

Little Hartley to Lithgow (West section)
Community Update – September 2022

Great Western Highway Upgrade Program



Early works relocating utility assets at Coxs River Road are planned to start in September

Together, the Australian Government and the 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 Katoomba to Lithgow duplication will provide major economic and safety benefits. It will improve the connection between Central West NSW and Sydney, reduce congestion, improve resilience and freight productivity, and provide a safer and more reliable journey for thousands of residents, commuters, tourists and freight operators who travel in, around and through the Blue Mountains.

Transport for NSW (Transport) plans to begin an early works program relocating utility assets for the Coxs River Road Upgrade in September 2022.

The Coxs River Road Upgrade is the first phase of work in the Little Hartley to Lithgow section of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program.

The project will upgrade 2.4km of existing highway at Little Hartley to a safer, four-lane divided carriageway, and will include a road bridge to carry Coxs River Road over the new highway.

A construction contract for the Coxs River Road Upgrade main works is expected to be awarded in late 2022, with road works beginning early in 2023.

Coxs River Road Upgrade early works

Transport has awarded the contract for the Coxs River Road Upgrade early works program to Ausconnex.

Ausconnex will relocate Endeavour Energy's electrical high and low voltage overhead power lines and poles, Telstra's underground assets, and also adjust residential connections between just east of Coxs River Road and the Hartley Cemetery.

The early works will take place along the Great Western Highway and in properties next to the road, starting in September. We will be moving around four kilometres of overhead power lines and underground assets so we can build the new highway.

Crews will be working between **7am and 6pm Monday to Friday**, with some work on **Saturdays** between **8am and 1pm**. We will notify you if we need to do any work outside these hours. There won't be any work on public holidays.

We do not expect work to disrupt traffic on the Great Western Highway or local roads very much, and we will make sure you can always access homes and businesses.

Early works are expected to be completed by March 2023, weather permitting.

Please contact the project team if you have any questions about the Coxs River Road Upgrade early works program.

Hartley Historic Site National Parks revocation

The Little Hartley to Lithgow concept design proposes use of 2.5 hectares of national park land at Hartley Historic Site to keep the upgraded highway away from the village and avoid impacts on heritage buildings. We have worked closely with National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) on this revocation process.

The Little Hartley to Lithgow (West Section) Review of Environmental Factors (REF) determination approved the project with the exception of land reserved in the National Parks Estate.

The National Park revocation Bill passed NSW Parliament on 11 August 2022. Transport has now approved this section and will work with NPWS to transfer the ownership of land.

We would like to thank NPWS for working with us to help protect the Hartley Historic Village and its heritage buildings.

Aboriginal heritage consultation

We are continuing to consult with local knowledge holders in the Aboriginal community to help develop measures to avoid impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and items where possible, or mitigate impacts if they cannot be avoided. This includes protection and salvage measures, and curation of any artefacts.

Salvage works were recommended at 11 Aboriginal sites between Little Hartley and Lithgow in the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR).

Following an Aboriginal Focus Group (AFG) meeting in May, we provided the draft Little Hartley to Lithgow Aboriginal heritage salvage methodology to Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) in June for review and comment. The final document will form part of Transport's application to Heritage NSW for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit, which would allow salvage works to be carried out.

Salvage works must comply with the agreed methodology and would be carried out by archaeologists and site officers nominated by the RAPs.

We also held two face-to-face consultation sessions for the wider Aboriginal community in May, where we asked for ideas for cultural interpretation initiatives for the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program. We are exploring all suggestions for potential inclusion into the urban design of the upgrade.



Heritage buildings at Hartley Historic Village

Seed collection

Qualified seed collectors and bushland regenerators have started collecting seeds from native plants and trees along the Great Western Highway as part of our landscape program.

We are storing the seeds in a purpose-built seed bank, and they will be propagated and grown into plants for the nature strips, median islands and other landscaped areas of the project between Katoomba and Lithgow.

Replanting the same species currently along the highway will help with climate resilience and adaptation.

Starting this work now means we will be able to plant more mature sized shrubs and trees where we have identified greater visual impacts.

Seed collectors will be on the lookout for protected species. They will harvest seeds if appropriate or monitor the plant for the right seed collection time.

We will replant protected species along the road corridor if we can or work with other land managers to provide protected species for their revegetation programs.

We will collect, store and propagate seeds throughout the program, with an initial focus on the areas around Coxs River Road and Medlow Bath.

Urban design consultation

The project team presented the proposed Coxs River Road Upgrade urban design to Lithgow City Council officers and representatives from the Hartley District Progress Association (HDPa) in May 2022.

Project team members also attended the HDPa's May meeting and extended an invitation to provide feedback on the proposed urban design and landscaping around Coxs River Road. We would like to thank the HDPa for collating and submitting the comments provided. The feedback is being reviewed by the project team and will be incorporated into the design where feasible.

We appreciate the rural residential setting of the Harley Valley and its many historic buildings. We are working to make sure the urban design and landscaping fits with the existing features of the Valley and mitigates impacts from the road works as much as possible.

We are also investigating ways to feature cultural interpretation elements in the upgrade such as on bridges and retaining walls, tree plantings, interpretive signage, and public works of art.

We will hold further meetings with the community as the urban design and cultural interpretation planning progresses.



The seed collection team onsite near Coxs River Road (Photo credit: Jason Rothery, Landscape Asset Advisor, Transport for NSW)

Skills, employment and industry development

At the peak of construction, the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program is expected to support more than 3,900 jobs.

Wherever possible, we will source workforce and products from local and regional NSW, with a focus on the Blue Mountains and Central Tablelands.

We will create local and regional employment pathways and maximise local and regional business participation through our Skills, Employment and Industry Development Strategy.

We will work with industry and training providers to train up local and regional people, so we leave a skills legacy that endures far beyond the construction of the upgrade.

The program will drive economic growth for the region, boost business capability and capacity, and support diversification so that local businesses are ready to respond to future opportunities.

Find out more at nswroads.work/gwhindustry



Local and regional people and businesses will have a unique opportunity to reap the benefits of nearly a decade of construction

Little Hartley to Lithgow Upgrade public meeting

Following the release of the Little Hartley to Lithgow (West Section) Submissions Report, we held a public meeting at Hartley Community Hall on 28 July 2022.

We wanted to provide an opportunity for you to tell us what you think about Transport's responses to your submissions, and how we can work together as the project moves towards construction.

Thank you to the many community members who forwarded submissions to be considered by Transport, and to all those who attended the meeting. We are considering all comments provided as the design continues to be refined.

We are committed to working with the community to deliver the best upgrade possible between Little Hartley and Lithgow.


Onsite meetings

The project team have been having onsite meetings with property owners and residents around acquisition, property adjustments, construction leases and property impacts.

If you have any questions or concerns about project impacts on your property and would like to meet with the team, either face-to-face or online, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Contact us

Sign up for our eNewsletter online at nswroads.work/gwhd so you never miss a project update.

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