

Cessnock Road upgrade, Testers Hollow

FAQ's October 2022

1. Why do we need the upgrade?

Cessnock Road is an important regional transport route connecting the Maitland area with the Hunter Expressway. The road is subject to flooding at Testers Hollow, which affects local residents, commuters and freight in the surrounding area.

When completed, the project will substantially improve the impact of flooding along Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow from a 1 in 2 year flood event to an up to 1 in 20 year flood event.

2. What does the upgrade involve?

The upgrade involves building a new two-lane road about 1.5 metres higher than the existing Cessnock Road to improve flood immunity during certain flood events. The new two-lane road will have two-metre wide shoulders and new drainage to allow flood water to pass freely under the new road.

3. Why was this option chosen?

A number of options were considered for the height of the new road. The new two-lane road is considered the best overall solution as it:

- significantly reduces the impact, frequency and duration of flood events along Cessnock Road
- improves connectivity between the Maitland area and broader community
- has the least environmental impact and property acquisitions
- minimises the cost of construction, maintenance and traffic disruption.

For more information on the options considered, you can view the [review of environmental factors](#).

4. What is the Annual Exceedance Probability?

Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) refers to the likelihood of a flood event occurring in any one year.

This is another way of describing the random nature of flood events compared to Average Recurrence Interval (ARI). For example, the same flood could be described as five per cent AEP or one in 20 year ARI.

The upgrade involves building a new road about 1.5 metres higher than the existing Cessnock Road. This would allow access in a five per cent AEP flood event, which would substantially reduce the impact of flooding along Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow.

5. How long will it take to build the new road?

The project is open to traffic. Final completion and site demobilisation is expected to occur in early 2023, weather permitting.

6. Why has construction of the new road alignment taken so long to complete?

The upgrade of Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow is a complex job. To minimise traffic impacts during construction, the new road is being built alongside the existing Cessnock Road. Existing speed limits and property access is also being maintained.

Construction of the new road has included a six month settlement period which is an important part of the construction process. During the settlement period, over 16,000 cubic metres of fill were imported and placed on the 120 metre preload embankment. The settlement period was required to allow underlying soft soils to consolidate before work on the new alignment could start.

The settlement period was completed within the predicted duration and did not delay progress of the project. Delays to the project have been predominantly due to above average wet weather that has been recorded on the project.

7. What is happening to the old road? Can we still use it when it isn't flooding?

It will not be possible to use the old road after the new road is constructed, as it will have a channel cut through to improve drainage. This channel is required to protect the new road during certain flood events.

8. I am a cyclist – are you providing bike lanes?

The new road will include two metre wide shoulders for improved cyclist access.

9. I live nearby – will my property be impacted by the work?

Properties located near the project site may be impacted by temporary noise during construction of the new road.

Normal work hours are between 7am and 6pm on weekdays and 8am and 1pm on Saturdays. Some out of hours work is required for the safety of motorists and workers. Impacted residents will be notified in advance of any night work.

Property access would be maintained throughout construction.