Fact sheet

Ryde to Pymble pipeline upgrade - Review of Environmental Factors Addendum

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When will the REF Addendum feedback submissions close?

The feedback on the proposed changes will be accepted until Sunday, 19 July 2026. All feedback received during this period will be considered as part of the assessment and finalisation of the REF Addendum.

The community and stakeholders will continue to be engaged throughout the project.

Can the pipeline be relocated to avoid tree impacts?

The project team has investigated a range of alignment and construction options to minimise impacts on vegetation. The final pipeline route has been selected after considering existing utilities, environmental, engineering, safety, operational and property constraints. Where feasible, adjustments have been made to reduce impacts on trees and vegetation.

Figure 1 dotted lines painted on road to show approximate trench location and width.

Why has the number of trees identified for pruning or removal increased?

Since the original REF was exhibited, we have undertaken additional design development, detailed surveys, utility investigations and arboricultural assessments. These investigations have provided a more accurate understanding of the potential impacts of construction activities on nearby trees, including impacts to tree canopies and root systems.

As a result, additional trees have been identified as requiring pruning or removal, while other trees may be retained following further investigations such as root mapping. We are continuing to review opportunities to reduce impacts wherever possible.

Why weren't these impacts identified earlier?

The REF process assesses the environmental impacts of the proposed project based on the information available at the time. During the early stages of project development, assessments are prepared using preliminary design information and assumptions.

As the design has progressed, further investigations have provided a better understanding of underground services, tree root systems, construction requirements and site constraints. This additional information triggered a review of the existing REF to ensure all potential environmental impacts are accurately identified and assessed.

An REF Addendum is prepared to assess the additional vegetation potentially impacted and outline the measures that will be implemented to avoid, minimise or mitigate those impacts.

This process ensures that environmental assessments are based on the best available information and that any changes or new impacts identified during design development are transparently assessed.

Why is this project being assessed under a Review of Environmental Factors instead of an Environmental Impact Statement?

The approval pathway depends on the type of project and the outcomes of the environmental assessment. The Ryde to Pymble Pipeline upgrade is being assessed through a Review of Environmental Factors (REF), which is the assessment process used for many public infrastructure projects under Division 5.1 of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Through this process, Sydney Water examines all potential environmental impacts of the project, including impacts on biodiversity, waterways, heritage, traffic, noise, vibration and the local community, and identify measures to avoid, minimise and manage those impacts. The REF also includes specific tests required under NSW legislation to assess whether impacts, including biodiversity impacts, are likely to be significant. The findings of those assessments inform the appropriate approval pathway for the project.

How confident are you that the final number of impacted trees won't increase further?

We understand the concern, especially given that detailed design requirements have expanded the tree impacts beyond the initial REF assessment. While minor design refinements may still occur, we are confident that we have mapped the impacts. We are currently undertaking detailed root mapping to find ways to bring this number of impacted trees down, not up.

The project team remains focused on avoiding and minimising impacts wherever practicable. The overarching design changes and their updated environmental impacts will be formally documented in the REF Addendum published on the project page. Further, during the construction phase, the project

team and site arborists will continually assess site conditions to identify further opportunities to reduce or eliminate potential impacts on the ground.

What happens if additional tree impacts are identified during construction?

Any changes to vegetation impacts will be managed in accordance with environmental approval requirements and project commitments.

What is tree root mapping and why is it undertaken?

Tree root mapping is a specialised investigation used to identify the location and extent of a tree's root system. The information helps the project team to understand whether construction activities can be adjusted to avoid significant roots and reduce impacts on individual trees.

Will all identified trees on the maps be removed?

No. The maps identify trees that may be impacted by the project and include trees proposed for removal as well as trees that may require pruning.

Additional investigations, including root mapping and detailed construction planning, are still underway and will continue throughout the project as we begin open trenching work. These investigations may allow some impacts to be reduced, and some trees currently identified as potentially impacted to be retained.

When will maps of the assessed trees be updated?

Tree root mapping investigations are currently underway to determine if we can reduce the number of trees impacted. An updated map will be developed as part of the final REF Addendum.

How are decisions made about whether a tree can be retained or must be removed?

Each potentially impacted tree is assessed by qualified arborists. Considerations include the extent of impacts to the Structural Root Zone (SRZ), canopy encroachment, tree health and condition, species characteristics, safety considerations and the likelihood that the tree will remain healthy and structurally stable following construction.

Where impacts can be avoided or reduced through design changes or modified construction methods, these will be adopted, rather than tree removal.

How are trees assessed in the REF Addendum?

All trees within and adjacent to the construction corridor are assessed by qualified arborists. The assessment considers factors such as species, size, health, condition, life expectancy, habitat value and the potential impact of construction activities on each tree.

What is Structural Root Zone (SRZ)?

The SRZ is the critical volume of soil directly surrounding the base of a tree that provides its physical stability. Think of it as the tree's foundation. It's not just about where the roots go, but how they are arranged to keep the tree upright against gravity and wind.

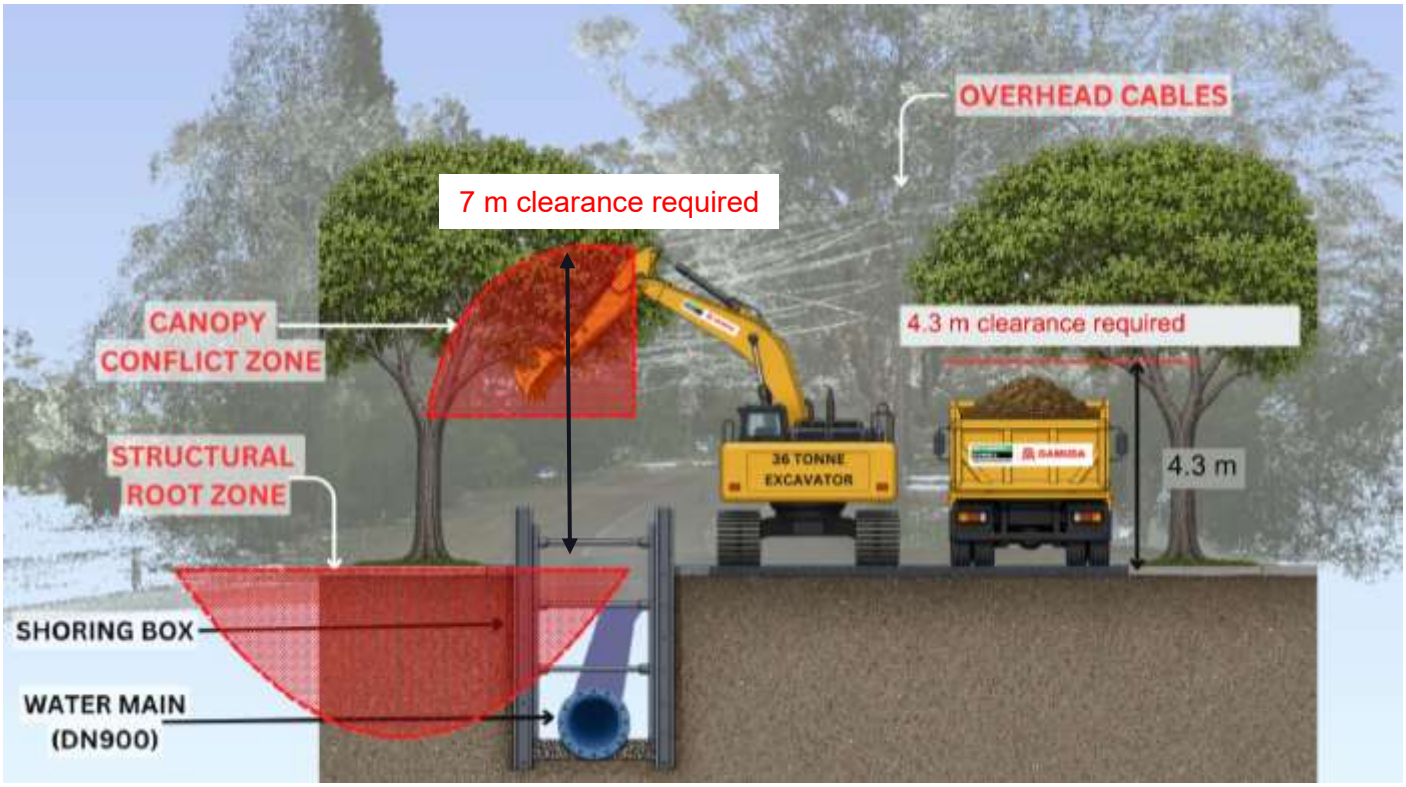

Figure 2 indicative space requirements for open trench work

Why do trees need to be pruned or removed?

Some trees need to be pruned to allow work to proceed and reduce the risk of a tree strike. Tree strikes can damage the trees and create a safety risk for workers and the community.

There are also trees that will be impacted by works, either through impacts to the Structural Root Zone (SRZ) or major encroachment into the tree canopy, that cannot be avoided. These trees are unlikely to remain healthy or stable after the works, so need to be removed.

Why are some trees identified as potentially impacted, despite being several metres from the pipeline alignment?

A tree's root system and canopy often extend well beyond the visible trunk. Construction activities can affect trees through impacts to roots, branches, access requirements, construction equipment movements, temporary work areas and safety clearances.

For this reason, trees located several metres from the proposed alignment may still require assessment and may be potentially impacted. These trees are included in the assessment to ensure all construction-related impacts are considered and managed appropriately.

What type of trees have been assessed?

All trees within the study area have been assessed and documented but the project arborist. Only trees with potential direct impacts have been included to inform the REF Addendum.

Smaller shrubs and groundcover vegetation are assessed separately through the project's ecological and vegetation surveys.

What is tree pruning?

Tree pruning is the selective removal of branches from a tree to manage its health, safety and appearance. Some trees along the construction corridor will need to be pruned to allow for safe construction access when installing the new pipeline and to avoid hitting the tree and causing damage.

What will happen to trees after they have been removed?

Options will be considered in accordance with project requirements and environmental commitments, with reuse or appropriate disposal assessed where possible. This includes contacting local zoos (such as Taronga Zoo) to see if plant material can be used for food or habitat enrichment.

How will impacts on wildlife be managed?

If a tree is identified as providing important fauna habitat, it will be assessed by qualified environmental specialists. Prior to the removal of vegetation, a pre-clearance walkthrough will be completed by the project Ecologist. The project Ecologist will also be present during the removal of hollow bearing trees.

What measures are being taken to protect trees that will be retained?

Trees identified for retention will be protected through measures such as tree protection fencing, clearly marked exclusion zones around designated vegetation prior to the commencement of works. Our project team monitor construction activities to ensure these protection measures remain effective and that no unauthorised impacts occur within the exclusion zones.

Why can't all trees be retained?

The Ryde to Pymble pipeline upgrade is critical to improve the reliability, capacity and resilience of Sydney Water's network, for current and future communities across northern Sydney.

Although every reasonable effort is made to retain trees, some vegetation impacts cannot be avoided due to engineering, safety, access and operational requirements. Where impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation and offset measures will be applied.

Will replacement trees be planted? What is the offset policy?

Yes. Direct impacts from vegetation clearing will be offset in accordance with Sydney Water's Biodiversity Offset Guideline which is detailed in Table 5-4 of the REF. Depending on the type of impacted vegetation, this includes an offset multiplier of either 2:1 or 3:1.

For more Environmental protection information please visit our website https://www.sydneywater.com.au/environmental-protection

Will the community have an opportunity to provide feedback on tree replanting?

We welcome community feedback on our replanting and are committed to incorporating community and Council feedback to determine the best locations and species for replanting. We'll balance these community priorities with site specific conditions and environmental requirements to ensure the long-term health and suitability of new trees.

How long will it take for replacement trees to grow?

The time required will depend on the species planted and growing conditions. While newly planted trees cannot immediately replace the canopy provided by mature trees, species will be selected to establish successfully and contribute to long-term canopy cover and biodiversity outcomes.

When will we hear about the start of work?

Notifications will be issued in advance of approved construction activities, including trenching works and tree pruning or removal. These notifications will provide information on the timing of works, potential impacts and any associated traffic management arrangements.

Why are you installing a new 900mm pipe instead of repairing the 750mm existing pipe?

The existing pipeline was constructed in 1936 and was decommissioned in 2014 due to its age and condition. The project is delivering a new pipeline to increase the capacity and reliability of the drinking water network and support growth across Sydney's North Shore. A 900 mm pipeline has been selected to ensure we can meet current and future requirements.

Where will the upgraded pipeline be located?

The upgraded pipeline will follow the existing pipeline alignment between Abuklea Road and Turramurra Public School. In other sections, a new route is required to enable construction and minimise impacts.

On Kissing Point Road, the new pipeline will be installed in the northbound lane (travelling uphill). This alignment has been selected to avoid conflicts with underground services and the existing pipeline, which is located in the southbound lane.

What method is used to cross Lane Cove National Park?

We will use a trenchless technique to avoid disturbing this environmentally sensitive area. Two shafts will be excavated to accommodate the launch and receival of the micro tunnel boring machine.

The launch shaft will be on the southern side of the M2 at the end of Vimiera Rd, Marsfield and the receival shaft is planned to be on Kissing Point Road, South Turramurra north of Lane Cove National Park.

Why have the Monteith Street, Montrose Street, Rothwell Road and Roland Avenue sections been descoped?

We've completed further investigations of the intended connection point at Roland Avenue and the existing 1200mm water main. These investigations confirmed that the condition of the main was significantly better than originally anticipated. As the existing main runs parallel to our design, this presented an opportunity to relocate the connection to the intersection of Monteith Street and Kissing Point Road. Utilising the existing main from this location enabled us to descope about 1km of the

proposed pipeline and reduce associated community and vegetation impacts. Some isolated works in this section will still be required.

What construction method will be used along Kissing Point Road?

We'll use open trenching along Kissing Point Road. This involves digging a trench, installing the pipe, then backfilling and restoring the area once work is complete. This method is typically quicker than tunnelling with progress of about 12 meters per day.

At the end of each day, the road/lane will be made safe for traffic and pedestrians. Once the work is completed, we'll return and restore Kissing Point Road in accordance with council guidelines.

Will there be traffic management?

Yes, traffic management measures including temporary traffic control and clear signage will be implemented. This will include side streets to ensure the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians during construction.

Traffic Guidance Schemes will be developed for each work area to maintain safety for motorists, pedestrians and workers. Measures may include temporary road/lane changes, traffic controllers, signage and staged works.

The community will receive notifications before significant traffic changes occur.

How will access to schools and shops be maintained?

Maintaining safe access for schools, shops, pedestrians and residents is a key priority throughout construction. Traffic management measures will be implemented to maintain access, with any temporary changes communicated in advance.

Where possible, construction activities near schools will occur during school holiday periods to minimise impacts on students, families and school operations.

What are the work hours and days?

Our standard work hours are **7am-6pm Monday to Friday, and 8am-1pm on Saturdays**. Direct pipe drilling work from the launch at Vimiera Road to the retrieval at Kissing Point Road, will be during standard work hours during the week and extended on **Saturdays to 8am-6pm**.

Occasionally, work may be required outside of standard work hours due to road restrictions, transport requirements, or permit conditions.

If we need work outside standard hours, nearby residents will be notified in advance with details of the work.