strategically opposite to each other. Dead gums are mostly safe to climb, but due to the ivy cover, I chose not to wear spikes (gaffs). Instead, a floating anchor is more like the right option. I started throwing to the tallest and gnarly pine on the fire track. Looking from below, I could set up the first rope, base anchoring at a decent height. After a few tries, finally got a line installed. Once at the top, I had a better view and the tree looks fragile, which satisfy my plan so far. Once I finally decided where my first base anchoring rope would be, it was time to climb the other more manicure pine in the private property.

## ON-SITE

Luckily enough, we had owner consent to use his premises. Beautiful and well looked after backyard facing north-east with prominent sunshine in the mornings. The house was built in 1915 Victorian style including the old looking gazebo below the tree. Once my line was installed, here I am ascending again, expecting to have a second view to position my final anchor point correctly. This time, I had a throw cube stow on my harness with the idea in shooting a line over the dead tree within the most appropriate position to retrieve my initial rope installed in the previous large pine. Succeeded. Using my second anchor point in the private property pine, I threw both ropes (Yellow and Blue) towards the gazebo and both with extra weight to make it landed where I wanted.



Source: T. Miranda 2020



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Day was getting better and without looking at the clock, lunchtime had approached and after a tiring solo mission, I guess we should stop and have a feed and review our plan. I was a bit nervous as the council officer promised the owner that no damage will occur, which is always a concern from both sides – my responsibility and the officer. Thus, I felt confident and after lunch finally cracked on. Both basal anchors were set up to be retrievable, so in case of emergency, two ground workers could rescue me, expecting I was heavy enough to be belayed. Both ropes had Oval carabiners attached to a DMM Bat ring plate and a primary line attached in the middle, which I had my Zig Zag and Chicane setup. Apart from a bit of a bounce, I felt comfortable to dismantle the tree by hand. We only had to rig one branch towards the property and this setup was easy enough, provided by a natural crotch on the tree beside. All safe and sound, the trunk was left at a habitat level and day was almost finished. We left the site at 2:30 pm. Still sunny.