

Hope for sick Gallipoli oak

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PLANS are afoot to create a tree that is a genetic match for the sick Gallipoli tree outside St David's Cathedral.

Heritage tree experts have volunteered to graft some of the holm oak to create another.

The evergreen *Quercus ilex* is believed to have been nurtured from an acorn or small sapling from Gallipoli after the 1915 battle and was tended by ex-servicemen.

Past digging works may have cut through huge roots, which spread far under surrounding streets.

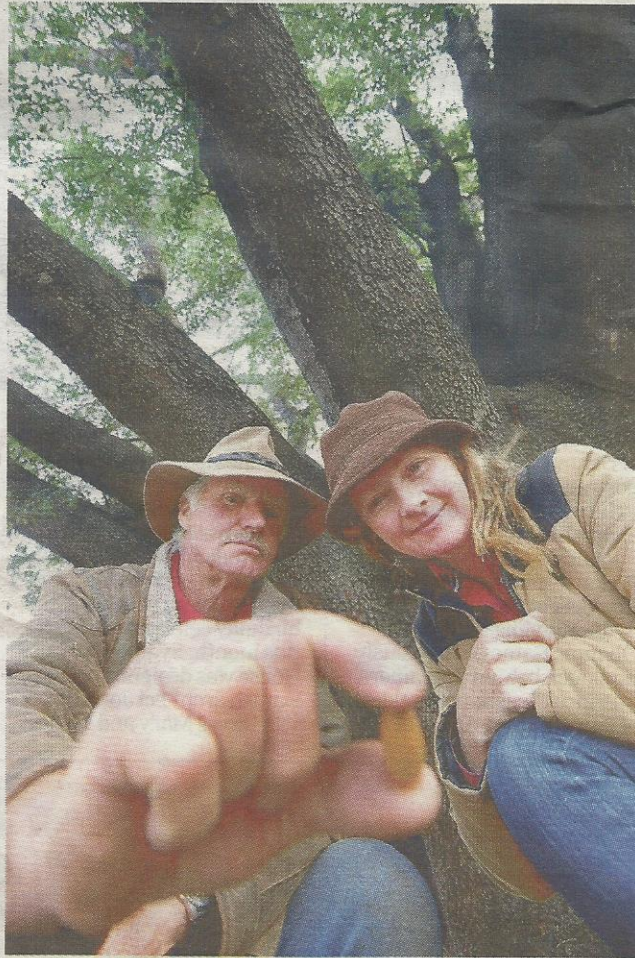
Rowena Howard and Grant Horne from the Historical Plant Nursery said it was possible to take a piece of the oak and graft it on to an evergreen host tree.

Then fresh acorns would be collected in autumn and be stored before they became small saplings on to which the piece of tree, or scion, would be grafted.

"We would be keeping the genealogy of this tree," Mr Horne said. "Then it could grow somewhere protected and safe."

Staff at Hobart City Council, which cares for the tree, have also taken cuttings as well as working with other experts to determine the cause of its decline.

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GRAFT PLAN: Heritage tree experts Grant Horne, left, and Rowena Howard with the holm oak tree outside St David's Cathedral.
Picture: SAM ROSEWARNE