

Questions and answers about vegetation clearing

Why does vegetation need to be cleared?

The M2 Motorway will be widened along 14.5 kilometres of its length. In order to widen the motorway it will be necessary to clear some existing vegetation to allow various works to be undertaken, including:

- Establishment of construction compounds
- Relocation of services eg. power, water, gas, telecommunications.
- Earthworks and drainage works.
- Provision of access roads.
- Pavement widening.
- Modification to bridges,
- Installation of new and temporary noise walls.
- Installation of retaining walls.

What areas will be cleared?

Vegetation clearing will only take place in areas directly associated with access, site establishment, construction and motorway widening work. The majority of clearing will be undertaken within the M2 Motorway lease boundary. Some clearing is required on land owned by the RTA or agencies outside the lease boundary to establish compounds etc.

The areas identified for clearing along the motorway include a total of 17 ha to be permanently cleared and 7 ha to be temporarily cleared in order to undertake the construction works.

Temporary clearing at compounds and work sites will be minimised by retaining mature trees wherever possible. Some clearing around Darling Mills Creek, Terrys Creek and Devlins Creek has been undertaken to provide access to work sites under these viaducts. The use of tower cranes in these areas has significantly reduced the amount of clearing to be undertaken. Most of the equipment and construction materials are moved by the tower crane from the motorway down to the work site. This reduces the need for truck movements and protects the bush land at these work sites.

Maps showing the areas that will be cleared are included in Attachment D of the *Flora and Fauna Management Sub-plan*. This plan and the maps can be downloaded from the project website at: www.hillsm2upgrade.com.au/cem_documents.htm

How long will the vegetation clearing take?

Clearing commenced in February 2011 and may take up to six months to complete. Key activities prior to clearing include:

- Establishment of vegetation clearing boundaries
- Identify weed controls and undertake weed treatments
- Implement erosion and sediment controls
- Identify services and access routes

M2 Upgrade project

A team consisting of The Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW, The Hills Motorway Limited and Hills Motorway Management Limited (as trustee of the Hills Motorway Trust)

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Email: enquiries@hillsm2upgrade.com.au
Call: 1800 196 266 (free call)
Post: PO Box 379, North Ryde BC NSW 1670

What are the hours of work?

Standard construction working hours are Monday to Friday, from 7am to 6pm and Saturday from 8am to 1pm. Some work may be required outside of these hours, for example, when traffic lanes need to be closed to avoid the risk of trees and vegetation that overhang the motorway falling onto the motorway.

A separate notice will be provided to nearby residents if night works are needed.

What equipment will be used for the clearing and where will the mulch be stored?

Equipment used for clearing includes chainsaws, wood mulchers, stump grinders, cranes (to lift large branches), excavators and elevated work platforms.

All vegetation that is cleared will be mulched on site and stockpiled in different locations to be reused (eg. for revegetation or control of sediment run off) or removed for disposal at approved sites.

What assessment has been made on the impacts of vegetation clearing?

An assessment of the impacts on flora and fauna and measures to minimise these impacts has been undertaken and is described in the *M2 Upgrade Environmental Assessment May 2010*. This document is available on the project website at www.hillsm2upgrade.com.au. Further information is available in the specialist study *Flora and Fauna Technical Paper 3* which is part of the environmental assessment document.

The requirements to clear vegetation have been reviewed and refined by the project team to minimise the potential impacts as construction methods are finalised. Maps showing the areas to be cleared can be found in *Attachment D of the Flora and Fauna Management Sub-plan* as part of the *Construction and Environmental Management Plan*.

This plan and the maps can be downloaded from the project website at:
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What is being done to minimise the impacts on fauna and native vegetation?

The project team will retain native vegetation wherever possible. Measures to minimise impacts on fauna and native vegetation include:

- The areas of vegetation to be retained will be clearly marked on site in order to reduce the risk of over-clearing.
- An ecologist will undertake a pre-clearing survey to identify and mark potential hollow-bearing trees before clearing commences.
- Trees that have been identified as hollow-bearing will be cleared last to reduce the risk of injury to any nesting fauna.
- An ecologist will be on-site to supervise the removal of all identified hollow-bearing trees. Nest boxes will be installed to provide replacement nesting locations for habitat that is removed.

Clearing of vegetation will be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislative requirements, guidelines and the Minister for Planning's Conditions of Approval. Further information including

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the *Minister's Conditions of Approval*, the *Construction and Environmental Management Plan* and the *Flora and Fauna Management Sub-Plan* is on the project website at www.hillsm2upgrade.com.au

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What will be done to replant the areas that are temporarily used?

The project team will replant 7 hectares of vegetation once construction is completed. A revegetation strategy that considers the availability of light, moisture and the most suitable plant species is being developed.

Landscaping plans will use native vegetation where appropriate and the areas will be replanted to at least the same condition prior to clearing.

Seeds will be collected in the corridor prior to and during clearing wherever possible and replanted.

Will operational noise and air quality be impacted when vegetation is cleared along the corridor?

Although vegetation is effective as a means of visual screening, it does not significantly reduce noise impacts from roads. Similarly, vegetation is not an effective way of reducing the dispersion of airborne pollutants from roads.

It is not expected that the removal of vegetation would have a significant effect on air quality or increase noise levels near the motorway.

Where can I find out more information?

Visit the project website for further information at www.hillsm2upgrade.com.au

Home page → Document links → Environmental assessment document links

Home page → Document links → Construction document links

The community complaints and information line 1800 196 266 is attended day and night during construction. Complaints received will be responded to within two hours and we will investigate the complaint as soon as possible. If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback please contact us on the 1800 number or email enquiries@hillsm2upgrade.com.au.



Hills M2 Upgrade
breakdown safety

In the case of breakdown:

- Stay in your vehicle
- Switch on your hazard lights
- Call **1800 196 266**
- Wait for assistance