

Frequently asked questions

August 2023

Western Distributor Road Network Improvements

This information has been developed to provide more detail about the proposed changes and likely impacts of the project, and to provide answers to frequently asked questions from stakeholders and the community.

These frequently asked questions are also available to view or download as a PDF on the [Documents page](#) of the project portal.

Submissions report and amendments to the REF

How has feedback on the REF been considered?

The project's Review of Environmental Factors (REF) was publicly displayed for comment in late 2022. Transport for NSW received more than 250 formal submissions in response to the REF and has responded to all comments raised in the Submissions Report. The Submissions Report also addresses any changes to the design proposed in the REF and explains the findings of additional impact assessments.

Were any changes made to the proposed design following the REF consultation?

Some amendments to the proposed design have been made following the detailed design process and feedback received during REF consultation. These include:

Gantries on Anzac Bridge

The three additional gantries that had been proposed on Anzac Bridge in the environmental assessment have since been excluded from the scope of this project. This change was in response to strong feedback received from the community. Transport is reassessing their need, location, visual impact and heritage impact.

The gantries installed in the A-frames on Anzac Bridge are part of a separate project associated with WestConnex Rozelle Interchange.

Relocation of a bus stop and parking changes on Harris Street

The REF assessed the removal of the pedestrian crossing at the southern end of the Harris Street and Allen Street intersection. The community raised concerns about accessing the existing bus stop that the pedestrian crossing serviced. In response to this feedback, Transport reviewed an option to relocate the existing bus stop to the northern side of the intersection to align with the remaining pedestrian crossings. This was assessed in *Section 4.3* of the Submissions Report and will be included as a revision to the scope of the project. Implementation of this bus stop change will be subject to further consultation with the community in the coming months.

The relocated bus stop results in parking losses on Harris Street northbound. The loading zone is retained but shifts north of the bus stop. Six 2-hour parking spaces are impacted by this bus stop adjustment. Bus service providers were consulted in the development of this option and provided endorsement.

Where the existing bus stop would be removed on the south of Allen Street, five new half hour parking spaces would be created. The existing and proposed parking configurations are shown within *Section 4.3* of the Submissions Report.

Tree impacts at Darling Harbour

The alignment of the new on-ramp has been adjusted to avoid impacts to major utility services. Changes to the construction methodology have resulted in impact to an additional 10 trees.

Transport will continue to work closely with Placemaking NSW and other stakeholders to minimise impacts during construction and ensure the best possible place outcomes, including assessing options for palm tree translocation and use of mature tree stock in landscaping.

Where can I find the final submissions report?

The Submissions Report is available at nswroads.work/wdrni-portal for you to view responses to issues or read more about the design changes.

When will construction start and how long will it take to complete?

Work to deliver the changes at Allen and Harris Street intersection will begin later this year and be complete by mid 2024.

Work to refurbish the Anzac digger statues will begin in coming months.

Work to upgrade the Pyrmont Bridge Road and Bank Street intersection will not take begin until early 2025, after the Fish Markets have moved to their new location in Blackwattle Bay.

Delivery of the new Fig Street on-ramp is subject to a future investment decision.

Where can I find out more information?

For further information or to subscribe for email updates, please visit nswroads.work/wdrni-portal or contact the project team at WesternDistributor@transport.nsw.gov.au

About the project

Why are changes needed?

In 2020, an average of 120,000 vehicles used the Western Distributor each day (pre-Covid, this was around 136,000 vehicles per day). Currently, motorists using this route experience high congestion and long traffic queues, particularly during the morning peak. This is expected to worsen as demand for the precinct grows with future development.

There is a significant weaving and merging issue on Western Distributor that causes over 100 crashes and near misses a year on average. It is Transport's responsibility to ensure the network is safe and reliable for the millions of journeys made each year.

This project will improve safety on the Western Distributor, reduce queues on off-ramps and improve the resilience of the network.

What are the key features of the improvements?

Key features include:

- modifying the intersection at Allen Street and Harris Street to provide three lanes northbound towards Harris St, and removing a pedestrian crossing

- enhancing visitor experience and refurbishing the two Anzac digger sculptures on the Anzac Bridge
- modifying the Pymont Bridge Road and Bank Street intersection, removing turning movements onto Bank Street from the eastbound Pymont Bridge Rd off-ramp and changing the off-ramp from one lane to two lanes
- constructing a new on-ramp connection to the Western Distributor from the Fig Street on-ramp, Pymont (subject to a future investment decision)

What changes will be made to the intersection of Allen and Harris streets?

Modifications at this intersection include:

- changing the lane configuration on Allen Street to provide three eastbound lanes (towards Harris Street), one left and through lane and two right-turn lanes onto Harris Street
- removing parking on Allen Street to reallocate road space. This requires removing eight (8) parking spaces on Allen Street and a loading zone
- removing the southern pedestrian crossing on Harris Street
- changes to traffic control signals to improve operation of the intersection
- relocating the bus stop to the northern side of Harris Street and Allen Street intersection
- relocating the loading zone on Harris Street north towards Pymont Bridge Road
- removing six (6) parking spaces on Harris Street
- creating five (5) timed half hour parking spaces on Harris Street northbound (south of Allen St intersection)
- adjustments to utility services

What changes will be made to the intersection of Pymont Bridge Road and Bank Street?

Modifications and changes affecting this intersection include:

- upgrading the Pymont Bridge Road eastbound off-ramp from one to two lanes through line-marking changes
- a new signalised pedestrian crossing at base of the off-ramp and two left turn lanes onto Pymont Bridge Road
- closing the turning movements onto Bank Street from the Pymont Bridge Road off-ramp and installing a new incident response vehicle bay in this location
- changes to the 501 bus route caused by the turning movement ban (an alternate route will be decided in consultation with the community, bus users and bus planners and operators, with public engagement on changes to the 501 bus route planned for Q3 2023)
- restricting access to Bank Street from the off-ramp to emergency services vehicles only
- changing the lane configuration on Bank Street to provide two lanes approaching the Western Distributor on-ramp (westbound) and one lane towards Miller Street
- changes to traffic control signals to improve operation of the intersection
- adjustments to utility services

The current movements from the Pymont Bridge off-ramp into Bank Street will remain until after the Sydney Fish Market has relocated to its new development site on Bridge Road (expected late 2024).

What's happening to the Anzac memorial sculptures?

In consultation with the Office of Veterans' Affairs and the Returned and Services League Australia (RSL), Transport is planning to refurbish the two Anzac digger memorial sculptures at the western end of Anzac Bridge.

Initial plans include respectful improvements to the local area to enhance visitor amenity and connect the location of the sculptures with other memorials in the area. Plans also include acknowledging the role of all Australian and New Zealand service personnel including Aboriginal military personnel. We will keep the community updated as these plans progress.

What will the new on-ramp at Fig Street look like?

The new on-ramp will be a single traffic lane, about 370 metres long, starting from the Fig Street on-ramp and joining the Western Distributor on the right-hand (southern) side, near 'The Ribbon' development.

This ramp will improve safety and reduce the risk of incidents on the Western Distributor by removing the need for traffic to cross multiple lanes to reach Sydney Harbour Bridge or the CBD. It will also remove the need for traffic to merge abruptly.

Three existing piers will be modified, and seven new piers constructed underneath the Western Distributor to support the new ramp. Some of this work is expected to impact the International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney building. Transport will work with Placemaking NSW and Darling Harbour Live through detailed design to minimise impacts.

Construction of the new on-ramp is subject to a future investment decision.

Where do incidents mainly occur on the Western Distributor?

Between 2016 and 2020, most accidents or incidents on the Western Distributor occurred on the eastern (city) side of Anzac Bridge through Pyrmont and Darling Harbour. When developing the proposal, the project team gathered information about the frequency and severity of incidents at the Allen Street and Harris Street intersection, the Pyrmont Bridge Road and Bank Street intersection and the merge point at Darling Harbour where the Pyrmont Street and Fig Street on-ramps join the Western Distributor.

Incidents ranged from 'near misses' to more serious or fatal crashes, with the most severe generally occurring outside peak times when traffic speeds are higher. These crashes also resulted in substantial traffic delays for motorists on the Western Distributor, Anzac Bridge and surrounding roads.

How often do incidents occur in these locations?

Allen Street and Harris Street intersection:

Intersections are known to be network bottle necks, or pinch points, where motorists experience heavy congestion and long traffic queues in peak times.

Four reported incidents occurred at this intersection between 2016 and 2020 and queues were observed to extend onto the Allen Street off-ramp.

Pyrmont Bridge Road off-ramp and intersection at Bank Street:

There were 18 reported incidents at this location between 2016 and 2020, four of which resulted in serious injuries. At peak times, queues were observed to extend along the off-ramp and onto the Western Distributor.

The Darling Harbour merge point:

Multiple traffic lanes merge on the Western Distributor at Darling Harbour, resulting in many motorists needing to cross more than one lane to reach Sydney Harbour Bridge. This 'weaving' behaviour of vehicles resulted in 512 crashes at this location between 2016 and 2020, including one fatality. This is an average of around 100 incidents per year or between one and two per week.

Will any parking be removed?

As part of the intersection modifications on Harris and Allen streets, eight on-street parking spaces and one loading zone space on Allen Street, and six on-street parking spaces on Harris Street will be permanently removed.

Removing parking on Allen Street will free up road space to provide a third traffic lane on Allen Street travelling towards Harris Street, reduce queues on the off-ramp, and improve traffic flow at the intersection.

Parking on Harris Street northbound will be reduced to accommodate the relocated bus stop and relocated loading zone north of the bus stop. This requires the removal of six on-street parking spaces. The relocation of the existing bus stop on Harris Street north of Allen Street intersection will allow for five on-street half hour parking spaces to be created at the site of the existing bus stop.

During construction, parking removal will be required around our work areas and site compounds. This may include some spaces in the Sydney Fish Market car park and on sections of Allen Street, Bulwara Road, Jones Lane and Pyrmont Street.

More information about changes to parking can be found in *Section 4*, and *Section 5.2* in the Submissions report.

What changes will be made to the 501 bus route?

Currently, the inbound 501 bus route make a U-turn between the Pyrmont Bridge Road off-ramp and Bank Street when travelling to and from the bus stops on Harris Street.

When the Sydney Fish Market relocates in late 2024, this movement will be closed as part of modifications to the Pyrmont Bridge Road and Bank Street intersection. This will result in a permanent change to the 501 bus route. Public consultation on changes to the 501 bus route will commence in the coming months.

Will any trees be removed?

Within the project footprint, 79 trees have been identified for removal. This includes a group of palm trees in Darling Harbour under the Western Distributor. Transport recognises the value of these trees and will be working closely with Placemaking NSW and other key stakeholders to pursue potential options to relocate and re-use these trees in other areas of landscaping.

Trees impacted by the project would be offset in accordance with the Transport Biodiversity Offset Policy.

More information about impacts to trees and vegetation and protection measures can be found in *Chapter 6.3* of the Review of Environmental Factors for the project, *Appendix C: Arborist Report* (appendix to the REF) and sections 5 and 6 of the Submissions report.

What work is expected around Darling Harbour as part of the project?

Work to build the piers for the new on-ramp will happen at street level on the Darling Harbour promenade which will require the removal of some trees.

Work areas will be set up along Tumbalong Boulevard and in front of the ICC Sydney. Construction vehicle access will be established to these work areas via Darling Drive and Zollner Circuit which will mean changes to pedestrian and cyclist movements in the area during construction.

We will consult with Placemaking NSW, Darling Harbour Live, businesses in Darling Harbour and City of Sydney to understand how we can minimise impacts as much as possible during construction.

Will this project affect the future Bank Street Park that is proposed?

A compound site is proposed in an area that will become part of the future Bank Street Park. Transport will work closely with Infrastructure NSW to hand over this area at the end of our project.

For more information about the proposed Bank Street Park, please visit [insw.com/blackwattlebay](https://www.insw.com/blackwattlebay)

Recent FAQs from the community

Have you considered that the change to the intersection of Pyrmont Bridge Road and Bank Street will lengthen the journey for people traveling from Balmain to Glebe and to Broadway Shopping Centre?

We recognise that removing the turning movements onto Bank Street from the Pyrmont Bridge Road off-ramp will alter the current route to key destinations like Glebe and Broadway for some motorists. Although the

journey to Glebe and Broadway Shopping Centre will be longer from Balmain and Glebe, travel time is not expected to differ significantly.

As surrounding infrastructure comes online such as Blackwattle Bay Development and New Sydney Fish Market, the efficient and safe function of this intersection is critical to sustain the increase in traffic demand.

Do these proposed changes benefit car users to the detriment of pedestrians?

The Western Distributor (and Anzac Bridge) is a critical transport corridor for cars, but also public transport and freight operations to all parts of Sydney, including northern Sydney and Warringah Freeway, south Sydney and the airport, the eastern suburbs and the inner west and Western Sydney via the M4. Several destinations motorists reach using this connection are only, or most appropriately, accessed by road whether that be private, public or freight vehicles. Any upgrades to the efficiency of the Western Distributor and its off-ramps will directly improve bus trips, with over 100 buses every hour relying on the efficient and safe function of this corridor in the morning peak, heading towards the city.

This project focuses specifically on the safety and efficiency of the Western Distributor and Anzac Bridge corridor, however there are several strategic plans outlining Transport's commitment to better public transport and active transport amenity in key places such as Pyrmont. As these plans develop, the community will be given the opportunity to provide input on future proposals.

We also encourage you to learn more about the Public Spaces Charter. The charter recognises the importance of partnering with local businesses and the community to ensure that neighbourhoods like Pyrmont thrive and prosper. For more information, please visit <https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/great-public-spaces/festival-of-place/public-spaces-charter>

Does removing the pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Allen Street and Harris Street penalise active transport and prioritise cars?

The Pyrmont precinct is unique in that a critical transport corridor, the Western Distributor, meets a vibrant local community around Harris Street. While we acknowledge the importance of pedestrian amenity to the suburb, the precinct also needs to balance movement and place outcomes to ensure the network functions effectively as a whole.

Due to their link to central Sydney, the right turns from Allen Street to Harris Street have significant traffic demand. To avoid queues and remove conflict with pedestrians, it is important that this movement is kept as efficient as possible.

What are you doing to address active transport and pedestrian amenity?

This project focuses specifically on the safety and efficiency of the Western Distributor and Anzac Bridge corridor, however there are several strategic plans outlining Transport's commitment to better active transport amenity in key places such as Pyrmont. As these plans develop, the community will be given the opportunity to provide input on proposals.

Will closing the right turn off Pyrmont Bridge Road exit ramp force more cars down Harris Street?

We acknowledge some motorists will be re-routed through Harris Street as part of the proposed movement restrictions at Pyrmont Bridge Road and Bank Street intersection. Harris Street is both a place and an important movement corridor for the distribution of motorists through Pyrmont, Ultimo and beyond.

Other work in Pyrmont and the Inner West

What improvements to public and active transport are happening in the area?

Prioritising traffic movements on key transport corridors like the Western Distributor allows us to re-think what changes we can make in other areas to prioritise active and public transport and support liveable, vibrant local centres and high streets.

We are currently developing the Pyrmont Ultimo Transport Plan to partner with the community and support a mode shift to more space-efficient transport including public transport, walking and cycling over the next ten years.

To find out more about opportunities to be involved in the Pyrmont Ultimo Transport Plan, contact the project team at pyrmontpeninsula@transport.nsw.gov.au

What work is planned to refurbish the Glebe Island Bridge?

Transport for NSW is continuing to investigate options for the future of Glebe Island Bridge, including ongoing maintenance and options for refurbishment and repurposing.

We will inform the community in advance of any maintenance work and will also inform you of opportunities to provide feedback on the future use of the bridge as this information comes to hand.

Use of the eastern approach to the Glebe Island Bridge as a project compound site will not affect or delay any repairs or future use investigations.

Is this project needed when the Western Harbour Tunnel is planned to open in 2028 and Sydney Metro West in 2030?

While some reduction of traffic demand is expected when the Western Harbour Tunnel becomes operational, increases in traffic are also expected, due to the introduction of WestConnex and major development in Pyrmont (including Blackwattle Bay redevelopment and the new Sydney Fish Market upgrade). These would result in greater traffic demand for Anzac Bridge and Western Distributor and would outweigh the relief of traffic volumes offered by the opening of the Western Harbour Tunnel.

Transport has undertaken strategic traffic modelling conducted with and without Sydney Metro West, which indicates there would be minimal changes in traffic volumes or travel demand into and out of this corridor in future years. The safety and resilience issues on the road network warrant immediate intervention and should not await the completion of other projects such as Western Harbour Tunnel and Sydney Metro West.