

Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade

Draft North Sydney Tree Replacement Strategy

December 2022



Acknowledgement of Country

Transport for NSW acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal people and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

Many of the transport routes we use today – from infrastructure lines, to roads, to water crossings – follow the traditional Songlines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country that our nation's First Peoples followed for tens of thousands of years.

Transport for NSW is committed to honouring Aboriginal peoples' cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

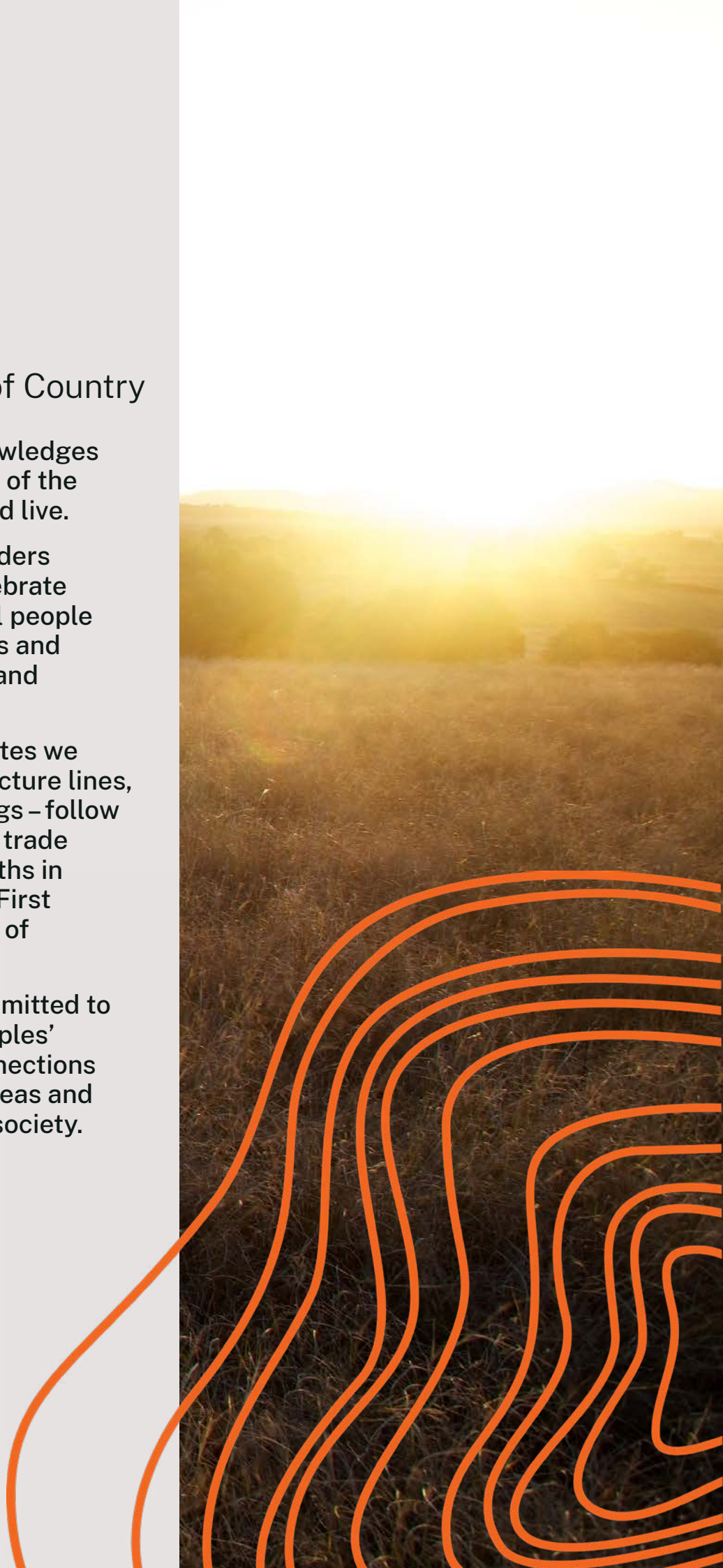


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1. Overview

Transport for NSW (Transport) is planning and delivering an unprecedented investment in public transport and place making projects in the North Sydney local government area.

Transport is committed to integrated transport and place-making projects that support North Sydney CBD's future growth and role as a globally connected precinct. Transport shares North Sydney Council's desire for a more connected, place-based North Sydney.

Key benefits of the suite of projects underway in North Sydney include easier access to the broader integrated transport network, improved active and sustainable transport options and a more vibrant and liveable locality in which people live, work and do business.

Significant projects include the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade, the new Sydney Metro stations at Victoria Cross and Crows Nest, the North Sydney Integrated Transport Plan and the northern cycle access ramp to the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade will provide new and streamlined connectivity from North Sydney to the broader motorway network. It includes links to the M4 and M5 and faster access to Sydney's north, west, south and Sydney Airport. From North Sydney, the tunnel will provide a 20-minute journey to Sydney Olympic Park and 15 minutes to Kingsford Smith Airport.

As part of the project, there will be impacts to some trees along the alignment. Where trees do need to be removed, they will be replaced in accordance with the project planning approvals, which require trees to be replaced at a ratio of two to one, resulting in a future increase in tree canopy.

As part of this process, taking into account community and stakeholder feedback, Transport is committed to developing a Tree Replacement Strategy to facilitate the tree replacement requirements of the projects in the North Sydney area.

This draft strategy is being developed in partnership with North Sydney Council to gain agreement on principles for tree replacement in the LGA as part of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade.

The scale of work taking place within North Sydney will have impacts on trees and vegetation. Transport is committed to working collaboratively with North Sydney Council as part of this strategy to replace trees, in line with the project approval requirements including the two to one ratio, to ensure we leave a positive legacy for the community.

An overarching objective of this strategy will be to ensure a focus on quality tree replacement, including the selection of the best trees appropriate to planting locations, to ensure a continuance of North Sydney's already high-quality tree coverage.

Transport recognises the value the North Sydney community places on its natural landscapes, heritage features and open space and is working with the local community, stakeholders and North Sydney Council on a range of initiatives designed to improve open space and create new public places for the community to gather.

Transport is committed to continuing to work with Council to achieve a shared vision for long term place making opportunities in North Sydney and this strategy forms a key component of this ongoing approach.

2. Introduction



The Tree Replacement Strategy aims to meet project requirements with a considered approach to tree selection, replacement location and staging, with an overarching objective of high-quality tree replacement in North Sydney.

2.1 Purpose of this draft strategy

Transport is committed to developing the Tree Replacement Strategy to facilitate the tree replacement requirements of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project in the North Sydney local government area (LGA) as set out in the project planning approvals (described in detail in Section 5.4). These projects form part of a wider overall NSW Government program, the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link.

The Strategy is being developed in partnership with North Sydney Council to gain agreement in principle for tree replacement in the LGA including:

- the potential for trees to be replaced in the North Sydney LGA in areas within 500 metres from the construction boundary
- the potential for trees to be replaced in the North Sydney LGA in areas outside the 500 metre construction boundary
- identifying open space areas in the LGA which are suitable for tree replacement including Council managed parks
- working together to identify areas of Crown Land including some Crown Land areas managed by Council where tree replacement may be suitable

- seeking opportunities to plant replacement trees in alternative areas including Transport-owned land, private land, educational campuses and community spaces
- general principles around the types of trees appropriate as replacement trees in particular settings (e.g. parks, streets, bushland)
- understanding that the replacement of trees will be managed in accordance with the project planning approvals, noting that there is scope for alternate approaches by agreement between Transport and Council
- communication protocols between project teams and Council with respect to tree replacement and associated matters including the progressive replacement of trees during project construction.

Transport is engaging with North Sydney Council on the above principles and others that may be suggested by Council and will continue to develop the Tree Replacement Strategy over the course of 2022.

Transport will also replicate the principles and approach in this strategy with other Councils along the project alignment including Willoughby City Council.

2.2 Tree Replacement – Transport and Council interface

Table 1 below shows key project documentation including documents required under the project Minister's Conditions of Approval (MCoA) relating to tree removal and replacement requirements. This strategy is not a direct requirement of the MCoA.

It has been prepared in the early stages of project delivery, however, to guide the collaborative approach to tree replacement between Transport and North Sydney Council and to assist in the ongoing development of the planning-approval required documents.

Table 1 – Tree Replacement Strategy and planning approval documents

Document	Purpose	Engagement	Timing
Tree Replacement Strategy	Stakeholder engagement strategy to facilitate collaboration and agreement with local Councils including North Sydney Council on principles for tree replacement.	Council to provide feedback on draft strategy document prepared by Transport. Transport to incorporate feedback where feasible with a view to Council endorsement of the agreed strategy.	Transport has been working with and continues to work with North Sydney Council.
Flora and Fauna Management Sub-Plan	Requirement of planning approval and includes details on how the project will manage potential flora and fauna impacts during construction including mitigation measures and the process of vegetation to be cleared as part of the project.	MCoA requires the sub-plan to be developed in consultation with relevant Councils (including North Sydney Council). Council has been consulted on sub-plans prepared for the project to-date.	Flora and Fauna Management Sub-Plan is one of a range of sub-plans prepared under the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) required under the MCoA. The CEMP Sub-plans must be submitted to the Planning Secretary for approval along with, or subsequent to, the submission of the CEMP but in any event, no later than one month before construction.
Landscape Strategy Report	Requirement of planning approval and details the type, size, number and location of replacement trees. The report must demonstrate how any replacement plantings are consistent with the requirements of relevant conditions of the planning approval.	MCoA requires the Report to be developed in consultation with relevant Councils (including North Sydney Council).	The report must be submitted to the Planning Secretary for information no later than nine months following the commencement of operation. Transport will consult with North Sydney Council in the development of the report.
Place, Design and Landscape Plans	Requirement of planning approval and must include the location of existing vegetation, areas of vegetation to be retained and proposed planting and seeding details, including the use of local indigenous species for revegetation activities. The plans also include a range of other matters relating to design outcomes for the project (e.g. built environment, landform, open space, heritage, visuals and others).	MCoA requires the Plans to be developed in consultation with relevant Councils (including North Sydney Council).	The plans must be prepared in consultation with relevant Councils including North Sydney Council. The plans must be reviewed by a project Design Review Panel submitted to the Planning Secretary for approval no later than one month before construction of permanent work subject to the PDLP. Transport will consult with North Sydney Council throughout the course of the project in the development of the report.

3. About the project

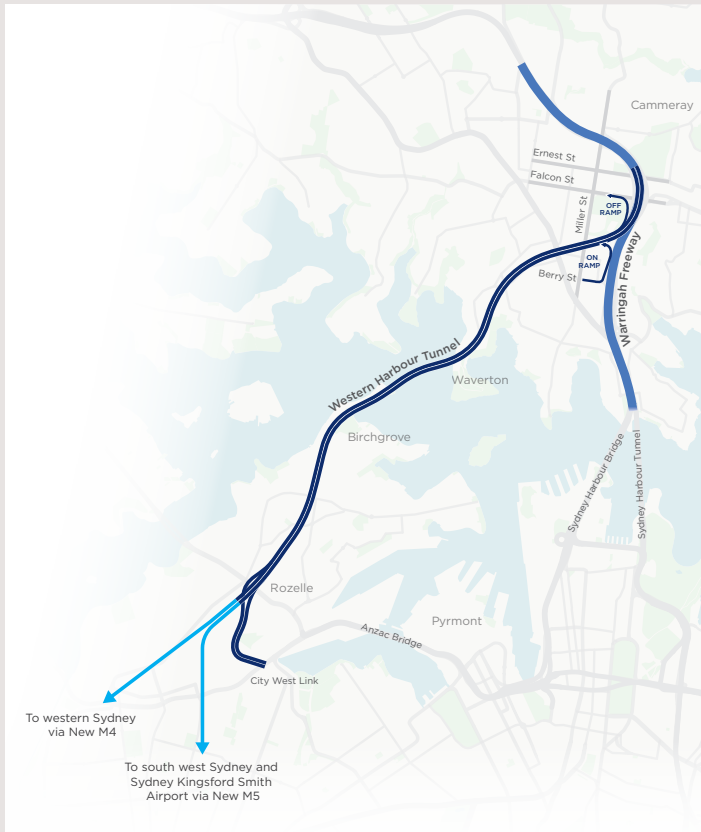
3.1 Project overview

In January 2021, the NSW Government granted planning approval for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project. The project is a major part of the overall Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link program.

The Western Harbour Tunnel project involves a 6.5-kilometre twin-tunnel motorway from Rozelle to Cammeray, including a new Sydney Harbour crossing and upgrades to streamline the Warringah Freeway and provide connections to the M4 and M5 and future Beaches Link motorway.

North of Sydney Harbour, the entirety of the Western Harbour Tunnel runs beneath the North Sydney LGA and most of the alignment of the Warringah Freeway Upgrade is within the LGA, with a small proportion in the Willoughby LGA.

Diagram 1 – Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade alignment



3.2 Transport challenges and project objectives

As part of the development of the project, Transport identified a range of challenges across Sydney's wider transport network that could be addressed through a new crossing of Sydney Harbour and upgrades to freeway connections and configurations north of the Harbour. A range of transport challenges were identified including:

- high volumes of commuter traffic on roads around the Sydney Harbour central business district (the 'Harbour CBD')
- congestion on key roads around the Harbour CBD including roads which are nearing capacity including the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Harbour Tunnel and Anzac Bridge, adding additional strain on the road network
- disruption to the Harbour CBD road network due to traffic incidents – an incident can quickly cause long delays across the broader network and take a long time to clear afterwards
- the performance of the Warringah Freeway is impacted by high traffic volumes, congestion on harbour crossings, and merges and weaves
- congestion impacting the streetscapes, sustainability and liveability across the Eastern Harbour City and Sydney's north.

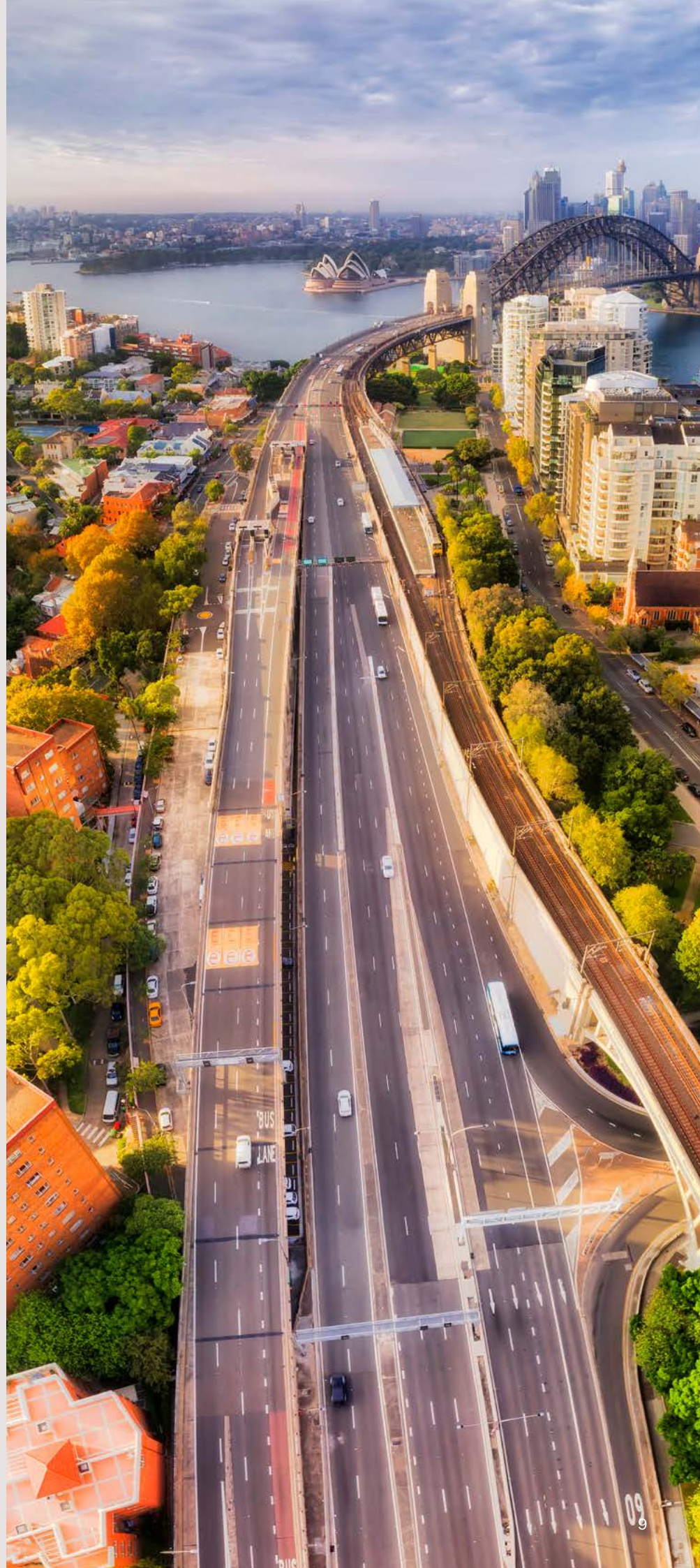
To meet these challenges, during the planning phase for the project, Transport identified the following project objectives:

- reduce congestion on key roads around the Harbour CBD, including the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Harbour Tunnel and Anzac Bridge
- create faster, safer and more reliable journeys across Sydney Harbour, particularly for traffic bypassing the Harbour CBD to the west
- improve productivity by allowing commuters and freight to reach their destination faster, safer and more reliably
- increase the ability for the Harbour CBD road network to cope with traffic incidents
- reduce travel times, delays and queuing on the Warringah Freeway by improving cross-harbour capacity and reducing merges and weaves, supporting long-term increased demand
- improve streetscapes, sustainability and liveability across the Eastern Harbour City and Sydney's North districts by reducing congestion.

3.3 Project background

Options for new road crossings of Sydney Harbour have been considered for many years. These have included concepts for new bridges and tunnels at several locations along the harbour.

After the release of the *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* (Transport for NSW, 2012) and *State Infrastructure Strategy Update 2014* (Infrastructure NSW, 2014), investigations into alternative harbour motorway crossings focused on tunnelled solutions to provide a western bypass of the Sydney CBD.



These investigations found that a new harbour crossing and tunnelled motorway west of the CBD addresses the identified transport needs of providing additional transport capacity across Sydney Harbour to relieve congestion and improve reliability on existing crossings. Importantly, it will:

- increase road capacity on the critical north-south harbour crossing by 50 per cent, providing journey time and reliability benefits to users of the new route, as well as users of the existing crossings
- provide an alternative western bypass of the CBD, reducing pressure on the heavily congested Anzac Bridge and Western Distributor corridor
- improve performance, reliability and resilience of the adjoining arterial road network, which is heavily affecting performance of the existing harbour crossings
- improve travel times between key centres for all road users, including a significant number of bus users, service vehicles and freight
- re-establish road hierarchy for the harbour crossings as part of a 'three crossings strategy'.

Community and stakeholder engagement has been an integral component in the development of the project and the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link program more widely. The engagement program has proactively informed and involved community members and stakeholders during project development.

Engagement with the public and broader stakeholders commenced in March 2017 and continued through to the preparation, display and submissions process for the project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and into the early project delivery phase.

3.4 Key benefits

The project would provide vital additional capacity on the busiest road corridor in Sydney, improving liveability and amenity for local communities who would benefit from reduced through traffic and congestion at surface and improved connectivity. It would also deliver meaningful productivity benefits for NSW.

The project would leverage the underground WestConnex network to deliver a new western bypass of the Harbour CBD, significantly increasing the efficiency and capacity of the transport crossings of Sydney Harbour.

The additional core motorway capacity delivered by this project would significantly improve journey times and journey time reliability for about 2.5 million trips for people who use the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Harbour Tunnel road crossings every week, as well as users of many arterial roads whose performance is affected by these crossings.

The Warringah Freeway Upgrade would connect the new tunnel with the existing road corridor and streamline traffic movements to optimise the future use of the three harbour crossings.

It would serve journeys through strategic centres north of the harbour including North Sydney, St Leonards, Chatswood and Macquarie Park. Increased road network capacity and connectivity as a result of the project would also result in travel time savings for freight movements, further serving the growth of Greater Sydney.

This new western bypass of the Sydney CBD would also serve through journeys between the south and west of Sydney, including the international gateways of Sydney Airport and Port Botany.

The increase in harbour crossing capacity and efficiency delivered by the project would also remove a major bottleneck that constrains the road transport capacity of areas north of Sydney Harbour.

This enables future connections, such as the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project, which will deliver significant benefits for public transport, freight and other road users over an increased catchment.



The major transport benefits of the project include:

- a third harbour crossing to reduce congestion on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Harbour Tunnel and Anzac Bridge – leading to faster and more reliable journeys to, from and around the Harbour CBD
- return local streets to communities by moving traffic underground, freeing up local streets for local traffic and supporting the sustainability of local town centres
- make journeys on the Warringah Freeway easier and safer by improving lane configuration and providing clear directions on the best way to cross the harbour and reach your destination
- enable local businesses to have better and more efficient access to Greater Sydney, making it easier to move goods and provide services, as well as bringing employees and businesses closer together
- contribute to an integrated transport network by enabling direct bus access to North Sydney and an efficient transfer to the new Sydney Metro network
- opportunities to enhance the local community by improving shared user connections and providing new public open space.



4. Guiding information

Transport understands the importance local communities place on trees and the important role they play in open space, creating liveable and sustainable places for people to enjoy. As part of the project, Transport is committed to replacing trees and plantings at the required two to one ratio as well as delivering a future increase in quality tree canopy in partnership with communities, stakeholders and local councils. Wherever possible the project teams will manage works to avoid and minimise the need for tree removal.



4.1 Key policy considerations

Replacing trees at the required ratio across the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade alignment, including replacement tree planting in the North Sydney LGA and in other local council areas along the overall project alignment, will generate social, economic and environmental benefits.

These include:

- improved urban heat island outcomes
- enhanced shade
- better air quality and ambient air temperatures
- improved community health
- increased fauna habitat
- increased species diversity where appropriate
- improved community amenity

- positive partnership opportunities with North Sydney Council, Inner West Council and Willoughby City Council and other key Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade stakeholders
- beneficial commercial outcomes for tree suppliers
- the potential for urban tree cover to influence public and environmental health, climate change and resilience outcomes in North Sydney is one of the key drivers that has influenced this strategy.

A number of strategic planning policies and directions for Greater Sydney underpin tree replacement for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project as they guide the development of a more sustainable urban environment. This is further described in the following sections.

4.2 Trees in the urban environment

Trees have the potential to transform the quality of life in Australian cities.

This has been documented by a wealth of research and recognised by the Greater Cities Commission (GCC), the organisation established by the NSW Government to lead metropolitan planning for the Sydney region.

The GCC's aim is to make Greater Sydney more productive, sustainable and liveable. The vision, strategic directions and objectives to achieve this aim are outlined in *A Metropolis of Three Cities*, also known as the *Greater Sydney Region Plan*, which sets a 40-year vision to manage growth and change for Greater Sydney in the context of social, economic and environmental matters.

It identifies a requirement to expand urban tree canopy in the public realm (Objective 30).

4.3 Tree replacement benefits

As Greater Sydney grows and urban areas become denser, extending urban tree canopy is one of the most effective ways to improve amenity. A target has been set to increase tree canopy cover to 40 per cent, up from the current 23 per cent.



Urban tree canopy can be complemented by green ground cover, rain gardens, green roofs and green walls. The *Greater Sydney Region Plan* identifies multiple benefits of urban tree canopy cover, including:

- **environmental benefits:** providing habitat and protecting the health of waterways and improvements to air quality through the removal of fine particles from the air and through the conversion of carbon dioxide to oxygen
- **economic benefits:** a ten per cent increase in tree canopy has been shown to increase property values by an average of \$50,000
- **place-making benefits:** trees enhance the quality of the public domain
- **amenity benefits:** trees, through the provision of shade and reduced UV exposure, increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling as a means of transport
- **urban landscape benefits:** increased urban tree canopy cover also contributes to realising other key planning objectives including the implementation of the *Sydney Green Grid* (Plan Objective 32), an initiative to connect communities to the landscape with multiple benefits including better access to open spaces, encouraging healthy lifestyles, supporting walking and cycling, supporting ecological resilience and enhancing bushland and habitat corridors
- **urban heat mitigation benefits:** trees provide shade which reduces the ambient air temperature. It is estimated that every ten per cent increase in tree canopy cover can reduce land surface temperatures by 1.13° Celsius.

4.4 Guiding documents

A number of documents have been identified as key references and guides in developing this strategy. As part of the development of a tree replacement program for the project, and in developing the urban design and landscape related documents required under the planning approval, Transport will seek to incorporate the principles and objectives of these guiding documents into the delivery of replacement trees.

The documents integrate existing research or guidance on the benefits of urban tree canopy cover. Guiding documents to be used as part of the tree replacement program include, but are not limited to:

North Sydney Council policies and guiding documents:

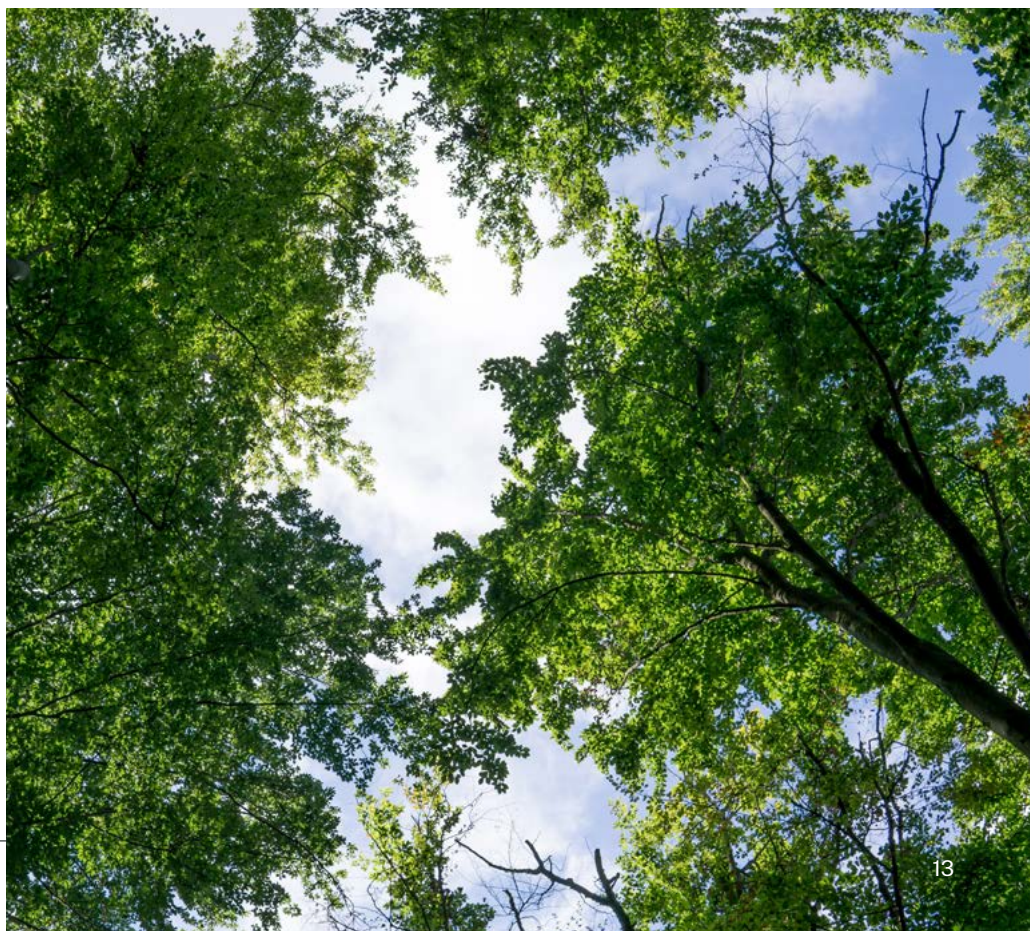
- North Sydney Street Tree Strategy
- North Sydney Urban Forest Strategy
- North Sydney Public Domain Strategy
- Other documents as identified by Council in the development of this strategy.

NSW Government / Transport policies and guiding documents:

- Greater Sydney Green Grid 2017
- Urban Tree Canopy Guide 2017
- Transport for NSW Biodiversity Guidelines
- Transport for NSW Beyond the Pavement policy.

In developing this strategy in addition to overarching documents guiding tree replacement required as part of the MCoA, Transport will also consider a range of policy documents, guidelines and inputs prepared by other local Councils along the alignment, including Inner West Council and Willoughby City Council.

Transport will seek to replicate the approach outlined in this strategy in the Inner West and Willoughby local government areas.





4.5 About these documents

4.5.1 North Sydney policies and guiding documents

Managing Trees in North Sydney

North Sydney Council maintain a large network of public trees with over 17,000 street trees plus many more growing in parks and reserves.

Transport recognises that North Sydney Council's environmental and urban design teams have over many years delivered high quality urban vegetation and high levels of maintenance and care for trees.

Transport is committed to working in a partnership approach in delivering tree replacement, combining the knowledge and experience of Council with that of Transport to ensure high quality tree replacement outcomes to the benefit of the community and environment in North Sydney.

As a basis for developing this strategy and implementing a replacement tree program, the following North Sydney Council policies and guiding documents will be used alongside a range of complementary NSW Government policies and frameworks as outlined further below.

Detailed information around managing trees in North Sydney is available on the North Sydney Council website.

View information on managing trees in North Sydney can be found on the **North Sydney Council website**

North Sydney Council Street Tree Strategy

The North Sydney Street Tree Strategy is Council's strategy providing clear guidelines for the effective short and long-term management of the network of trees, which comprise the basis of virtually all streetscapes in the North Sydney area. This network consists of over 17,000 individual trees.

In developing and implementing the Tree Replacement Strategy, Transport will work with council to ensure an alignment wherever feasible with the principles of the Street Tree Strategy.

View information on the North Sydney Street Tree Strategy **North Sydney Council website**



North Sydney Urban Forest Strategy

The North Sydney Urban Forest Strategy provides an in-depth look at how Council's 'green infrastructure' is performing and considers how Council can maximise its performance in the future. In developing and implementing the Tree Replacement Strategy, Transport will be informed and enact the synergies between the two strategies including emphasising the common objective of an increase in quality urban tree canopy coverage in the North Sydney LGA.

View information on the North Sydney Urban Forest Strategy **North Sydney Council website**

North Sydney Public Domain Strategy

The North Sydney CBD Public Domain Strategy is designed by Council to prioritise urban life, community gathering and pedestrian safety. It identifies a range of projects that will create a strong, connected network of public urban spaces in the CBD and outlines a timeline and framework to deliver these projects. In developing and implementing the Tree Replacement Strategy, Transport will work with Council to take a holistic approach to tree replacement across the LGA including in regard to the CBD and the creating of cool, green and liveable public spaces.

View information on the North Sydney Public Domain Strategy **North Sydney Council website**

4.5.2 NSW Government policies and guiding documents

The Greater Sydney Green Grid (2017)

The Greater Sydney Green Grid is a long-term vision for a network of high quality green spaces that connect communities to the natural landscape. It includes tree-lined streets, waterways, bushland corridors, parks and open spaces linked to centres, public transport and public places.

An introduction to the Sydney Green Grid (2017) can be viewed on the **NSW Government architect website**

Draft Greener Places Design Guide

The guide proposes an improved approach for NSW, outlining the strategies and indicative targets to achieve improved canopy cover across the Greater Sydney Region, and other urban areas across NSW.

View the draft Greener Places Design Guide on the **NSW Government Architect website**

4.5.3 Transport for NSW policies and guiding documents

Transport for NSW Biodiversity Guidelines

Transport has developed best practice guidelines for project managers, staff and contractors to use to help protect biodiversity during construction of road projects and ongoing maintenance works.

The guidelines provide a comprehensive range of measures to minimise the impact to flora and fauna, prior to and during the clearing of native vegetation and their habitats.

View the Transport Biodiversity Guidelines on the **Transport for NSW website**

Transport for NSW Beyond the Pavement policy

An urban design approach for transport infrastructure planning, design and construction.

The policy encourages project teams to 'think beyond the pavement' - that is consider the broader context of which infrastructure is a part as well as the broader government framework and agenda to which Transport projects should contribute.

View the Transport for NSW Beyond The Pavement policy (2020) **Transport for NSW website**

5. Tree and vegetation impacts

As part of the project, there will be impacts to some trees along the alignment. Transport's approach in delivering the project is to avoid or minimise the need to remove trees through project design and careful environmental management. Trees that do need to be removed will be replaced in accordance with planning approval, including the two to one replacement ratio requirement.

Most of the sites required for construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade have either already been disturbed or contain trees and plantings which have been planted (i.e. they are not remnant).

In certain locations along the project alignment, as identified through the environmental assessment process, vegetation will be required to be removed to facilitate the work. This will include some native plants, planted medians, non-native species and weeds.

Most of the trees and plants we need to remove are located within the Warringah Freeway corridor and at the Cammeray Golf Course construction site.

An indicative diagram of areas of impact is below at Diagram 2. It should be noted the areas of tree removal or impacts shown are associated with the Warringah Freeway Upgrade.

More information on vegetation impacts associated with the Western Harbour Tunnel will be available following the award of the contract and as the project moves to the detailed design phase. This strategy will be progressively updated as the project is delivered.

Diagram 2 – Tree removal areas (Warringah Freeway Upgrade)





5.1 Environmental impact assessment

The Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade EIS was placed on public exhibition by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) (formerly the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 'DPIE') between January and March 2020.

During the display a significant community and stakeholder engagement program was carried out, following on from previous public engagement during the concept design phase of the project in 2017.

As part of the planning approval process, the project was declared Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI) in 2018. The EIS was prepared in accordance with the provisions of Part 5.2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Key environmental issues associated with the project were considered throughout the design and development process and these were addressed in the EIS.

The EIS was considered by DPIE and the project was approved by the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in January 2021.

The EIS for the project remains publicly available and includes a wide range of information on the project design, potential environmental impacts and mitigation strategies, on the **Transport for NSW website**.

The following sections of the EIS provide information on tree and vegetation removal:

- Chapter 19 – Biodiversity
- Chapter 22 – Visual amenity
- Appendix S – Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
- Appendix V – Urban design, landscape character and visual impact
- Appendix W – Arboricultural impact assessment

These and all other sections of the EIS can be accessed on the **EIS page** of the project website.

During the EIS public exhibition, 1,441 submissions were received from members of the public, with 13 submissions from NSW Government agencies and five from local Councils. Transport has taken feedback from the community and stakeholders into account as a result of the environmental assessment process where feasible. A detailed Response to Submissions Report was released in September 2020 providing Transport's responses to the matters raised.

The submissions report can be accessed via:

<https://caportal.com.au/rms/wfu/documents-and-notifications>

5.2 Impact mitigation

Transport for NSW is committed to minimising the community and environmental impacts of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade which will improve safety and reliability for motorists.

Transport will reinstate and rehabilitate parks, open space and recreation areas impacted by construction and not required for permanent infrastructure back to the community.

A Place, Design and Landscape Plan for the Warringah Freeway Upgrade is being developed as part of main work activities. As per E178 in the Minister's Conditions of Approval (MCoA), the Place, Design and Landscape Plan must be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced person in consultation with relevant Councils, the community and affected landowners and businesses.

The public display of the Place, Design and Landscape Plan will occur in 2023. A similar plan will follow for the Western Harbour Tunnel later in the project.

Transport is committed to replacing trees and plantings at a ratio of two to one and to delivering an increase in tree canopy working in partnership with North Sydney Council. Tree replacement will be guided by condition E185 of the MCoA. In line with the MCoA, replacement trees must be located on public land and be prioritised within 500 metres of the affected areas, with the aim of delivering increased shading to footpaths and pedestrian and cycle paths.

While Transport is committed to prioritising replacing trees within 500 metres of the project boundary, work to achieve this will take place within a number of project constraints and other challenges (listed further in section 5.6).

To meet this priority, Transport will also holistically investigate tree planting opportunities in other areas of the project boundary.

If and when replacement tree planting opportunities within the 500 metre project boundary have been exhausted then in conjunction with North Sydney Council and the community further opportunities for tree planting will be identified beyond the project boundary within North Sydney LGA.

5.3 Tree definition

In the EIS, trees were defined and assessed as those being at least four metres high with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of over 600 millimetres.

DBH is a standard measurement for trees and is where the diameter of the trunk is measured. It sits at 4.5 feet or 1.4 metres high.

As part of the MCoA (SSI-8863), the following definition of a tree was provided:

“Long lived woody perennial plant greater than (or usually greater than) three metres in height with one or relatively few main stems or trunks (AS4373-2007 Pruning of amenity trees).”

In accordance with MCoA A3, as there is an inconsistency between the EIS definition of a tree and the Infrastructure Approval definition of a tree, the definition of a tree provided in the Infrastructure Approval has been adopted by the Project.

The change in definition has come about from the MCoA. This means the amount of vegetation to be cleared is the same, however, how vegetation is defined and offset has changed.

What may have been assessed as a shrub or bush in the EIS is now considered a tree under the MCoA definition. The benefit of this re-definition is that under MCoA E184 (which requires two to one replanting of any tree to be removed) more trees will be replanted as part of the project.

It should be noted that around Australia and across infrastructure projects in the past, there has been no universal definition of a tree in terms of its size, dimensions and maturity.

5.4 Project Conditions of Approval

In January 2021, the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces granted formal planning approval for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project.

The MCoA for the project include a range of conditions relating to the impacts on trees and vegetation across the project alignment, from Rozelle to Willoughby. Transport acknowledges that some of the more significant impacts of the project are associated with the Warringah Freeway Upgrade, which largely runs through the North Sydney LGA.

A key requirement of the Minister’s Conditions of Approval (MCoA) is that the project *“must be designed to retain as many trees as possible. Replacement trees and plantings must be provided at a ratio of 2:1 and deliver an increase in tree canopy to enhance the relevant council’s position in respect of the Sydney Green Grid, unless otherwise specified by the Planning Secretary”*.



Transport will work in partnership with local Councils to ensure replacement trees are of sizes, species and maturities appropriate to the areas in which they will be planted.

Specific approval conditions apply regarding the location, species, quality, timing and size of replacement trees. Additionally, as part of the MCoA, a range of project documents must be developed in relation to the replacement of trees and other landscape and amenity considerations.

As referred to earlier in this document, these include a Flora and Fauna Management Sub-Plan which will detail the processes for managing vegetation and associated issues. The Landscape Strategy Report and Place, Design and Landscape Plans must also be prepared.

Transport will work with North Sydney Council to replace trees with the intent to deliver an increase in quality tree canopy and an aim to enhance Council’s position in respect of the Sydney Green Grid – the NSW Government’s initiative as part of the Greater Sydney Region and District Plans, delivering an interconnecting network of open space that will keep the city cool, encourage healthy living, enhance biodiversity and ensure ecological resilience.

Table 2 below provides an overview of certain key MCoA conditions with specific relevance to trees and vegetation across the project corridor.

Table 2 – Key Minister’s Conditions of Approval relating to trees and vegetation

Condition number	Condition requirement
E184	The CSSI must be designed to retain as many existing trees as possible. Replacement trees and plantings must be provided at a ratio of 2:1 and deliver an increase in tree canopy and aim to enhance the relevant council’s position in respect of the Sydney Green Grid, unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Secretary.
E185	Replacement trees must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) be located on public land and prioritised within 500 metres of the construction boundary, that delivers increased shading to footpaths, pedestrian and cycle paths (b) be of a species suitable to the location, having regard for local ecology and existing street trees (c) meet the requirements for quality tree stock specified in the AS2303:2018: Tree Stock for Landscape Use (d) be provided no later than six months following the commencement of operation (e) have a minimum pot size consistent with the relevant council’s plans / programs / strategies for vegetation management, street planting, or open space landscaping, or as agreed by the relevant council(s).
E186	Replacement and enhancement of vegetative screening along the project corridor must take place in a progressive manner during construction to allow for the early establishment of vegetative screening.
E187	A Landscape Strategy Report must be prepared which details the type, size, number and location of replacement trees. The report must demonstrate how any replacement plantings are consistent with the requirements of Condition E184 and Condition E185. The report must be submitted to the Planning Secretary for information no later than nine months following the commencement of operation.
E177-181 (Excerpt)	A Place Design and Landscape Plan must be prepared. The PDLP must include... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (f) the location of existing vegetation, areas of vegetation to be retained and proposed planting and seeding details, including the use of local indigenous species for revegetation activities.

5.5 Tree replacement timing considerations

Transport is committed to the replacement of trees removed as part of the project as soon as is practical during the life of the project and will ensure trees are replaced progressively.

This will provide the opportunity for planted trees to start to grow during the project lifecycle resulting in more mature replacement trees being in place at the end of the project.

The MCoA for the project requires that overall strategies and specific information on tree replacement across the project be addressed in key required planning documentation to be prepared by Transport and project delivery teams. These include Place, Design and Landscape Plans and a Landscape Strategy Report.

The Place, Design and Landscape Plans are required to be prepared and submitted to the Planning Secretary no later than one month before the construction of permanent work. The Landscape Strategy Report is required to be submitted to the Planning Secretary no later than three months after the commencement of operation of the project.

In planning for the required number of trees to be used as replacement trees in the North Sydney area, it is considered unlikely that the preferred tree species would be commercially available to purchase “off the floor” at the required quantity at any single point in time.

As such, Transport will work in partnership with North Sydney Council throughout the course of the project on forward planning for procurement and progressive replacement of tree stock.

For the project to plan in a way that will meet the requirements of the MCoA and meet the tree replacement needs of Council, it is essential that the required number of trees of the desired species, at appropriate maturity levels, are planned for and sourced early.

Based on initial investigations, the time required to grow street trees from seed to the required size is between around 85 weeks for smaller to medium sized trees and 130 weeks for larger trees.

A number of factors that could extend or reduce these timings, including availability of stock overall, or stock of particular species, and time of year of required seed collection. Availability of stock in smaller sizes in nurseries may reduce the timeframes.

Time of year of ordering of tree stock is also an important consideration, relative to appropriate planting and growing seasons.

Given the complexities in planning for, ordering, procuring and delivering replacement trees, Transport will work with North Sydney Council to develop a staged approach to overall tree replacement. Indicative stages and timings of the approach are set out in Section 9 of this report.

5.6 Constraints in the North Sydney LGA

As our urban environment becomes more compact, finding space for trees and tree roots will become harder, and require greater investment, including supporting infrastructure, to create sustainable growing environments.

In discussions with North Sydney Council throughout the course of 2022, Transport and Council have identified a number of constraints associated with tree replacement options in the LGA.

Transport recognises these constraints and will work with the community, stakeholders and Council as part of the roll out of this strategy in line with planning approval requirements to collaboratively identify opportunities and develop solutions to address these challenges.

Identified constraints include:

- as a highly built up urban area with existing good tree coverage particularly in residential areas, there is limited streetscape for replacement trees
- there are significant underground and overhead utilities throughout the LGA including water and gas mains underground, and electricity cabling and wires both underground and overhead
- engineering constraints in relation to the planting of trees – including clearance, safety, lines of sight (including tree under canopy) in accordance with Austroads standards
- including provisions for maintenance of trees including access for maintenance and the need for maintenance to be carried out safely
- North Sydney's small geographic area relative to other councils across Greater Sydney, and North Sydney's role as both a business centre and residential area
- a significant number of longstanding parks and open space that have been well vegetated for many decades, limiting scope for additional tree planting.

It should be noted that many of these constraints are not unique to North Sydney, and apply in other project impacted LGAs, such as Inner West and Willoughby.

In working to address these constraints, a number of opportunities have been identified for tree replacement. In some cases, these are within the required 500 metre project boundary, with potential options beyond this requirement.

Transport's aim in replacing trees is to replace as many quality trees as possible to meet project conditions of approval. Trees within the North Sydney LGA that have been removed as a result of this project will be replaced on the 2:1 ratio within the North Sydney LGA.

5.7 Developing this strategy

This draft strategy will be developed and implemented in partnership with the key stakeholders including North Sydney Council, Transport project and urban design teams and contractor project delivery teams.

Engagement activities include external and internal meetings and briefings, gathering of supporting information and seeking feedback on the draft strategy from North Sydney Council. The purpose of the engagement approach with stakeholders is to:

- gather relevant information and facilitate sharing of stakeholder views to guide early strategy development
- provide regular updates to stakeholders on progress of the overall project as it relates to trees and inputs into the strategy
- obtain input into a draft strategy and to facilitate in-principle agreement on replacement planting objectives, options, potential locations and a range of potential replacement tree species.

A number of engagement activities have been carried out as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Engagement activities in developing this strategy

Activity	Details
Tree impacts workshop February 2022	Workshop between Transport and North Sydney Council to identify priorities to be factored into the development of the strategy and principles to support desired tree replacement outcomes.
Interface meetings and briefings ongoing fortnightly throughout 2022	Regular Transport and North Sydney Council interface meeting at which status, intent and progress of Tree Replacement Strategy was discussed.
Internal Transport site inspections and investigations throughout 2022	Transport project team and Place North team site inspections and internal investigations to gather information and assess potential scope for tree replacement in the North Sydney LGA
Site inspections at Warringah Freeway and Cammeray Golf Course 28 June 2022	Inspection between Council representatives and Transport representative to gather high level information and view of tree removal areas.
Internal Transport subject matter experts review of strategy structure and proposed content Aug-Sept 2022	Subject matter experts from Transport projects, corporate, environmental planning and urban design provided comment and input into the strategy.
Presentation to North Sydney Council representatives September 2022	Presentation providing an overview of key sections of the strategy document provided to North Sydney Council Acting General Manager and project / Council interface lead.
North Sydney Council provided with draft strategy for review and comment November 2022	Draft strategy provided to North Sydney Council interface, to arrange review by relevant Council environmental and urban design teams and other relevant areas, with Transport commitment to review feedback and revise document as appropriate.
Next steps Q4 2022	Feedback on draft strategy sought from local community.
Early 2023	Strategy to be finalised.





6. Tree replacement objectives

Learning from experience on previous projects and based on initial research for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project, Transport has identified three overarching principles to guide the delivery of tree replacement.

6.1 Principles for tree replacement

Delivering the tree replacement program across the life of the project, including meeting the planning requirements such as the two to one replacement ratio, will require the adoption and adaption of these principles as the project progresses.

The identified principles are:

1. **Community centred** – delivering benefits to the impacted local community
2. **Returning green space** – reinstating quality open and green space in the local area
3. **Achievable** – providing certainty to meet project approval requirements.

Transport will work with North Sydney Council to refine and adapt these principles in the early stages of project delivery to provide a framework for the selection of specific tree locations and species, sourcing and delivery approaches and community engagement activities.

In accordance with these principles, the project teams will prioritise tree replacement in areas and location types where these three principles most overlap – providing benefits to people and communities, the environment and places and with efficient and viable delivery in mind.

Adopting these principles will ensure replacement trees can be best delivered progressively throughout the life of the project, with community support, to enhance local open space and ensure the successful growth of replacement trees.



6.2 Objectives for tree replacement

Transport and the project teams are carrying out desktop studies, reviews of existing documentation and experiences and learnings from previous or current major transport and infrastructure projects in NSW and beyond, to gather information to assist in meeting the tree replacement requirements of the MCoA.

The review of background documentation and other project experience, together with stakeholder engagement, has identified a number of opportunities that guide and inform the location of the replacement tree planting.

Transport will work with North Sydney Council as a starting point in delivering this strategy using the five objectives below to guide ongoing discussions, planning and delivery of tree replacement in the North Sydney LGA through to the delivery phase of the project.

- **Objective One** – prioritise community open space
- **Objective Two** – prioritise proximity to tree removal sites
- **Objective Three** – plant in areas according to existing Council policies
- **Objective Four** – balance needs such as amenity, comfort, light, people movement, views
- **Objective Five** – plant in areas that will promote growth and success of planted trees.

6.3 Future canopy coverage

Transport is committed to replacing trees to deliver an increase in quality tree canopy working in partnership with North Sydney Council on an ongoing basis throughout the life of the project.

With regard to canopy coverage, as part of the planning approval requirements, in partnership with key stakeholders, the maturity of replacement trees in the replacement planting will be outlined in key planning documents including the size, type and location of plantings.

Selection of pot size, planting location and species of trees will take place with the intent to provide a quality canopy cover for future years. A range of tree sizes and maturities will be provided appropriate to the areas where replanting will take place.

As required by planning conditions, for replacement trees in Council maintained parks and streets, Transport will ensure minimum pot sizes will be consistent with the requirements of Council plans, programs and strategies or as agreed with Council.

In developing the Place, Design and Landscape Plans and Landscape Strategy Report, Transport and the project teams will be guided by a range of guidelines and policies with the intent of providing quality future canopy cover by the replacement trees in North Sydney and other areas.

Due to the constraints of the North Sydney LGA and available landscape, the selection of quality trees and ensuring the survival of species will be key, in addition to the quantity of planting and with the implementation of an appropriately funded maintenance program.

In line with North Sydney Council's Urban Forest Strategy (2019), this project falls under multiple categories of classification including 'Urban' (Target Canopy Cover 25%) and 'Suburban' (Target Canopy cover 50%).

Based on land use within the North Sydney and the international recommended target cover for CBD zones, urban zones and residential zones, the overall canopy cover target for North Sydney is 34.4%.

Transport will work with Council to implement and establish an increased and diverse tree canopy with the aim of reaching these targets.

6.4 Tree relocation options

The potential for relocation of mature trees in the North Sydney LGA is currently being investigated by Transport and the project delivery teams. It should be noted that relocation of mature trees is costly and has associated risks with only certain species being viable candidates. Native species have a low success rate in surviving relocation at a mature age.

Candidate species are generally non-native which can include species of palm and non-native deciduous trees, with varying survival success. In determining if trees are suitable for relocation, advice from a suitably qualified arborist will be sought to inform whether individual trees can be successfully and feasibly relocated.

Given limitations on the feasibility of tree relocation, Transport's preference is to retain vegetation by redesigning construction work where possible or seeking arborist advice to retain trees. This is common practice across infrastructure projects including works on the Warringah Freeway Upgrade project where the design has been managed to avoid or reduce tree impacts.

Arboriculture investigations are taking place for the main work portion of the Warringah Freeway Upgrade. Currently no individual trees have been identified as viable for relocation. Similar investigations will be carried out once the main contract for the Western Harbour Tunnel project in the North Sydney Council area is awarded.

With regard to the practicality of relocating individual trees, there is no specific limit on the size of trees which can be relocated.

If an individual tree was identified as being potentially suitable for relocation (ie. with an appropriate location found for relocation and the tree assessed as being likely to survive the process) practical issues including cost, time and safety would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Where reasonable and feasible across the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project, Transport will seek to relocate trees identified as suitable candidates.

6.5 Potential planting locations

Under the MCoA, replanting should take place up to 500 metres from the project construction boundary. Precise areas for replacement will be determined working in partnership with North Sydney Council as part of the development of the Landscape Strategy Report, required by the MCoA. This report must detail the type, size, number and location of replacement trees.

This report will also inform the Place, Design and Landscape Plans for the project which will include the location of existing vegetation, areas of vegetation to be retained and proposed planting and seeding details, including the use of local indigenous species for revegetation activities.

The MCoA requires that these documents are developed and implemented during construction and operation of the project. Transport and the project teams will progressively develop and implement these documents during the construction phase. The Place, Design and Landscape Plans will be developed for each major contract across the project.

There are limitations on the number of replacement trees that can be planted within 500 metres of the project boundary.

As such, North Sydney Council and Transport have discussed the potential to identify alternative locations in the North Sydney LGA where replacement trees could be planted, outside the 500-metre requirement. It should be noted that replacement trees will be prioritised within 500 metres of the construction boundary, as per the MCoA. Should locations outside the 500-metre requirement be identified and agreed with Council, Transport would seek approval from the Planning Secretary.

Transport will work in partnership with Council and the community to identify possible tree planting locations.



6.6 Tree species for replacement planting

In the North Sydney LGA, Transport is committed to working in partnership with Council through current local tree planting strategies and plans to guide the final selection of species identified under this strategy and as part of the planning approval documents.

Based on a preliminary document review and the objectives of the Tree Replacement Strategy, the following three approaches for tree selection have been identified and Transport will work through these to seek advice from and agreement with North Sydney:

1. **Tree type and location** – selecting the most appropriate tree type and size for each specific location to ensure the greatest success in tree growth and survival and community and environmental benefit
2. **Environmental benefit through diversity** – ensuring there is a diversity in species across local areas in keeping with, or improvement to, pre-project species diversity
3. **Methodical delivery** – planning, procuring and delivering replacement trees in a methodical way to ensure availability and planting of trees progressively through the life of the project.

More detail on these three approaches follows below.

Tree type and location

The Tree Replacement Strategy is based on a tree selection approach that begins with an analysis of growing conditions, desired project outcomes and species characteristics as key considerations to determining a list of suitable species.

Right tree, right place in the context of this Tree Replacement Strategy means finding the best trees with the greatest benefits and attributes for each location, while avoiding assets and impacts to properties. This approach delivers the maximum heat mitigation benefits while also reducing the likelihood of tree failure.

Environmental benefit through diversity

Scientific research indicates that a large representation of any one particular plant family leaves urban tree populations vulnerable to pest and disease outbreaks, as a single pathogen would be able to cause significant losses to a large share of the tree population.

Low species diversity also increase vulnerability to the kinds of weather conditions the project area is expected to experience, that is: increases in heat waves and reduced rainfall/ prolonged drought.

To ensure longevity of replacement tree planting and maximise long-term benefits to communities and environment in the North Sydney LGA, this strategy promotes diversity in tree species and growth rates, consistent with broadly accepted best practice guidelines.

Methodical delivery

The ability to procure the identified tree species within the limited project time frame is a key need of the project to achieve project planning approval requirements.

Transport will work with Council to identify potential commercially readily available species, to ensure stock availability to support the project planning conditions.

7. Strategy for replacing trees

Transport (and its precursor agency, Roads and Maritime Services) has worked collaboratively with North Sydney Council on tree management approaches in the North Sydney LGA since 2017, as part of the development and environmental assessment phase of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project.

7.1 Working with North Sydney Council

Transport continues to support Council's ongoing understanding of the project and potential impacts and is committed to working in partnership with Council to understand its needs and the needs of the local community.

In February 2022, representatives from Transport and North Sydney Council participated in a tree strategy workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to identify priorities to be included in the development of the Tree Replacement Strategy and principles to support desired tree replacement outcomes.

The workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders to identify issues associated with tree removal and replacement in the North Sydney LGA and potential opportunities in the short and long term.

During this workshop Transport provided an overview of the areas in the LGA where vegetation is required to be removed.

Transport also provided a summary of the Flora and Fauna Management Sub-Plan, including provisions such as the engagement of a qualified arborist, assessments of the vegetation likely to be impacted by the project, assessment of potential alternate construction methodologies to reduce impacts on vegetation and how these will inform final clearing plans.

Due to the highly built-up nature of the comparatively small North Sydney LGA, there are constraints upon areas in the LGA where replacement trees can be planted.

7.2 Proposed Transport and Council joint working group

As part of the discussion, Transport committed to working closely with Council to develop this strategy to identify and agree on principles, opportunities and areas that may be suitable for replacement planting and to ensure Council has ongoing involvement into the locations and species of trees to replace those being removed.

Transport proposes that the further refinement, agreement and roll out of this strategy would be progressed through a joint working group approach between agencies on an ongoing basis from Q4 2022. The working group would comprise of key nominated representatives from Council and Transport, across landscape and environmental management personnel and project delivery representatives.

As part of this proposed group, Transport will work with North Sydney Council to develop a snapshot of areas which are suitable for replanting within the North Sydney LGA.


In addition to the working group approach, during the delivery of the project Transport and the project teams are regularly engaging with North Sydney Council. Regular Transport-Council meetings are held to discuss a variety of project matters such as actions required of Transport and Council and ongoing progress updates.

These regular forums will continue in addition to the working group, to ensure open dialogue and to agree on initiatives with regard to tree replacement. Transport will continue to work collaboratively with Council in the development of the strategy for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade. These forums will also allow for discussion where appropriate on other projects taking place in the North Sydney LGA which may interface with tree replacement initiatives.

7.3 Place, Design and Landscape Plans

Project Place, Design and Landscape Plans are a requirement of planning approval and must include the location of existing vegetation, areas of vegetation to be retained and proposed planting and seeding details, including the use of local indigenous species for revegetation activities.

The plans also include a range of other matters relating to design outcomes for the project (eg. built environment, landform, open space, heritage, visuals and others).



A Place, Design and Landscape Plan will be developed for each of the major contract components of the project, including the Warringah Freeway Upgrade and the Western Harbour Tunnel packages. MCoA requires the plans to be developed in consultation with relevant Councils (including North Sydney Council).

The plans must be reviewed by an independent project Design Review Panel and submitted to the Planning Secretary for approval no later than one month before construction of permanent work subject to the plans. Transport will work with North Sydney Council throughout the course of the project in the development of the plans.

7.4 Landscape Strategy Report

The Landscape Strategy Report is a requirement of planning approval and details the type, size, number and location of replacement trees. The report must demonstrate how any replacement plantings are consistent with the requirements of relevant conditions of the planning approval.

MCoA requires the report to be developed in consultation with relevant Councils (including North Sydney Council).

The report must be submitted to the Planning Secretary for information no later than nine months following the commencement of operation. Transport will work with North Sydney Council in the development of the report.

7.5 Flora and Fauna Sub-management Plan

A Flora and Fauna Sub-Management Plan is a requirement of planning approval and includes details on how the project will manage potential flora and fauna impacts during construction including mitigation measures and the process of vegetation to be cleared as part of the project.

MCoA requires the Sub-Plan to be developed in consultation with relevant Councils (including North Sydney Council). Council has been consulted on sub-plans prepared for the project to-date.

Flora and Fauna Management Sub-Plan is one of a range of sub-plans prepared under the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) required under the MCoA.

The CEMP sub-plans must be submitted to the Planning Secretary for approval along with, or subsequent to, the submission of the CEMP but in any event, no later than one month before construction.

8. Tree replacement locations

This section provides an overview of potential options for replacement trees in the North Sydney LGA.

8.1 Tree replacement locations – open space and Crown Land opportunities

Consideration will be given to alternative locations for replanting, including open space and Crown Land in the North Sydney LGA if suitable.

It should be noted that some Crown Land in the LGA is managed by Council and use of such areas for replanting would be discussed with Council.

Additionally, some of the Crown Land parks managed by Council have landscape masterplans in place. Any additional planting in these parks will be required to be in accordance with these community masterplans.

Transport and North Sydney Council will work together to identify areas of Crown Land including Crown Land areas managed by Council where tree replacement may be suitable.

Transport will further investigate these options with Council.

8.2 Tree replacement locations – areas owned or managed by Transport

Transport for NSW and its related agencies own and manage a significant asset base across NSW including parcels of land throughout the North Sydney LGA. These include arterial roads, railway corridor, road verges, median strips and other transport-related assets.

In planning and constructing the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade infrastructure, Transport has and will continue to identify areas in Transport-owned land where tree replacement planting can take place.

While a significant portion of the trees to be removed as part of the project are along the Warringah Freeway corridor, as has been identified in the EIS, there are opportunities for replanting along the freeway corridor progressively as the project infrastructure is built.

A key consideration in planting additional trees along road corridors is safety of motorists and pedestrians, including line of sight, tree height and tree placement to allow for pedestrian thoroughfare.

Transport will work with North Sydney Council in continuing to identify Transport-owned land that may be suitable.

8.3 Tree replacement locations – community opportunities

Transport recognises the unique environmental, cultural and heritage features of the North Sydney Council area and understands how the local community cherishes the landmark open space features of the area.

Transport will engage with North Sydney Council and the local community to identify opportunities for residents, business and community groups to participate in and assist with tree placement in the LGA.

At this early stage of project delivery, Transport and the project teams consider that the following initiatives would be of value to both the community and the successful delivery of the project.

8.3.1 Schools and educational campuses

With around 20 schools and educational campuses in North Sydney alone, including the Australian Catholic University campus, Transport will investigate opportunities for these institutions, along with others across the project boundary, to participate in tree planting and replacement opportunities.

These potential locations are not necessarily on public land, though they are community facilities with significant areas of open space, presenting opportunities for a cooler and greener locality in North Sydney should they be suitable for tree replacement options.

Transport recognises that Council will have existing, long-established relationships with education providers in the LGA, and will work in partnership with Council in discussing options with these stakeholders.



8.3.2 Verge gardens

Verge, or median, gardens form an important part of the urban forest and have the potential to improve the appearance of streetscapes and provide opportunities to engage with the local community.

Across the Greater Sydney metropolitan area, local communities and councils have been increasingly exploring opportunities to create verge gardens in suitable locations. Verges may have limitations in terms of the space required for larger trees (as defined in the MCoA) and Transport will work with Council to identify areas where this option may be possible and desirable in North Sydney.

8.3.3 Pocket parks

Transport will investigate opportunities across the alignment in the North Sydney and other LGAs to develop 'pocket parks'. These are small areas of public land which can be set aside for a cool and green spaces in a pocket of an otherwise developed area.

As is the case with verge gardens, recently the NSW Government and councils across Greater Sydney have been encouraging the development of small parks or 'pocket parks' in suitable public spaces. These small parks, often located in small, under-utilised areas of open space, align with the delivery of government initiatives to enhance the quality of life for local communities.

8.3.4 Sporting fields and facilities

Transport will work with Council to identify areas within or around sporting fields or facilities in the North Sydney LGA where there may be opportunities to plant replacement trees.

Many such facilities are owned or under the care and control of Council and a collaborative approach will be adopted so that Council can provide Transport with information and opportunities at any such facilities.

8.3.5 Community planting options

Studies have found that trees planted with community involvement have significantly higher survival rates. Transport will work with Council to seek opportunities to empower local communities through their involvement in the strategy.

Some community planting options may involve active participation with the North Sydney community in tree replacement in the LGA. While planting on private or residential land is currently in addition to the requirements of the MCoA, increasing quality vegetation in private land in the LGA would enhance the local environment and private amenity for residents.

8.3.6 Establishing replacement trees

Transport will ensure that an appropriately funded maintenance program is in place to maintain new trees through a 24 month (minimum) establishment period. Any replacement tree loss that occurs will be replanted by Transport in consultation with Council.

8.3.7 Aboriginal / First Nations groups

Heritage and Country disturbance are an important consideration in urban design and landscape planning. Any construction should have as minimal disturbance to the ground as possible. For Aboriginal people, the ground and water are important and should not be disturbed unnecessarily so as to minimise change to ecosystems and cultural values within Country.

Creating a place where Aboriginal peoples cultural heritage is shared with users is very important in developing understanding and appreciation of our shared cultural heritage.

Transport, in partnership with Council, will seek opportunities to connect to Country through the selection and replanting of specific trees, seeking to identify plants associated with Aboriginal seasons, ceremonies, healing properties, men and women's plants, seasonal indicators, decoration, food, fire, habitat and implements.

8.3.8 Further options to be explored in partnership with Council

Transport and Council will continue to explore tree replacement options in a partnership approach to delivering replacement trees progressively throughout the course of the project delivery, as part of ongoing forums and discussions. Tree replacement approaches will be managed adaptively so that new options can be implemented as the project evolves.

9. Next steps

9.1 Communications protocols

A key element of the project approach will be to develop and implement well-established, clearly understood governance arrangements for communication and engagement activities.

It is critical that decisions, activities and behaviours complement and support each other to ensure a streamlined approach to communication and engagement and to minimise confusion for community members, external stakeholders and organisations.

Transport and North Sydney Council participate in a major projects working group which meets fortnightly to discuss progress, milestones, actions and status of key issues with regard to the major projects underway in North Sydney.

This forum primarily covers the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade as well as Sydney Metro City and Southwest. The forum includes a dedicated major projects resource at Council and includes senior community and stakeholder engagement staff from Transport.

The forum can also be used as a touch point for these Council and Transport representatives to escalate broader project-related issues in North Sydney and will be an initial forum to facilitate tree replacement discussions.

As the project teams delivering the project 'on the ground' develop specific tree replacement initiatives, Transport, the project teams and North Sydney Council engage in line with the requirements of the MCoA.

This will involve a collaborative approach in working with Council in the development of the Place, Design and Landscape Plans and the Landscape Strategy Report.

9.2 Ongoing options identification

This strategy is a living document and will be reviewed and updated throughout the course of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project.

As the project continues, Transport and North Sydney Council will continue to work together to identify options for tree replacement.

Transport is committed to working with stakeholders and the community to identify new and innovative options for tree replacement as they come to light.

This will include options for tree replacement locations and species.

At this early stage based on previous experience on projects of a similar scale, Transport has identified a preliminary list of species suitable for a range of location categories.

An indicative list of tree species suitable for a range of locations will be finalised in early 2023. Transport will work through the identified options with Council to enhance and build upon this list.

9.3 Progressive replacement approach

As part of the project commitments, Transport and the project teams will progressively look to rehabilitate the corridor as soon as reasonably possible. Planning will start early in the project for the sourcing of replacement trees.

This will ensure that appropriately sized trees will be available at required times during project delivery.

A number of indicative locations have been identified where trees could be progressively planted. These will need to be agreed with Council and will be progressed in the development of the Place, Design and Landscape Plans and Landscape Strategy Report.

Transport and the project teams will also work with North Sydney Council to investigate initiatives to engage with local communities and community groups to identify opportunities for planting replacements including investigating options with land care / bush care groups.

9.4 Sourcing replacement trees

A schedule for the progressive replacement of trees and plans for sourcing of trees will be developed by the project teams as the project continues.

Native species will generally be sourced from within the same region to ensure the success of plantings, with the main suppliers of replacement trees and plants located in Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Central Coast.

The project teams will commence discussions with suppliers to source replacement trees as the project continues.





9.5 Proposed tree replacement actions

This section outlines a series of next steps that are tasks that must be undertaken in order to ensure implementation of the Tree Replacement Strategy. Implementation involves the following key planning steps:

- investigating additional replacement planting opportunities within the project corridor
- determining installation capacity and planning for an orderly roll-out
- initiating tree procurement and determining supply
- identify and planning for timely community consultation
- monitoring and tracking progress.

9.5.1 Tree installation actions

Specific tree replacement actions in the replacement delivery phase include:

- work with project contractors and their detailed design teams to identify potential additional locations for replacement tree planting within the project corridor (including areas surrounding project infrastructure)
- determine appropriate tree species and potential quantities for additional corridor planting
- develop detailed planting layouts and tree schedules.

- work with project contractors to determine the most appropriate process and timing for procurement and installation of additional corridor trees
- adjust tree supply contract or initiate separate contract
- agree on maintenance responsibilities for additional corridor trees
- planting by project contractor or separate contractor, as agreed in collaboration with North Sydney Council.

Roles and responsibilities for the above will be decided in collaboration between Transport and Council.

9.6 Progress evaluation

Utilising recent learned experience on significant and similarly scaled projects in NSW, Transport will work collaboratively with North Sydney Council to monitor and evaluate each stage of the tree replacement process.

A successful recent approach in tree replacement across projects includes provision of an identification tag to help track health and development of replacement trees.

Tags or survey tags will be used where appropriate to identify replacement trees to assist with maintenance.

Transport will continually update documentation on tree replacement to assist in tracking the progress of tree replacement throughout the course of the project and to assist in development and implementation of the Place, Design and Landscape Plans and the Landscape Strategy Report.

Progress will be monitored throughout the course of the project including at regular meetings and in interface forums with North Sydney Council.

Where project or local circumstances change during the course of delivery, Transport commits to working with Council to develop adaptive solutions or refinements to ensure the continued progressive replacement of trees, to the benefit of the environment and the local community.

9.7 Engagement approach

This strategy is being developed alongside North Sydney Council to facilitate in-principle agreement on replacement objectives, locations, timing phases and species.

Transport expects that during the course of project construction over several years, opportunities may be identified to partner with community groups to deliver tree replacement options over and above those identified in the early stages of delivery including in this strategy.

Transport and the project teams will continue to work with North Sydney Council in 2022 and beyond regarding tree removal and replacement in the LGA and will work with Council to develop the agreed Landscape Strategy Report.

Transport will also work with North Sydney Council to investigate initiatives to engage with local communities and community groups to identify opportunities for planting replacements including investigating options with land care / bush care groups.

Options to the benefit of the environment and community relating to the reuse of tree materials may also be identified during the tree removal and replacement approach.

Community groups and relevant agencies may be offered timber, foliage and root-balls of cleared vegetation to be reused appropriately. The project teams are also currently investigating the provision of timber and foliage to Taronga Zoo, Sydney Wildlife Zoo at Darling Harbour, and the Koala Park Sanctuary at Pennant Hills.

As is the case across the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project, Transport will continue to keep local communities informed of work in their local area. As tree replacement initiatives take place across the project local communities will be kept informed







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