



Transport for NSW

New England Highway – Muswellbrook bypass

Project update – Preferred Option

November 2020



Artist impression of the proposed Muswellbrook Bypass southern connection, looking south

Have your say on the latest design of the Muswellbrook bypass

The NSW Government is delivering a New England Highway bypass of Muswellbrook.

The bypass would improve travel times, freight efficiency and safety for all road users.

Transport for NSW has identified a preferred option for the bypass. The proposed design includes a refined alignment and connections to the existing New England Highway.

Project background

The New England Highway is part of the inland Sydney to Brisbane National Land Transport Network and the primary route connecting the Upper Hunter with Maitland and Newcastle.

The highway currently passes through the centre of Muswellbrook. It is a two lane road, restricted by numerous intersections and nearby buildings with minimal setback from the road.

The highway carries between 11,000 and 20,000 vehicles through the township each day, about 13 per cent being heavy vehicles.

New England Highway - Muswellbrook bypass preferred option



Northern connection



Southern connection



Preferred option development

The preferred route corridor for the bypass was published in July 2018. This also included potential bypass connections.

Transport for NSW has since carried out further investigations to refine the preferred alignment of the bypass and identify connections to the New England Highway.

Developing the preferred option included:

- site investigations to identify geotechnical and environmental constraints to minimise potential impacts
- consultation and investigations to better understand any potential heritage impacts
- producing design options for the alignment and connections to the existing New England Highway.

Selection of the preferred option took into account technical, social, environmental and economic factors.

The preferred option includes:

- about 9.1 kilometres of new highway with a single lane in each direction
- a refined alignment south of Coal Road, with the bypass shifted further to the east to reduce environmental impacts and improve the road alignment
- full southern and northern connections with the existing New England Highway which provide for all traffic movements.

Key benefits

The proposed bypass would:

- improve network efficiency on the New England Highway, particularly travel times for long haul freight movements
- improve safety for all road users in the town centre, particularly relating to heavy and light vehicle interactions
- improve amenity of Muswellbrook township.

Additional bypass connection options

As part of the development of the preferred option, additional bypass connection options were considered.

Sandy Creek Road

- The northern connection included consideration of exit and entry ramps at Sandy Creek Road.
- All traffic movements are proposed to be provided at the northern connection, which provides greater benefit to the overall road network than exit and entry ramps.
- It is not proposed to provide a connection at Sandy Creek Road, as this was assessed as providing minimal benefit to the overall road network.

Coal Road

- Consideration was given to a connection at Coal Road.
- A Coal Road connection would result in traffic, including heavy vehicles, accessing Muswellbrook via local residential streets.
- The connection would result in potential noise, air quality and road safety impacts through local residential streets, and to sensitive noise receivers such as the hospital.
- It was identified that additional upgrade work would be required along Coal Road and adjoining residential streets of Muswellbrook to cater for additional traffic, which would be the responsibility of Council.
- A Coal Road connection would increase the project footprint, environmental impacts and cost.
- It is not proposed to provide a connection at Coal Road, as this was assessed as providing low value for money, with additional residential and environmental impacts, and would not be able to access the adjacent coal mining operation.
- While the preferred option does not include a connection at Coal Road, the project is being designed so a connection could be built at this location in the future if needed.



Save travel time



Keep trucks off local streets



Improve safety on the existing highway

Have your say

Transport for NSW is inviting feedback from the community about the Muswellbrook bypass preferred option.

There are a number of ways you can get involved, including visiting the project website or by calling or emailing the project team.

Feedback closes on **Friday 18 December 2020 at 5pm.**

Contact us

For more information on the Muswellbrook bypass or to join our mailing list (email or post), please contact our project team:

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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 517 222.

Next steps

Feedback received on the preferred option will be considered to further refine and prepare the concept design and environmental assessment for the bypass.

The environmental assessment will include more detailed information about the design features, potential benefits and impacts, and will be displayed for community feedback in 2021.



* Timing for construction of the bypass has not been confirmed and is subject to project approval.