

FAQs

Ryde to Pymble pipeline upgrade

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When did the REF Addendum feedback period close?

Feedback on the proposed changes was accepted between Monday, 29 June and Sunday, 19 July 2026. All feedback received during this period was considered as part of the assessment and finalisation of the REF Addendum. The community and stakeholders will continue to be engaged throughout the project.

How has community feedback influenced the project?

Community feedback has played an important role in informing project refinements. Through additional investigations and design development, Sydney Water has identified opportunities to further reduce impacts, including retaining 47 trees previously identified for removal, refining construction methods, reducing the footprint of the Kissing Point Road microtunnel retrieval compound, and reducing the number of temporary construction compounds in the Ku-ring-gai local government area from five to two.

Further tree root mapping and tree-specific investigations will continue throughout construction to identify opportunities to retain additional trees. An alternative connection strategy has also removed approximately 900 metres of pipeline from the project scope, reducing community and vegetation impacts.

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.

Why did the number of trees identified for pruning or removal increase?

Since the original REF was exhibited, additional design development, detailed surveys, utility investigations and arboricultural assessments have been undertaken. These investigations provided a more accurate understanding of the potential impacts of construction activities on nearby trees, including impacts on 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 the impacts identified earlier?

The REF process assessed the environmental impact of the proposed project based on the information available at the time.

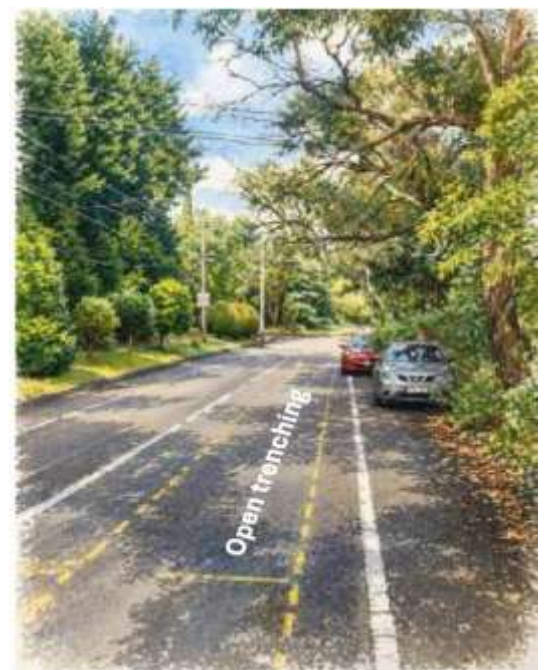


Figure 1 dotted lines painted on road to show approximate trench location and width

During the early stages of project development, assessments are prepared using preliminary design information and assumptions.

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

The REF Addendum assessed the additional vegetation potentially impacted and outlines the measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate those impacts.

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

Why was the project 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 was assessed through a Review of Environmental Factors (REF), which is the assessment process used for public infrastructure projects under Division 5.1 of the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Through this process, Sydney Water examined 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.

Will the final number of impacted trees increase further?

We have carefully reviewed our designs to protect as many trees as possible. While minor adjustments may still happen as work progresses, our priority is keeping environmental impacts to a minimum.

As construction gets underway, our project team and site arborists will continue doing assessment work to find every opportunity to minimize environmental impact. What 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. This information helps the project team understand whether construction activities can be adjusted to avoid significant roots and reduce impacts on individual trees.

Will all trees identified 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 will continue throughout the project. These investigations may allow some impacts to be reduced, and some trees currently identified as potentially impacted to be retained.

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.

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 nearby workers and the community.

There are also trees that will be impacted by work, either to the Structural Root Zone (SRZ) or major encroachment into the tree canopy, which cannot be avoided. Because the work will likely impact their health and stability, these trees require removal.

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 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.

How are decisions made about tree retention or removal?

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 were trees assessed in the REF Addendum?

All trees within and adjacent to the construction corridor will be 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 a Structural Root Zone (SRZ)?

The SRZ is the critical volume of soil directly surrounding the base of a tree that provides 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.

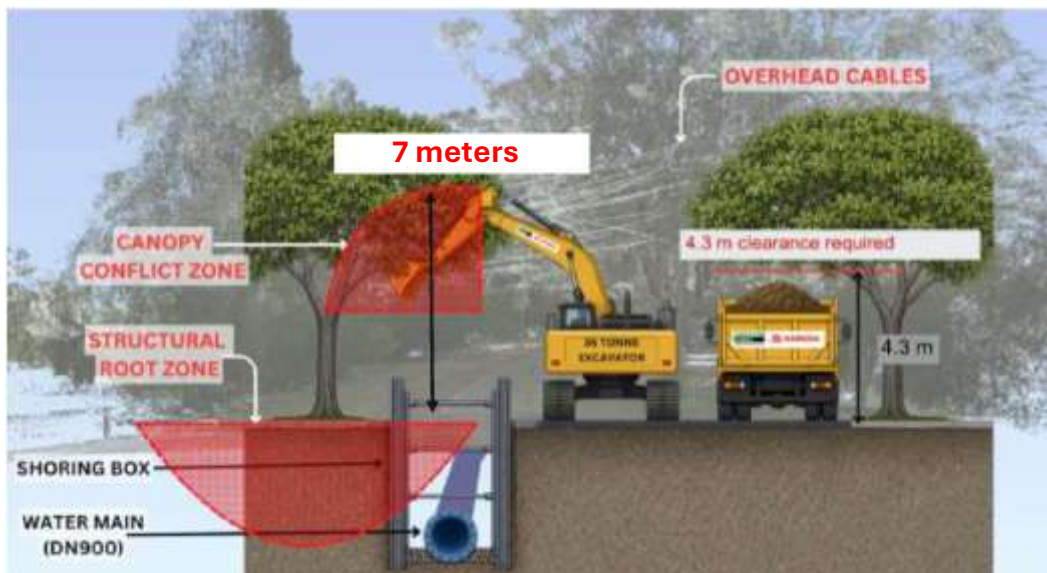


Figure 2 indicative space requirements for open trench work

Why 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 construction corridor 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 were assessed separately through the project's ecological and vegetation surveys.

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 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 tree protection fencing, and clearly marked exclusion zone installation prior to the commencement of work. Our project team monitor construction activities to ensure these protection measures remain effective and that no unauthorised impacts occur within the exclusion zones.

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

www.sydneywater.com.au/environmental-protection

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.

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.

When will we hear about the start of work?

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

Why install 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 current project is to deliver 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 current and future requirements are met.

Where is the upgraded pipeline alignment?

The upgraded pipeline follows 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. Please see the map below:



What method is used to cross Lane Cove National Park?

A trenchless technique known as Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) will be used to avoid disturbing this environmentally sensitive area. TBM is used to excavate tunnels safely while minimizing disruption to the above surface. Two shafts will be excavated to accommodate the launch and receive 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 receive 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 descope?

Further investigations of the intended connection point at Roland Avenue and the existing 1200mm water main have 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 work in this section is still required.

What construction method will be used along Kissing Point Road?

Open trench construction will be used along Kissing Point Road.

While tunnelling was considered, it is not practical along this urban corridor. Tunnelling requires large launch and retrieval shafts at either end of the tunnel, as well as substantial work areas for tunnelling equipment, pipe storage, spoil removal and the progressive feeding of pipe sections into the tunnel.

Finding multiple sites large enough to accommodate these activities is not possible in a built-up area such as Kissing Point Road, where space is limited and surrounded by roads, homes, businesses and other infrastructure.

Open trench construction is therefore the most suitable method for the majority of the alignment, as it can be delivered within the existing road corridor without the need for large tunnelling compounds at either end of a tunnel section.

Tunnelling will only be used where open trench construction is not practical, such as beneath the Lane Cove National Park and the M2 Motorway. At these locations, the pipeline needs to be installed at significant depth and pass beneath major infrastructure, the Lane Cove River, and other terrain features. Tunnelling allows these crossings to be completed safely without the extensive excavation that would be required for an open trench through a national park or across a major motorway corridor.

How will the road surface be affected by trenching?

To install the pipeline, sections of the road will need to be excavated and temporarily closed while work is carried out. Typically, work will be undertaken in segments between intersections, with each section closed from Monday to Friday while construction is completed in that area.

Property access will be maintained wherever possible, subject to safety requirements and traffic management arrangements. Detours will be in place to help motorists travel around the work zone.

Keeping a road section closed while work is underway is more efficient than reopening and reclosing the road each day. This approach allows construction to be completed more quickly, reducing the overall duration of work and minimising the project's presence and disruption within the community.

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 work.

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 project's work hours and days?

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

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

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

Will updated environmental information continue to be published?

Yes. As the project progresses, relevant project updates will continue to be provided through community notifications, the project webpage and stakeholder communications where appropriate. Information released will reflect project milestones, approved activities, construction planning and other matters relevant to the community. The project webpage will continue to provide access to relevant REF Addendum information and project updates as they become available.