



Championship Course Project Fact Sheet

The Royal Sydney Golf Club is the largest area of managed landscape in the Woollahra municipality. It is also home to a renowned Championship Golf Course. Neither the landscape, nor the golf course, can presently be managed and presented in the most optimal way – whether for the environment or for the game of golf. The challenges to optimally address both are interconnected, not least being considerations around long-term sustainability.

- The Royal Sydney Golf Club is more than 120 years old; the current Championship Course near on 100 years old.
- Over the last 30 years, the course's ranking by Golf Digest in the top courses of Australia has dropped from 4th in 1991 to 48th in 2020.
- At the heart of the Club's "Strategic Plan 2030" was the vital necessity to address in a holistic way the golf design and landscaping challenges that was contributing to the course's declining rating, which informed the decision to commission a course re-design by world-renowned golf course architect, Gil Hanse, and landscape architect, Harley Kruse.
- The course re-design was approved by just over 80 per cent of Club Members at an Extraordinary General Meeting in 2019. It is expected the member-funded works will cost around \$17 million.
- An amended development application ('DA') for the project was recently submitted to Woollahra Municipal Council and is expected to be determined by the independent Woollahra Local Planning Panel before the end of the year, with construction scheduled to commence in April 2022.
- The amended DA clearly identifies final tree numbers, provides enhanced details on important water management and drainage solutions, as well as explains how the biodiversity across the course will be significantly increased.

Before



After



Above: artist's impression of the view from the Championship Course looking back to the clubhouse.

- The current problems with the course include failing drainage and irrigation systems, poor sand quality in the bunkers and dense, congested playing corridors where trees restrict airflow and create heavy shade. This has promoted infestation by undesirable grasses, the loss of grass and tree root invasion on greens, tees and fairways. Additionally, the course is experiencing an increasing number of tree failures – in fact, 300 trees have been lost in the past 5 years alone.
- Currently, there are 30 different species of trees, plants, shrubs and grasses across the course. This will be increased to 94 different native species (some rare and endangered) with the planting of around 500,000 plants and shrubs featuring different hues, textures and year-round flowering - which will more than triple the flora biodiversity on the site. Importantly, it will bring back the ecological connectivity that has been lost due to the decline in the critical understorey planting.
- It is proposed that 595 trees be removed from the property and be replaced with 1,888 new trees of very diverse native species - **resulting in an actual net increase of 1,293 trees on the course itself.** Many of the new trees are currently being grown in various nurseries for planting during the works.
- The trees removed will be replaced by Australian natives, including species such as Sydney Peppermint, Scribbly Gum, Red Bloodwood, Angophora, Coastal Banksia and Old Man Banksia.
- The principles in the new design feature improved biodiversity, control of aggressive and invasive flora species, provision of wildlife corridors, restored bushland, a contribution to the broader community's understanding and valuing of biodiversity and providing habitat for birds, insects and other fauna species.
- The changes will also result in a 20 per cent reduction in water use (saving 73 million litres per year - equivalent to over 29 Olympic swimming pools), as well as a significant reduction in the use of chemicals and fertilisers.

- Some 14 hectares of fertilised mown turf will be given up and restored as areas of naturalised landscape of coastal heath, the endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub and naturalised native grasslands.
- The project provides an opportunity, at no cost to the public, to implement approaches to the restoration and maintenance of coastal heathland environments in urban Sydney - including seed collection and natural regeneration experiments.
- A clear objective of the re-design is to make the Royal Sydney property one of the most important sanctuaries of native flora and fauna in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs.

	EXISTING COURSE	AMENDED DA (APRIL 2021)
Total trees	2,696 trees	3,989 trees
Tree removals	-	595 trees
New trees*	-	1,888 new native trees to be planted
Tree canopy	15.35 ha	Canopy regained in approximately 10 years plus an increase of 6-19% by 2040-2045
Heathland	Nil apart from recent trial areas	13.79 ha (largely replacing mown grass)
Native heathland vegetation	Nil apart from recent trial areas	350,000 plants planted in first 12 months 150,000 plants planted in years 2 & 3
Water saving	-	20%

* the amended DA includes the planting of an additional 1,185 native trees identified by Woollahra Council to be 'prescribed trees' due to their species type and size.



More Information



championshipcourse.rsgc.com.au

April 2021