

Medlow Bath and East REFs both approved

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond and make submissions during the REF consultation.

Transport for NSW (Transport) is widening the Great Western Highway to two lanes in each direction from Rowan Lane in Katoomba to Tennyson Road in Blackheath, including an upgrade of around 1.2 kilometres of the highway at Medlow Bath between Railway Parade and around 330 metres south of Bellevue Crescent.

Both the Katoomba to Blackheath and Medlow Bath upgrades have now been approved, with the Medlow Bath section to be the first section of the highway to be upgraded. The project will be managed by Transport and funded by the Australian and NSW Governments.

The Submissions Reports and Community Consultation Reports for both sections are now available on the project website at nswroads.work/gwh

We appreciate the community has been waiting since September 2021 to view responses to their Medlow Bath REF submissions. However, this delay allowed Transport to consider submissions collectively across the Katoomba to Blackheath section of the upgrade, and consider all potential impacts in one simultaneous review, which was important to the local Blue Mountains community.

Medlow Bath REF exhibition

The REF for the Medlow Bath section of the Great Western Highway Upgrade was displayed from **27 July to 5 September 2021**. In **March 2022**, Transport responded to community feedback to defer the determination of the Medlow Bath REF until submissions could be considered alongside the Katoomba to Blackheath (East) REF which was displayed in **June 2022**.

During the submission period we received submissions from 250 members of the community, businesses or other stakeholders. Many of the Medlow Bath REF submissions centred on the following issues:

- Water quality, biodiversity and heritage impacts
- The need for the pedestrian bridge and its design
- Business impacts, particularly to the Hydro Majestic
- The environmental approval pathway

- Consultation during the stay-at-home orders in place during the consultation period
- Requests for a 19km tunnel starting at Katoomba.

Of these submissions, 13 were from government agencies including Blue Mountains City Council, Water NSW and National Parks and Wildlife, or community groups, with the balance from the general community.

Katoomba to Blackheath East REF exhibition

The Katoomba to Blackheath East REF was displayed from **15 May to 19 June 2022** during which time 108 submissions were received.

The main issues raised during display of the REF were:

- Concern about the design and impacts of the Medlow Bath section of the upgrade
- Proposed alternative routes
- The environmental approval pathway
- Landscape character and visual impacts
- Biodiversity impacts during construction.

Of these submissions, 102 were from the general community, one was from Blue Mountains City Council and five were from other government agencies.

How to view the Submissions and Community Consultation reports

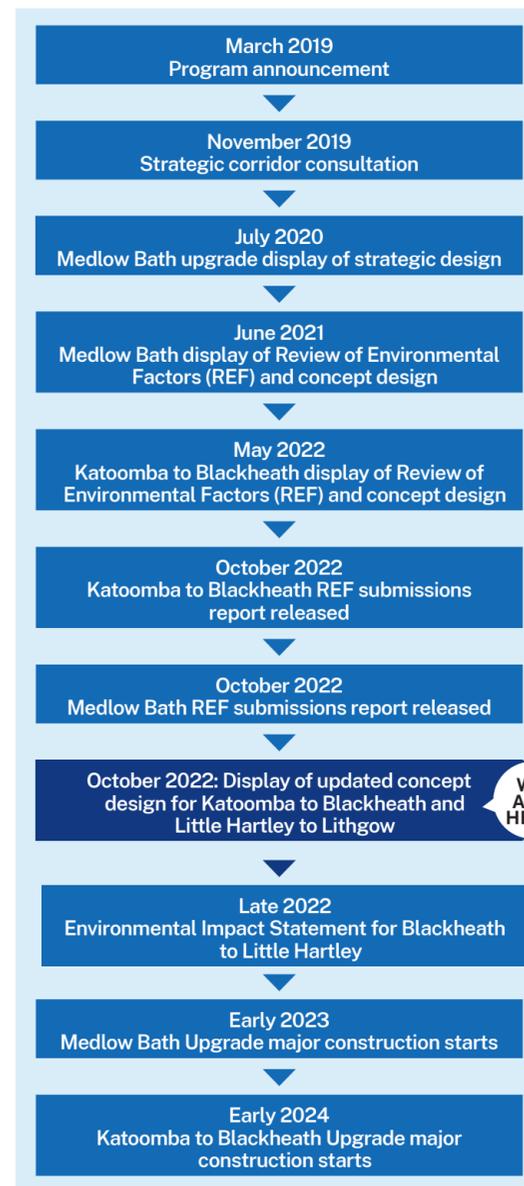
To read the full reports visit nswroads.work/gwh or call **1800 953 777** to request a hard copy be posted out in the mail.

How to find a response to your submission

If you provided an email or a postal address as part of your submission, you will receive a letter advising you of your submission number and referring you to the section(s) in the report which contain a response to your submission. If you made submissions to both REFs, you will receive two separate letters.

How are we refining the design in response to feedback?

The insights and feedback gathered from the submissions received for both the Medlow Bath and Katoomba to Blackheath upgrades are being considered as the projects are finalised.



October 2022
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Next Steps

The Medlow Bath Upgrade will soon begin construction with work scheduled to start in early 2023. We will continue to update the community with information about construction as it becomes available.

We plan to begin construction on the Katoomba to Blackheath section in late 2023.

Talk to the project team

We are holding public meetings online and face-to-face discuss the key issues raised in community submissions to both the Medlow Bath and Katoomba to Blackheath (East Section) Review of Environmental Factors submissions reports. We will provide a short presentation then take your questions and comments.

Join us to talk to the project team and have your say.

Online
6pm – 7.30pm
Tuesday 1 November 2022

The Hydro Majestic Hotel
Majestic Ballroom
52-88 Great Western Hwy, Medlow Bath
Drop in from **5.30pm**,
formal presentation and Q & A from **6.00pm – 7.30pm**
Tuesday 8 November 2022

Register online: nswroads.work/gwh

Contact us

If you have any questions please contact:

1800 953 777

gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au

nswroads.work/gwh



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Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade (East section) and Medlow Bath Upgrade
Community Update | October 2022

Great Western Highway Upgrade Program



Artists impressions: Medlow Bath and Katoomba to Blackheath upgrades

Together, the Australian Government and NSW Government have committed more than \$2.5 billion towards the East and West sections of the Great Western Highway Upgrade, 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.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond and make submissions during the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) consultation.

Both the Katoomba to Blackheath and Medlow Bath upgrades have now been approved.

Medlow Bath Upgrade

Design changes

We have updated the design based on your feedback, including:

- Ruling out the alternative design for Bellevue Crescent that involved relocating the intersection, and had impacts on land south of the Hydro Majestic Hotel and United Petroleum
- Proceeding with the preferred option for the intersection improvements at Bellevue Crescent
- Relocating the bus stop with its mural on the highway to Railway Parade
- Refining the design of the water quality basin in ongoing consultation with Blue Mountains City Council and Sydney Water
- Implementing a community-led landscape design along Railway Parade
- Revising and softening the visual impact of the pedestrian bridge in consultation with Heritage NSW, Blue Mountains City Council and the community
- Formalising additional public parking in front of Medlow Park to offset parking removed from the highway.

The Elsie Langford Centre

As part of the Medlow Bath Upgrade, a bio-filtration and detention basin will be built on the land where the Elsie Langford Centre currently stands. The basin will improve the quality of the water leaving the highway and entering the local environment. Water running off the highway will be captured in this basin. As this water moves through the basin, it travels through various filters, which cleans and improves the quality of the water that eventually enters the environment. Transport will care for and maintain the basin.

We appreciate that residents may be concerned about the demolition of the Elsie Langford Centre as Elsie was a significant person in the development of Medlow Bath. We are talking to the Langford family about how they would like to commemorate Elsie's contribution to the village.

To compensate for the loss of the building, we will provide a grant to Blue Mountains City Council for improvements to Medlow Park. We are talking to the Medlow Bath Residents Action Group on what those improvements could be, but we welcome feedback from anyone in the community about what other improvements we could include at Medlow Park. Contact us with your ideas at gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au

Railway Parade community planting

The Medlow Bath Railway Parade verge planting project, running between St Albans Road and Rutland Road next to the rail corridor fence line, has been developed by local designer Dig Landscape Design in partnership with the local community and Blue Mountains City Council.

The project will begin soon with clearing and preparing the area to make way for a range of plantings including *Camelia sasanqua*, *Spartan*, *Rubens* and *Viburnum tinus* for screening, and *Poorinda Ecstasy*, *Katies Belles* and *Profusion* for feature and accents.



Artist impression, Railway Parade landscaping and how it will look around two years after planting

Medlow Bath pedestrian bridge

Transport received many submissions questioning whether a pedestrian bridge across the railway and highway is needed. We are committed to providing safe and equitable access for everyone using the rail station or crossing the highway, and will continue with the development of a pedestrian bridge in this location.

We have listened to the community and their concerns about the design and are working with Heritage NSW, Blue Mountains City Council and community representatives on design changes to improve the way the bridge will fit within its surrounding heritage context. Transport is also considering interpretive features like artistic representations of the history and heritage of Medlow Bath.

We will update the wider Medlow Bath and Blue Mountains community about the bridge design at information sessions to be held in the coming months.



Pedestrian bridge design development to continue

Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade (East section)

Design changes

We have updated the design based on your feedback, including:

- Connecting the new eastbound carriageway back to the existing Great Western Highway just to the east of Tennyson Road
- Continuing the active transport trail between Medlow Bath and Blackheath up to Valley View Road, Blackheath as part of these works, rather than the future tunnel construction. The active transport trail would serve as a maintenance access from time to time for utilities, water quality basins, the adjacent national park (for approved access only) and emergency access for bushfires.
- Connecting high voltage electricity, optical fibre and water main relocations for Medlow Bath to Blackheath back to existing utility networks
- Creating an Aboriginal yarning circle, in response to engagement with local Aboriginal representatives.

Connecting to the proposed tunnel

One of the key design changes relates to the proposed tunnel from Blackheath to Little Hartley and how the current upgrade will connect to it via a portal near Evans Lookout Road. These changes will improve connectivity and provide safer access between the upgraded highway and the existing Great Western Highway.

To accommodate the proposed tunnel, the Katoomba to Blackheath Upgrade will now also include:

- Extended new eastbound and westbound lanes on the highway towards Blackheath
- Providing a westbound exit ramp from the new highway to Blackheath
- Continuing the active transport trail on the outskirts of the National Park to connect directly to Blackheath
- Creating an interim eastbound connection from Blackheath to the new sections of the Great Western Highway.

Refer to the map for a closer look at the design changes that have occurred since the REF was displayed.

Pulpit Hill Heritage Interpretation Area

Transport received a number of submissions related to Pulpit Hill and the former location of the Explorers Tree.

We recognise the historical importance of Pulpit Hill and we have included features such as upgraded visitor car parking and general public access to the heritage interpretation area via the active transport trails.

We will involve local artists to contribute to the urban design and landscaping strategies of the proposal in Pulpit Hill (and elsewhere along the upgrade).

The design of the heritage interpretation area will be developed as part of the upgrade program's cultural interpretation strategy, in consultation with the Blue Mountains City Council, Heritage NSW, local heritage specialists, Aboriginal knowledge holders and the local community.



Artist impression, improved visitor car parking at the Pulpit Hill Heritage Interpretation Area

Active transport connection extended

The active transport links included in the Katoomba to Blackheath proposal were well received by the community.

The completed active transport trail will provide uninterrupted pedestrian and cyclist access between Katoomba and Blackheath. The new sections of trail will be sealed with bitumen, asphalt or concrete. The trail will be a minimum of three metres wide and will have slopes moderate enough to allow pedestrians and cyclists to use it for travel between the villages.

Following your feedback, we are now extending the active transport links through to Valley View Road in Blackheath. We are also investigating how the trail could go further as part of the proposed Blackheath to Little Hartley tunnel construction.

