

## The Helilift

In our 30 years of being in the tree industry, the 21st of January 08 was without a doubt the most exhilarating day of our extensive career. As a family business going through a major overhaul of our structure, public appeal and internal running's, this job was a step in the right direction. The site at the rear of the property was inaccessible to large machinery and presented major problems for conventional take down methods. I first was contacted back in November and it took us 8 weeks to organise all the finer details of this complex take down.

Originally, we were going to use an 80 tonne crane to extract the large *Eucalyptus*; however, the only access was the neighbour backing onto our client's job. After discussing the effect the 80 tonne crane would have on the neighbour's yard, it was apparent that we needed to drastically rethink our strategies. So I made the relevant call with the thought of using a helicopter for the extraction. At this point, it all seemed a little daunting and unrealistic. With renewed confidence of our new attitude, we contacted McDermott Aviation who were more than happy to come and assess the situation. Once meeting Damien onsite, it was pointed out

to us that this operation would require at least 15-20 separate lifts using 5mtr slings rated at over 5 tonnes lifting capacity. Damien was confident that his team would be able to extract this tree within the 4 hr min. At this point, we were very confident the job was going to go smoothly.

The job was booked for the 21st January; we had all our permits in place main roads, aviation clearances etc. it had been raining for two weeks prior and it would continue to rain a further two weeks after; however, the heavens were clear and all it was all systems go. Our team of seven were in place for the job of the life time! We had our resident arborist as the lead climber with secondary climber in place (for health and safety) using a spider 23mt tower that we had organised to fit through the carport for the safe removal of the log sections. This delicate operation was about to start. All of the team were in the back yard waiting for the chopper and when it finally turned up it didn't let us down with its thunderous blades cutting through the air with such force, enough to blow everyone's helmets clear off.

With the road control in place, all the

boys at their stations the helicopter hovered over the old deceased *Eucalyptus* to dislodge any loose branches. Before I knew it, the first branch was being flown over Eight Mile Plains. What a satisfying feeling! All the adrenaline had culminated to this very moment and it was worth the wait! Many neighbours gathered to watch this amazing take down. All were amazed at how smoothly the job went without incident. Lift after lift the tree was safely extracted in less than three hours. After the helicopter had left and the tree was gone, we went back into the yard to see what plants may have been damaged. Apart from a couple of small branches that had fallen off in the original hover, there was no damage at all. This was truly the most professional and technical takedown we had ever been a part of. Since completing this job, we have had a great deal of interest in our services. We have been able to increase our staff and offer better packages and will continue to look for new staff that are interested in participating in modern arboriculture. Please contact Glenn Walton if working in a forward thinking and moving company such as ours interests you. 0414515815 or [www.brisbanetreexperts.com](http://www.brisbanetreexperts.com) .

