

GOLDEN HIGHWAY CORRIDOR STRATEGY Community Consultation Report

OCTOBER 2016



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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the issues raised by community members and stakeholders through formal submissions in response to the public exhibition of the Golden Highway Draft Corridor Strategy.

The report details how the feedback presented by key stakeholders, community groups and individuals during the consultation period has been addressed to update the final Golden Highway Corridor Strategy document.

1.2 Background to the project

The Golden Highway Corridor Strategy is a NSW Government initiative that aims to set a planning framework for how the government will manage road transport on the Golden Highway corridor in line with the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (LTTMP), Hunter and Central West Regional Transport Plans, the NSW Freight and Ports Strategy and other relevant state planning frameworks. It integrates planning for roads, freight and all other modes of transport and sets out initiatives, solutions and actions to meet NSW transport challenges. The corridor strategy supports the two key aims of the LTTMP, to provide essential access for Regional NSW and to set, as a priority, the need to support an efficient and productive freight industry.

The NSW Government has made fundamental changes to infrastructure planning and investment to ensure funding is allocated towards the initiatives that deliver the best value, based on compelling evidence. Corridor strategies are being prepared for every state road in NSW to create consistency in how the State Road Network is managed and planned. These corridor strategies

make planning and investment decisions transparent to the community, councils and other government agencies.

The Golden Highway Corridor Strategy has been prepared by a multidisciplinary project team from Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) with expertise in road safety, traffic, asset management, land use, environment, planning and development.

The strategy aims to address the current and future transport needs of the corridor, including road safety improvements, delivery of overtaking lanes and support for greater use of higher productivity vehicles (HPVs). HPVs are vehicles that exceed the carrying capacity of a standard restricted access vehicles enabling them to carry larger loads per trip and thereby reducing the number of trips required to move the same amount of freight. The strategy builds on numerous upgrade works already completed on the Golden Highway corridor by the NSW Government, including pavement resurfacing and rehabilitation, intersection upgrades and safety works. Investigations are also underway to address run-off road crashes.

1.3 Consultation approach

The Golden Highway Draft Corridor Strategy was released for public comment between the 30th March and 9th May 2016. The draft report was published on the Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services websites for viewing by the general public and a process for providing feedback was detailed.

Stakeholder briefings were held with relevant stakeholders who were invited to provide comment and assessment. The list of key stakeholders can be found in Appendix A.

Stakeholders were encouraged to talk to the Roads and Maritime Regional Manager in the Hunter and Central West regions regarding any issues, contact the project team via the 1800 community number and submit written responses via the Golden Highway Corridor Strategy email account, mailing address and online survey.

Community members were also invited to attend four community drop in sessions held during the consultation period. The purpose of the drop in sessions was to provide the community an opportunity to view the display materials, talk with members of the project team and submit feedback in person. A total of 171 people were recorded as attending the drop in sessions. These sessions were held at:

- Saturday 2 April 8am - 12pm
Denman Farmers Markets
Lions Park, Main Street, Denman
55 attendees at this drop in session.
- Saturday 9 April 8.30am - 1pm
Dunedoo Farmers Markets
Milling Park, Golden Highway, Dunedoo
43 attendees at this drop in session.
- Saturday 16 April 9am - 12pm
Merriwa Markets
RSL Club, Bow Street, Merriwa
28 attendees at this drop in session.
- Saturday 30 April 10am - 4pm
Dubbo Show
108 Wingewarra Street, Dubbo
45 attendees at this drop in session.

Promotion of the drop in sessions and invitation to comment was provided via the Project website, newspaper advertisements, media release, static displays and letterbox drops. The project website received a total of 325 unique page visitors during the consultation period.

Twelve advertisements appeared in local newspapers to raise awareness of the display and invite comment. These included the Scone Advocate, Muswellbrook Chronicle, Mudgee Guardian, Singleton Argus and Dubbo Daily Liberal.

The media release announcing the display and inviting comment was distributed to local media outlets and was published in the Muswellbrook Chronicle and Hunter Valley News as the article 'Michael Johnsen announces Golden Highway Gateway Strategy funding'.

Community update postcards were delivered to the residents in Denman, Dunedoo and Merriwa. The Golden Highway Draft Corridor Strategy document was also available to view at local libraries at these locations. A static display of project materials i.e. community update postcards and frequently asked questions, were also distributed to local businesses to promote the drop in sessions and invite comment.

Stakeholders engaged with the project via mail, email, phone, online survey and drop in sessions. During the consultation period a total of 54 submissions were received including two letters, four phone calls, 15 emails, 18 feedback forms and 19 online surveys.

The feedback was sought to better inform the final strategy document and was vital when developing the corridor strategy to ensure local knowledge is at the heart of any future upgrade and maintenance decisions. It helps to ensure that the planned investment on the highway meets the needs of the local communities and industries it serves.

The final Golden Highway Corridor Strategy can be viewed on the Transport for NSW website at the following address: <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects-road-network-corridor-planning/golden-highway-corridor-strategy>

2 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Total of
397
comments for
discussion



2.1 Comments of support

A positive response has been received on the draft strategy from a number of stakeholders on the corridor including local councils, community and business groups, local industry and community members.

The feedback obtained has included expressions of support for this strategy as it provides a clear staging of options for improvements on the highway over the next 20 years. The strategy has provided a high degree of certainty for councils to consider their local road network needs based on the plans outlined in the draft strategy.

A number of councils have written and expressed their support for the aims and direction of the strategy, including:

- Dubbo City Council (now part of Western Plains Regional Council)
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Singleton Shire Council
- Warrumbungle Shire Council
- Wellington Shire Council (now part of Western Plains Regional Council)

Other stakeholders including TRUCKRIGHT and Regional Development Australia Orana have also expressed support for the improvements detailed in the strategy which aim to provide local and regional benefits.

2.2 Overview of issues raised

A total of 54 written submissions were received covering a range of topics, totalling 397 comments for discussion. This included seven comments of support for the aims and direction of the strategy. The remaining 390 discussion points are grouped into ten categories based around the issues most commonly raised. The issues most frequently raised were regarding:

1. Road design and geometry
2. Urban amenity
3. Rest areas
4. Higher Productivity Vehicle access
5. Pavement condition
6. Overtaking lanes
7. Rail crossings
8. Stock crossings
9. Pedestrian access
10. Other issues

A summary of each issue and the NSW Government's response is provided below, along with a reference to the community respondent from whom the comment was received.

Changes to the final Corridor Strategy have been referenced in the responses where applicable.

3 CORRIDOR ISSUES RAISED

3.1 Road design and geometry

Issue description

Road design relates to the physical geometry and layout of the road, this includes the horizontal curves on the highway, the various grades of any hills along the route, the width of the road including the line marking arrangement, and the design of intersections with roads connecting to the highway.

Submission numbers

A total of 43 submissions have been received relating to road design, with seven different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 48, 51, 52, 53, 54 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of issues

1. Concerns have been received regarding the design of intersections on the corridor, in relation to sight distances, road safety, geometry and ability to accommodate turning movements by heavy vehicles. These included sites near Merriwa, Denman, Mount Thorley; Idaville Road, Vinegaroy Road, Tongy Lane, Flaggs Road, Ringwood Road Bylong Valley Way, Durraween Lane and Muronbong Road. Suggestions have been made by respondents to add turning bays at these locations.
2. Comment has been received pointing out a number of unsafe road curves at locations on the corridor. In particular, sites near the Range Road intersection, between Belford Road and Denman, and Andersons Gap have been noted by respondents.

3. Comments have been received pointing out a number of bridges and culverts that require widening at locations on the corridor to enable HPV's to safely cross. In particular, sites near Warkworth, Mount Thorley, Hunter River Bridge and Westwood Road east of Battery Rock rest area, have been noted by respondents.
4. A number of respondents have commented on signposting both on the approach to and within towns. Comments relate to the need for more signage on the corridor.
5. A concern was raised regarding need for traffic lights at busy intersections in towns on the corridor to increase safety. In particular, sites near Merriwa were noted.
6. A number of comments were received regarding poor visibility and safety issues on the corridor. In particular the need for vegetation maintenance, to minimise visibility issues and increase visibility for road users at intersections. In particular sites near Wybong Creek, Ballimore and Merriwa.
7. A number of comments were received regarding access/egress to a school located on the corridor near Denman. Respondents were concerned about road and pedestrian safety, and suggest the entry to the school be placed away from the Golden Highway and the speed limit near the school reduced to 40 km/h.
8. Comment has been received regarding the need for traffic modelling of the Fitzroy Street roundabout; the safety and efficiency of the Myall Street roundabout (noting major upgrades and access requirements at the nearby hospital), and the safety and capacity of Erskine Street (Golden Highway) from the level crossing to the Myall Street roundabout.
9. Comment has been received on the possibility of increasing the speed limit from 100 km/h to 110 km/h on rural sections of the Golden Highway.

Issue response

1. Intersections that constrain the movement of heavy vehicles, in particular HPVs have been assessed in the strategy. Other substandard intersections flagged during the consultation period have been included in the final strategy where appropriate. Roads and Maritime will upgrade intersections on a priority basis to provide left and right turning bays. Intersections will be prioritised by crash history, crash risk and road hierarchy. Roads and Maritime will upgrade the intersections of Putty Road, Mount Thorley, Denman Road, Rosemount Road, Muronbong Road and Durraween Lane in the short-term. In the medium term, intersections to be upgraded will include Pagan Street, Reedy Creek Road, Bylong Valley Way, Wybong Road, Worondi Creek Road, Flagg's Road, Westwood Road, Vennacher Street, Ringwood Road, Idaville Road, Ulan Road, Vinegary Road (Warrumbungle Way) and the Castlereagh Highway (east and west). Roads and Maritime will also work with the RFS and Upper Hunter Shire Council to upgrade the access for emergency services to the Golden Highway in Gungal. Remaining intersections along the Golden Highway corridor will be progressively upgraded on a priority basis over the long term.
2. Road design standards are set out in the AUSTRROADS Guide to Road Design (Part 2 – Road Geometry) (2010) and in the RMS Network Planning Targets (2010). Deficient curves on the corridor have been identified in the strategy. The AUSTRROADS Guide to Road Design also provides guidelines for safety barrier treatments on curves, with which the corridor strategy is consistent. The highway between Belford and Putty Road (past Range Road) will also be widened as part of the short-term plans in accordance with design guidelines. This will include providing minimum 2 m sealed shoulders and widened clear zones (or safety barriers). These works will improve the safety of existing curves.
3. Roads and Maritime plans to provide upgraded signage and line-markings at 12 narrow bridges and bridge approaches on the corridor to improve driver awareness as part of the short-

term program of work. These bridges include Wollombi Brook, Krui River, Talbragar River (Uarbry and Piper Bridge), Cainbil Creek, Limestone Creek, Tucklan Creek, Sandy Creek, Spicers Creek, Ballimore Creek and Mitchells Creek.

Roads and Maritime will also commence a planning study in the short-term to assess options for the widening or replacement of the Krui River bridge. It is noted the Krui River bridge is 6m wide with 2.8 metre travel lanes, and is approximately one metre narrower than other bridges. Given the potential safety issues this raises with regards to PBS vehicles, it has been identified for further investigation. The planning study will also assess the adequacy of the road alignment on the bridge approach.

4. Tourist signage on the corridor is assessed by the Tourist Attraction Signposting Assessment Committee (TASAC) and any decisions must find a balance between supporting regional tourism and excessive signage becoming a distraction to drivers using the corridor. Signs for safety and direction are installed in accordance to the principles set out in the AUSTRROADS Guide to Traffic Management (Part 10 – Traffic Control and Communications Devices) (2009). The corridor strategy assessment of signage is aligned with these guidelines.

As part of the short-term program of works, existing rest areas and new rest areas will be provided along the corridor. New and upgraded signage will be provided for these rest areas as a part of the works.

5. Roads and Maritime will liaise with Upper Hunter Shire Council as part of the Draft Town Centre Masterplan for Merriwa, to ensure the safety and efficiency of the Golden Highway and local roads through Merriwa.

Roads and Maritime is currently developing a project to improve pedestrian crossings in Merriwa, in particular the project will improve visibility and safety for pedestrians. The work started in mid-June 2016 and is expected to be

completed in August 2016. The work on the Golden Highway between Bow Street and Vennacher Street will address concerns raised by the local community about the safety of existing pedestrian crossings. More information on this project can be found at <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/news-events/news/members-of-parliament/2015/151112-have-your-say-on-the-golden-highway-upgrade.html>

6. Roads and Maritime undertakes regular maintenance of roadside vegetation. Prioritising for vegetation maintenance considers safety, particularly sight distance at intersections and vegetation within drainage lines. Roads and Maritime also liaises with the Rural Fire Service to minimise fire risk, and considers enhanced maintenance of vegetation on town approaches.

The corridor strategy has also identified approximately 45 kilometres of pavement on the Golden Highway to be rehabilitated or widened as a part of the funded short-term program of works. This includes between Belford and Putty Road, Hollydene winery to Woodlands Road, Denman Road to Rosemount Road, and various locations between the intersection of the Castlereagh Highway (east) and Dubbo. This work includes assessment of vegetation and removal of vegetation where possible. Where vegetation cannot be removed to provide appropriate clear zones, roadside safety barriers will be provided.

7. In July 2016, Roads and Maritime completed a project to improve traffic flow and safety on the Golden Highway at Denman and improve access from the highway to Palace and Crinoline streets. Roads and Maritime developed the project to improve safety and traffic flow for vehicles travelling on the highway and reduce braking for heavy vehicles. Construction work was carried out from February 2016 to July 2016. The work included realigning a 120-metre section of the Golden Highway to bypass the four-way intersection at Palace and Crinoline streets; widening road shoulders on the Golden Highway; installing new right turn bays to improve safety for vehicles turning into Denman

and St Joseph's Primary School; building new footpath in front of St Joseph's Primary School and improving the driveway access to the school and installing new guardrail, kerb and gutter and stormwater drainage.

Roads and Maritime made a number of changes to the original design after community feedback was received during the community display in December 2015. The changes were made due to limitations in the sight distance at the intersection of the proposed cul-de-sac and Crinoline Street. More information can be found at <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/news-events/news/members-of-parliament/2015/151009-have-a-say-safety-improvements-the-golden-highway-denman.pdf>

A 40 km/hr school speed zone is also in force along the Golden Highway at Denman during school start and end times.

8. Roads and Maritime have developed a Dubbo Traffic Model in consultation with Western Plains Regional Council (formally Dubbo City Council) for the purpose of testing options for a second high level crossing of the Macquarie River. That model will be used in future to investigate network expansion requests from Council on a priority basis. Safety performance will continue to be monitored and prioritised on an annual basis
9. The current road alignment along much of the Golden Highway includes less than desirable curve radii, steeper grades in sections, significant native vegetation communities adjacent to the corridor, and direct property accesses. In order to upgrade the current road alignment to a 110km/h speed environment and meet current design standards, significant investments would be required. These requirements include a high standard of alignment, limited direct access to the highway (with houses set back), wide and traversable clear zones and wide spacing of intersections (NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines (2011)). Given this, there are currently no plans to increase the speed limit on the Golden Highway.

3.2 Urban amenity

Issue description

Urban amenity describes how the Golden Highway impacts on the liveability of towns located along the corridor. There are 113,350 people located in Local Government Areas and of that 35,505 people living in towns and villages along the Golden Highway. Whilst the highway connects townships to industry and employment opportunities, it can also bring an undesirable level of traffic, noise and disruption to townships when heavy vehicles pass through their centres.

Submission numbers

A total of six submissions have been received relating to urban amenity, with two different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 5, 16, 20, 24, 26, 35 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of issues

Comments were raised about the need to look at town bypasses for heavy vehicles to limit the impact on the amenity of local communities including Denman and Dunedoo.

Issue response

Over time, as towns have developed along the Golden Highway, traffic volumes have increased. It is noted in many towns the volume of traffic is a mixture of local traffic accessing goods and services within towns, as well as through traffic accessing other areas and highways connected along the corridor. In other cases, such as Denman, the highway already bypasses the main commercial centre.

Given the current volume of traffic travelling on the Golden Highway through towns such as Denman and Dunedoo is considered to be fairly low (3000 vpd at Denman and 1500 vpd west of Dunedoo) a bypass of these towns is not considered warranted at this stage. Roads and Maritime will continue to liaise over time with councils and communities along the corridor to discuss concerns as they arise.

3.3 Rest areas

Issue description

Highway rest areas are important facilities for fatigue management along the corridor. Driver fatigue has been identified as a respondent to road crashes and presents a safety risk to all road users. Better trip planning, including frequent rest breaks



can help drivers avoid fatigue. Rest areas and stopping bays need to be strategically located and signposted.

Submission numbers

A total of 14 submissions have been received relating to rest areas, with three different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 28, 37, 40, 51, 52, 54 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of Issues

The driver amenities provided at rest areas are very important in determining how useful rest areas are for drivers and how often they will be used. Comments have been received stressing the importance of rest area design, suggesting better parking facilities and access to rest areas for heavy vehicles and the importance of improving rest area facilities such as shelters, toilets, showers, fuel and food.

Issue response

Roads and Maritime Services is currently completing a review of rest areas across the state road network. Improving rest areas on the Golden Highway is a priority and more specifically the provision for heavy vehicles, where this has been identified as a key component to improving access and productivity on the corridor. A program of improvements to rest areas and truck parking bays is funded in the short-term, including improvements at Dunedoo and Jerrys Plains. As part of the upgrade, new and upgraded rest area signage will be provided along the road corridor. Roads and Maritime proposes to progress the Sandy Hollow heavy vehicle rest area, when funding becomes available.

To meet the basic needs of heavy vehicle drivers, major heavy vehicle rest areas should include provision of sealed pavements particularly for ingress and egress lanes and ramps, at least one toilet on each site, shaded areas, rubbish bins and tables and chairs. Additional facilities such as

showers, fuel and food are provided through service stations and are outside of the scope of what Roads and Maritime provide in heavy vehicle rest areas.

3.4 Higher Productivity Vehicle access

Issue description

A key objective of the Golden Highway Corridor Strategy is to improve freight productivity by extending the areas accessible to HPVs and supporting industry to progressively adopt modern vehicles. Improving freight productivity and efficiency adds directly to national economic output by reducing the costs associated with freight movement. HPVs are able to carry larger loads per trip reducing the number of trips required to move the same amount of freight. Work is required to remove impediments to HPV access on the Golden Highway.

Submission numbers

A total of 33 submissions have been received relating to HPVs, with two different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 44, 45, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of Issues

1. Comments received about a number of locations along the corridor where HPV access is restricted and unsafe. Respondents believe this makes the corridor unsuitable for HPV freight using the corridor to travel between Belford and Dubbo. A number of locations where HPV access is not suitable were flagged by community and industry members including sharp corners, junctions and other obstacles at Jerrys Plains, Putty Road intersection, Ogilvie Hill, Winery Hill, Ballimore, Uarbry and Idaville Rd.

2. A comment was received expressing concern that HPVs travelling along the corridor divert onto local roads rather than continuing along the approved B Double route, near Ballimore.

Issue response

1. The vision for the Golden Highway is to accommodate HPV access between Belford and Dubbo. The corridor strategy sets out the NSW Government's 20 year plan to manage and guide the development of the road corridor to improve safety, traffic efficiency and sustainability. The corridor strategy identified the constraints to HPV access and \$133 million in funding has been provided through state and federal government programs to address these deficiencies. HPV access through the Performance-Based Standards (PBS) scheme offers the heavy vehicle industry the potential to achieve higher productivity and safety through innovative and optimised vehicle design. PBS vehicles are designed to perform their tasks as productively, safely and sustainably as possible, and to operate on networks that are appropriate for their level of performance. The basic principle of PBS is matching the right vehicles to the right tasks. PBS vehicles are tested against 16 stringent safety standards and four infrastructure standards to ensure they fit the existing road network and are safe. The scheme has been in operation since October 2007.

As part of the corridor strategy upgrades will include overtaking lanes, pavement reconstruction, widening and intersection upgrades, rest area improvements, upgrades to level crossings, flood immunity works and heavy vehicle inspection sites. Roads and Maritime will continue to liaise with freight operators in the delivery of this program.

2. This matter has been referred to RMS compliance officers.

3.5 Pavement condition

Issue description

The comments received regarding pavement condition relate to the current standard of the road surface as well as its service life and maintenance. Effectively managing the Golden Highway's pavement condition over the long term is a key task that involves estimating the pavement's remaining service life to ensure adequate rates of pavement replacement. In order to provide a suitable asset for HPV access, heavy duty pavement is recommended (particularly in areas of moderate to high heavy vehicle volumes).

Submission numbers

A total of 43 submissions have been received relating to pavement condition, with two different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of Issues

1. Comments have been received pointing out the poor pavement conditions at locations along the corridor. In particular respondents have noted sites near Winery Hill, Pembroke Road, Uarbry, Vinegaroy Road, near Denman and some rest areas along the corridor.
2. Concerns about poor pavement conditions leading to HPV crashes near Jerrys Plains and steep, straight shoulders on the corridor, in particular east of Pembroke Road. A suggestion has been made to taper shoulders to avoid crashes.

Issue response

1. Roads and Maritime has investigated pavement conditions and as a part of the short-term program of works, will rehabilitate and widen approximately 45 kilometres of road pavement along the Golden Highway. This includes between Belford and Putty Road, Hollydene winery to Woodlands Road, Denman Road to Rosemount Road, and various locations between the intersection of the Castlereagh Highway (east) and Dubbo. A bridge to provide improved flood immunity will also be provided at Uarbry, bypassing the existing low-level causeway. A program of improvements to rest areas and parking bays are also proposed in the short-term. In the medium-term, Roads and Maritime will continue a program of pavement rehabilitation (including widening) as funding permits.
2. Roads and Maritime will commence a planning study to assess options for the widening or replacement of the Krui River bridge east of Pembroke Road. The planning study will also review the adequacy of the road alignment of the bridge approach. Roads and Maritime has also identified a continued program of pavement rehabilitation and widening, and clear zone works east and west of Jerrys Plains in the medium term (including the eastbound “s” curve approach to Jerrys Plains).

3.6 Overtaking lanes

Issue description

Overtaking lanes improve travel times and level of service for road customers. They also reduce driver frustration and unsafe behaviour. The need for implementing extra overtaking lanes has been discussed by respondents.

Submission numbers

A total of 21 submissions have been received relating to overtaking lanes, with two different comment points raised in these submissions. The

reference numbers for the respondents are: 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 36, 40, 45, 47, 49, 52, 53 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of Issues

With a large diversity of vehicle types using the Golden Highway corridor, from heavy freight vehicles to oversized farming and mining equipment, school buses and commuter vehicles, the level of service on the road could be improved by providing overtaking opportunities when these different vehicle types share the same two lane corridor. Respondents have expressed the need to build overtaking lanes as the highest priority for the corridor strategy.

Issue response

The importance of overtaking lanes on the Golden Highway has been highlighted in the final corridor strategy document. This includes actions along the corridor for increased overtaking lanes, and under Section 5.2 (Overtaking opportunities and level of service) in the corridor strategy document.

As part of the short-term program of works, Roads and Maritime will construct overtaking lanes between the New England Highway and Putty Road, between Hollydene winery and Woodlands Road and at Ogilvies Hill.

In the medium-term, additional overtaking lanes will be provided between the New England Highway and Denman. Climbing lanes will also be provided on all steep grades east and west of Merriwa, east of Krui River, west of Cassilis Road and near Ulan Road.

Minor upgrades to existing climbing lane sections such as east of Merriwa, and on Pikes Gap will also be undertaken to improve the safety and efficiency of these road sections.

Roads and Maritime will also monitor the need to provide additional overtaking lanes between Denman and Dubbo.

3.7 Railway crossings

Issue description

Rail crossings can refer to either a level crossing – the intersection of a road or walkway and a railway line at the same grade – or a grade separated crossing, where the road and rail line are either under or over one another. At-grade rail crossings can present risks relating to road safety and negatively affect travel times on intersecting roads.

Submission numbers

A total of seven submissions have been received relating to railway crossings, with three different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 5, 6, 9, 13, 16, 19, 28 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of Issues

Comments were received regarding specific railway crossings on the corridor, in particular the road safety issues and delays they cause, including crossings near Denman and Dunedoo. A suggestion for overpass at railway crossing near Denman to stop near misses has been made by respondents.

Issue response

The corridor strategy identifies the need to upgrade the railway crossings along the Golden Highway under Section 5.1 Rail crossings. A speed limit review will be completed at all high-speed level crossings along the Golden Highway and will consider reducing the regulatory speed limit to 80 km/h.

Roads and Maritime will upgrade the level crossing at Denman to provide boom gates and an upgrade of the Mangoola Road intersection as part of the short-term program of works.

Roads and Maritime will continue to monitor the performance of the Denman level crossing in consultation with ARTC.

3.8 Stock crossings

Issue description

Stock crossings refer to the movement of stock i.e. cattle and sheep from one side of the highway to another.

Submission numbers

A total of six submissions have been received relating to stock crossings, with two different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 23, 27, 30, 37, 39, 53 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of Issues

Comments have been received pointing out the need to recognise and accommodate stock crossings and address safety concerns regarding stock crossings at locations along the corridor. In particular, sites near Jerrys Plains and Dunedoo were identified.

Issue response

Roads and Maritime is exploring a program of minor works including vehicle activated signs and localised shoulder widening for the stock crossings east of Jerrys Plains in the short-term. A 2 km extended 80 km/hr zone is also in force at the Jerrys Plains stock crossing. Roads and Maritime will continue to monitor the safety and performance of these crossings. Section 5.5 (Skid resistance) of the Golden Highway Corridor Strategy incorporates this response.

Roads and Maritime will liaise with Local Land Services and land holders on opportunities for safe stock crossings, particularly near Dunedoo.

3.9 Pedestrian Access

Issue description

Pedestrian access can refer to a shared zone of a road or network of roads where space is shared safely by vehicles and pedestrians and where pedestrian priority takes precedence over ease of vehicle movement.

Submission numbers

A total of three submissions have been received relating to pedestrian access, with two different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 8, 26, 34 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of Issues

Concerns have been received about pedestrian access, as well as walking and cycling access in towns on the highway. In particular sites near Dunedoo and Merriwa have been identified.

Issue response

The road corridor strategy identifies the need to support walking and cycling infrastructure (active transport plans) within the town centres along the corridor. The NSW Government will work with local councils to integrate walking and cycling into their ten-year Community Strategic Plans to ensure there is more provision for walking and cycling, and will promote this approach with Regional Organisations of Councils.

The Regional Transport Plans for the Hunter and Central West regions further detail the active transport plans in the communities in these regions such as the 'Cycling Towns Program' to assist with funding bicycle infrastructure in regional towns. The current policy is to focus on improving cycling facilities within a five kilometre radius of the main population centres and walking facilities within a two kilometre radius of such centres.

3.10 Other

Issue description

Other issues raised during the consultation period including queries about detour routes, community engagement, telecommunications and the contractor tendering process on the Golden Highway corridor. This section addresses these remaining issues.

Submission numbers

A total of 17 submissions have been received relating to other issues, with six different comment points raised in these submissions. The reference numbers for the respondents are: 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 19, 20, 25, 28, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 42, 43 and more detail about their background can be found in Appendix 2.

Summary of Issues

1. Comment has been received regarding the coverage of incidence response plans in the strategy. In particular, the impact on local roads of any diversions in place when an incident forces the closure of a section of the highway.
2. A comment was received regarding community engagement on the corridor.
3. Comments were received regarding the lack of reliable telecommunications on the corridor including mobile and Wi-Fi coverage along the highway.
4. A comment was received regarding how Roads and Maritime will engage contractors to complete work on the corridor.
5. Comments were received pointing out the draft corridor strategy failed to recognise bus and coach services that are in use on the Golden Highway.
6. Comment was received suggesting environmental studies should be conducted to protect flora and fauna located on the corridor.

Issue response

1. When developing Incident Response Plans, Roads and Maritime consults with local government and emergency services to minimise the impact of closures on local roads which are used as detour routes during an incident. The short-term program of work includes flood immunity work at Mudies Creek and Uarbry as well as a broader package of safety improvements which will reduce the need for detours. In the medium-term, Roads and Maritime will monitor opportunities for variable message signage (VMS) to alert drivers to issues on the corridor and potential road closures. Roads and Maritime will also continually monitor existing Incident Response Plans to ensure they remain current, and provide coverage for the entire road corridor.
2. Roads and Maritime will continue to work with the community and stakeholders throughout the life of the project to keep the community informed. This will include providing more detailed consultation to directly impacted stakeholders, and provision of advance notice of work activities.
3. The NSW Government has discussed improvement of mobile phone coverage with carriers, highlighting areas of poor or nil coverage. The Federal Government has established a mobile black spot program, more information is available through the Department of Communication and the Arts <https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/mobile-services-and-coverage/mobile-black-spot-programme>.
4. Roads and Maritime procurement policy ensures roadworks will be delivered to achieve the overall best value for money for the NSW Government.
5. The final corridor strategy has been updated to recognise existing public transport services on the Golden Highway under Section 4.6 Public transport in the corridor.
6. Roads and Maritime is committed to carrying its activities in an environmentally responsible manner by effectively identifying and managing any risks which may potentially impact the environment. Roads and Maritime will conduct all its operations in accordance with relevant legislation, government policy and agreements. In the case of proposed short-term works on the Golden Highway, Roads and Maritime will be undertaking an environment assessment of these works.

4 WAY FORWARD

This Community Consultation Report summarises the comments and feedback received by Transport for NSW on the Draft Golden Highway Corridor Strategy following a public consultation period between 30th March and 9th May 2016. This report also responds to the concerns raised in these submissions.

Consideration of the issues raised during the public submissions period has led to a number of updates to the final document.

We would like to thank community members and stakeholders for their time and input into the corridor strategy development process. We would

also like to thank local councils for providing technical analysis and documents that will be of assistance in the development of road projects.

Local knowledge has been invaluable in the process of developing a strategy for the Golden Highway corridor and input from community members and stakeholders using the corridor has been vital in the development of a final document that accurately represents the requirements of the community it aims to support.



APPENDIX 1 - STAKEHOLDERS INVITED TO COMMENT

APPENDIX 1 - STAKEHOLDERS INVITED TO COMMENT

Dubbo City Council

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Upper Hunter Shire Council

Singleton Council

Warrumbungle Shire Council

Wellington Shire Council

State Member for Barwon

State Member for Dubbo

State Member for Upper Hunter

Wanaruah Local Area Land Council

In addition letters were sent to 137 government organisations, community organisations, schools and businesses located on the Golden Highway inviting comment on the draft corridor strategy.

APPENDIX 2 - TABLE OF RESPONDENTS

Respondent	Respondent number	Section where issues were considered
Resident of Telarah	1	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions.
Resident of Dubbo	2	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes.
Resident of Dubbo	3	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions.
Resident of Dunedoo	4	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions.
Resident of Denman	5	Road design and geometry, Urban amenity, Pavement conditions, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Overtaking lanes, Rest areas, Railway crossings.
Resident of Dubbo	6	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes, Railway crossings.
Resident of Westbrook	7	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Overtaking Lanes.
Upper Hunter Shire Council	8	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Overtaking lanes, Rest areas, Pedestrian access, Other.

Respondent	Respondent number	Section where issues were considered
Resident of Singleton	9	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Railway crossings, Other.
Resident of Merriwa	10	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles, Pavement conditions, Rest areas, Overtaking lanes, Other.
Resident of Jerrys Plains	11	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles, Pavement conditions, Rest areas, Stock crossing.
Resident of Scone	12	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Rest areas, Other.
TRUCKRIGHT	13	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Railway crossings, Other.
Freight Operator	14	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Rest areas.
Freight Operator	15	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Overtaking lanes.
Muswellbrook Shire Council	16	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Urban amenity, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Rest areas, Railway crossings, Other.
Resident of Dubbo	17	Road design and geometry, Pavement condition, Rest areas.
Resident of Dubbo	18	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes.

Respondent	Respondent number	Section where issues were considered
Resident of Baerami	19	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Overtaking lanes, Railway crossings, Other.
Dubbo City Council	20	Road design and geometry, Urban amenity, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Other.
Resident of Dunedoo	21	Road design and geometry, pavement conditions.
Road Freight Group	22	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions.
Resident of Singleton	23	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Stock crossings.
Resident of Merriwa	24	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Urban amenity, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes.
Resident of Gungal	25	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes, Other.
Resident of Dunedoo	26	Urban amenity, Pedestrian access.
Resident of Chatswood	27	Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Stock crossings.
Resident of Cassilis	28	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Rest areas, Railway crossings, Other.

Respondent	Respondent number	Section where issues were considered
Resident of Merriwa	29	Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes.
Resident of Cassilis	30	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes, Stock crossings
Resident of Merriwa	31	Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes, Rest area.
Resident of Merriwa	32	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access.
Resident of Merriwa	33	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicle access, Pavement conditions, Other.
Resident of Merriwa	34	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Pedestrian access.
Resident of Merriwa	35	Urban amenity, Pavement conditions, Other.
Resident of Dubbo	36	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes, Other.
Warrumbungle Shire Council	37	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Rest areas, Stock crossings, Other.
Regional Development Australia Orana	38	Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Other.
Resident of Dunedoo	39	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Stock crossings.
Resident of Merriwa	40	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes, Rest areas.
Resident of Dubbo	41	Road design and geometry.

Respondent	Respondent number	Section where issues were considered
Resident of Dubbo	42	Other.
Technical Expert (Internal)	43	Other.
Resident of Dubbo	44	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions.
Resident of Berowra	45	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes.
Resident of Dubbo	46	Road design and geometry.
Resident of Dubbo	47	Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes.
Resident of Dubbo	48	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions.
Resident of Dubbo	49	Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes.
Resident of Dubbo	50	Higher Productivity Vehicle access.
Resident of Windella	51	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Rest areas.
Resident of Denman	52	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Rest areas, Overtaking lanes
Resident of Jerrys Plains	53	Road design and geometry, Higher Productivity Vehicles access, Pavement conditions, Overtaking lanes, Stock crossings.
Resident of Merriwa	54	Road design and geometry, Pavement conditions, Rest areas.



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