



# **Proposed safety improvements to Heathcote Road narrow bridge over Woronora River, Engadine**

Engagement report

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<b>Author:</b>	Chris McDonald – Communications and Stakeholder Engagement
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# 1 Executive Summary

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Transport for NSW will close the narrow bridge over Woronora River on Heathcote Road, Engadine to deliver needed safety improvement works. We will deliver road lane widening works and improvements to the bridge approaches. This will improve traffic flow and make the bridge safer for motorists including larger vehicles.

We have listened to the community, conducted traffic modelling and reviewed safety statistics to find the bridge needs safety improvements.

In May and June 2020 community consultation was carried out using on-line platforms that included a questionnaire where bridge users to gather their could provide their comments about the proposed safety improvements ahead of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) scheduled for the end of 2020.

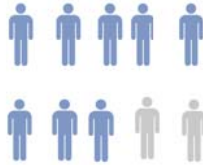
The campaign reached 210,070 people with 1,041 completing the online questionnaire. Almost half, 437, of the respondents also provided additional feedback. We have learnt:

- users of the bridge are highly engaged and support the safety improvements
- the bridge has a legacy, with its long history in the community it is of high interest
- 21,680 people watched the video of the bridge with an average view time of 8 seconds (5 seconds above the norm.)
- this bridge is still a frequently used with almost 70% of respondents daily or weekly users
- 8 out of 10 respondents cited bridge safety as a primary concern
- 708 respondents subscribed to the project database to be kept informed
- 95% of subscribers chose email as their preferred form of communication.

From the **results** of the questionnaire **we know...**



**7 out of 10**  
are regular to heavy  
bridge users



**8 out of 10**  
were concerned for  
bridge safety



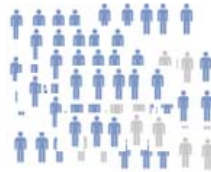
**53%**  
call it Heathcote Road  
Bridge



**95%**  
prefer email to receive  
project updates



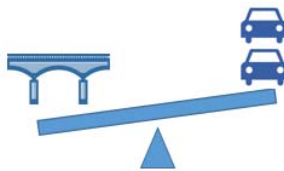
**1 out of 10**  
were concerned for  
the bridge closure  
during works



**708**  
joined the project  
database to be  
kept informed



**8 out of 10**  
live in the  
Sutherland Shire



**363**  
concerned the corridor  
does not meet current  
and future need

### **1.1.1 Decision**

Based on this information, we will continue with the development of proposed safety improvements for the Heathcote Road bridge over Woronora River. This is in line with the majority of respondents to the engagement being most concerned about the safety of motorists using the bridge.

The next community consultation will be during the display the Review of Environmental Factors in late 2020, which will include a detailed scope of proposed works, environmental and road network impacts and more information about potential road closures. The community will be kept informed as this project progresses.

## 2 Introduction

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### 2.1.1 Background

The official name of the bridge is Bridge 152, however it is often referred to as 'the narrow bridge over Woronora River'.

For the community this bridge symbolically represents a time when the bridge was one of the few connections between the south and the west.

Built by the military the narrow Heathcote Road Bridge over Woronora River history dates back to 1943. The bridge sits over the Woronora River nestled amongst the spectacular Heathcote and Royal National Park.

Transport for NSW is making improvements to the bridge as its road lanes are limited in width, with community concern for motorist safety when crossing the bridge.

### 2.1.2 Methodology

Transport for NSW sought comment from users on the proposed changes. We worked within the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions to safeguard the community and our staff whilst doing our best to connect with the community.

A short online questionnaire was created to collect contact details and comments from road users that we were able to reach via our communications channels. The questionnaire questions are in Appendix A.

The results were collated to understand the demographics and views of participants.

## 3 Engagement approach

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The Transport for NSW project to deliver safety improvements to the over 75 year old narrow bridge over Woronora River on Heathcote Road, Engadine is in response to community feedback. In the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, 25 May – 5 June 2020, Transport for NSW sought feedback from users of the bridge and the local community on the proposed safety improvements.

The social distancing requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic have meant face to face meetings, information sessions are not an option, despite this the community was still given the opportunity to have a say. Transport for NSW developed a consultation and engagement strategy that would overcome barriers to reaching the target audience and use platforms for genuine and meaningful engagement without compromising the health and safety of staff or the community.

Creative was developed for the campaign that included a 30 second video for on-line, imagery, project website page to act as the central information source and collateral (postcard and posters). All collateral and media invited community members to provide comments and feedback on the proposed bridge safety improvements, via an on-line questionnaire and a Facebook Live Event. The project website also provided additional methods for the community to provide feedback such as email and a 1800 number.

Consultation needed to reach local community members and transient out of area bridge users so a combination of traditional, digital and social media platforms and VMS road signage was used and achieved an audience reach of 210,070. We received a community response of 1041 questionnaires completed and a database of 708 subscribers established for ongoing project communications.

### 3.1.1 Objectives

- To direct bridge users to our online questionnaire.
- To collect information from the questionnaire including contact details, responses to specific questions and overall sentiment.
- To develop a project database for bridge users and engaged members of the community for ongoing communications
- To inform the strategic planning of the upcoming REF.

### 3.1.2 How engagement was done

An online questionnaire was developed to collect information from bridge users that we were able to reach via a suite of traditional and digital communications channels. See Table 1.

*Table 1 – Community and stakeholder engagement timeline*

Engagement	Dates	Target	Detail	Audience Reach
Letterbox drop	23-24 May	Local residents and businesses	9,000 Postcards	9,000
Facebook video ad	25 May -5 June	Targeted to local residents and potential bridge users	Boosted with advertising 25 May – 5 June	85,627
Facebook Live event	25 May – 3 June	Targeted as above	Boosted with advertising 6 – 3 June	391
Posters	25 May	Local shopping centres and businesses		unknown
1800 number	23 May ongoing	Local residents and potential bridge users	Postcards, posters, website	1
Email - inbound	23 May ongoing	Local residents and potential bridge users	Postcards, posters, website	23
Email - outbound	3 June	Local businesses and potential bridge users	Included emergency services	69
Website	23 May ongoing	Visitors to the project page	Postcards, posters, website	4,959
VMS	1-6 June	Motorists passing by routes to the bridge	Three VMS set up in strategic locations	110,000
Media release	1 June	Local and state media channels		n/a

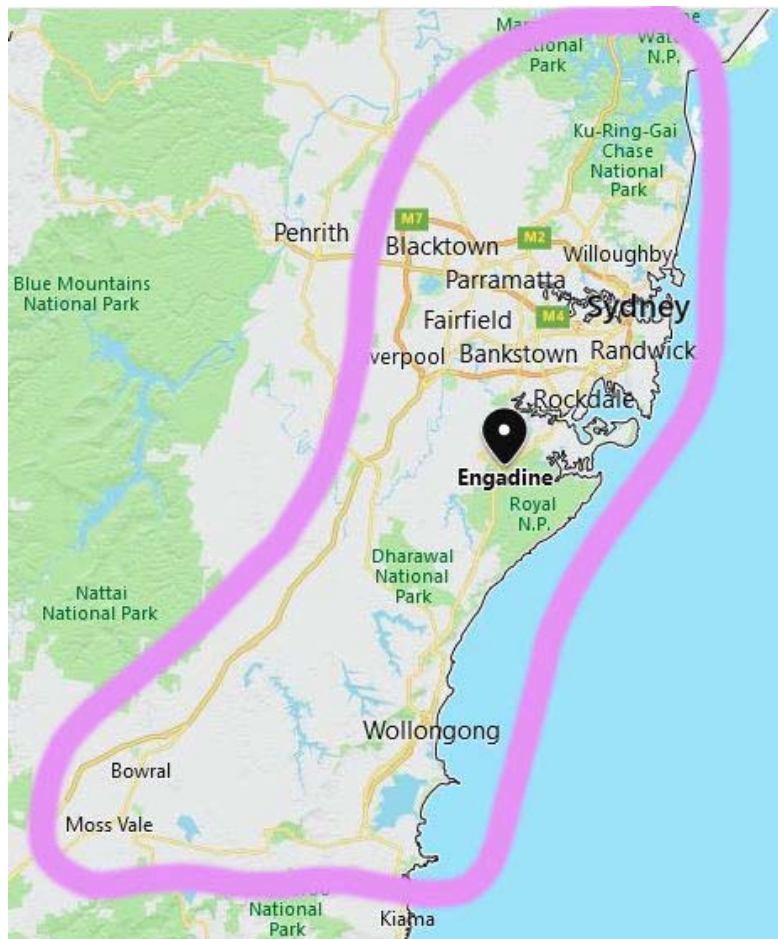


### 3.1.3 Engagement outcome

Consultation needed to reach local community members and transient out of area bridge users so a combination of traditional, digital and social media platforms and VMS road signage was used and achieved an audience reach of 209,977. Coupled with engaging key messaging and content the campaign:

- 1041 questionnaires were completed by procured community response
- 708 respondents subscribed to the project database for updates.
- 95% chose email as their preferred method for ongoing communication
- people as far as Shellharbour, Moss Vale, Liverpool and the Central Coast participated in this questionnaire. See Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Audience reach



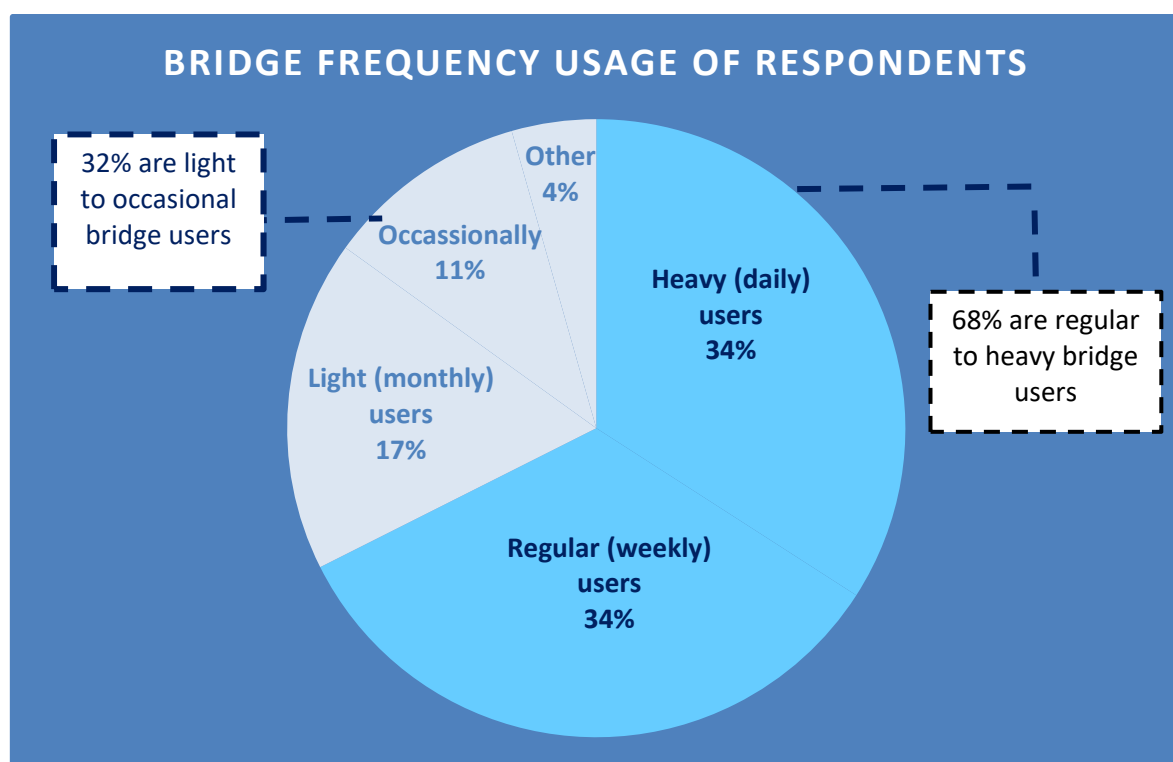
## Questionnaire Responders

7 out of 10 questionnaire respondents were regular to heavy users of the bridge

- 34% daily bridge users
- 34% weekly bridge users
- 32% were light bridge users including monthly (17%), occasional (11%) and other (4%) users.

See Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Bridge frequency usage of respondents



Geographically, the majority of respondents were within the Sutherland Shire:

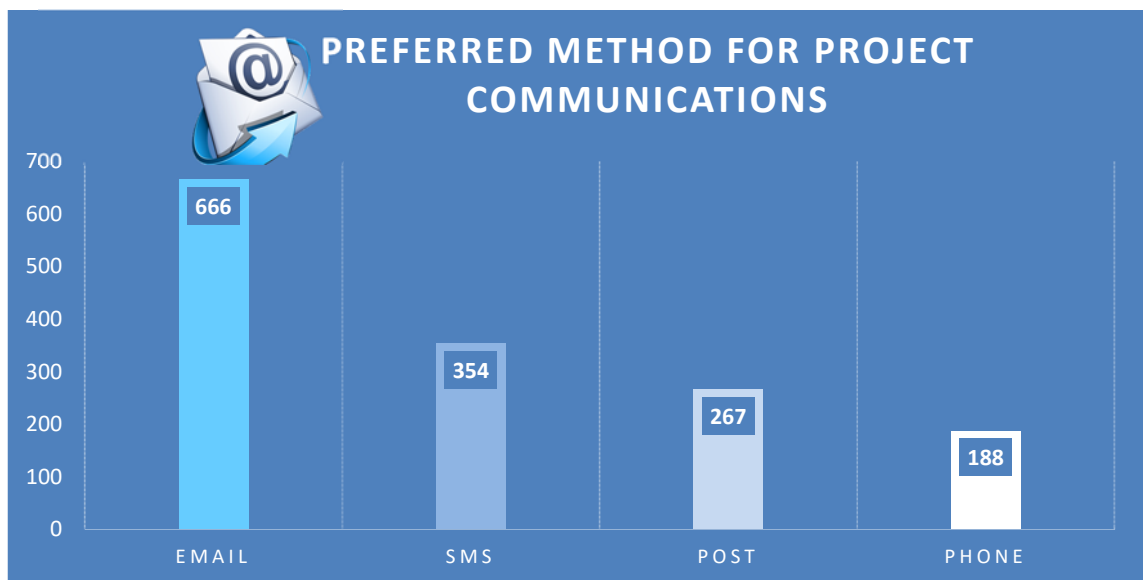
- 84% of respondents were from the Sutherland Shire
- 74% of the respondents from the Sutherland Shire resided in the suburbs of Engadine, Heathcote, Waterfall, Woronora Heights and Yarrawarrah

## Establishment of community and Stakeholder database

The preferred communications for respondents to be kept informed were predominantly by electronic and digital communication platforms. 708 community members subscribed to the project database, some choosing multiple methods for receiving project updates. Email was by far the preferred option almost twice as popular as SMS. See Figure 3.

- 95% email
- 50% by SMS text message
- 38% by post
- 26.5% by phone

Figure 3 – Preferred Communication Method



## 4 Feedback and TfNSW response

### 4.1.1 Questionnaire response

The questionnaire had 1,041 respondents which is high when considering COVID-19 environment. The questionnaire was conducted using Qualtrix data secure survey software.

#### Community bridge name

Over half of respondents called the bridge, which doesn't have an official name, the Heathcote Road Bridge:

- 53% Heathcote Road Bridge
- 21% the narrow bridge over Woronora River
- 26% either used another name or did not use a particular name.

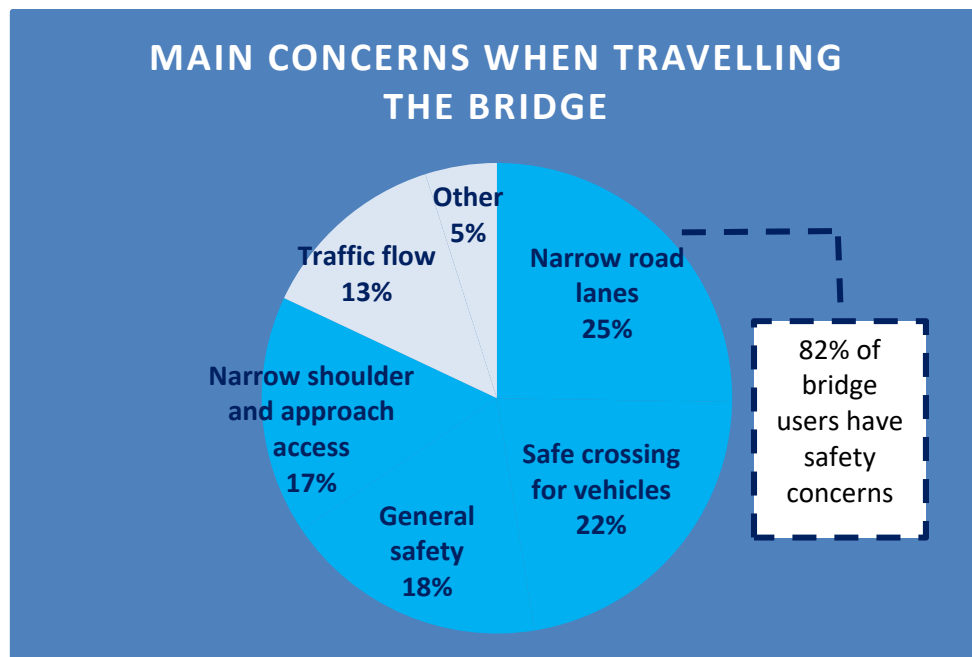
#### Main concerns while travelling on the bridge

The community indicated a strong concern for safety crossing the bridge with narrow road lanes, narrow shoulders and approaches when accessing the bridge of main concern.

- more than 8 out of 10 bridge users expressed concerns for safety
- less than 2 out of 10 of bridge users expressed concern for non-safety issues such as traffic flow on the bridge

See Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Main concerns when travelling on bridge



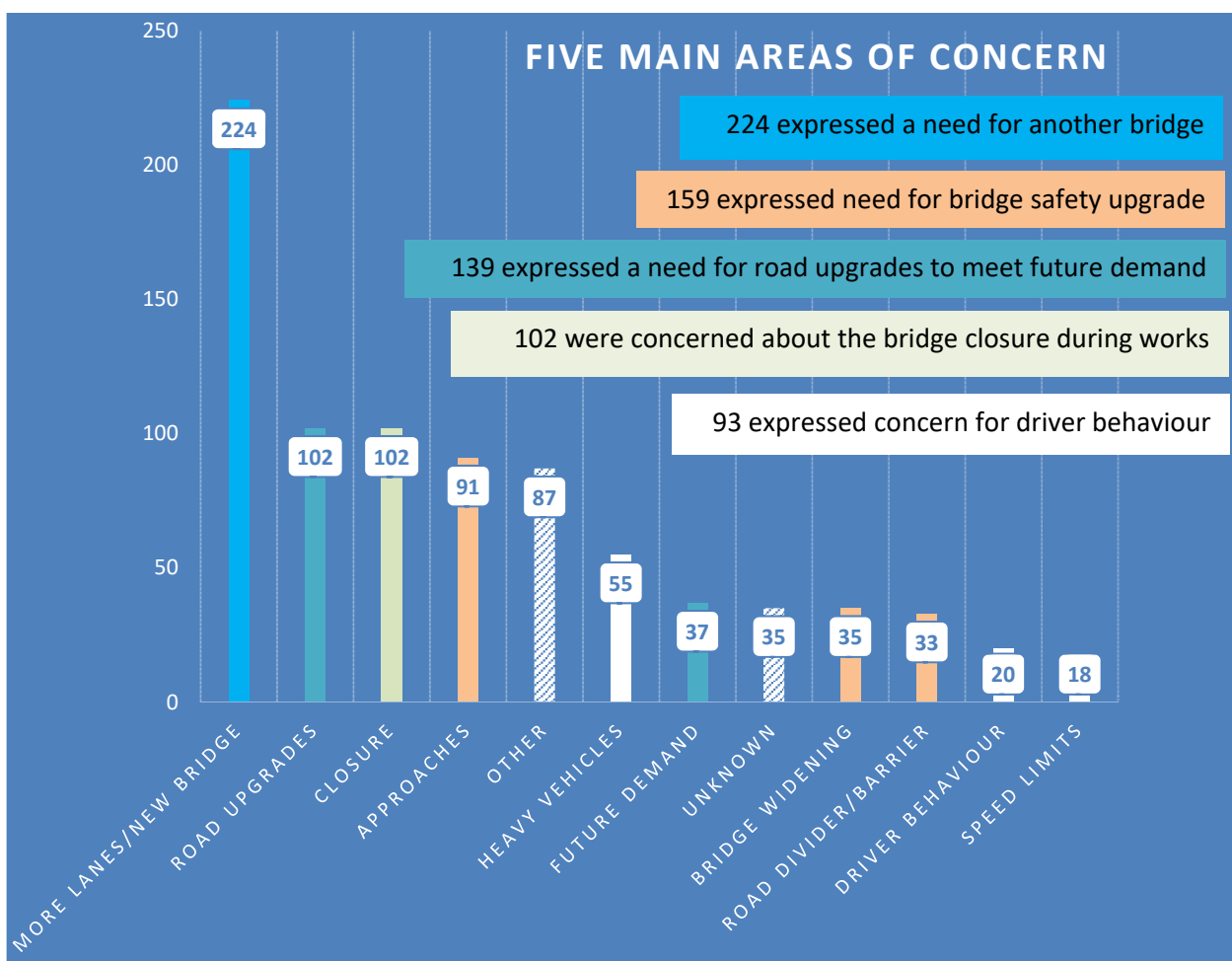
## General comments and feedback

In the open text field of the final question, 437 comments were collected from the 1041 respondents. The concerns were grouped according to their topic to identify areas of greatest concern. Of the comments received for this question most expressed concern that the current bridge crossing and roads did not meet current and future need for the area. The need for the current bridge to have safety improvements was also a high concern for this group.

It was also observed that driver behaviour was a concern representing 21% of the comments received in this section.

See Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Top 10 topics show there are four main areas of concern for the community



## 4.1.2 Communications

### Social Media

Social media proved a great way to get in touch with some of our stakeholders, and we posted both a video and a Facebook LIVE invitation. The video was boosted the first week and the invitation the second week.

Facebook Advertising had a high audience reach of over 86,000 people with high engagement compared to industry standards.

The high number of people responding, commenting and reacting to the Facebook advertising and posts indicates we reached the right people. Not only was the topic of Heathcote Rd bridge safety interesting to these people but it was also of interest to their friend network as many of them shared the information in the posts or of the upcoming Facebook Live event.

In the absence of a usual face-to-face event due to COVID-19 restrictions, a Facebook LIVE event to provide a forum where the community could ask questions and have the project team respond as they would in a normal face to face environment but in this case it was on-line.

- 391 indicated interest in the event
- 64 attended the event on the day
- 324 shares prior to the event
- 89 comments during the event.

### Email

Email was one of the other options to contact the project team with feedback. The content of the emails included comments that were like those recorded in the questionnaire.

- 23 community members contacted us by email, primarily to subscribe and be added to the project database to receive program updates
- one post subscription
- four sms subscriptions
- eleven subscribed by email.

### Website

Our website was the most important of our communication methods and will continue to be the best place to provide the latest information and updates to the community: [rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/Heathcote-road-project](https://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/Heathcote-road-project).

- there were 4,168 individual visits to the project website (unique views for the period

- around 20% (791) of the project website visitors visited the project website more than once
- 70% of the project website visits came from Facebook, 2,937 individual visits (unique views)
- 7 searches (Google, Bing etc) were responsible for almost 10% of page views.
- 8% percent of views came from ANSTO, 2.2% from The Leader and less than 1% from the Qualtrix survey page
- there were 4,959 page views of the project web page starting May 24
- 3,342 page view leads came from Facebook
- 47 people subscribed to the project database from the project website

### **1800 phone number**

Phone contact as available however it did not prove a popular method for communication. Only one person contacted us by phone to make a comment and ask questions after the questionnaire ended. The content of the conversation was similar to the questionnaire.

### **Virtual Message Signage**

Virtual Message Signage was used to reach bridge users who may or may not be local to the community or be on social media and therefore not see other communications. VMS ensured we captured these users so they knew and had the opportunity to comment on proposed bridge safety improvements.

22,000 daily users of the bridge were exposed to Virtual Message Signage (known as VMS this is electronic signage) over five days in three locations.

### **Posters**

To reach those in the community who may have been outside the letter box drop area by putting up posters in several community places including shopping centres and local cafés. The distribution was limited however due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## **4.1.3 Transport responses**

This activity and report is not consultation for the community about this project, rather, an early engagement report before we display the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) in late 2020. At the display, the community will have the opportunity to provide a formal submission that will be reviewed and published in the REF submissions report. See Table 2 for the most frequently asked questions during this early engagement and Transport's response.

Table 2 – Transport responses to the most frequently asked questions

Topic	Response
<p><b>Why improve the bridge?</b></p>	<p>We have listened to the community, seen traffic modelling and reviewed safety statistics questions during this early engagement the bridge needs some safety improvements.</p> <p>The bridge is more than 75 years old. Transport needs over this time have changed and so the bridge needs some safety improvements. We will widen bridge road lane widths to the new standard, from 3m to 3.5m in each direction, and improve the approaches.</p>
<p><b>Are you looking for community feedback about bridge improvements?</b></p>	<p>We are looking for your comments on the proposed changes. Your feedback will be used to help guide the design as part of the Review of Environmental Factors, the REF, which will be displayed at the end of the year.</p> <p>We will conduct an extensive consultation campaign to gather feedback on the REF while it is on display.</p> <p>We are working within the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions to safeguard the community and our staff whilst doing our best to connect with the community.</p>
<p><b>When will the Review of Environment Factors (REF) assessment be available for the community to provide feedback?</b></p>	<p>The REF is expected to be on public display late 2020.</p>
<p><b>What environmental impacts are expected while work is carried out on the bridge?</b></p>	<p>Environmental concerns are being investigated by our project team and will be addressed in the REF.</p>
<p><b>What work will is being proposed?</b></p>	<p>We will widen the existing narrow lanes to standard widths (3m to 3.5m) with shoulders and improve the approaches to the bridge to increase safety for road users.</p> <p>There have been comments that TfNSW will demolish the bridge but that isn't true. We can preserve the bridge by carrying out some safety improvements that bring it in line with today's safety standards. Much has changed over the past 75 years including vehicle size and speed.</p>



<p><b>How long will it take to do the work?</b></p>	<p>We'd like to do it as fast as possible, and that will take around six months with a full bridge closure.</p> <p>A partial shutdown would be more difficult to manage safely for our workers or motorists.</p> <p>This construction work will be challenging due to the surrounding rocky cliffs and the height above the river for starters.</p> <p>Work will be carried out so that one lane remains accessible for construction vehicles and Emergency vehicles as required to ensure that emergency services are not compromised for the local community.</p>
<p><b>Why aren't you building a second bridge?</b></p>	<p>This project is delivering on a promise to address community safety concerns by improving bridge safety not building a new bridge. We will of course listen to what you have to say and the interest expressed for a new four lane bridge will be recorded for future network planning consideration.</p>
<p><b>When will work on the bridge upgrade start?</b></p>	<p>Early construction work will commence late 2021 at this time final design will also be completed and approved. Transport for NSW will be able to advise the community about the full construction schedule.</p>
<p><b>Will there be a detour?</b></p>	<p>There will be a detour via the Bangor Bypass, which adds an extra 25 minutes in normal traffic.</p> <p>Depending where motorists are travelling, there are other options such as driving via Picton or Sutherland either to or from Wollongong or the city.</p>
<p><b>How long will work on the bridge upgrade take?</b></p>	<p>Transport for NSW will need to close the bridge for at least six months to carry out the works uninterrupted to deliver the needed safety improvements swiftly and reduce how long the community is affected by the bridge and road closures.</p> <p>Please visit our project website to subscribe for future updates about the progress of the project.</p>
<p><b>Will you give us notice of your works?</b></p>	<p>Motorists will be given lots of notice via VMS, email, sms, traffic alerts and notifications when our work affects motorists. Right now we are collecting your details so we can use them for this reason in the future. It will help you organise your travel route in advance.</p> <p>In the questionnaire we have asked for postcodes/locations of users so we can provide advance notice of any bridge closure so that alternate routes can be sought from place of departure to minimise travel impacts.</p>

<p><b>Have you taken thought about future traffic needs?</b></p>	<p>TfNSW is planning for growth in the southern suburbs and looking into roads for current and future traffic volumes.</p> <p>Standard road widths will be widened from 3m to 3.5m in each direction, to improve road safety and reliability, reduce congestion and cater for current and future traffic.</p>
<p><b>How will the improvements be funded?</b></p>	<p>The project is funded by the Gateway to the South Pinch Point Program for the strategic phase and the concept design including community consultation and environmental assessments.</p>
<p><b>Have you done other investigation or work in the area?</b></p>	<p>TfNSW has been investigating other improvements to the A6 corridor along Heathcote Road between New Illawarra Road, Lucas Heights and the Princes Highway, Engadine to improve road safety and reliability, reduce congestion and cater for current and future traffic.</p> <p>Other improvements proposed along this north-south connector including the improvement of Heathcote Road between Holsworthy and Voyager Point, we have also delivered upgrades at the major intersections with New Illawarra Road and the Princes Highway.</p> <p>However this project is focussed on the safety improvements needed for the narrow bridge on Heathcote Road over the Woronora Bridge.</p>

#### **4.1.4 Out of scope**

Feedback received that was out of scope was received from 235 respondents, who made a comment about a new bridge/more lanes/duplicate bridge.

Bridge safety for all users is a priority and the bridge and approaches must be widened as soon as possible. The NSW Government has funded this project to \$73 million dollars which covers widening the bridge and approaches. Other work to improve safety and network efficiency on the Heathcote Road corridor may be considered in future.

These queries are directed back to the scope of work.

## 5 The Outcome

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We have listened to the community, reviewed traffic modelling and safety statistics to find the bridge needs safety improvements to bring it in line with current safety standards.

There is strong community support for the Heathcote Road bridge safety improvements. The closure of the bridge is generally accepted by the community as the most efficient delivery of the works, however, community concern is noted that the closure be time limited and the project is looking at measures to manage and lessen where possible those impacts.

There was a common concern amongst the community for driver behaviour adding bridge safety issues. The project has taken this on notice and as a result will look into measures that encourage and reinforce safer driver behaviour in addition to the bridge safety improvements.

A message of received from the community during the consultation process was the belief that the Heathcote Road corridor cannot meet the increasing future traffic demand, with specific need cited for another bridge and for more traffic lanes. Whilst this cannot be addressed in the Heathcote Road bridge safety improvements project it has been documented and taken on notice by Transport for NSW.

The project REF will be displayed late 2020. This will be another opportunity for the community to provide comments on a more detailed information about the project.

## 6 Appendix A – Qualtrix questionnaire questions

*Transport for NSW will close the narrow bridge over Woronora River on Heathcote Road, Engadine to deliver needed safety improvement works.*

*To carry out the works the bridge will be closed for at least six months. We want to hear from you before we display the Review of Environmental Factors later this year, before we start early works in late 2021.*

*Please fill in your details and complete the questions below to be kept informed as the project progresses. Transport for NSW appreciates your patience while we carry out this important safety work.*

To be kept informed on the project please provide your details:

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Please select the best way for us to communicate with you throughout the works. You may choose more than one option

- Email (please provide your email address)
- Text message (please provide your mobile number)
- Post (please provide your postal address)
- Phone (please provide your phone number)

What name do you use for the bridge? You may choose all that apply

- Heathcote Road Bridge
- Narrow bridge over Woronora River
- Not sure don't really call it by any one name
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

On average how often would you use the bridge?  
You may only choose one answer

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Never
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What are your main concerns when travelling the bridge? You may choose one or more answers

- Narrow road lanes
- Narrow shoulder approaches when accessing the bridge
- Its general safety
- Traffic flow
- Safe crossing for large vehicles
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other comments or feedback for us? Please tell us in 200 words or less.

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THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE OUR SURVEY.

*We will report on our findings on our website in August 2020.*

*In the meantime if you have any questions, please contact the project team.*

Phone: 1800 572 004

Email: [HeathcoteRoadBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HeathcoteRoadBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au)

Web: [www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/heathcote-road-bridge](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/heathcote-road-bridge)

## 7 Appendix B – Community update May 2020



Transport for NSW

### Heathcote Road bridge over Woronora River improvements



**May 2020**

Transport for NSW will close the narrow bridge over Woronora River on Heathcote Road, Engadine to deliver needed safety improvement works.

We will deliver widening works and improvements to the bridge approaches. This will improve traffic flow and make the bridge safer for motorists including larger vehicles.

We want to hear from you before we display the Review of Environmental Factors later this year.

**Subscribe** | To subscribe to our regular project notifications please email [HeathcoteRoadBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HeathcoteRoadBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au) stating your preferred methods of contact, email or SMS or both.

### Transport for NSW will deliver safety improvements at the narrow bridge over Woronora River on Heathcote Road, Engadine in response to community feedback.

To carry out the works the bridge will be closed for at least six months. Please complete our online questionnaire, and register your interest to be informed as the project progresses. Transport for NSW appreciates your patience while we carry out this important safety work.

[rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/heathcote-road-bridge](https://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/heathcote-road-bridge)

The online questionnaire will be posted on our website until 5 June.

### Contact us

For more information on our project please visit [rms.nsw.gov.au/heathcote-road-bridge](https://rms.nsw.gov.au/heathcote-road-bridge)

Thank you for your patience during this work.

 1800 572 004

 [HeathcoteRoadBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HeathcoteRoadBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au)

 [rms.nsw.gov.au/heathcote-road-bridge](https://rms.nsw.gov.au/heathcote-road-bridge)



This document contains important information about public transport projects in your area. If you require the services of an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450** and ask them to call us on **1800 572 004**. The interpreter will then assist you with translation.

# 8 Appendix B – community update distribution area



# 9 Appendix C – sample of web page

The screenshot shows a web page for 'Transport for NSW Roads and Maritime' with a navigation menu including 'Roads', 'Maritime', 'Business & Industry', 'Projects', 'Safety', 'About us', and 'Contact us'. The main heading is 'Safety improvements for Heathcote Road Bridge over Woronora River'. Below this is a 'Latest news' section with two items: 'Quadrant one closed' (JUN 2020) and 'Investigation work completed' (FEB 2019). A 'Subscribe' form is present with fields for name, email, and address. A video player shows an aerial view of the bridge. The 'Project information' section includes 'Background', 'Key features', 'Benefits', 'Community involvement', and 'Next steps'. A 'Timeline' section at the bottom lists project milestones from 2017 to 2020.

## 10 Appendix D – Poster



May 2020

Transport for NSW will close the narrow bridge over Woronora River on Heathcote Road, Engadine to deliver needed safety improvement works.

We will deliver widening works and improvements to the bridge approaches. This will improve traffic flow and make the bridge safer for motorists including larger vehicles.

We want to hear from you before we display the Review of Environmental Factors later this year.

**Transport for NSW will deliver safety improvements at the narrow bridge over Woronora River on Heathcote Road, Engadine in response to community feedback.**

To carry out the works the bridge will be closed for at least six months. Please complete our online questionnaire, and register your interest to be informed as the project progresses.

Transport for NSW appreciates your patience while we carry out this important safety work.


**[rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/heathcote-road-bridge](https://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/heathcote-road-bridge)**

The online questionnaire will be posted on our website until 5 June.

### Contact us

For more information on our project please visit **[rms.nsw.gov.au/heathcote-road-bridge](https://rms.nsw.gov.au/heathcote-road-bridge)**

Thank you for your patience during this work.

 1800 572 004

 [HeathcoteRoadBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HeathcoteRoadBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au)

 [rms.nsw.gov.au/heathcote-road-bridge](https://rms.nsw.gov.au/heathcote-road-bridge)



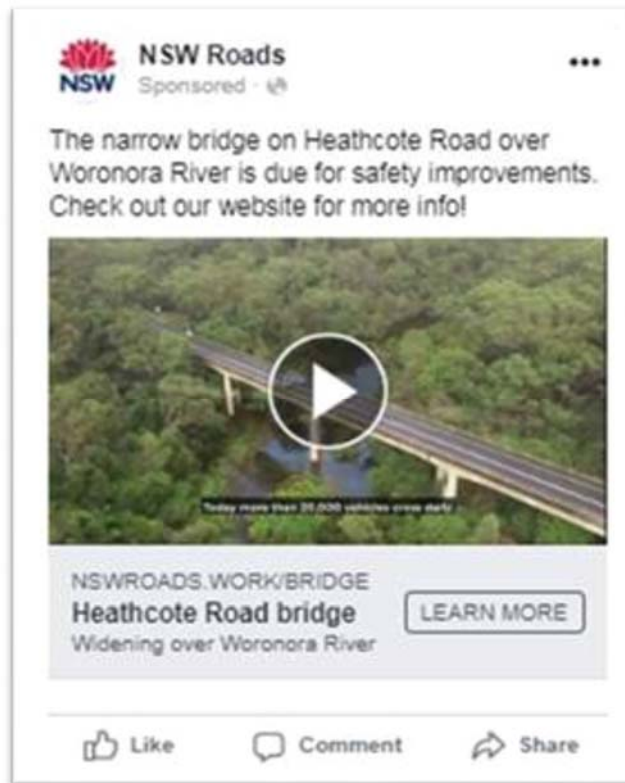
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# 11 Appendix E – Facebook posts



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The narrow bridge on Heathcote Road over Woronora River is due for safety improvements. Check out our website for more info!


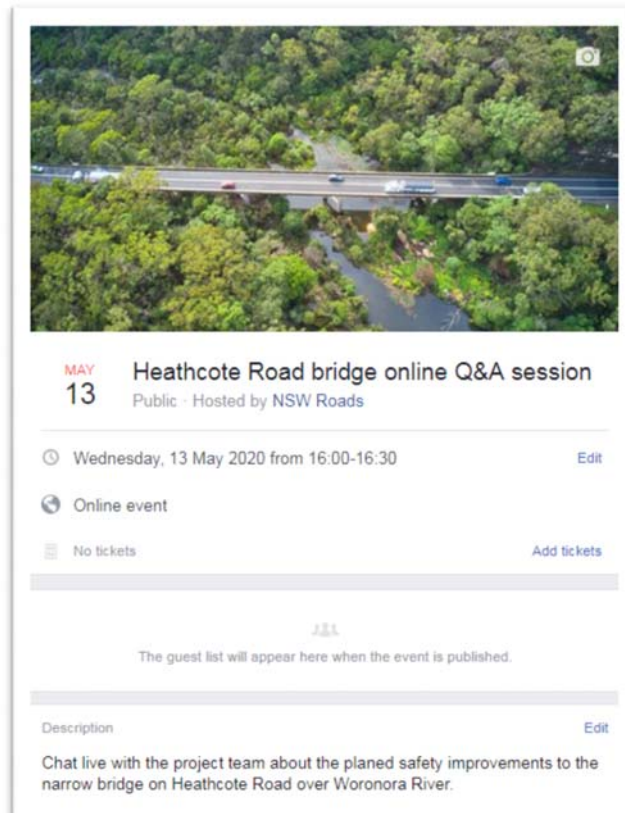


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**Heathcote Road bridge**  
Widening over Woronora River

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**MAY 13** Heathcote Road bridge online Q&A session  
Public · Hosted by NSW Roads

🕒 Wednesday, 13 May 2020 from 16:00-16:30 [Edit](#)

🌐 Online event

🎟 No tickets [Add tickets](#)

👤  
The guest list will appear here when the event is published.

Description [Edit](#)

Chat live with the project team about the planned safety improvements to the narrow bridge on Heathcote Road over Woronora River.

## 12 Appendix F – Facebook Live event

