



Great Western Highway upgrade Kelso to Raglan tree removal Frequently Asked Questions

What are the details of the project?

The NSW Government has committed \$45 million in funding to upgrade the Great Western Highway between Kelso and Raglan to improve safety and efficiency, and reduce travel time along this section of the highway.

Why do you need to remove trees as part of the Great Western Highway upgrade between Kelso and Raglan?

The trees in the road corridor between Raglan and Kelso will be removed to allow for the road to be widened. It is not possible to build the new travel lanes without removing the trees on either side of the road.

What is the condition of existing trees?

Following assessment from an arborist, it was found that many of the existing trees are aging and pose an increased risk to road and path users by limb drop or full tree failure. Whilst some of these trees can be managed with additional care, they will continue to decline to a point where they no longer look like or perform as an avenue tree. As more gaps start appearing in the future, the line of trees and the avenue effect will be lost.

What is the history of the poplar tree?

The Lombardy Poplar (*populus nigra* var 'Italica') was introduced into regional NSW between the 1820's and 1870's to combat soil erosion and land degradation, provide a fast-growing and easily replaceable timber resource and shade for livestock. Poplars fell out of favour due to fungal diseases and being short lived, but experienced a renewal of popularity during the Interwar years as part of a design approach to beautify cities and their civic spaces through street amenity and avenue planting.

What is the plan for the future?

During consultation with the community in 2020, it was noted that residents highly valued the avenue of poplars decorating the entrance of Bathurst. Transport for NSW will reinstate an avenue of trees that will continue to define the entry into Bathurst as part of a comprehensive landscape design plan for the project. You can view the artist's impression of the new design at nswroads.work/kelsotoraglan. Each tree that is removed will be replaced at a ratio of at least 1:1.

When will tree removal commence and how will it be done?

Transport for NSW will be removing trees in two stages to ensure disruption to traffic is minimal. Trees on the northern side of the road will be removed from Monday 22 March 2021 and trees on the southern side of the highway will be removed as part of stage two in mid-2022.

Are there any Aboriginal scar trees within this project?

There are no registered Aboriginal objects or places known to the local Aboriginal community in the vicinity of the project.

Tell us about the landscape design plan

The landscape design plan proposes to reinstate and create an iconic tree avenue into the eastern entry to Bathurst through the use of a variety of trees with strong seasonal change traits and distinct arrangements along the road. Native trees will also be planted along the boundary to Bathurst, in combination with a welcome sign.

Shade trees and park trees will be planted along the Great Western Highway at Elmo Lavis Park which are more suitable to the residential character and will improve the amenity for park users and the new cycleway. All the trees will be selected with future climate resilience in mind, in agreement with Bathurst Regional Council, Greening Bathurst and other stakeholders.

Lombardy Poplars will not be used again due to their relatively short healthy useful life, their propensity to sucker and vulnerability to several tree diseases which cannot be treated.

What type of trees will be planted?

The new avenue trees will be selected for future resilience and strategically placed to improve road safety and reduce the likelihood of disruptions to the highway from fallen limbs or older trees blowing over. The primary avenue will be comprised of pin oaks (*quercus palustris*), but other tree plantings will include red-spotted gums (*eucalyptus mannifera*), red oaks (*quercus rubra*) and cimmaron ash (*fraxinus pennsylvanica* 'cimmzam'). Additional species may be used for particular locations and subject to availability.

When will planting of new trees commence?

Planting is likely to commence at the conclusion of the project, in 2023.

Why can't the trees be planted sooner?

Landscaping will commence at the completion of construction works, to avoid damage by construction operations. Seasonal conditions are also considered to give the trees the best chance of survival.

How long will it take for the replacement trees to be established?

Trees planted in this project will be under establishment maintenance for 12 months, and a further care and monitoring period of 24 months (3 years total). The trees will be provided with an irrigation system during this period.

Who will maintain the trees after planting?

Bathurst Regional Council will manage the ongoing, long term maintenance of the trees after they have been established.

How can I find out more information?

If you have any questions regarding tree removal or would like more information on the project, please contact our project team or visit our project website:

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Frequently Asked Questions



Artist's impression

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