

# Mount Victoria to Lithgow

Great Western Highway upgrade



**Transport**  
Roads & Maritime  
Services

**JULY 2012**

An aerial photograph showing a winding road through a lush green valley. The road is flanked by dense forests and rolling hills. Some small buildings and fields are visible on the left side of the road.

## Concept design and road boundaries

### Invitation to comment

A concept design and proposed road boundaries for the future upgrade of the Great Western Highway between Mount Victoria and Lithgow are on display for your comment until Friday 26 October 2012. Your input will help finalise the concept design and reserve new road boundaries for long-term improvements. Roads and Maritime Services has engaged with the local community starting with the route options development process in 2008. The concept design currently on display has taken account of the community views and feedback received throughout the engagement process.

### In this issue:

- Information about the NSW and Australian governments response to a 2012 independent review.
- Information on new speed limits through the valley.
- Information about projects to be constructed including the upgrade of Forty Bends and the enhanced road safety program.
- Information and maps outlining the key features of the concept design and proposed road boundaries.
- Information about what happens next, including details of upcoming community discussions about the concept design and places where you can view a copy of the concept report.
- A reply paid feedback form.
- Contact details for enquiries and comments.

## Governments response to independent review

In September 2011 the New South Wales Government engaged Evans and Peck to undertake an independent review of the proposed upgrade of the Great Western Highway west of Katoomba. The review was initiated following concerns raised by members of the local communities about environmental, cultural, social and economic impacts of the upgrade projects and to ensure that the best value for money is obtained from the investment. The review has now been completed and can be viewed on the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) website.

The NSW and Australian governments have now agreed on a revised program of works to be delivered between Mount Victoria and Lithgow.

This program of works includes:

- Finalising the concept design and road boundaries for upgrading the highway between Mount Victoria and Lithgow.
- A three lane upgrade at Forty Bends. See page 18.
- An enhanced safety works program.
- Using remaining funds from the joint \$250 million Australian and NSW government commitment to fund upgrades between Mount Victoria and Katoomba.



## New speed zones

As a result of speed limit reviews conducted by RMS and the NSW Centre for Road Safety, the following changes were made to the speed limits on the Great Western Highway between the bottom of Victoria Pass and South Bowenfels:

- The speed limit from the bottom of Victoria Pass to the bottom of River Lett Hill, a length of 7.3 kilometres, was reduced from 90 km/h to 80 km/h.
- The speed limit between the top of River Lett Hill to South Bowenfels, a length of 4.1 kilometres, was reduced from 90 km/h to 80 km/h.

The existing 80 km/h and 40 km/h truck and bus speed limits on this section of the Great Western Highway have been retained.

These changes are based on the high crash rate, standard of the alignment, roadside development, the lack of adequate clear zones and restricted sight distance.

The changes reduce the number of speed zones from four to one between the bottom of Victoria Pass and South Bowenfels and provide consistency for motorists.

## Road boundaries for long term improvements

RMS has developed a concept design for the longer-term upgrade of the Great Western Highway between Mount Victoria and Lithgow. The purpose of this concept design is to identify road boundaries that can be reserved for long-term improvements. These boundaries will be provided to the Blue Mountains City and Lithgow City councils as a key input to future land use planning.

The proposed road boundaries include the road formation, batters and retaining structures, drainage structures, landscaping and space for maintenance activities.

The concept design for the road boundaries extends between Soldiers Pinch, about 400 metres east of Browntown Oval at Mount Victoria and Magpie Hollow Road at South Bowenfels.

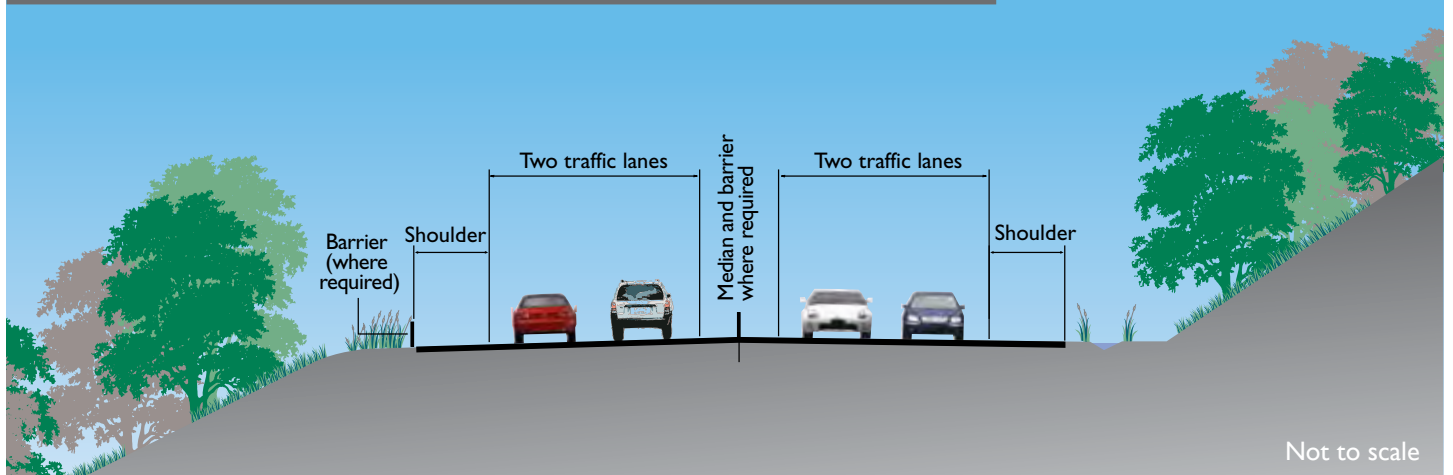
The concept design has been primarily developed within the preferred route buffer zone displayed in May 2010. In some areas it has been necessary to go beyond the preferred route buffer zone. The reasons for this include improved road alignment, extensions to the east of Browntown Oval and west of McKanes Falls Road, service road connections, upgraded side roads and water quality measures.

The concept design integrates road safety, freight efficiency and local access improvements and includes environmental design considerations. While the concept design varies between two and four lanes, the road boundaries will be set for four lanes along the entire length of the highway to allow for long-term improvements.

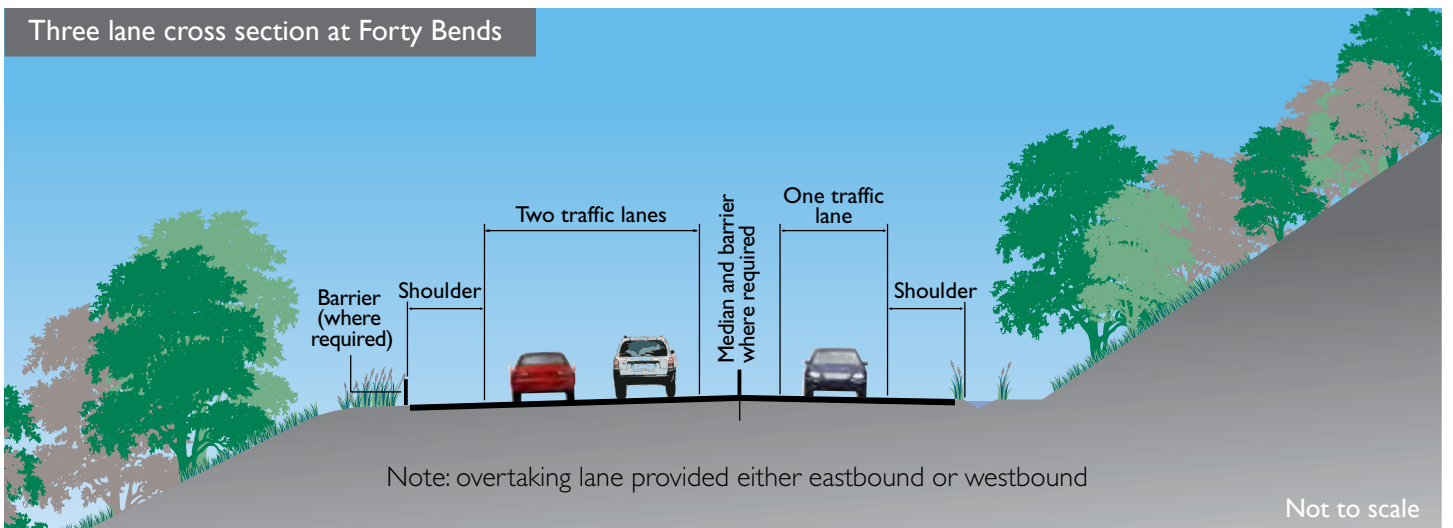
## Key features of the concept design between Mount Victoria and Lithgow

- Three lanes between Soldiers Pinch and Browntown Oval.
- Two lanes each way, separated by a median between Browntown Oval and the top of River Lett Hill, including:
  - Twin, two lane tunnels, about 350 metres long, under the railway line and Darling Causeway at Mount Victoria.
  - Twin, two lane tunnels, about 1 400 metres long, bypassing Mount Victoria.
  - Twin viaducts from the tunnels to the valley floor at Little Hartley.
  - New twin bridges over River Lett.
- Three lanes, including a median and barrier (where required) between the top of River Lett Hill and McKanes Falls Road.
- Two lanes, including a median between McKanes Falls Road and Magpie Hollow Road.

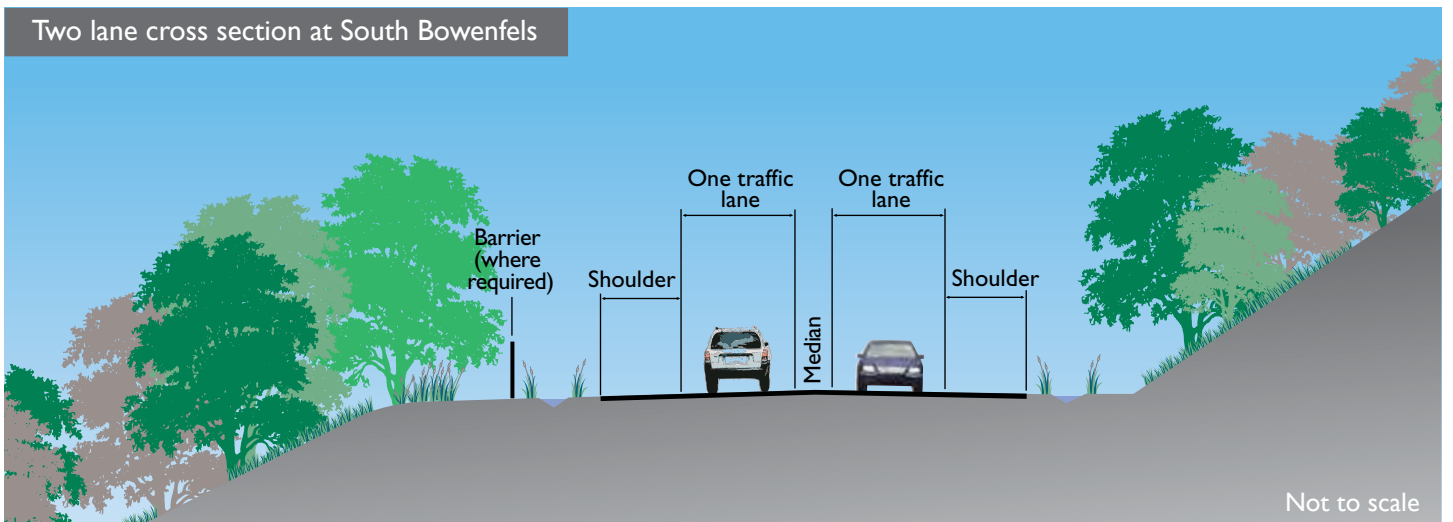
Four lane cross section between Mount Victoria and the top of River Lett Hill



Three lane cross section at Forty Bends



Two lane cross section at South Bowenfels







## Proposal for a local service road

A local service road has been designed between the bottom of Victoria Pass and Jenolan Caves Road, connecting the 'bypassed' sections of the existing highway. This would improve safety and cater for a mix of through, local and tourist traffic. It would also provide for local trips separate to the upgraded highway.

A service road would provide major local safety benefits as well as enhanced local tourism and business opportunities. It would also cater for cyclists, pedestrians and local bus services, making a safer environment for all road users.

Ultimately a service road would provide an alternative route between Mount Victoria and Jenolan Caves Road, predominantly via the existing highway alignment.

The proposed local service road would require some additional land acquisition and have a slightly larger environmental footprint. Additional work would be required to connect the remaining sections of the existing highway including new road construction, overpasses, underpasses, an additional bridge, and restoration of existing road pavement.

## Key safety benefits

The upgraded highway would improve road safety by:

- Providing additional lanes for improved traffic flow and overtaking.

- Eliminating about 90 per cent of right turns across highway traffic between Mount Victoria and South Bowenfels and improving road shoulders. This would be achieved in a number of ways:
  - Right turns onto the upgraded highway from the service road would use an underpass, an overpass or u-turn bay which would enable a left turn onto the highway, reducing the likelihood and severity of crashes through fewer traffic conflicts.
  - The majority of property accesses would be via service roads and not directly onto the highway.
  - Only left-in and left-out turns would be possible where properties access directly onto the upgraded highway. Right turns would be achieved via u-turn facilities on nearby side roads.
- Separating local and through traffic.
- Reducing the number of tight curves.
- Reducing the steepness of the road.
- Provide for better management of black ice.
- Providing an opportunity for local bus services to use the service road.
- Providing heavy vehicle rest areas.
- Providing u-turn facilities and wider shoulders on some side roads, allowing safer turning for motorists and safer pick-up/drop-off points for school buses.
- Encouraging cyclists and pedestrians to use the service road.

## Freight efficiency improvements

The upgraded highway would improve freight efficiency by:

- Reducing steepness of grades and improving curves.
- Increasing safe passing opportunities.
- Reducing interaction with local traffic through provision of a local service road.

## Environmental design features

The following design features are proposed:

- Fauna crossings to enable reconnection of habitat corridors in key locations.

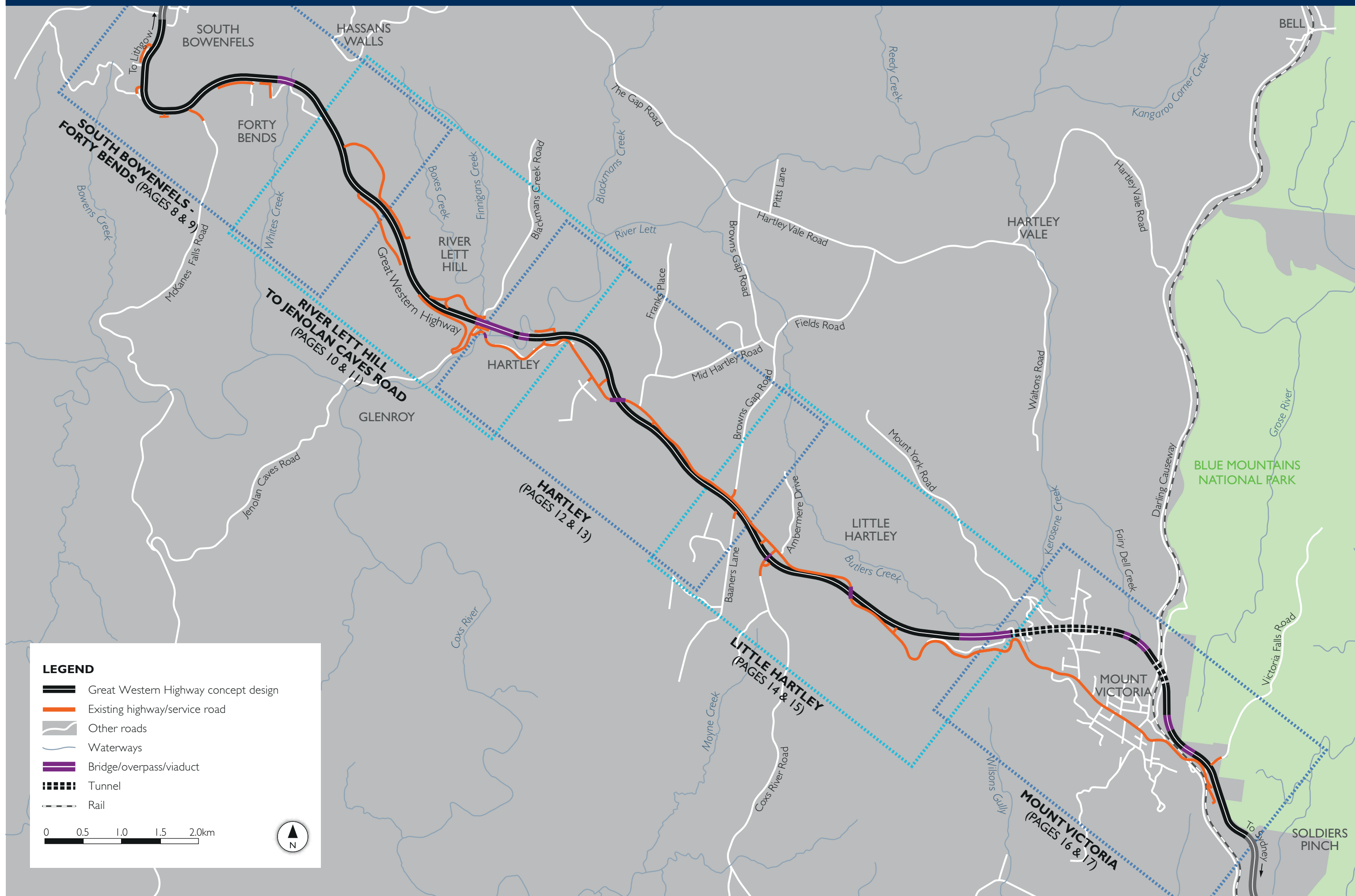
- A network of water treatment measures designed to protect water quality.
- Landscaping that contributes to the visual setting and fits in with landforms and heritage sites.

More detail on the concept design and the options considered can be found in the **concept report** at the display locations or on the RMS website [www.rms.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au)

### South Bowenfels

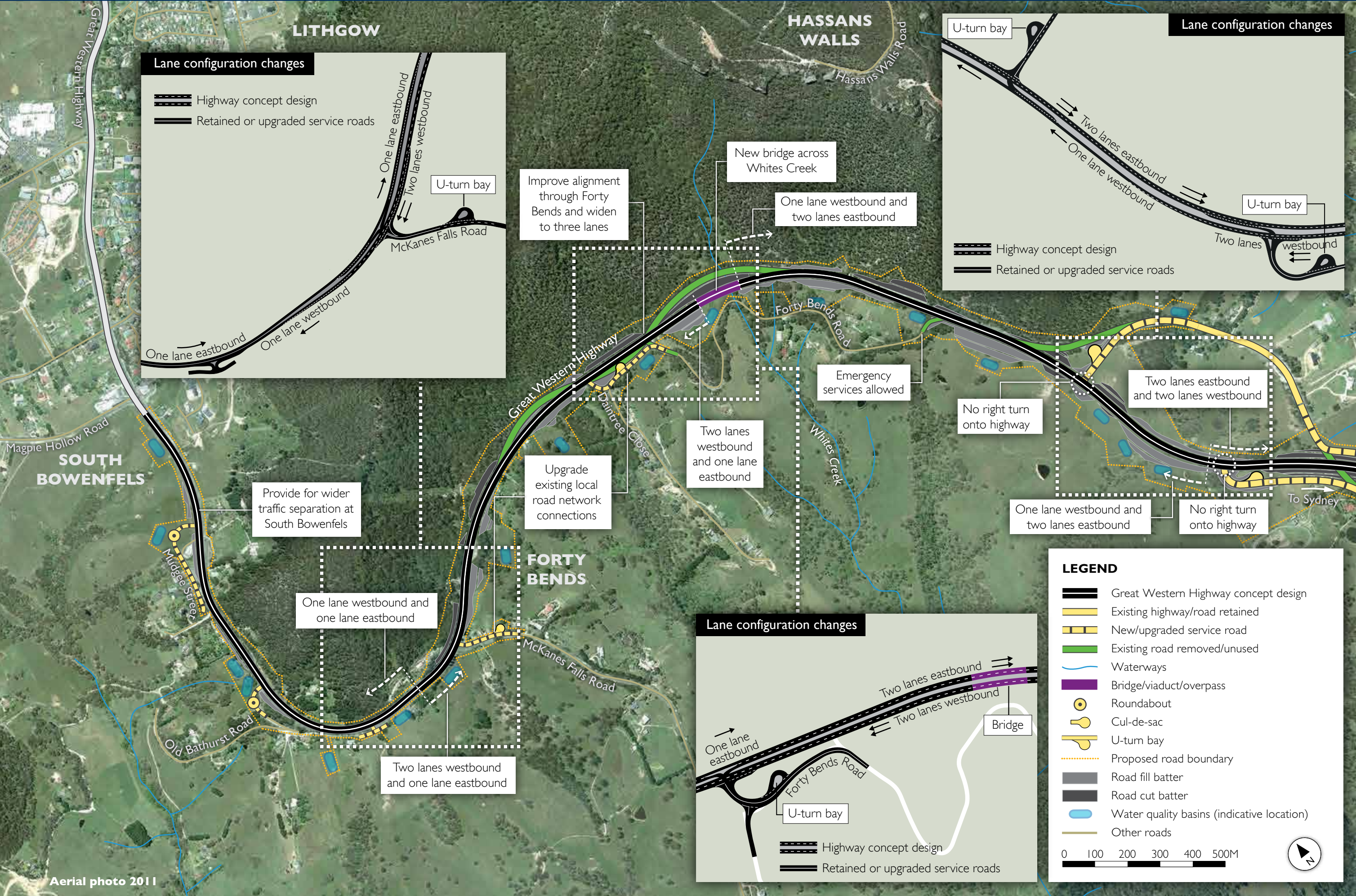






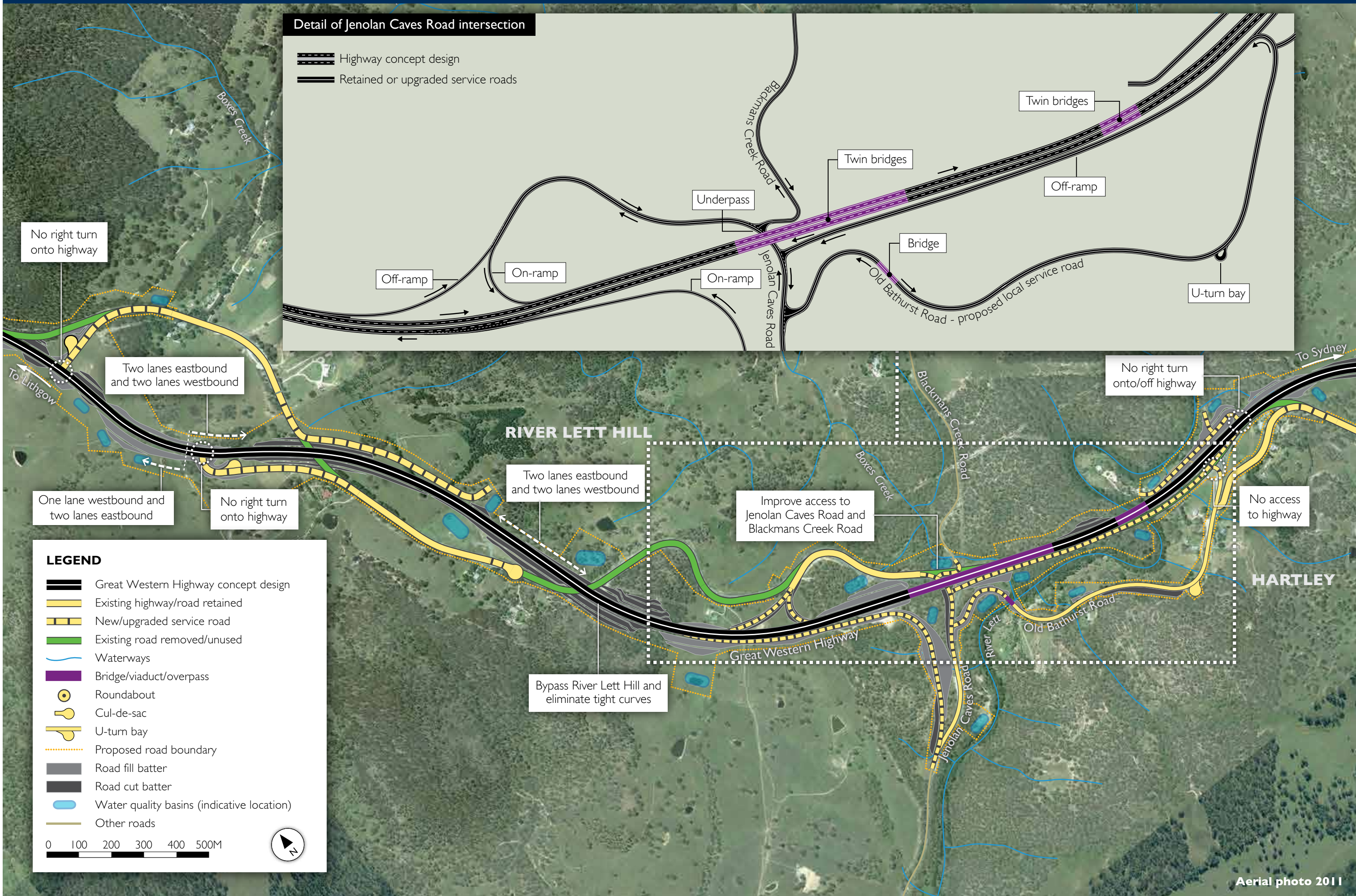


South Bowenfels - Forty Bends





# River Lett Hill - Jenolan Caves Road





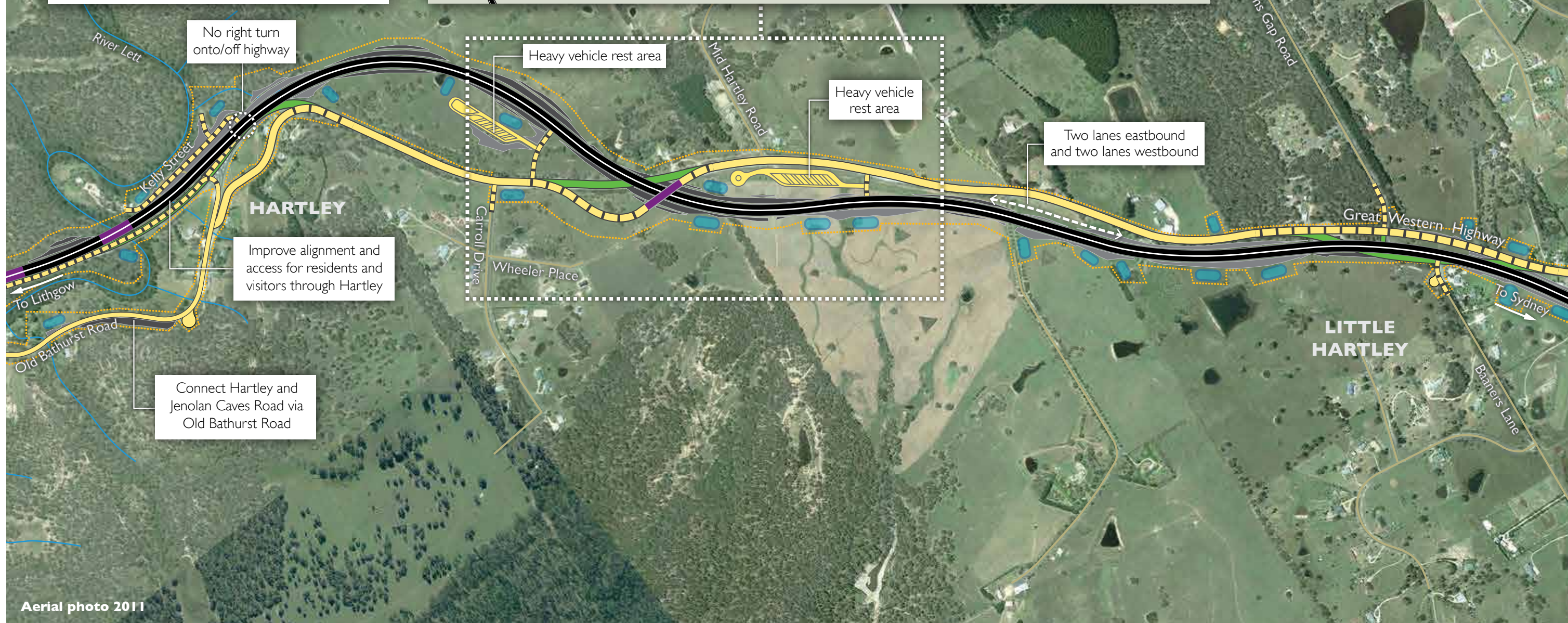
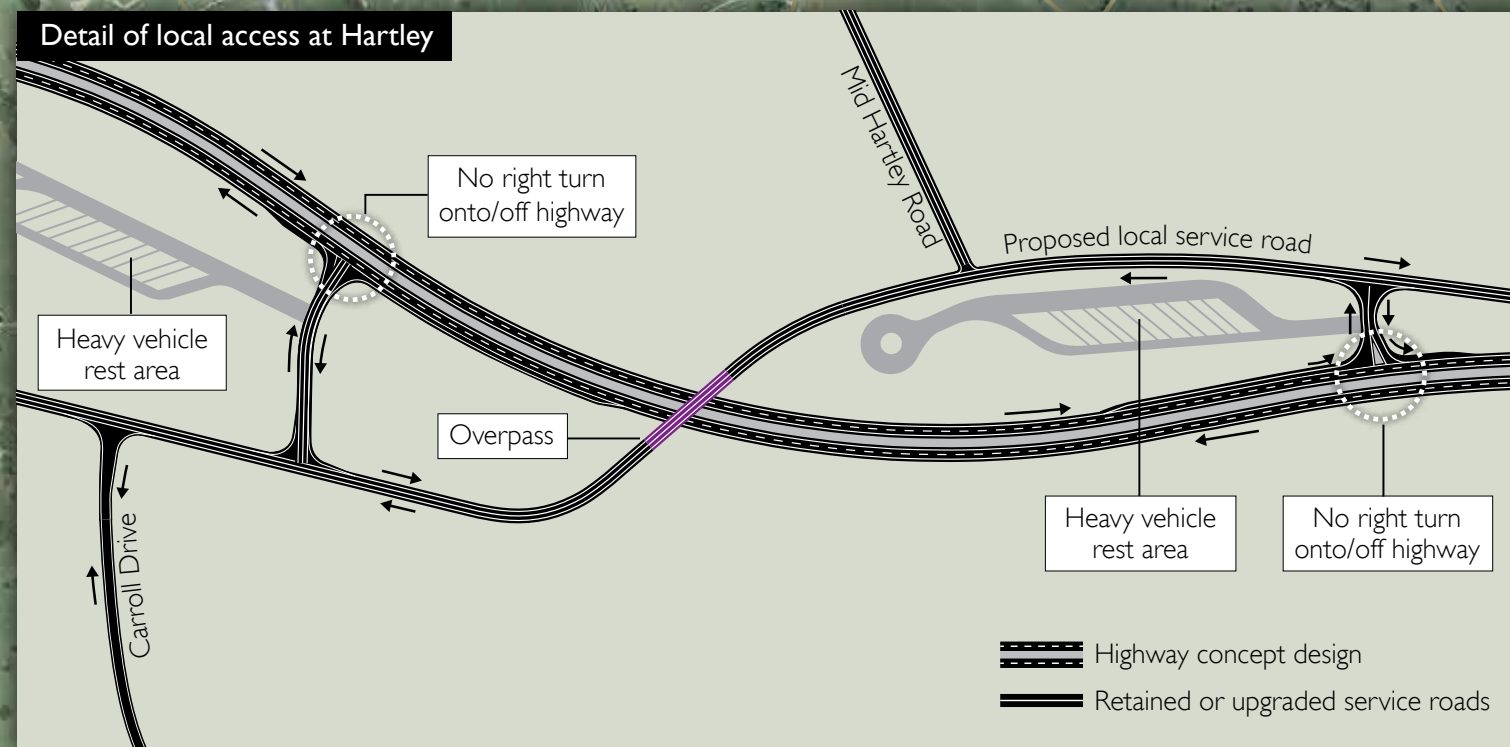
LEGEND

- Great Western Highway concept design
- Existing highway/road retained
- New/upgraded service road
- Existing road removed/unused
- Waterways
- Bridge/viaduct/overpass
- Roundabout
- Cul-de-sac
- U-turn bay
- Proposed road boundary
- Road fill batter
- Road cut batter
- Water quality basins (indicative location)
- Other roads

0 100 200 300 400 500M

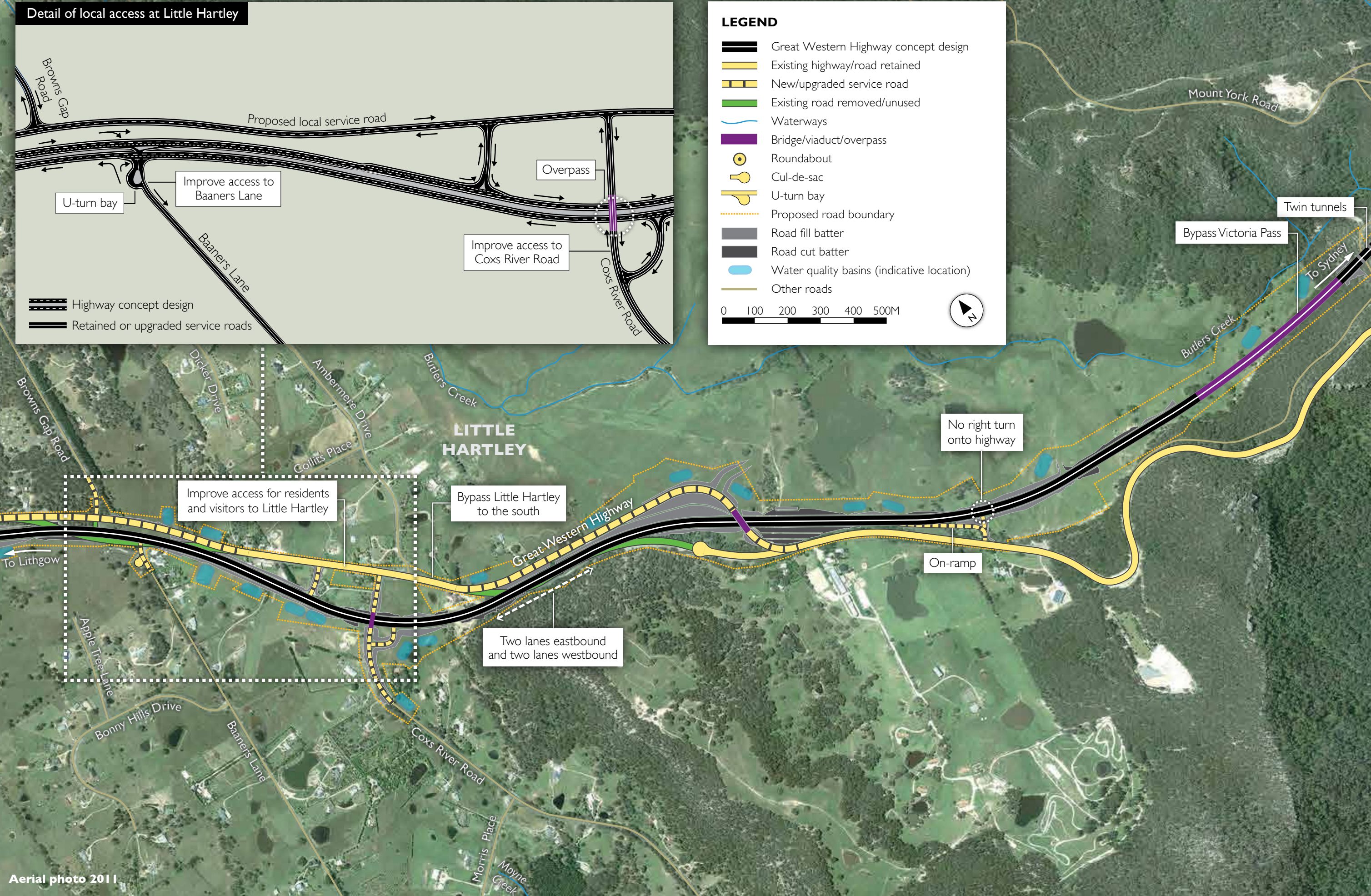


Detail of local access at Hartley

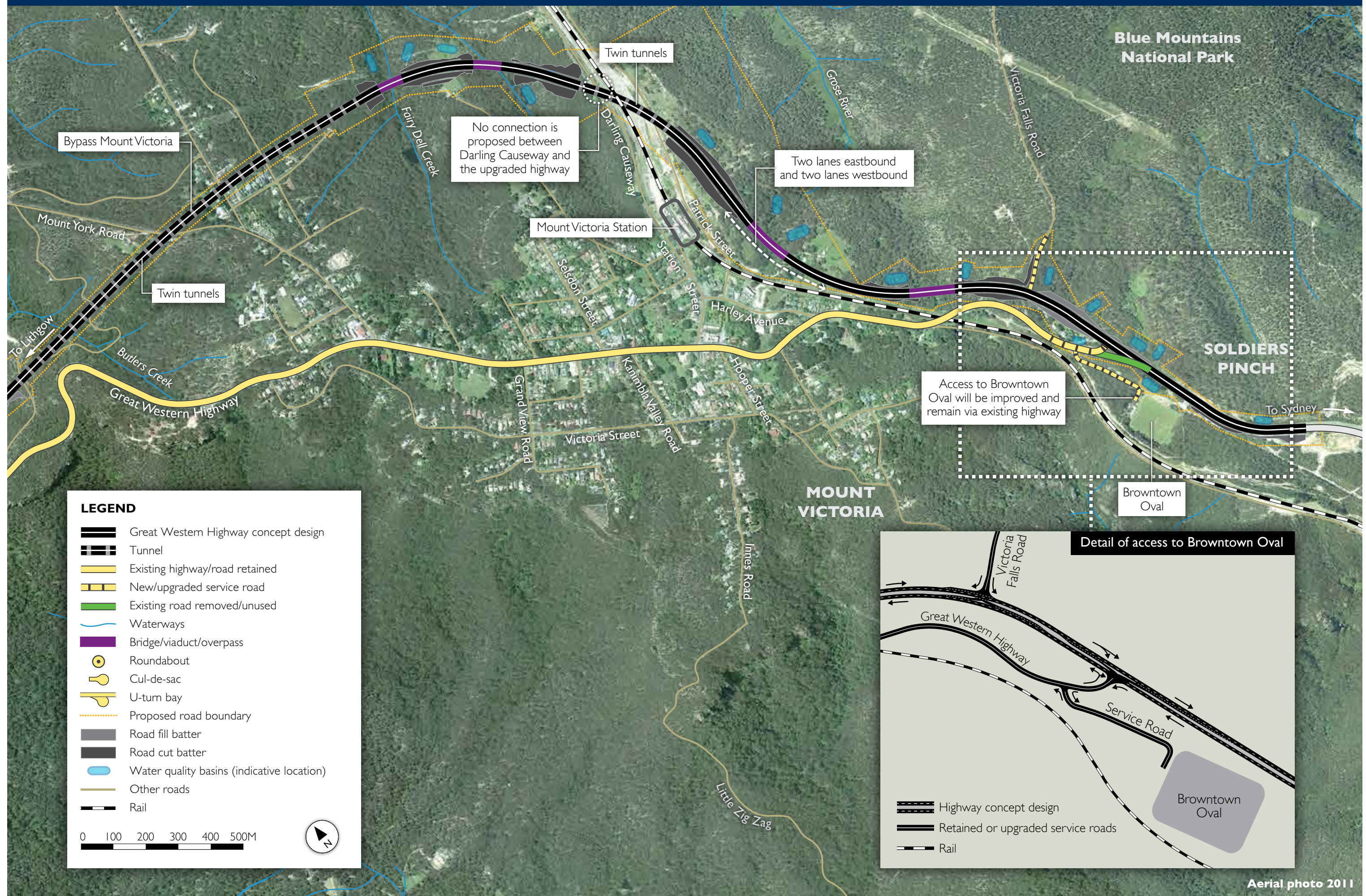


Aerial photo 2011











## Three lane upgrade of Forty Bends

Realigning the highway at Forty Bends would improve safety and reliability of travel, reduce the likelihood of crashes and potential road closures in winter months due to the formation of black ice.

Other safety benefits would include reduced grades and smoother curves.

Planning and field investigations are already well advanced and work has started on an environmental impact assessment for this section of the highway upgrade. The environmental impact assessment will be displayed for community comment later in 2012.

RMS will also start discussions with potentially affected landowners in coming weeks.

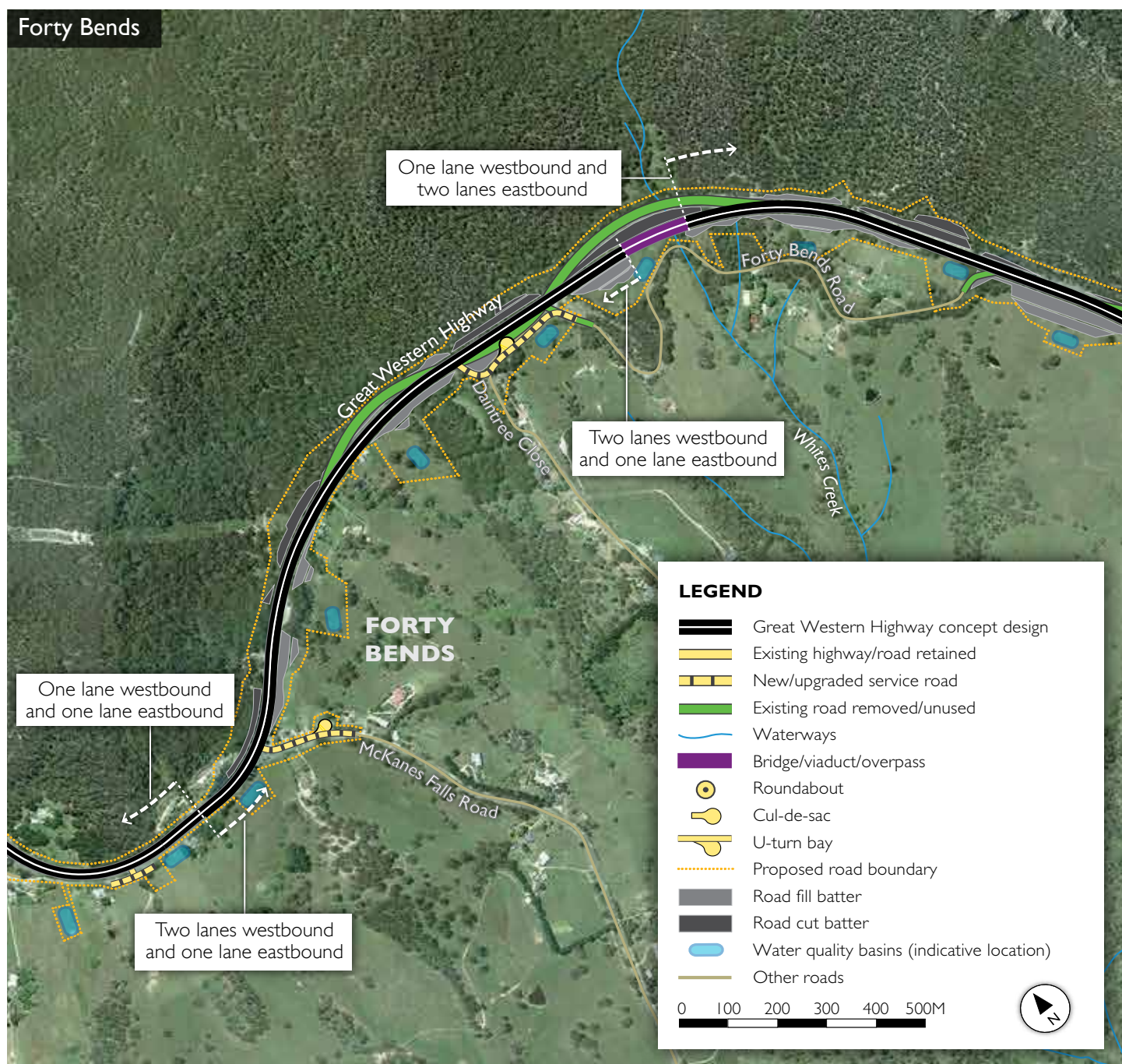
## Forty Bends environmental impact assessment

RMS is preparing an environmental impact assessment (Review of Environmental Factors – REF) of the proposed upgrade of the Great Western Highway at Forty Bends. Community feedback on the concept design will be incorporated into the environmental impact assessment.

The environmental impact assessment will:

- Describe the proposed upgrade and its features.
- Identify and assess the potential environmental impact associated with the design.
- Identify mitigation and management measures to reduce any impacts of construction and ongoing operation of the upgrade.
- Consider all feedback on the design.

The REF will be displayed for community comment later in 2012. RMS will consult directly with all property owners affected by the upgrade of Forty Bends.





Forty Bends

A photograph of a white truck driving on a two-lane asphalt road that curves through a dense, green forest. The road is bordered by a concrete curb on the left and a gravel shoulder. The truck is moving away from the viewer, and the road disappears into the trees in the distance. The scene is captured in bright daylight.

The enhanced safety works program includes existing commitments such as the completed works on the bottom curve of Victoria Pass and the current upgrade on the top curve of Victoria Pass.

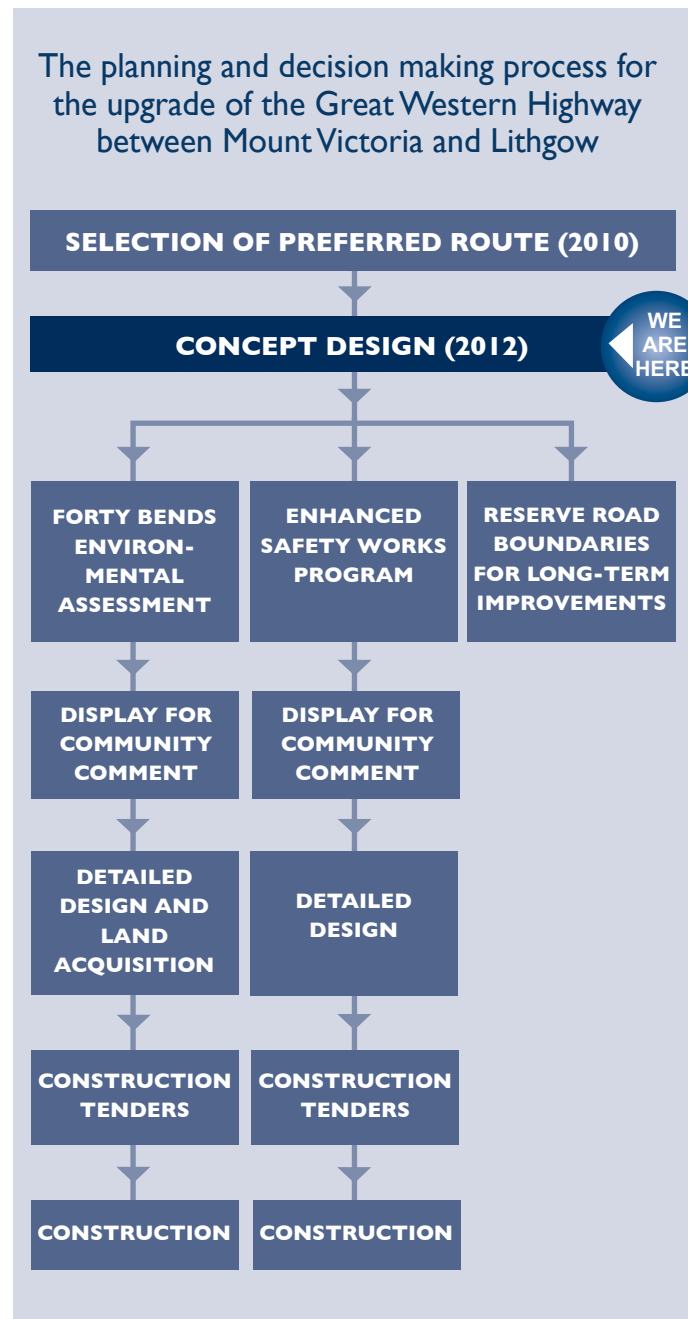
Work will soon start on safety improvements along the Great Western Highway for the Mount Victoria township, including intersection and pedestrian safety improvements.

New safety works in Hartley Valley will be displayed for community feedback later in 2012.

RMS will consider feedback from the community in the process of refining the concept design and confirming the road boundaries for long-term improvements.

Once finalised, the proposed four lane road boundaries will be provided to Lithgow City and Blue Mountains City councils for inclusion in their Local Environment Plans.

## Hartley Valley



You are invited to comment on the concept design. Mail and email address details are included on the back page of this community update. If you prefer, you may use this feedback form to make comment. Comments close on 26 October 2012.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Name		
Address		
Suburb	Postcode	State
Phone number	Email address	

**Privacy:** Roads and Maritime Services (“RMS”) is subject to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Action 1998 (“PIIP Act”) which required that we comply with the Information Privacy Principles set out in the PIIP Act.

All information in correspondence is collected for the sole purpose of assisting in the assessment of this proposal. The information received, including names and addresses of respondents, may be published in subsequent documents unless a clear indication is given in the correspondence that all or part of that information is not published. Otherwise RMS will only disclose your personal information, without your consent, if authorised by the law. Your personal information will be held by the Mount Victoria to Lithgow Alliance, 100 Christie Street, St Leonards NSW 2065. You have the right to access and correct the information if you believe that it is incorrect.



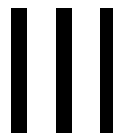


To mail this feedback form fold along the dotted line and seal with clear tape.  
Mail your completed form (no stamp required) to address below.

FOLD HERE FIRST

**Delivery Address:**  
PO Box 164  
ST LEONARDS NSW 1590

No stamp required  
if posted in Australia



Mount Victoria to Lithgow Alliance  
Reply Paid 164  
ST LEONARDS NSW 1590

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## How you can be involved

### Display locations

The concept design is on display until 26 October 2012.  
Displays will be at the following locations:

**Blue Mountains City Council**

2-6 Civic Place, Katoomba

Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5pm.

**Katoomba Library**

Town Centre Arcade

Katoomba Street, Katoomba

Monday to Friday from 10am to 5.30pm and  
Saturday from 9am to 4pm.

**Lithgow City Council**

180 Mort Street, Lithgow

Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm.

**Lithgow Library**

157 Main Street, Lithgow

Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm and  
Saturday from 9am to noon.

**Lithgow Motor Registry**

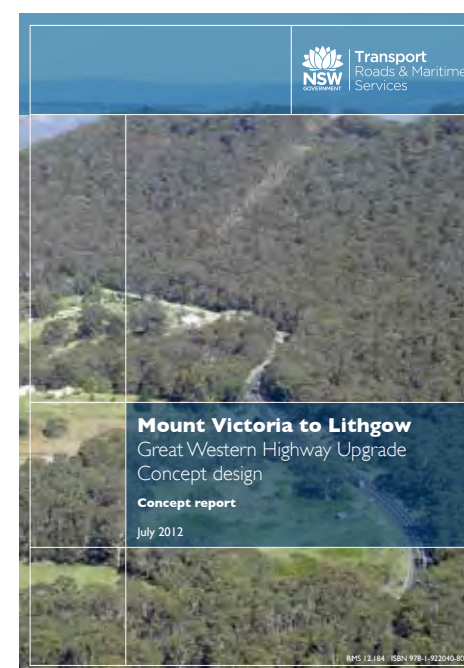
Shop 51, Valley Plaza

Corner of Lithgow and Bent Streets, Lithgow

Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

### RMS website

The concept report is available on the RMS website at  
[www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects).



### Community meetings

RMS representatives will discuss the upgrade priorities and concept design (particularly Forty Bends) at:

**Hartley School Building**

Mid Hartley Road, Hartley

Wednesday 1 August 2012

Noon to 2pm

**Mount Victoria Public School**

Great Western Highway, Mount Victoria

Wednesday 1 August 2012

6pm to 8pm.

The project team will be presenting the concept design followed by time for discussion at the following locations. This will provide an opportunity for the community to look at the concept design in more detail.

**Hartley School Building**

Mid Hartley Road, Hartley

(focus on River Lett Hill, Hartley and Little Hartley)

Thursday 9 August 2012

Noon to 2pm.

**Mount Victoria Public School**

Great Western Highway, Mount Victoria

(focus on Mount Victoria)

Thursday 9 August 2012

6pm to 8pm.

**Union Theatre**

63-65 Bridge Street, Lithgow

(focus on Forty Bends and South Bowenfels)

Saturday 11 August 2012

10am to Noon meeting and 1pm to 3pm staffed display.

The project team will remain at the venue to discuss any matters the community and stakeholders may have regarding the concept design.

### Feedback

Feedback on the concept design will be received until Friday 26 October 2012.

A feedback form is provided in this community update for your comment. Alternatively you can send your written comments to the Mount Victoria to Lithgow Alliance at the mail and email addresses shown below.



australian  
made



carbon  
neutral



recycled



CARBON NEUTRAL PAPER

### For more information:

Mail to Mount Victoria to Lithgow Alliance, PO Box 164, St Leonards NSW 1590

**T** 1800 035 733 (toll free)

**E** [MV2Linformation@MV2L.com.au](mailto:MV2Linformation@MV2L.com.au) or visit [www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects)

July 2012  
RMS 12.183