

## Ryde to Pymble pipeline upgrade – Update of Review of Environmental Factors (REF Addendum)

### Project Scope

The Ryde to Pymble pipeline upgrade Project involves constructing a water main approximately 9.5 kilometres (km) in length between West Ryde Pumping Station and a connection point at Roland Avenue, Wahroonga.

### Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and proposed Addendum

As part of the Project REF, which was published in September 2025, a Biodiversity Assessment Report was prepared to assess potential impacts of the Project on flora and fauna along the water main alignment. This included impacts to planted, urban exotic and native remnant vegetation within the construction corridor.

*Table 1 Biodiversity Values Impacted assessed in the September 2025 REF*

| <b>Biodiversity Value Impacted</b>      | <b>Total Impact</b>  | <b>Project Impact</b>                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Non-threatened native vegetation</b> | <b>0.6 hectares</b>  | <b>Trimming or removal of native vegetation</b>                              |
| <b>TEC</b>                              | <b>0.06 hectares</b> | <b>Trimming or removal of native vegetation</b>                              |
| <b>Native remnant trees</b>             | <b>89</b>            | <b>Trimming or removal of native vegetation</b>                              |
| <b>Hollow bearing trees</b>             | <b>11</b>            | <b>Trimming trees containing habitat values or removal of habitat values</b> |

Due to constraints identified during the design process including construction feasibility, safety requirements, engineering constraints and the space needed to safely construct and maintain this essential infrastructure, Sydney Water is assessing an Addendum to the approved REF. The Addendum proposes a change the impacts to vegetation within the construction corridor.

To minimise impacts to vegetation, the Project Team has considered alternative construction methods, work areas and site layouts where possible. However, additional trees will need to be removed or pruned to deliver this essential infrastructure.

Wherever possible, tree pruning – not removal - will be prioritised to protect and retain as the maximum number of trees. However, where pruning is not possible and/or construction work may affect the health of trees, these will be removed as a last resort.

**The maps provided alongside this pack highlights the additional trees that are currently under assessment to be impacted as part of the REF Addendum.**

Additional trees that may be impacted have been assessed by an Arborist and Ecologist to support REF Addendum decision-making.

Table 2 Additional vegetation identified as part of the REF Addendum

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Identified for removal | 159 |
| Identified for pruning | 288 |

This additional vegetation is combination of non-threatened native vegetation, TEC, Native remnant trees and hollow-bearing trees. The exact impact on each of these, will be identified in the REF Addendum.

Please note, Sydney Water is assessing the vegetation impacts using a worst-case scenario. The Project team is undertaking additional assessments and investigations, and will implement mitigation measures to minimise Project impacts to vegetation as far as practicable.

## Project Objectives and Need

The Prospect Water System is the largest and most central water supply system in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan area. The Prospect Water System includes the Prospect North and Ryde delivery systems, which currently service a population of 1.6 million. There is significant growth forecasted in these systems, with the population expected to increase to 2.1 million by 2031 and 2.4 million by 2056.

Strategic planning identified the opportunity to upgrade and reintroduce the Ryde to Pymble pipeline to meet system planning objectives. Upgrading the Ryde to Pymble pipeline will increase the water delivery systems' servicing capacity and increase resilience. Additionally, the enhanced capacity of the Ryde system will cater for increased growth across the North Shore.

## Frequently Asked Questions – REF Addendum – Tree Removal & Tree Pruning

### Why is Sydney Water undertaking this project?

Sydney Water is bringing the Ryde to Pymble drinking water pipeline back into service and upgrading the connection to Wahroonga Reservoir. These improvements will help provide a more reliable water supply for local communities and support future growth across Sydney's North Shore.

### What is the Addendum REF needed?

As detailed design has progressed, Sydney Water has identified refinements to the construction methodology and work areas. These changes are being captured in an addendum to the project's Review of Environmental Factors (REF), which assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed changes and identifies mitigation measures to manage those impacts.

### Why are trees proposed for removal?

Throughout the design process, Sydney Water and the project team have worked to minimise impacts on vegetation by considering alternative construction methods, site layouts and work areas.

Despite these efforts, some tree removal is necessary due to engineering requirements, safety considerations, access needs and the space required to safely construct and maintain essential water infrastructure.

### Was tree removal considered during project planning?

Yes. Avoiding and minimising impacts to trees and vegetation has been a key consideration throughout project planning and design process. The project team has assessed alternative options where practicable. However, in some locations tree removal is unavoidable to safely deliver the project.

### Who decides which trees can be removed?

Trees that may be impacted are assessed by an Arborist and Ecologist to support REF Addendum decision-making.

Sydney Water is responsible for assessing and determining the environmental impacts associated with the project, including any proposed tree removal.

While local councils have provided input regarding the use of public land and site compound locations, they do not approve environmental impact assessments or determine which trees may be removed as part of this project.

### What environmental approvals are required?

As Sydney Water is a public authority delivering essential infrastructure, the project is being assessed under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW).

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Under this process, Sydney Water is responsible for preparing, reviewing and determining the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and any associated addendums.

### **How are environmental impacts assessed?**

The REF process considers a range of environmental factors including vegetation, biodiversity, traffic, noise, vibration, heritage, water quality and community impacts.

Where potential impacts are identified, mitigation measures are developed and incorporated into project planning and delivery.

### **Why are some trees proposed to be pruned away from the Project alignment?**

During trenching and pipeline installation, some road closures and bus detours may be needed along parts of the alignment. Trees on detour streets may need pruning so buses and construction vehicles can pass safely, while reducing the risk of branch strikes or greater damage to the tree.

### **Will impacted vegetation be replaced or offset?**

We are committed to restoring affected areas following construction and impacted vegetation will be replaced in line with the previous offset outlined in table 5-4 of the September 2025 REF as per Sydney Water's Biodiversity Offset Guideline.

Opportunities for revegetation, landscaping and restoration will be considered as part of the project's environmental management and restoration planning.

Community feedback on restoration and revegetation opportunities is welcomed.

### **My tree has been tagged, what does this mean?**

A qualified Arborist has assessed the tree for species, significance, health and level of impact it may experience from Project works.

The tag corresponds to a Tree ID that the Project uses to identify trees and conduct assessments. This does not mean that the tree will be impacted by trimming or removal.

### **Why are trees being impacted on my street?**

The pipeline follows a 9.5km route between West Ryde and Wahroonga. Trees along your street are being impacted because they fall within, or are immediately adjacent to this construction corridor, or to ensure detours are implemented safely.

### **Are the trees in my private property affected?**

Generally, works are confined to public land and road reserves. However, if a tree on your property has branches or roots that overhang or encroach the construction corridor, it may require pruning or further investigations to allow machinery to pass safely.

These cases only occur where properties are adjacent to the existing Sydney Water easement. The Project Team will contact affected property owners before any work occurs on or over private boundaries.

### **How will trees be removed?**

Tree removal and pruning will be carried out by qualified Arborists using standard industry techniques (such as chainsaws, elevated work platforms and woodchippers).

Pruning is always the preferred method to retain trees. Removal is used strictly as a last resort if a tree's structural health is compromised, or it directly blocks essential infrastructure.

### **Will there be any noise and dust from tree clearing?**

Yes, there will be temporary, localised noise from chainsaws and woodchippers, as well as potential dust from clearing activities.

These works will be restricted to approved Project hours, and nearby residents will be notified ahead of time regarding specific schedules on their street.

### **What are the mitigation measures in place during these works?**

Mitigation measures implemented will be as per the approved REF and includes:

- Using qualified Arborists and ecologists to inspect trees prior to and during works.
- Fencing to protect trees marked for retention.
- Relocating any native wildlife found inside hollow-bearing trees. Removal of wildlife if required will be undertaken by a qualified ecologist
- Implementing dust suppression techniques (such as water sprays) and scheduling noisy works to minimise community disruption.

### **Are threatened species being impacted from tree removal works?**

Some ecological communities have already been assessed to be impacted as part of the REF. The Biodiversity Assessment addendum will confirm changes to impacts. Ecologists will be on-site to ensure impacts to these are strictly minimised and managed.

Offsetting will happen in line with table 5-4 of the September 2025 REF and in accordance with Sydney Water's Biodiversity Offset Guidelines.

### **How can I provide feedback?**

Community feedback is an important part of the assessment process. Residents are encouraged to provide feedback on significant trees, local environmental considerations and opportunities for restoration and revegetation.

Feedback received will be considered as part of the REF addendum review process.

### **How can I learn more about the proposed changes?**

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Further information about the proposed REF amendments is available on the project webpage.

Residents are also encouraged to attend one of the upcoming community information sessions where members of the project team will be available to answer questions and discuss the proposed changes.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Sydney Water will hold two community information sessions:

- Ryde Local Government Area session – Monday 6 July 2026, 4-6pm at Ryde Library (1 Pope Street, Ryde, NSW, 2112)
- Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area session – Tuesday 7 July 2026, 4-6pm at Turramurra Community Hall (1 Gilroy Road, Turramurra, NSW, 2074)

Session dates, times and locations will be advertised on the project webpage and through project communications.

**Website:** [www.sydneywater.com.au/ryde-to-pymble-pipeline](http://www.sydneywater.com.au/ryde-to-pymble-pipeline)

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