

Commemorative Community Update – December 2022

Sealing the Cobb and Silver City highways



Minister Farraway, Transport staff and community mark the completion of the Silver City Highway in Tibooburra on the 14 December 2022

The NSW Government is providing \$145 million to rebuild and seal the remaining sections of both the Cobb and Silver City highways.

In this community update, we commemorate the completion of the works on the Silver City Highway from Broken Hill to the Queensland border, proudly delivered earlier than scheduled, improving freight access, flood immunity, regional development and road safety.

Signed sealed and delivered

As part of a decade long commitment since 2011, the NSW Government has invested \$195 million to seal all remaining dirt roads on the state's highway network by 2023.

The completion of the Silver City Highway initial seal project from 2018 to 2022 is an historic milestone, and one that was achieved six months ahead of schedule.

“This is quite an effort by our teams at Transport for NSW considering the challenges they have faced including the Covid-19 pandemic, flooding events in 2021 and the ongoing La Nina events which have seen our crews continually battling wet conditions, almost halving the amount of available working days to deliver the project,” said the Hon Sam Farraway MLC, Minister for Transport and Regional Roads.



Alistair Lunn (Transport), local resident Peter Beven and Minister Farraway unveiling the plaque in Tibooburra

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The History

The Silver City Highway connects Buronga, on the Victorian border with the Queensland border via Broken Hill and Tibooburra.

The first motorised vehicles started travelling between Broken Hill and Tibooburra in the 1920s. It is said to have taken three days as they followed the tracks that were formed by horses and camels, repeatedly getting bogged in sand hills.

Travelling via camel took eight days, which meant the reduction to three was a significant improvement at the time. The upgrade works have seen the existing road rebuilt to include table drains on both sides of the road, eliminating pooling rain water, resulting in a dramatic decrease in closures each year, more reliable access and a smoother journey.

Now 100 years on we can travel between these remote locations in just over three and a half hours.

The end of work on the Silver City Highway is an incredible milestone for people living in the far west of NSW as well as the many freight operators and tourists who use the road every year.

What we have delivered

The NSW Government invested \$72 million between 2018 to 2022 to seal all remaining sections of the Silver City Highway. This included:



110 kilometres of upgraded and sealed highway and drainage structures to combat impacts of floods



Construction of a new bridge at Packsaddle

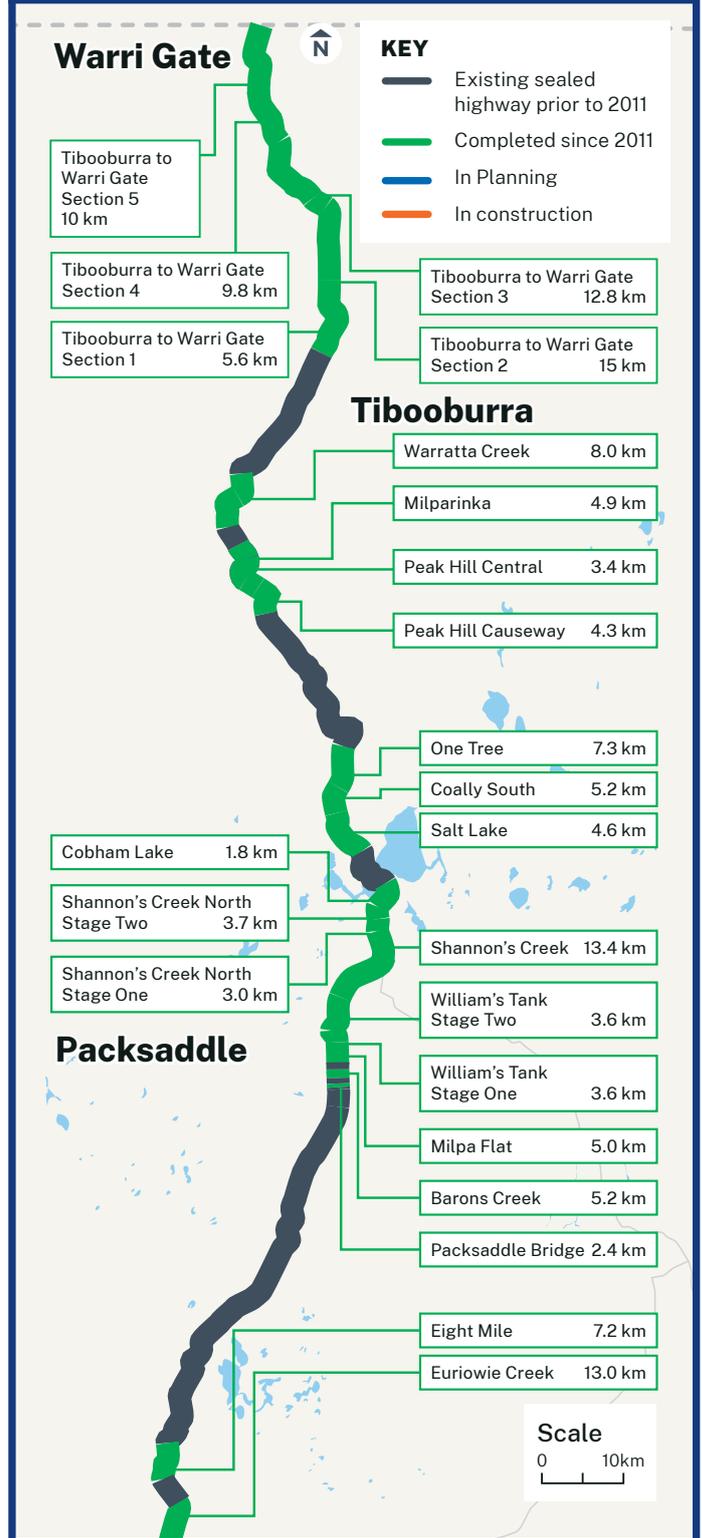


New automated electronic road signs designed to improve safety and better inform motorists about road conditions.



Reduced travel time
for people, business and goods

Silver City Highway initial seal program as at December 2022



Completion event in Tibooburra 2022



Shannons Creek Emergency Airstrip



Packsaddle Bridge opening 2019

Benefits for our communities and road users

- Reduced travel times by up to 30 minutes between Broken Hill and Warri Gate
- Improved connections for the freight and livestock industry in remote NSW
- Greater economic and tourism opportunities
- Reduced time, cost and resources used in road maintenance
- Fewer highway closures with improved wet weather immunity
- More reliable access to schools and hospitals
- Smoother and safer road surface.

Supporting jobs and local businesses

The Silver City Highway sealing project alone sustained about 60 local jobs, with an additional 20 contractors assisting with resources and skills.

Locally sourced work crews and contractors battled the elements and camped on-site to ensure this important project was completed.

840,000 tonnes of locally-sourced crushed gravel and 50,000 tonnes of aggregate was used to build and seal the highway.

The result is a legacy project that will benefit the people and businesses of the state's far west for generations to come.



Works Supervisor Kevin Bath with local supplier Greg Wilkins Industries



Initial seal being applied to the final section of the Silver City Highway north of Tibooburra

Meet John Ainsworth



John Ainsworth, President Tibooburra Progress Association

Johnny has lived in the area for 36 years, and is known as the unofficial Mayor of Tibooburra. He is the Captain of the local Rural Fire Service, Commander of the State Emergency Services and volunteer Ambulance driver.

“I can recall that it would take you two days to get from Broken Hill to Tibooburra as opposed to three hours now.”

“It's convenient and saves time. What we've noticed is the availability of stores has increased with reliable freight movements – we've got two trucks a week that come up, but back when the road wasn't sealed, if the road was closed, they couldn't get through - sometimes for days. For the local people, we have to anticipate what we're going to use. You can't just trip down to Broken Hill for a loaf of bread.

It's also convenient for the tourists, not everyone has a 4WD. It's nice for people to have a weekend drive to the beautiful outback.”



Connecting communities



Improving safety



Improved Connectivity for the freight and livestock industry

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Cobb Highway

Central Darling Shire Council has continued work on the Cobb Highway, with Mount Manara North the latest section to be completed. Council will also complete Bushley and Halfway Tree in 2023.

Transport crews will relocate to the Cobb Highway in January ready to commence work on the final section at Mount Manara, which will be realigned to create a safer, straighter road.

Crews will be working between **6.30am** and **5.30pm** Monday to Friday.

As a result of the continued wet weather experienced in 2022, the previously announced completion milestone of June 2023 has been impacted. The delivery program has been reviewed and it is expected that all remaining sections on the Cobb Highway will be completed by end October 2023, weather permitting.

Traffic changes

There may be some temporary traffic changes to ensure the work zone is safe, including speed reductions and lane closures during work hours.

Please keep to speed limits and follow the direction of traffic controllers and signs. For the latest traffic updates, you can call **132 701**, visit livetraffic.com or download the **Live Traffic NSW App**.

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like more information on the Cobb and Silver City Highways please contact our project team:



1800 167 499



western.projects@transport.nsw.gov.au



nswroads.work/farwestseals

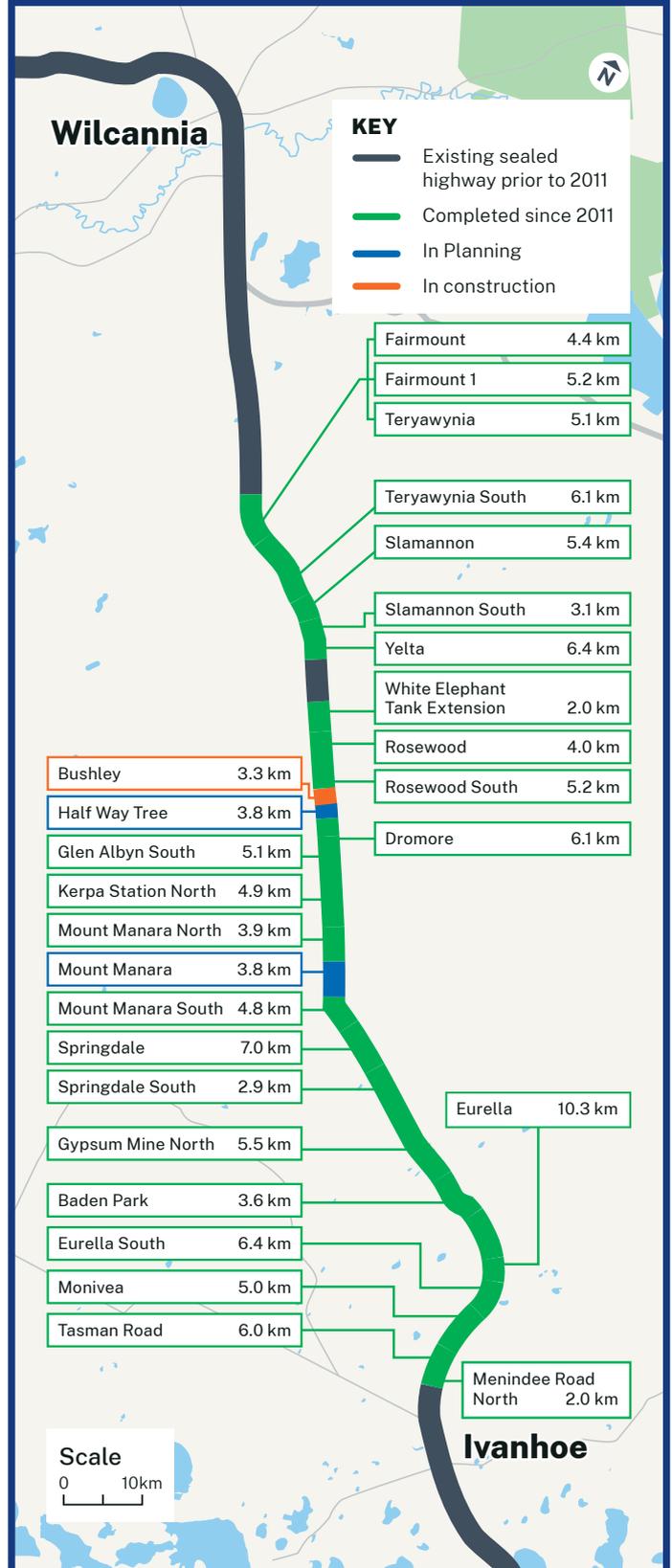


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Cobb Highway initial seal program Due for completion by October 2023



December 2022
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