



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



Transport for NSW

Great Western Highway

East – Katoomba to Blackheath

Review of Environmental Factors | Community Update



Artist representation – Great Western Highway, near Pulpit Hill, looking west. (indicative only, final layout to be determined through detailed design).

Together the Australian and NSW Governments are investing \$2.5 billion towards upgrading the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Blackheath, and between Little Hartley and Lithgow, respectively. The Great Western Highway Upgrade will reduce congestion, deliver safer, more efficient and reliable journeys for those travelling in, around and through the Blue Mountains, and better connect communities in the Central West.

Transport for NSW (Transport) is proposing to widen the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Blackheath to two lanes in each direction. The upgrade is split into two sections:

- Katoomba to Medlow Bath between Rowan Lane, Katoomba and Bellevue Crescent, Medlow Bath (about 3.5 kilometres)
- Medlow Bath to Blackheath between Station Street, Medlow Bath and Tennyson Road, Blackheath (about 1.8 kilometres)

Transport is now seeking your feedback on the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and concept design for the proposed Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade.

Your input is important in helping to design the best upgrade we can for the Katoomba to Blackheath section. We invite you to review the proposed plans, understand the environmental impacts and have your say.

Have your say

Formal submissions on the REF and concept design are invited until **Sunday 19 June 2022** and we encourage you to take the opportunity to have your say. Visit our virtual consultation room at nswroads.work/gwheastconsult or talk to staff at one of our consultation sessions to find out more.

May 2022

Katoomba to Blackheath tunnel not viable

Transport investigated a wide range of upgrade options between Katoomba and Lithgow, to make sure we deliver a connection that minimises environmental impacts, supports local economies, improves travel times and safety and is financially responsible.

A range of options connecting these towns were evaluated against viability criteria and program objectives. Options were narrowed down and reviewed further, and challenged by expert panels as part of an option analysis to confirm their performance against objectives and viability criteria.

The program objectives for the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program are:

- Economic development, productivity, and recovery
- Resilience and future proofing
- Network performance
- Safety
- Amenity, liveability, and environment.

The viability criteria used for the options analysis include things like:

- Safety
- Long-term needs
- Technical feasibility
- Environmental impacts
- Economic outcomes.

The Medlow Bath surface bypass, tunnel bypass and the Katoomba to Blackheath alternate corridors, including a longer tunnel, failed the initial assessments on grounds of technical feasibility, environmental impacts and excessive construction costs.

The Katoomba to Blackheath alternate corridor option failed the technical feasibility test for the same reason and had unacceptable environmental impacts, particularly to the national park and nearby hanging swamps.

While the cost of a 19-kilometre tunnel has not been formally estimated, the dollar per kilometre cost estimate suggests a total cost in excess of \$10 billion.

A tunnel between Katoomba and Blackheath would also fail to serve the high volume of local traffic.

Traffic modeling indicates that approximately 40 per cent of traffic on the Highway between Katoomba and Little Hartley is traveling between Katoomba, Medlow Bath, Blackheath, Mount Victoria and/or the Darling Causeway.

This traffic would not use a tunnel that began between Katoomba and Medlow Bath.



Artist's representation of twin bridge near Explorers Road, looking east (indicative only, final layout to be determined through detailed design).

Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade benefits:



Improve
road alignment

Water quality



Recognising
Historical significance



Improving
safety



Connecting
communities



New pathways
for active transport



Better, safer and more
reliable trips
for customers and communities

Have your say on the Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade

You are invited to have your say on the REF and concept design for the proposed Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade.

An REF is undertaken to assess the potential impacts of a proposed development or activity on the environment, to ensure compliance with the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and any other relevant state and national laws.

It includes investigations into all environmental impacts, and includes ways the project proposes to identify, mitigate and manage those impacts.

We have developed fact sheets that highlight how the East section upgrade REF has considered and addressed key themes from previous consultation:

- cultural heritage
- active transport
- biodiversity and water quality.

The fact sheets will give you an overview, however, we encourage you to read the full REF document to gain a complete understanding of all impacts, before you make a submission on any issue.

The proposal has been developed in response to the feedback received during previous community consultation periods in 2019 to 2021, in addition to feedback from key stakeholders.

The concept design is around 80 per cent complete. We welcome your feedback on how we can improve the design before it is finalised.

To view the full REF, the concept design and fact sheets go to nswroads.work/gwheastconsult. To have a hard copy of the REF posted to you, or if you need help locating specific specialist reports or studies that you are interested in, contact the project team at gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au or call **1800 953 777**.



Artist representation, Nellies Glen Road looking west.

Medlow Bath REF determination

In response to community concerns about the potential to not fully consider cumulative impacts along the highway due to the separation of the Medlow Bath and the Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade REFs, we have delayed the determination of Medlow Bath until after the assessment for East has occurred.

This will allow us to consider issues raised during both displays to ensure we are considering them in relation to the neighbouring project. More information about the determination of the Medlow Bath REF which was displayed from 27 July to 5 September 2021, and the Submissions Report will be provided later this year.

Transport takes its responsibilities towards protecting the environment very seriously. We have worked closely with the community and Blue Mountains City Council with regards to the environmental assessment between Katoomba and Medlow Bath and we have listened to the feedback we have received.

Deferring the determination will help Transport to make sure it considers all of the potential impacts in one simultaneous review, and provide more confidence to the Blue Mountains community about the environmental assessment of this critical infrastructure project.

We will continue to work with the community and with Council as the project progresses, and to be open and transparent about the environmental assessment process.

Medlow Bath pedestrian bridge

The Medlow REF display included a proposed design for a new pedestrian bridge over the Great Western Highway at Medlow Bath.

Feedback received during the REF display included a wish to have a greater say in what the bridge would look like.

Transport has listened and we will come back to the community with more information about the bridge including possible design changes seeking feedback.

Next steps

Transport will use your feedback to continue to refine and improve the Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade.

Construction on the Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade is expected to begin in 2023.

The Environmental Assessment for the Central section (Blackheath to Little Hartley) will be available for exhibition and consultation in late 2022.

Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade REF and concept design feedback form

You are invited to comment on the REF and concept design for the Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade. If you would like to mail your feedback, please detach and use this reply paid feedback form on the back page.

Please ensure you include a postal or email address with your submission. Unverified submissions cannot be included.

Submissions close at midnight on **Sunday 19 June 2022**.

Concept Design for proposed Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade

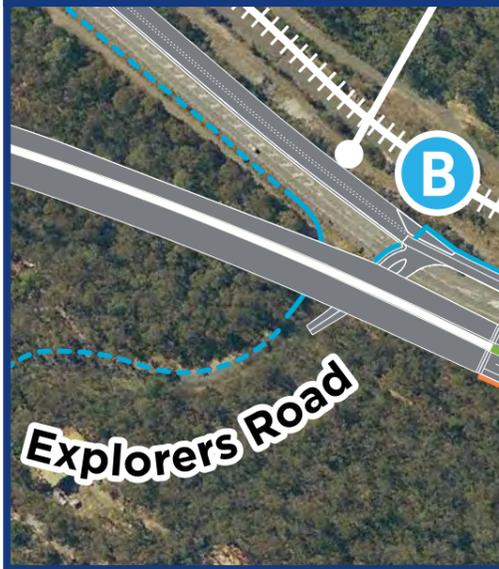
Katoomba to Medlow Bath section



1. Nellies Glen Road / Great Western Highway intersection



2. Explorers Road / Great Western Highway intersection



Medlow Bath to Blackheath section



Key features

Key features of the Katoomba to Medlow Bath section include:

- Widening around 3.5 kilometres of the Great Western Highway between Rowan Lane in Katoomba and Bellevue Crescent in Medlow Bath to provide two lanes in each direction
- Connections to the Medlow Bath Upgrade
- New concrete twin bridges (about 400 metres long) over the valley from Pulpit Hill near Explorers Road
- Upgraded intersections at Nellies Glen Road, Explorers Road and Foy Avenue

- Improved visitor parking at the Pulpit Hill heritage interpretation area
- A new truck stopping area to the west of Explorers Road
- Upgrade of the Great Blue Mountains Trail to maintain active transport connections between Katoomba and Medlow Bath
- New formalised bus stops on the highway at Nellies Glen Road (westbound), Explorers Road (eastbound) and Foy Avenue
- Upgraded and new drainage infrastructure and water quality controls

Key features of the Medlow Bath to Blackheath section include:

- Widening around 1.8 kilometres of the Great Western Highway between the existing rail overbridge in Medlow Bath to about 200 metres east of Tennyson Road in Blackheath to provide two lanes in each direction
- Connections to the existing highway, providing two lanes in each direction
- Road connection 'stubs' for the future Great Western Highway tunnel bypass
- Relocation of the electrical sectioning hut in the rail corridor from next to the highway opposite Coachhouse Lane, on to Station Street

- Extension of the Great Blue Mountains Trail alongside the National Park and Great Western Highway between Medlow Bath and Blackheath
- A new truck stopping area about one kilometre west of Medlow Bath
- Upgraded and new drainage infrastructure and water quality controls
- Investigating opportunities to extend utility relocations and access trails to connect to Blackheath

View the REF and concept design

You can view the Katoomba to Blackheath REF and concept design:

- online in our virtual consultation room at nswroads.work/gwheastconsult
- As a printed copy at one of these locations:
 - Katoomba Library
 - Katoomba Council Headquarters (foyer)
 - Glenbrook Customer Service Counter
 - Blaxland Library

Speak to the project team

We will hold a mixture of online and face-to-face information sessions.

We recommend that you view the REF and concept design before you speak with the team or make a submission.

Online sessions

- **Monday 23 May** 6.30pm – 8pm
- **Thursday 9 June** 6.30pm – 8pm

Targeted sessions:

Biodiversity and water quality:

Tuesday 31 May 6.30pm – 8pm

Localised impacts during and after construction:

- **Monday 6 June** 6.30pm – 8pm

Face-to-face sessions

1. Seminar Room, Katoomba Cultural Centre
Wednesday 25 May 4.30pm – 8pm
General session from 6pm to 8pm.
Aboriginal stakeholder engagement session from 4.30pm to 6pm.
Location: 30–32 Parke Street, Katoomba
2. Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre
Saturday 4 June 10am - 12pm
Location: 41 Gardiner Crescent, Blackheath

Register for a consultation session at nswroads.work/gwheastconsult

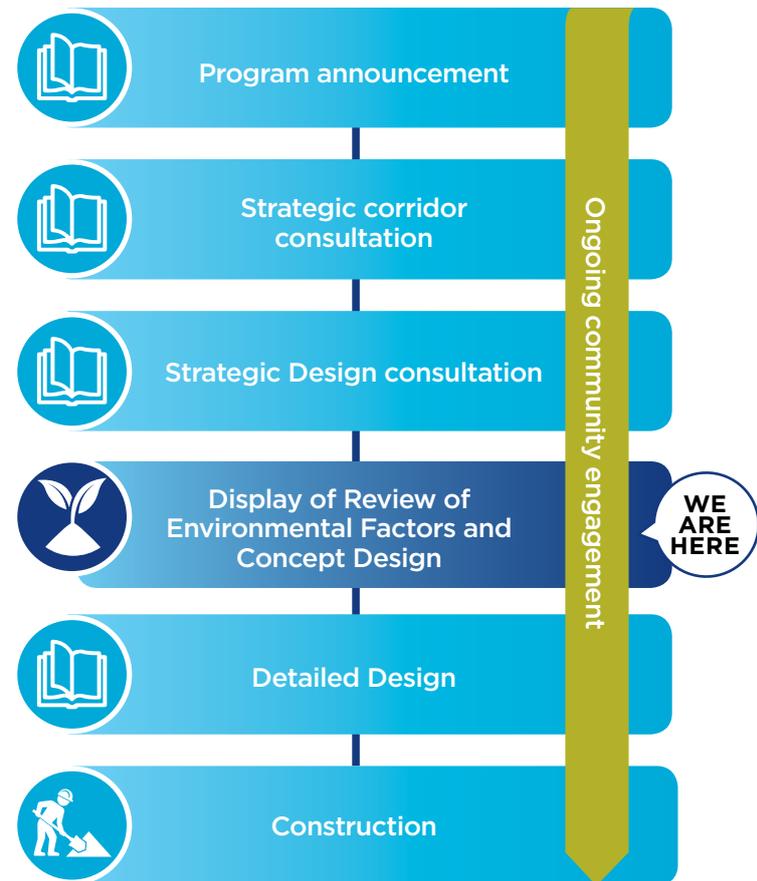
Bookings are essential for all sessions. Face-to-face sessions will be held pending COVID restrictions.

Contact us on **1800 953 777** or gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au to have a phone consultation if you prefer.

How to make a formal submission

We welcome all feedback on the Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade. To have your input formally considered, and receive a response in the Submissions Report, use our online submission form at nswroads.work/gwheastconsult, email us at gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au, or mail a printed submission to the address provided.

Program Update



Contact us

Sign up for our eNewsletter at nswroads.work/gwhd so you never miss a project update or register for a consultation session.

 1800 953 777

 gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au

 nswroads.work/gwhd

 Great Western Highway Upgrade Program
PO Box 334, Parkes NSW 2870



If you need help understanding this information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to call us on 1800 953 777.

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Katoomba- Blackheath
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