



Transport for NSW

# Medlow Bath

Consultation Summary Report



December 2020



# Contents

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<b>1. Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>		
1.1 Purpose of this report	3		
<b>2. Program Context</b>	<b>4</b>		
2.1 The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program	4		
2.1.1 Delivering benefits for all road users	5		
2.1.2 The essential transport role of the Great Western Highway	5		
2.1.3 Highway capacity	6		
2.2 The Medlow Bath project	7		
		5.2.6 Heavy vehicles	25
		5.2.6.1 TfNSW response	26
		5.2.7 Safety upgrade	28
		5.2.7.1 TfNSW response	28
		5.2.8 Public transport	29
		5.2.8.1 TfNSW response	29
		5.2.9 Walking and cycling	31
		5.2.9.1 TfNSW response	32
		5.2.10 Business	32
		5.2.10.1 TfNSW response	33
		5.2.11 Road safety	34
		5.2.11.1 TfNSW response	34
		5.2.12 Design	35
		5.2.12.1 TfNSW response	36
		5.2.13 Outside project scope	36
		5.2.13.1 TfNSW response	37
		5.2.14 Resilience	39
		5.2.14.1 TfNSW response	40
		5.2.15 Consultation	40
		5.2.15.1 TfNSW response	41
<b>3. Proposed Strategic Design</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6. Recommendations</b>	<b>42</b>
3.1 What does the strategic design include?	8	6.1 Improvements in design	42
3.2 Design map	8	6.2 Interim safety works	42
<b>4. Consultation</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7. Next Steps</b>	<b>43</b>
4.1 Values	10		
4.2 Communication objectives	10		
4.3 Consultation method	10		
4.4 How consultation took place	11		
<b>5. Consultation Summary</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8. Appendices</b>	<b>44</b>
5.1 Overview	14		
5.2 Summary of submissions and responses	15		
5.2.1 Business case	15		
5.2.1.1 TfNSW response	15		
5.2.2 Urban design	17		
5.2.2.1 TfNSW response	18		
5.2.3 Property	19		
5.2.3.1 TfNSW response	19		
5.2.4 Environment	20		
5.2.4.1 TfNSW response	21		
5.2.5 Traffic	23		
5.2.5.1 TfNSW response	24		

# 1. Executive Summary

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The NSW Government is investing \$2.5 billion towards upgrading the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow to a four lane carriageway.

The upgrade, once completed, will reduce congestion and provide safer, more efficient and reliable journeys for everyone travelling in, around and through the Blue Mountains, and better connect communities in the Central West.

In November 2019, the strategic corridor for the proposed upgrade between Katoomba and Lithgow was released to the community for feedback. This included the previously reserved corridor from Mount Victoria to Lithgow and a new corridor between Katoomba and Mount Victoria.

A summary of feedback from this consultation period can be found at [nswroads.work/GWHConsult](https://nswroads.work/GWHConsult).

Medlow Bath is the first section of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program (the Program) to begin detailed design and environmental assessment.

The Government has prioritised Medlow Bath as the first section of the Great Western Highway to be upgraded because:

- known safety concerns can be addressed sooner
- ongoing safety and accessibility benefits can be provided for local traffic and pedestrians while the remaining corridor is developed
- the corridor is well defined so the Highway can be widened with minimal property and environmental impacts
- upgrading the township first prevents congestion when the links between towns are built.

Over nine weeks, the proposed design for Medlow Bath was made available and feedback was sought from the community. This report provides a summary of the suggestions, concerns and questions raised in submissions to the Medlow Bath project as part of the Program.

**Following feedback gathered during the Medlow Bath consultation, we are investigating the feasibility of short term improvement measures to improve safety at Bellevue Crescent and Foy Avenue.**

Further survey work and technical studies informing the environmental assessment will also be carried out as part of the development of the project in Medlow Bath. Once the team has progressed the design and environmental assessment, the Review of Environmental Factors will be exhibited for consultation in mid-2021.



Medlow Bath train station looking towards Railway Parade

## 1.1 Purpose of this report

This Community Consultation Summary Report (the Report) captures the outcomes from the recent Medlow Bath consultation.

Between Wednesday 29 June and Monday 31 August 2020, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) carried out public consultation and invited feedback from the community and stakeholders on the proposed strategic design for the upgrade of the Great Western Highway through Medlow Bath.

The consultation was open to all interested stakeholders within the Blue Mountains, but focussed on the residents and business owners of Medlow Bath. The aim was to capture local knowledge, consider potential impacts and identify improvements which could be made to the preliminary strategic design.

The insights and feedback gathered from the community and stakeholders in this stage of consultation will be considered in decision-making as the Program progresses. The Project Team will use the knowledge gained to refine and improve the design to minimise impacts on, and create added benefits for, the township of Medlow Bath.

We will continue to build and maintain relationships with the Medlow Bath community and stakeholders throughout all phases of the Medlow Bath upgrade and the wider Program, and will continue to create formal and informal opportunities for people to have their say.



The Great Western Highway and rail corridor in Medlow Bath

## 2. Program Context

### 2.1 The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

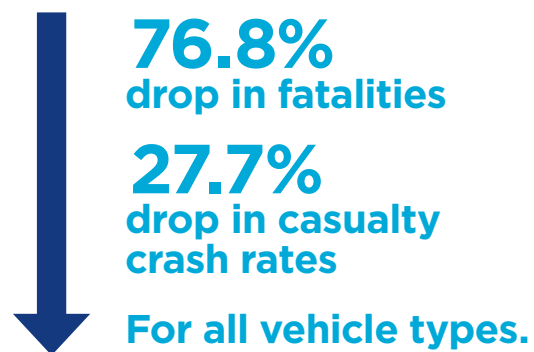
The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program proposes to deliver 34 kilometres of four lane carriageway between Katoomba and Lithgow. The NSW Government has committed \$2.5 billion in funding towards the planning and construction of the duplication.

The upgrade, once completed, will reduce congestion and provide safer, more efficient and reliable journeys for everyone travelling in, around and through the Blue Mountains, and better connect communities in the Central West.

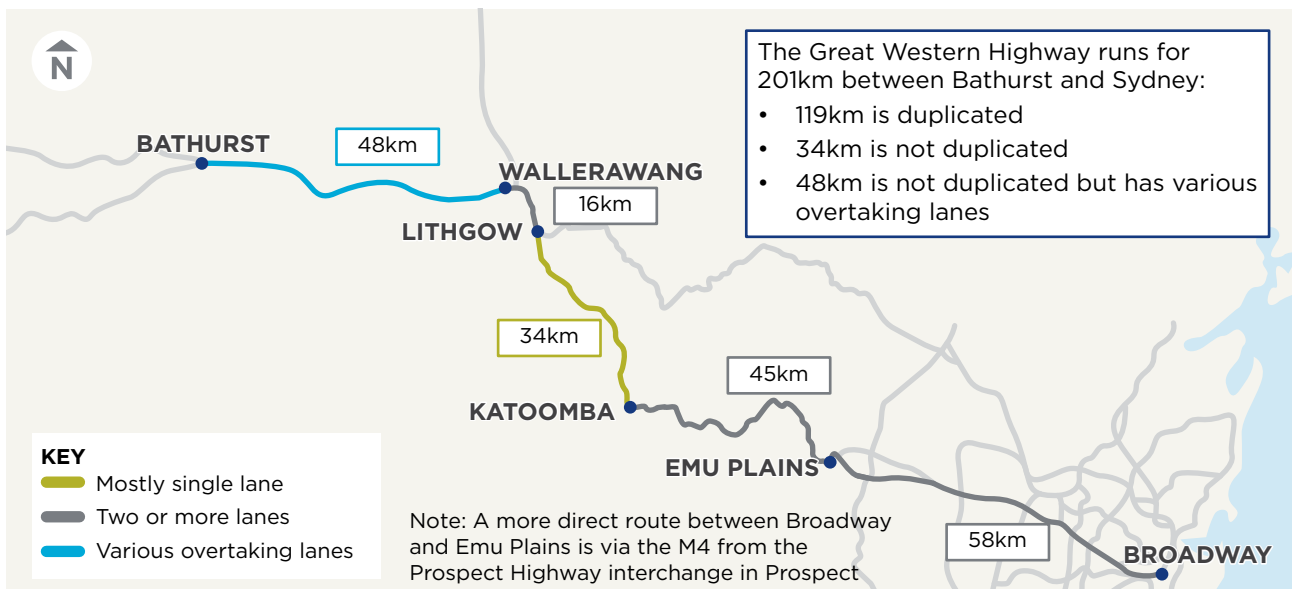
The NSW Government has progressively upgraded sections of the Great Western Highway to make it safer and more reliable for all road users. The section between Emu Plains and Katoomba has already been completed, and has resulted in a 76.8 per cent drop in fatalities and a 27.7 per cent drop in crash rates.

We now propose to upgrade and duplicate the Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow, starting with the Medlow Bath project.

In February 2020, the Program was listed by Infrastructure Australia as a priority initiative. This means that it is officially recognised as a priority infrastructure investment which Australia needs in order to secure a sustainable and prosperous future.



**Figure 1** Once the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program is complete, over 95 kms of the Highway will be duplicated



## 2.1.1 Delivering benefits for all road users

The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program from Katoomba to Lithgow aims to deliver the following benefits:



### **Improve safety:**

reduce safety risks along the corridor for all road users



### **Enhance network performance:**

improve congestion and travel time reliability



**Improve and drive:** regional economic development and productivity, and increase freight efficiency



### **Enhance liveability and amenity:**

maintain and improve local amenity and character, and protect environmental and cultural assets



**Improve resilience and future proof:** provide a dependable and adaptable transport network which enables continuity of transport and essential services.

## 2.1.2 The essential transport role of the Great Western Highway

The Great Western Highway acts as the key road transport route across and along the Great Dividing Range for all vehicles, including emergency and essential services, local commuters, through commuters, tourists and freight. Those travelling through the Blue Mountains largely choose to travel by road.

Within the Blue Mountains, the Highway serves an important role, by acting as the main street for mountains townships such as Blackheath, Medlow Bath and Mount Victoria.

Local residents use the Highway every day to get to work, do their shopping, take children to and from school, and enjoy the area's natural attractions and recreational opportunities.

Blue Mountains residents have indicated that over the next five years they will use private vehicles up to 15% more than they do currently.

The Program aims to preserve the unique character of the Blue Mountains communities, and local consultation is a vital part of that process.

Tourism in the Blue Mountains and Central West is growing in popularity. Tourists rely on the road to visit some of the world's most beautiful National Parks and World Heritage areas, or to travel through to tourist destinations on either side of the mountains.

This increase in tourism provides economic benefits for those communities and NSW as a whole, but is contributing to the congestion experienced through the Blue Mountains.

As a state highway, the Great Western Highway's role as a transport corridor is critical for NSW.



**Over 95 per cent** of people travelling through the Blue Mountains between Katoomba and Lithgow for non-freight trips choose to travel by road

**Central West region is expected to grow to more than 300,000 people during the next 20 years**

It is the key connector from the Central West and Orana and, with alternate routes up to 100km longer, is the fastest route for those in Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst and surrounds, to reach Sydney.

Over 95% of people travelling through the Blue Mountains between Katoomba and Lithgow for non-freight trips choose to travel by road.

The Great Western Highway is also part of the National Land Transport Network and is a crucial freight transport corridor from the Central West to Sydney and the mountains.

The Central West is NSW's third largest regional centre and contributes 12% to the state's gross regional product. This region is expected to grow to more than 300,000 people during the next 20 years.

As NSW's population and manufacturing capability grows, so too will the freight task to service those needs. The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program will support growth in key industries in the Central West.



The Great Western Highway plays a key role in NSW tourism in the mountains and beyond

Industries within the Katoomba to Lithgow corridor, such as quarries and timber mills, also make a significant contribution to the freight moving along the Highway.

Over half of the freight moved between Katoomba and Lithgow is transported by road, with nearly 40% of that road freight generated locally or delivered to local suppliers in the Blue Mountains.

Future customers will continue to rely on both road and rail along the Katoomba to Lithgow corridor.

### 2.1.3 Highway capacity

The Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow has a higher average traffic volume than other duplicated highways.

There are over 15,000 vehicle movements per day in Blackheath, over 19,000 at Medlow Bath, and over 20,000 at Katoomba.

This exceeds average traffic numbers of over 15,000 vehicles per day on the Pacific Highway at Grafton, the Princes Highway at Berry, or the Hume Highway at Goulburn.

**The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program will support growth in key industries in the Central West**

**Over half of the freight moved between Katoomba and Lithgow is transported by road**



Traffic peaks and congestion are common through both the week and weekends. Congestion is especially restrictive during special events and the school holiday periods.

As the route design is refined through community consultation, we will look at opportunities to progressively improve congestion and deliver more consistent speeds across the entire route.

Traffic on the Great Western Highway is projected to grow and the upgrade is being planned to deliver long term resilience and capacity. This upgrade will improve congestion and safety, and cater for future growth beyond 2033.

## 2.2 The Medlow Bath project

The NSW Government has prioritised Medlow Bath as stage one of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program.

TfNSW proposes to upgrade a 1.3 km section of the Great Western Highway through Medlow Bath, from the Station Street Bridge, to approximately 400 metres south of Bellevue Crescent.

Upgrading the Great Western Highway in Medlow Bath is constrained by the ridgetop terrain, private property along the Highway and the rail line. Bypassing the township on the east was considered in the 1950s and ruled out due to impacts on the residential area.

The existing corridor through Medlow Bath is well suited to widening. This proposed upgrade builds on work completed in 2002 during the bridge replacement over the railway lines at Station Street.

The proposed upgrade will include widening the existing Highway within the current road corridor property boundaries through the township, while maintaining the 60km/h speed limit.

Medlow Bath has been prioritised because:

- known safety concerns can be addressed sooner
- ongoing safety and accessibility benefits can be provided for local traffic and pedestrians while the remaining corridor is developed

- the corridor is well defined so the Highway can be widened with minimal property and environmental impacts
- upgrading the township first prevents congestion when the links between towns are built.

## 2.3 Benefits

The upgrade will deliver immediate benefits for Medlow Bath, including:



Safer vehicle access at Bellevue Crescent



Safer pedestrian access across the Highway



Safer pedestrian access to the rail station



Improved accessibility for all public transport users



Improved vehicle access to the Hydro Majestic



A new shared pathway for pedestrians and cyclists



New landscaping in the median strip



Improved capacity, which will reduce levels of congestion

# 3. Proposed Strategic Design

## 3.1 What does the strategic design include?

A strategic design is a preliminary drawing of a proposed road upgrade. From this initial draft, consultation and studies help to refine and improve a design until it is better informed, becoming a concept design, which is used at the environmental assessment stage.

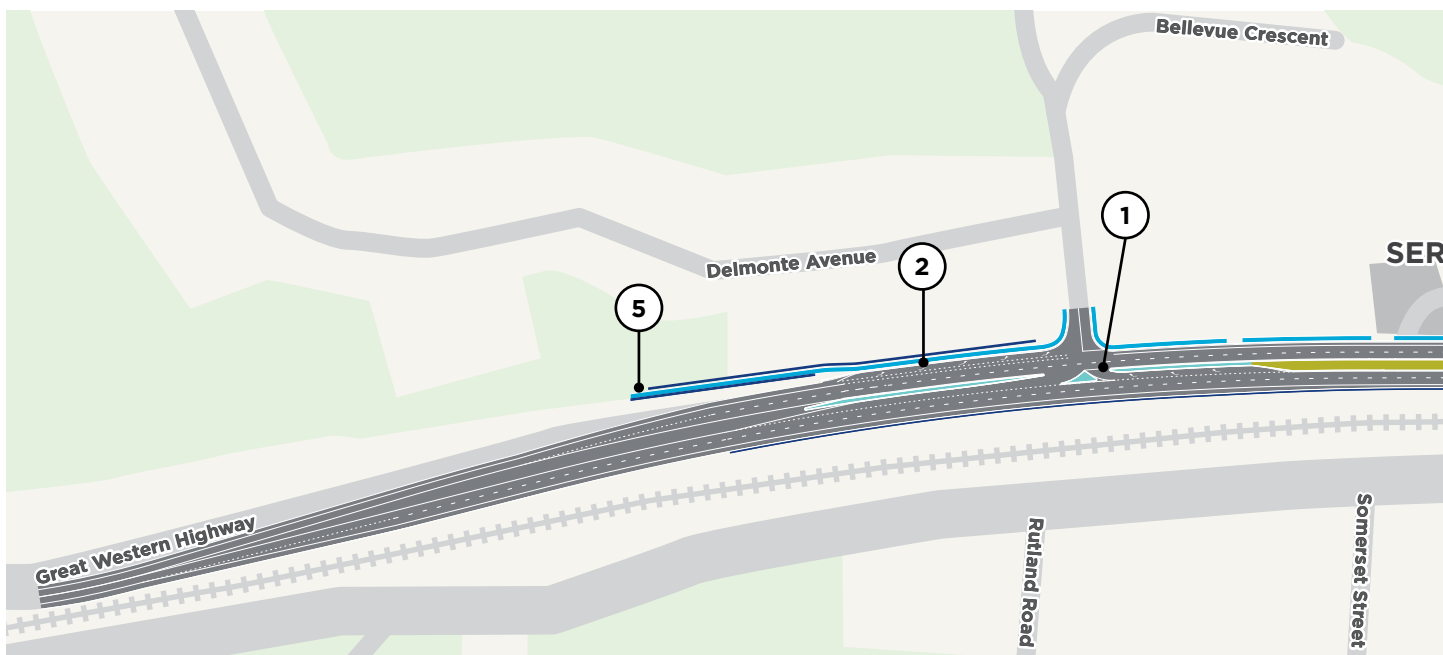
The strategic design proposed for the Medlow Bath upgrade includes:

1. A 'seagull intersection' providing right turn access into and out of Bellevue Crescent
  2. A separated left turn bay into Bellevue Crescent
  3. A right turn bay into the Hydro Majestic
  4. Preservation of the heritage stone wall in front of the Hydro Majestic
  5. A new shared path on the western side of the Highway for pedestrians and cyclists, linking to the existing walking and cycle trails at both ends of Medlow Bath
  6. A pedestrian bridge from the western side of the Highway over Medlow Bath train station, to Railway Parade, with lifts in four locations to provide access to road and rail public transport facilities for people with a disability
- A raised kerb median, with planting in the middle
  - Two traffic lanes in both directions
  - Shoulders on either side of the Highway for on road cycling and vehicle breakdown.

Following feedback gathered during the Medlow Bath consultation, we are currently investigating separate safety improvement options for Foy Avenue and Bellevue Crescent.

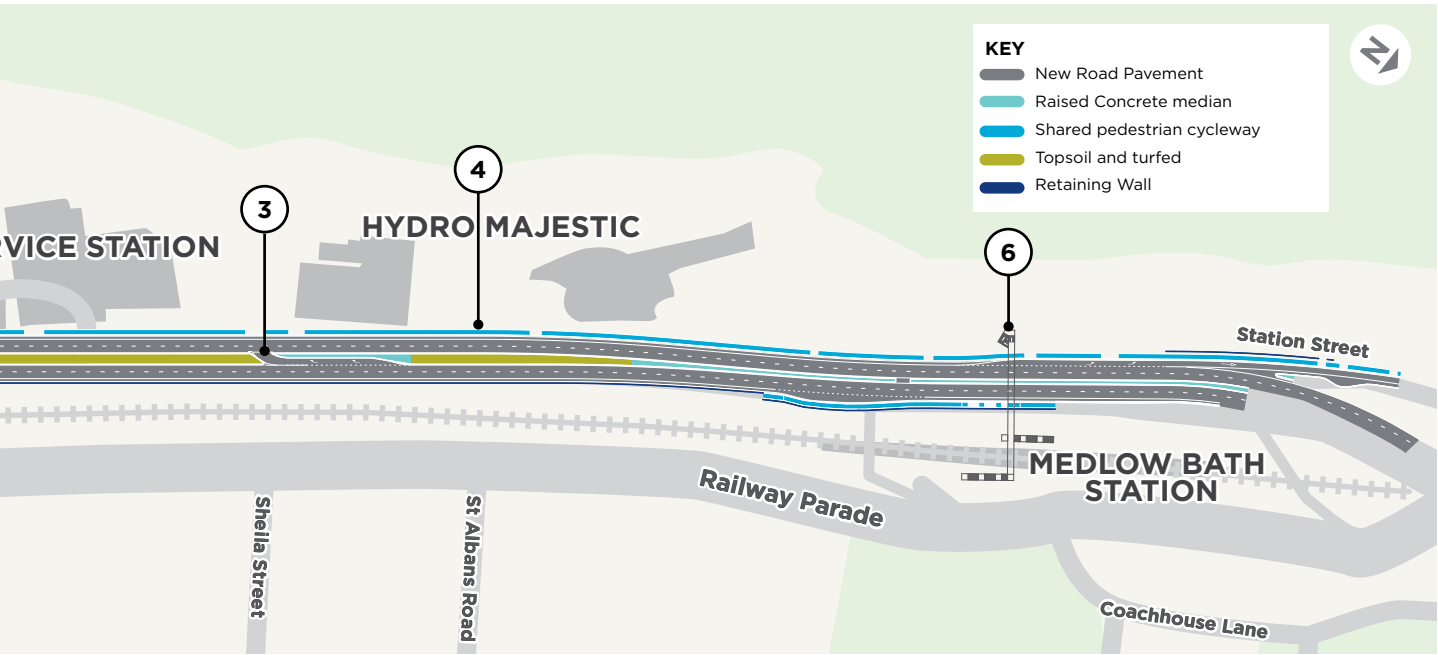
## 3.2 Design map

Figure 2 Draft Medlow Bath Strategic Design displayed during the June-August 2020 consultation period





The proposed upgrade in Medlow Bath can be carried out within the existing road corridor with minimal impacts to property and environment



## 4. Consultation

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### 4.1 Values

Transport for NSW's values underpin our decisions and behaviours when working with customers, colleagues, stakeholders and partners. They include:

- **Customer focus** – We place the customer at the centre of everything we do
- **Collaboration** – We value each other and create better outcomes by working together
- **Solutions** – We deliver sustainable and innovative solutions to NSW's transport needs
- **Integrity** – We take responsibility and communicate openly
- **Safety** – We prioritise safety for our people and our customers.

### 4.2 Communication objectives

The communication objectives for this Program are to:

- Provide clear, consistent and timely information to communities, stakeholders and customers on the Program
- Build relationships and a database of contacts of interested and concerned community members with whom TfNSW will continue to engage with throughout the development and delivery of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program
- Provide meaningful opportunities for the community to provide feedback
- Listen to community and stakeholder views to help shape the design of the Program
- Raise awareness of the Program and its benefits and impacts throughout all phases including planning and construction
- Establish relationships and build trust with the local community, particularly local stakeholder groups, business and any directly impacted residents/landowners.

- Provide clarity to the local community on the strategic design for Medlow Bath
- Actively accept and respond to feedback and input from the local community on the elements of the strategic design, including within the period of consultation
- Ensure that members of the local community have sufficient opportunity to provide feedback, in light of fluid COVID-19 advice and restrictions on community consultation.

### 4.3 Consultation method

Consultation was initially scheduled to take place from Monday 29 June until Saturday 15 August.

Due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions issued from NSW Health, residents were asked to register for face-to-face community consultation sessions. This was to ensure a limit of 20 attendees per session in line with NSW Health guidelines and to provide contact details, in case a move to online consultation was necessary.

TfNSW were provided with updated NSW Health guidelines which prevented face-to-face consultation from taking place. As a result, all consultation was moved online.

Feedback was welcomed through the interactive online portal, email, mail or phone, and during the consultation sessions.

The community was able to contact the project team on the details below:

1800 953 777  
gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au  
PO Box 2332, Orange NSW 2800  
nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway

Stakeholders and community members were encouraged to provide feedback on the following:

- improving intersections and providing turning lanes
- connectivity across the Highway
- how to ensure resilience and emergency access is maintained.

- maintaining the speed limit through Medlow Bath
- how to minimise impacts on the village
- landscaping opportunities.

Following requests from the Medlow Bath community, the consultation period was extended to 31 August 2020, to allow all residents additional time to provide feedback.

## 4.4 How consultation took place

Tool/Activity	Description
<b>Communications material</b>	
<b>Consultation postcard</b>  Appendix A	<p>A double-sided postcard was produced (approximately 400) and delivered to all residences in Medlow Bath. The postcard introduced the consultation period and advertised session dates/times and details on how to register for a session. Directions were provided to the online portal which showed the strategic design map, and residents were encouraged to provide feedback through the portal, email, post and via phone to the project team.</p>
<b>Community update and FAQ</b>  Appendix B	<p>A six-page community update was developed and delivered to Medlow Bath residents. It included a map of the Medlow Bath strategic design and FAQs, with answers collated from the first weeks of consultation.</p> <p>This brochure was intended to assist those who had booked phone consultations due to being unable to view the online interactive map or attend online sessions.</p> <p>The community update was also made available on the project website at <a href="https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/01documents/great-western-highway/katoomba-to-lithgow/gwh-medlow-bath-upgrade-community-update-2020-08.pdf">https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/01documents/great-western-highway/katoomba-to-lithgow/gwh-medlow-bath-upgrade-community-update-2020-08.pdf</a>.</p> <p>Medlow Bath residents who registered to the project database were also emailed a copy and a link to the community update.</p>
<b>Bespoke meeting letter</b>  Appendix C	<p>Two consultation sessions were planned to address issues for specific areas/streets. This included one for the residents in the vicinity of the Great Western Highway/Bellevue Crescent/Delmonte Avenue, and one for residents of Coachhouse Lane. A letter explaining these was distributed with the specific consultation session time and links to register.</p>
<b>Doorknocking</b>	<p>On 29 June 2020, the project team door knocked residents of Bellevue Crescent, Delmonte Ave and the Great Western Highway, as well as residents in Coachhouse Lane, to provide residents with information about the project and the specific consultation sessions planned for them.</p>

Tool/Activity	Description
<b>Consultation sessions and briefings</b>	
<b>Consultation sessions</b>	<p>Community consultation sessions were all held online, in line with NSW Health guidelines.</p> <p>The following general community sessions took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday 22 July: 7–8pm</li> <li>• Thursday 23 July: 1–2pm</li> <li>• Tuesday 28 July: 12–1pm</li> <li>• Wednesday 29 July: 7–8pm</li> <li>• Thursday 30 July: 1–2pm.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, three bespoke community consultation sessions were held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 23 July: 7–8pm Bellevue Crescent and Delmonte Avenue residents</li> <li>• Thursday 30 July: 7–8pm Coachhouse Lane residents</li> <li>• Monday 17 August: 6–7pm Coachhouse Lane residents.</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder group meetings</b>	<p>The following stakeholder group meetings were held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medlow Bath Highway Action Group, 29 June 2020</li> <li>• Medlow Bath Residents’ Association, 22 July 2020</li> <li>• Medlow Bath Rural Fire Service, 5 August 2020</li> </ul>
<b>Business meetings</b>	<p>On 29 and 30 June 2020, the project team met with the following businesses located on the Great Western Highway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hydro Majestic Hotel</li> <li>• United Petrol Station</li> <li>• Mazda Medlow Bath</li> </ul>
<b>Personalised meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project team met with a number of Medlow Bath residents on site on 29 June, and held seven phone consultations with individual residents.</li> </ul>

Tool/Activity	Description
<b>Media and advertising</b>	
<b>Advertisement</b> Appendix D	An advertisement about the Medlow Bath consultation period was published in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Mountains Gazette (1 July 2020)</li> <li>• Lithgow Mercury (20 June 2020).</li> </ul> A further advertisement to announce the extension of the consultation period was published in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Mountains Gazette (12 August and 19 August 2020).</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	Two media releases were distributed via the project website and through engagement with local media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medlow Bath residents invited to have their say on Great Western Highway design (7 June 2020)</li> <li>• Medlow Bath residents have more time to consider Great Western Highway design (6 August 2020).</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Tools and social media</b>	
<b>Website and interactive portal</b>	The Transport for NSW website, <a href="https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway">nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway</a> was used to provide information about consultation, including online bookings, the online interactive map and feedback form.
<b>Facebook</b> Appendix E	Facebook was used to provide information about the consultation period with posts on the NSW Roads page on 19 June and 29 June 2020, and on 7 and 21 August 2020 to advertise the extension to the consultation period.
<b>Direct contact channels</b>	
<b>Email</b>	The Program's email, <a href="mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au">gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au</a> , was publicised for the community to contact the project team directly with queries, concerns and to provide feedback.
<b>Phone</b>	The project hotline was also advertised for the community to contact the project team directly with queries and concerns, and to book phone and online consultations. The hotline number is 1800 953 777.

# 5. Consultation Summary

## 5.1 Overview

During the consultation period, we received over 850 pieces of feedback from members of the community, businesses and stakeholders. Of this feedback, 70 were online feedback forms, 30 were email submissions and 223 were pinned comments on the online map. 94 reactions, 128 comments, and 48 shares were received on two social media posts promoting the consultation period and process.

Seven community information sessions were held and attended by 70 people. Due to COVID-19 advice from NSW Health these information sessions were held online. The community was shown a half hour presentation from the Project Development Manager explaining the proposed design and this was followed by a half hour question and answer session. Over 400 questions were received and answered during these online consultation sessions.

For those unable to attend the online sessions, phone consultations were offered, with seven such sessions held during the consultation period. These sessions were accompanied by a printed map of the proposed design in a community update which was delivered to residences in Medlow Bath.

**850**  
pieces of feedback  
from members of  
the community,  
businesses and  
stakeholders

**70** were online feedback forms

**30** were email submissions

**223** were pinned comments  
on the online map

**94** reactions, **128** comments,  
and **48** shares were received  
on two social media posts

over **400** questions were asked  
and answered at the online  
consultation sessions

Key themes raised by the community included questions about:



and some feedback addressed issues that were out of scope.



## 5.2 Summary of submissions and responses

### 5.2.1 Business case

Several submissions raised questions about Ministerial commitments, other studies, business case timing, funding viability and the purpose of the upgrade.

*“The Minister promised 100km/h the whole way through the Mountains. If Medlow Bath is to remain at 60km/h how long before it is redeveloped to suit the 100km/h speed limit?”*

*“How have you factored in the inland rail route which can take 647,000 trucks pa off the roads when finished in 2025?”*

*“For the Katoomba to Lithgow project, all reports are that highway will be full by mid 2030s, and you will be looking for other routes. This road will be obsolete by the time it's finished.”*

*“The objective of any works should be to improve safety – the GWH does not have the capacity to take more freight. There should be a whole of Government approach to addressing the balance between the needs of businesses in the Central West, tourism both in the mountains and Central West, and preserving the World Heritage status of BM. This would include consideration of rail freight as well as alternative transport routes such as via Goulbourn and the Hume Highway.”*

*“You will do duplication of 4 lanes through 950m of Medlow and what happens if the rest of the highway is not done? It could be years before duplication is completed.”*

*“Why is Medlow Bath first?”*

*“When will the Business Case be ready?”*

*“Will the business case be completed before Medlow Bath is shovel ready?”*

*“When will the project start/finish?”*

*“When will the funding for the Katoomba/Medlow and Medlow/Blackheath sections be decided and confirmed?”*

<sup>1</sup>Ministerial media enquiry response, Blue Mountains Gazette, 23 July 2020.

*“Why is the RMS and the NSW government doing this at all...Billions spent to save 10 mins time travelling? Destroying the nature of the Blue Mountains villages and making it easier for trucks to speed.”*

#### 5.2.1.1 TfNSW response

##### Speed limits

The speed limit for Medlow Bath will be maintained at 60km/h. We are investigating speeds of between 80 and 100km/h for the remainder of the Program's length where the alignment, location and grade are suitable for this.

This is in line with the Minister for Regional Transport and Road's recent statement:

*“As part of the Great Western Highway upgrade, the NSW Government will be looking at opportunities to improve travel times and deliver a more consistent speed limit across the entire route. However, options for upgrading the Highway are constrained by steep topography, the railway line, private property boundaries, existing towns and the Blue Mountains National Park and World Heritage Area. As a result, the upgrade is generally being designed with an 80km/h speed limit except for the section through Medlow Bath which will be 60km/h.”<sup>1</sup>*

##### Other modal studies and growth

The project team is working closely with expert advisors in developing the Program Strategic Business Case for the entire length of the corridor. This is considering multi-modal and alternative corridor options for improving transport across the Blue Mountains as part of the broader state transport network.

The inland rail will service freight travelling between Melbourne and Brisbane. The freight corridor over the Blue Mountains services a different freight chain, so it is not expected that the inland rail route will have much, if any, impact on the amount or capacity of freight transported via the Great Western Highway.

The Great Western Highway's role as a transport corridor is critical for NSW. It is part of the National Land Transport Network, serving as a key freight transport corridor and connection from the Central West and Orana (including Dubbo, Orange and Bathurst) to Sydney. Alternate routes are also single carriageway Highways which are up to 100km longer in length.

The Great Western Highway also acts as the main street for Blue Mountains townships such as Blackheath, Medlow Bath and Mount Victoria.

The significance of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program is recognised by Infrastructure Australia, which lists it as a priority initiative that needs to be addressed in the next five years.

Most recent traffic studies conducted on the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow illustrate a consistent 1.4% growth each year. There are over 15,000 vehicle movements per day in Blackheath, which grows to around 19,000 at Medlow Bath, and increases again to above 20,000 at Katoomba. This section already exceeds traffic volumes on other duplicated Highways such as the Pacific Highway at Grafton, the Princes Highway at Berry and the Hume Highway at Goulburn.

### **Timing and funding**

The NSW Government stands by its election commitment to the full delivery of the upgrade of the Great Western Highway from Katoomba to Lithgow.

Our early work on planning for the project is a demonstration of the State Government's commitment to meeting the needs of the communities that use the Great Western Highway.

The Government has prioritised Medlow Bath to be the first section of the Great Western Highway upgraded because:

- known safety concerns can be addressed sooner
- ongoing safety and accessibility benefits can be provided for local traffic and pedestrians while the remaining corridor is developed
- the corridor is well defined so the Highway can be widened with minimal property and environmental impacts
- upgrading the township first prevents congestion when the links between towns are built.

By widening the existing Highway our intention is to preserve local heritage and property by using the existing corridor land, rather than pursue an alternative route with direct property and environmental impacts over sensitive and complex terrain.

Upgrades between villages require more complex environmental assessment and approval, taking additional time to plan before construction can begin. This approach at Medlow Bath would prioritise and deliver safety upgrades through the section while broader planning progresses.

The project team is working closely with expert advisors and is well under way in developing the Program Strategic Business Case for the entire length of the corridor, which will assess alternative corridors, for improving transport across the Blue Mountains. The Program Strategic Business Case is expected to be completed at the end of 2020 and will progress to government endorsement well before any work begins on the Medlow Bath upgrade.

There is sufficient funding currently allocated to the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program to enable us to progress the Medlow Bath upgrade.

## Purpose

The benefits of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program include:

- supporting economic recovery, development and sustainability
- improving efficiency and safety of freight movements
- improving access to tourism facilities and regional centres
- minimising peak period congestion
- providing capacity to meet future population growth.

Safety is a key driver for the Program.

The upgrade of the Great Western Highway between Emu Plains and Katoomba to four lanes, completed in 2015, has resulted in a 76.8 per cent drop in fatalities and a 27.7 per cent drop in crash rates.

Freight is also a key consideration for the Program. The Great Western Highway moves over 9 million tonnes of road freight each year with over three million tonnes of road freight originating in or delivered to the Blue Mountains area. This freight task will continue to grow, and if there is no change to the capacity of heavy vehicles allowed on the Great Western Highway, by 2036 there will be 700 more articulated heavy vehicles on the road each day. Using modern, higher capacity vehicles could instead reduce these articulated truck trips by approximately 15%.

## 5.2.2 Urban design

Several submissions raised questions about trees, landscaping, and place-making through sensitivity of the urban design.

*“What trees will be used in the medium strips? Redwoods, natives, pines?”*

*“We desperately need trees and low growing shrubs (medium strip and elsewhere) that have colour, form and texture, plus as each season progresses they produce a different and interesting display. The Western Red Cedar trees were put in against the community’s advice. When it comes to deciding the species of trees please don’t let the Highway Action group or the Residents Association group dictate what type of tree should be planted anywhere.”*

*“Given the impact the increased traffic lanes will have and the reduction in open landscaped spaces in the Medlow Bath, I think it is vital that extra attention is paid to landscaping. This will help the disfigurement of the town that will be caused by the road change...I would suggest particular attention to the areas just prior to access the bridge and alongside the bridge and near the station, particularly if landscaping elsewhere along the highway will be minimised owing to the limited space. The areas that were landscaped as part of the bridge construction have failed and have not been maintained. My own view would be intense planting of bush fire resistant trees such as small oaks and particularly maples under planted with juniper. This kind of landscaping has been done further down the highway e.g. around Leura, Wentworth Falls and Faulconbridge and it looks great, seems robust and reflects the mountain climate that visitors to the Mountains are interested in seeing. I would also ask that particular consideration be given to the design of the overhead bridge as there will be so little opportunity for landscaping. It should be a feature of the village and not just utilitarian in nature.”*

*“Can you get rid of the median and do something nice with the trees and vegetation along the railway line?”*

*“The region has so much history which I’m sure you’re all aware of. All I ask is that some integrity and sense of pride is employed in keeping some of the atmosphere and sense of history for future generations and in not just ploughing through and destroying that last piece of ambience that people specifically come to the mountains to enjoy. Because once built it will be forever destroyed...”*

*“Currently our town is effectively split in two by the GWH. A crossing of both the highway and rail line near Bellevue Ave would make it easier for residents to:*

- *walk/cycle to get milk, bread or other staples from the servo (from the north side of the GWH at eastern edge of town) without having to walk down Railway Pde, cross the highway and walk back up the GWH or drive*
- *visit the playground (from the south side of the GWH) or access the fire station (a.k.a pseudo town hall) without having to walk/cycle along a stretch of busy highway, which is pretty unpleasant*
- *use the popular walking/cycling route down Rutland Rd/Grand Canyon Rd to access Point Pilcher Lookout and/or Grand Canyon walk (from south side of the GWH)*
- *access lookouts on the Megalong Valley (from the north side of the GWH).”*

### **5.2.2.1 TfNSW response**

#### **Trees and landscaping**

We are committed to minimising environmental impacts during the construction and delivery of the Program. Feedback received will help inform the landscape and urban design assessment to be completed as part of the environmental assessment. There will be further consultation throughout the design process.

We are conscious that the trees planted along the Highway are important to local residents and we will do everything we can to minimise impacts and/or transplant any trees that need to be removed. There is also a commitment to plant trees through the design process in areas suitable for landscaping.

The species planted will be determined in consultation with Council and will be chosen in keeping with the character and heritage of Medlow Bath.

The median is required to give space for turn lanes into Bellevue Crescent and the Hydro Majestic, however we will investigate a narrower median to provide for more trees and vegetation along the roadsides where possible. We are currently consulting with NSW Trains and Sydney Trains about how the upgrade will interact with Sydney Trains’ land, including the retaining wall, corridor width, pedestrian bridge and the potential for landscaping along the railway/roadsides. We will continue these discussions throughout project development to reach the best outcome for Medlow Bath, while also ensuring safety in the rail corridor.

#### **Place-making**

We are aiming to improve resilience and connectivity of all mountains communities through the Program. We will investigate opportunities to improve these key aspects of the Highway operation as the project develops, whilst also investigating emergency access provisions to improve resilience as the design progresses.

We are sensitive to the area’s natural and built environment, and the value the community places on their village. Community consultation will be ongoing throughout the project, helping us to identify these sensitive and highly valued areas, as well as to identify opportunities to improve the current visual and urban amenity in Medlow Bath.

Throughout the design process the landscape character and visual impact are assessed as part of the environmental assessment requirements. An Urban Design and Landscape Plan will be developed for Medlow Bath and our team will be guided by the *Beyond the Pavement* policy and landscape design guidelines.

For more information go to [www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/partners-suppliers/documents/centre-for-urban-design/beyond-pavement.pdf](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/partners-suppliers/documents/centre-for-urban-design/beyond-pavement.pdf)

The *Beyond the Pavement* policy outlines four design objectives we are committed to achieving on all work:

1. Projects should fit sensitively into the built, natural, and cultural environment in both urban and rural locations
2. Projects should contribute to the accessibility and connectivity of communities and a general permeability of movement through areas by all modes of movement
3. The design and management of projects should contribute to the overall design quality of the public domain for the community, including transport users
4. Projects should help revitalise areas and contribute to the local and broader economy.

For more information go to [www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/partners-suppliers/documents/centre-for-urban-design/landscape-guideline.pdf](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/partners-suppliers/documents/centre-for-urban-design/landscape-guideline.pdf)

### 5.2.3 Property

Several submissions raised questions about acquisition, road levels, property adjustments, and access.

*“Which properties will be subject to compulsory acquisition?”*

*“The current proposal sees changes to the traffic slipway, movement of a retaining wall, raising of the street level of GWH/Station Street and the building of a 30cm high retaining wall at the front of the heritage properties at 36GWH, 38GWH (vacant) and 2 Station St.”*

*“Some of the properties back onto the shared path, will you be acquiring sections of those properties. Will your discussions be made public?”*

*“The slightly raised private access road past 100, 102 and 104 GWH along with the Crossing of the Mountains cycle/walk path is essential to access our 3 properties. Can you provide some kind of service lane that could also include drainage? Especially for residents who don’t have access to another road in or out.”*

#### 5.2.3.1 TfNSW response

##### Acquisition

There is one private property subject to partial acquisition, which is required for the pedestrian bridge. No other private properties are proposed to be acquired for the Medlow Bath project.

##### Road levels

Where possible, we are limiting private property impacts to only driveway and footpath adjustments. These will be further refined through concept design and any potential heritage impacts will be assessed through the environmental impact assessment process.

##### Property adjustments and access

We do not need to acquire any residential properties. However, we may need to make adjustments to residential properties near Bellevue Crescent to provide safe access where retaining walls and vehicle access are impacted by road widening and shared paths.

We are working with the residents and property owners south of Bellevue Crescent who have access from the Great Western Highway to find the best solution for access within the new design. These solutions will be negotiated privately with the property owners.

We will consider a service lane as part of the ongoing design refinement to provide safe vehicle access to the properties between Bellevue Crescent and the United Service Station.

## 5.2.4 Environment

Several submissions raised questions about the environmental assessment, National Park, air quality, water quality, biodiversity, heritage, noise, and trees.

*“What will your independent environmental review include?”*

*“Will the National Park be impacted with this design?”*

*“...Air pollution and greenhouse gases will rise because there will be more vehicles, including longer and heavier trucks up to 30 metres in length, using the highway travelling at faster speeds. Despite the claims by Transport for NSW, longer/bigger loads and quicker trips does not equate to safer trucks and fewer trips. Rather, it equates to more accidents and the opportunity for more trips for transporters and suppliers to grow their profits. Heavy vehicle accidents will also pollute the bushland, waterways and aquifers.”*

*“Where will the stormwater from the increased impervious area be drained to? Will the downstream systems be amplified & outlet structures upgraded? Who will maintain these outside the Highway corridor – RMS or Council?”*

*“Medlow Bath lies within Special Area Water Catchment. There is obvious silt and rubbish build-up in the silt trap near Railway Pd in Medlow Park. This runs directly to Lake Medlow and Greaves Creek water catchment dams. This is part of the Sydney catchment. How is a vast expanse of highway (more than double the current width) going to impact our water supply?”*

*“The Fauna... There is nothing mentioned regarding prevention to the animals if they were to cross the major roads or highways. In a form of bridges, tunnels under the roads or highways etc. They do happen to be used along the Pacific Highway upgrades at Karuah, Kempsey & Ballina NSW, as well as parts of the Hume Highway near Benalla VIC, just to name a few.”*

*“This project will mean more bushland, waterways and aquifers will be destroyed and damaged.”*

*“The heritage listed Medlow Bath station holds significant importance in the development of railway engineering and engineering achievement in NSW. The aesthetic value and attraction of this heritage listed station will be destroyed by the proposed overhead bridge. As a matter of urban planning, key road infrastructure projects should seek to avoid historic villages, tourist destinations and residential areas. The duplication of the highway through Medlow Bath itself will adversely affect the heritage significance of Medlow Bath and the preservation of that significance and village character for future generations...”*

*“Can we start the 60 km speed sign earlier to reduce compression braking in the town?”*

*“What noise mitigation measures will be available?”*

*“If you are measuring noise now, that does not measure the noise with the larger trucks which you are going to allow on the upgrade. How do you advise about noise levels not there as yet?”*

*“Working with locals (including the Blue Mountains City Council and Medlow Bath Residents’ Association) to create a natural sound/wind break along Railway Pde to reduce both rail and highway noise. A strip of low flammability native flora in various heights would create a good habitat for native fauna, reduce noise, and not recreate the danger of using large trees that we have had in the past, or the inconvenience of relying on a single species which may not survive all conditions.”*

### 5.2.4.1 TfNSW response

#### Environmental assessment

The Review of Environmental Factors will be prepared in accordance with all relevant Commonwealth, State and Local environmental plans and legislation.

The assessment will include investigations into the built (for example heritage) and natural environments (for example biodiversity and water quality) and potential impacts to human amenity (for example visual impacts and access). It will seek to identify, mitigate and manage any potential impacts associated with the proposal.

Consultation with the community and regulators from all tiers of government will be essential during the development of the environmental assessment. The aim of this consultation is to help us identify any unforeseen environmental issues which need to be assessed.

#### National Park

The Medlow Bath upgrade does not impact on National Park land. The NSW Government is committed to minimising impacts to the natural environment.

#### Air quality

An air quality assessment will identify potential impacts of the proposal, and appropriate management and mitigation measures to reduce any potential impacts.

Government's overall transport policy is outlined in Future Transport 2056. Chapter nine of that strategy, Sustainability, refers specifically to how the government's overall multi-modal transport policy will meet:

1. Australia's commitment made at the Paris Agreement in 2016 to a zero-carbon economy by 2050; and
2. The NSW Environment Minister Matt Keen's recent commitment to lowering greenhouse gases by 35% by 2030.

Traffic modelling indicates that traffic numbers – both light and heavy vehicles – will continue rising on the Great Western Highway, regardless of the upgrade. Upgrading the Highway presents opportunities to improve road use and safety, clear congestion points and cater for safer and more productive road freight vehicles which will increase travel efficiency while reducing emissions.

#### Water quality

We will undertake a hydrology assessment which will include a design for water quality control measures and capacity assessment for downstream connections. Basins and pollutant traps will be used where required to control flow rates and the quality of water leaving the Highway.

We are aware the project sits in the Sydney Catchment area of Water NSW as part of a Special Area Water Catchment. We will build safeguards into the design of the upgrade through Medlow Bath to ensure water quality is maintained or improved.

Erosion and sediment control plans will be designed and implemented during operation and construction to ensure run off meets regulated standards.

We will consult further with the community on the drainage, design, hydrology assessment and water quality control measures when the Review of Environmental Factors is displayed next year.

#### Biodiversity

We are committed to minimising environmental impacts during the construction and delivery of the Program.

During the environmental assessment, we will identify impacts to biodiversity for both the construction and operational phases of the Medlow Bath project and will identify appropriate mitigation measures where warranted.

We are conscious that the trees planted along the Highway are important to local residents and we will do everything we can to minimise impacts and/or transplant or replace any trees that need to be removed. There is also a commitment to plant trees through the design process in areas suitable for landscaping.

The species planted will be determined in consultation with Council and will be chosen in keeping with the character and heritage of Medlow Bath.

Your feedback will help inform the landscape and urban design assessment that is completed and presented as part of the environmental assessment consultation process.

### **Heritage**

We are aware of the presence of heritage houses and buildings in Medlow Bath, and that the Medlow Bath railway station is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register.

We are committed to preserving the character of Blue Mountains' communities and minimising impacts to heritage wherever possible.

A statement of heritage impacts will be prepared as part of the Review of Environmental Factors. This will include engagement with relevant stakeholders such as the Heritage Council of NSW, Transport for NSW's Heritage Committee, and other local heritage committees. Any potential heritage impacts will be identified, assessed and, mitigation measures identified through the environmental assessment process.

Noise and vibration assessments will also identify heritage houses at risk of noise or vibration impact during construction and operation, based on traffic modelling that assesses current and future traffic volumes. Properties requiring treatment measures and pre-condition surveys will be identified within the noise and vibration assessment. The NSW Government is committed to minimising impacts to local heritage and property.

### **Noise**

Upgrading the Highway from Katoomba to Lithgow will allow us to improve the existing alignment by straightening out curves and flattening steep grades as much as possible, which will reduce heavy vehicle noise.

We will also investigate relocating speed signs and providing new signage to reduce heavy vehicle compression braking.

Providing a Highway more suited to modern heavy vehicles will mean less engine emissions and noise, less interactions between heavy vehicles and local traffic, less exposure to driver fatigue and error, and reduced congestion on an improved Highway for all to use.

We will carry out a noise assessment as outlined in the Environmental Protection Authority's Road Noise Policy, along with Transport for NSW's Noise Criteria and Mitigation guidelines. These guidelines outline a consistent approach for determining what noise criteria applies, and how we evaluate, select and design feasible and reasonable noise mitigation measures for road upgrades.

The assessment would predict noise levels for the year of opening and 10 years after opening, both with and without the project proceeding. We use noise monitoring data we have gathered, along with traffic surveys, to predict noise levels at potentially affected residences.

A comprehensive noise study will also consider the potential for reflected noise from both the Highway and train lines, to determine the suitability for noise walls or other treatment measures.

If noise levels are predicted to exceed criteria set by the Environmental Protection Authority, noise mitigation will be considered. The types of noise mitigation applied to road upgrades includes low noise pavements, barriers, noise walls and property treatments specific for affected homes, which may include double glazing.



If you are currently experiencing high noise levels view details of our Noise Abatement Program here: <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/environment/reducing-noise/noise-abatement-program.html>.

### 5.2.5 Traffic

Several submissions raised questions about U-turning traffic, turning lanes, street parking, access to Station Street, Bellevue Crescent, and other general traffic related issues.

*“The proposed designs do not appear to have a resolution for Eastbound traffic to turn around and get to the Mazda dealership, the service station or indeed the Hydro Majestic hotel.”*

*“How does your plan allow for the delays caused by People turning left out of the garage and Hydro trying to do a U-Turn at the lights on the bridge?”*

*“There will be no access into or out of the service station for south-bound traffic. How do vehicles from the north (Blackheath, say) and east (majority of Medlow residents) of the service station and its emergency shop, access it without turning into Bellevue Crescent then doing a U-turn in either Bellevue or Delmonte, thus threatening the peace and safety of local families?”*

*“The design looks reasonable, however on weekends the east bound turning lane into the Hydro Majestic needs to be longer twice the length as the westbound traffic often prevent the east bound vehicles from entering quickly from the GWH to the Hydro Majestic.”*

*“Where will commuters park on the Delmonte side of the station? Are you planning a car park for us, or will we have to drive over the bridge and wait for quite some time on a very steep rise to cross the lights?”*

*“With no right turn to Sydney out of Hydro there will be too much traffic in Station St and on the steep hill at lights - traffic jams at the weekend. How will you solve this?”*

*“Further consideration needs to be addressed with the Hydro and visitors at peak times over weekends (Saturday 10am–5pm) and Sunday (10am–3pm). More than two vehicles exiting the highway into the Hydro at any one time will cause a pinch point, and at high volume times, will lead to congestion in the kerbside lane. This will promote early lane changes into faster flowing outside lane traffic. That in turns creates a dangerous blind spot of oncoming traffic travelling at 60km/h straight into those cars trying to exit the Hydro property.”*

*“A traffic light that specifically allowed U-turns [at Bellevue Crescent] would allow access to The Hydro Majestic for Sydney bound vehicles which would otherwise be forced to risk crossing oncoming lanes in heavy traffic.”*

*“What about having a roundabout at Bellevue Crescent instead of traffic lights? That would work to slow traffic along this section as well as giving right-turn cars right of way against through traffic?”*

*“Are you planning on opening the gates from the back of the Hydro into Bellevue Cres and dumping hundreds of cars on a busy weekend into Bellevue Crescent? That would be (probably literally) deadly for us in Delmonte and Bellevue.”*

*“There will be bottlenecks created either end of the village as two lanes go into one.”*

*“We need 2 lanes in both directions from Penrith to Lithgow. No compromise.”*

### 5.2.5.1 TfNSW response

#### U-turning traffic

During consultation many people commented on U-turn activities within Medlow Bath using either the United Service Station, Bellevue Crescent or the Hydro Majestic southern entry as well as the existing U-turn facilities provided at the rail bridge traffic lights that direct traffic via Railway Parade or Station Street to perform U-turns.

We will carry out detailed traffic modelling and a comprehensive traffic study to better inform this design, which will include extensively examining U-turn movements. The findings of this modelling will inform the Traffic Assessment within the Review of Environmental Factors.

If the modelling shows there is an increase in delays at the signalled intersection, we will consider changing the phasing of the lights, or seek other solutions. There is currently a U-turn bay in Railway Parade. We will investigate ways of increasing driver awareness of both Station Street and Railway Parade U-turn options.

The Hydro Majestic and the United Service Station exit points are not suitable to provide right turn out laneways.

Through consultation with residents and the United Service Station we have gained a much clearer understanding of their business needs and customer catchments. We have also clarified the reliance of local residents on the service station for shopping and the volumes of traffic coming from the west wanting to access the service station. We will investigate options to best provide access for drivers coming from the west to access the Service Station.

We are working to improve the design to better allow for local traffic U-turn movements based on the feedback received in this consultation period.

#### Turn lanes

We will use traffic studies and modelling to inform and improve the next stage of design. The construction of dual lanes will provide additional room for traffic flow, meaning that the Highway will be better able to safely support traffic entering businesses, side streets and driveways, particularly travelling in the westbound direction.

#### Parking

The Hydro Majestic has been working to provide parking within the Hydro Majestic land as part of its Development Application. Up to eight spaces would have remained on the Highway when the Hydro Majestic proposed road work is complete.

To allow room for the upgrade to be carried out in the existing road corridor, all parking would be removed from the Great Western Highway.

As part of the Medlow Bath project we will investigate providing commuter parking on Railway Parade near the Rural Fire Services property, which is closely located to the proposed eastern pedestrian bridge stairs and lift.

#### Bellevue Crescent

We acknowledge community concern about safety at the Bellevue Crescent and Foy Avenue intersections. Following feedback gathered during the Medlow Bath consultation, we are investigating the feasibility of short term improvement measures to improve safety at Bellevue Crescent and Foy Avenue.

While simpler in execution than the full upgrade works, these interim improvements will need to be investigated, designed and planned before construction can begin.

These upgrades would support the later delivery of the widening through Medlow Bath and could be delivered to improve the safety of both intersections while planning continues for the widening project.

Efficiency, safety, and accessibility are all key considerations that will be vital to informing the preferred intersection design. Suitable intersection options will be modelled and feasibility tested to reach a preferred design and environmental assessment.

A roundabout or overpass at Bellevue Crescent would require considerable realignment of the corridor away from the railway to provide enough space for access and operation. This could have considerable property impacts. We will explore other options to improve access for residents and traffic at Bellevue Crescent and Delmonte Avenue.

As a result of community feedback during our consultation we are not proposing to connect Bellevue Crescent to the Highway via the Hydro Majestic and United Service Station land. Such a proposal is a matter for the local council to determine.

### **Merging and congestion**

We acknowledge that road users experience congestion at the current merge points on the Highway. These temporary merging traffic bottlenecks will improve progressively as the adjoining sections of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program are completed.

The Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow has a higher average traffic volume than other duplicated highways.

There are over 15,000 vehicle movements per day in Blackheath, around 19,000 at Medlow Bath, and at times over 20,000 at Katoomba.

This exceeds average traffic numbers of over 15,000 vehicles per day on the Pacific Highway at Grafton, the Princes Highway at Berry, or the Hume Highway at Goulburn.

Tourism in the Blue Mountains and Central West is growing in popularity. This increase in tourism provides economic benefits for those communities and NSW as a whole, but is contributing to the congestion experienced through the Blue Mountains.

The Medlow Bath project will improve access for local highway traffic through this section of Highway servicing 19,000 vehicles per day, and which currently experiences congestion at intersections and merge points.

### **5.2.6 Heavy vehicles**

Several submissions raised questions about freight, regulation, traffic interactions, safety, noise, and suggested that alternate routes and methods could be warranted. A number of submissions also expressed support for the upgrade of the Great Western Highway.

*“How do we stop industry from just adding extra trucks?”*

*“How many trucking companies will be able to afford the cost of upgrading to the safer long trucks?”*

*“It is my understanding that trucks traversing through the Blue Mountains place cargo containers on two trucks then after they are on the other side of Lithgow place the two containers onto a single truck cab. They have not been offered another road choice and look forward to the two containers being able to attach to a single Cab. How does your plan for Medlow align with this big picture?”*

*“The community doesn’t want performance based standard vehicles through the village.”*

*“Two lanes each way will not be sufficient to move anywhere near enough road freight E-W when the population of Central West will increase to 300,000 in 20 years, making the GWH obsolete as a road freight corridor. But in the process unleashing hitherto banned megatrucks will increase freight traffic by 80% devastating all the villages of the Blue Mountains.”*

*“We don’t need more trucks; bigger trucks on our roads! We need to invest more time and money into our railroad system. Road trains are dangerous and way over sized for our areas. So what reason do you deem necessary to have to change all these roads for billions of dollars and man hours, when we could do so much more easily and with more affordability Just keep the trains in work and do exactly are meant to do???”*

*“Large trucks passing through villages should have a restriction on air braking during evening/night/early morning hours. It’s quite disturbing and not appropriate to village life.”*

*“The fact that the GWH will be made accessible to much larger transport vehicles (26m B-double and 30m fixed) is alarming to say the least. Sharing the highway with trucks of the current size limit is frightening enough as it is. I have frequently witnessed trucks going through red lights, exceeding the speed limit (especially at night) and tailgating car drivers. This won’t change. The big trucks aren’t travelling just from Lithgow to Katoomba, they are going right through the mountains. Bigger trucks = increased danger on our roads.”*

*“I drive through the upper mountains daily, both in my car & in a heavy vehicle. I’m looking forward to having the option to overtake people who do not or can not travel at the speed limit. Please please please give us dual lanes throughout the Blue Mountains. I have lived in the Blue Mountains all my life & find it excessively frustrating to drive to & from work, especially on busy weekends. I understand some people will not want the changes to happen but widening of the highway needs to happen. Medlow Bath & Blackheath are the bane of my travel no matter what time of day. I look forward to a being stopped at roadworks to make the desperately needed improvements to this area.”*

### **5.2.6.1 TfNSW response**

#### **Freight and regulation**

The Medlow Bath section is being developed and delivered as part of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program, providing two lanes in each direction with safe intersections

to separate local traffic turning movements from through traffic.

The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program is future proofing the length between Katoomba and Lithgow making it suitable for modern, more productive vehicles. It is currently the only nationally significant freight connection to Sydney limited to 20 metre heavy vehicles.

Transport companies will be able choose the most productive mode and vehicle for their deliveries. Blue Mountains City Council will also be able to plan upgrades to their local industrial areas to suit the class of vehicle accessing the Highway now and into the future.

Freight operators upgrade their fleet in the same way that private drivers upgrade to newer, safer, quieter vehicles. Statistics have shown that newer heavy vehicles travel more kilometres than older heavy vehicles as their use is prioritised across fleets.

Performance Based Standards (PBS) vehicles are becoming an increasingly popular choice for the freight industry, with total new PBS combination approvals having doubled over the last five years while the heavy vehicle market has only grown by 20 per cent over the same period (<https://www.nhvr.gov.au/news/2019/05/16/joint-release-report-shows-one-in-five-new-heavy-vehicles-pbs-approved>).

Operating a heavy vehicle, older or newer, has relatively fixed costs whether the vehicle is loaded or empty. Companies are not likely to operate additional truck trips with older heavy vehicles once they have introduced newer vehicles to replace them in their fleet, unless they absolutely have to.

There is no avenue for Transport for NSW to enforce use of PBS vehicles; however, the commercial incentive is very strong for operators to move to higher productivity heavy vehicles that are fitted with the necessary advanced safety equipment mandated for the corridor. Without permitting the use of safer more innovative high productivity vehicles on the corridor, the

Great Western Highway may see older, poorer performing heavy vehicles continue to operate in growing numbers, as they become less competitive on other corridors.

Despite being larger vehicles, modern PBS heavy vehicles are safer and more efficient than the shorter general access vehicles, such as the 19m semi-trailers that can currently travel on the Great Western Highway. For example, a 26-metre PBS A-double produces 46% less emissions than a 19-metre semi-trailer, requires 55% fewer trips to transport the same amount of freight, and can stop and turn in the same space.

Modelling indicates that allowing modern heavy vehicles on the Great Western Highway could decrease articulated truck numbers by around 15%.

### **Traffic**

Traffic on the Great Western Highway is expected to increase by 1.4% per year, leading to total traffic numbers of approximately 25,000 in Medlow Bath by 2040.

The duplication of the Great Western Highway will support future traffic growth in line with forecasted projections, supporting local access, regional tourism and freight connectivity in Medlow Bath.

### **Alternate routes and methods**

The NSW Government is committed to moving more freight from road to rail and is investing in the rail freight network to increase capacity. Rail freight is the most cost effective way to move large quantities of bulk goods over long distances.

Upgrading the rail line is no substitute for upgrading the Great Western Highway. The Highway upgrade is being developed alongside long-term rail options such as the Fast Rail program, as both are needed to meet future demand and address current issues around congestion, journey reliability and safety.

Ninety per cent of containerised freight suitable to be transported by train from the Central West to Sydney is already on the rail

network. Bulk goods will continue to rely on the rail line, including grain, export meat, timber, coal, steel products and interstate rail freight to Perth and Adelaide.

Even with improvements to rail, there are types of freight that producers and manufacturers will always choose to move by road.

These include:

- Consumables like groceries which need fast, frequent deliveries
- Goods that need to be delivered to many different stores along the way, like fuel
- Smaller freight loads, where it is more cost effective to be transported by road
- The nearly 40% of all road freight which either begins or ends its journey in the Blue Mountains, supporting the local economy.

Transporting this freight by road benefits residents and businesses of the Blue Mountains, Sydney and the Central West.

### **Safety**

Road safety has greatly improved on the upgraded section of the Great Western Highway to the east of Katoomba, with fatalities reduced by 76.8%.

The crash rate on this section of the Highway involving articulated heavy vehicles where someone is hurt has dropped by 71%. Duplicated highways are much safer for heavy vehicles and those sharing the road with them.

Upgrading the existing Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow will improve congestion and provide more efficient and reliable journeys for all road users travelling in, around and through the Blue Mountains and better connect communities in the Central West. The Upgrade Program will address known safety issues between Katoomba and Lithgow; improving intersections, straightening curves and flattening grades to provide a design consistent with latest Road Design Standards.

The Great Western Highway project team liaises with the freight and road safety branches of transport for NSW to support them in driver education programs aimed at

improving driver behaviour.

Preliminary studies indicate that around 4% of daily current heavy vehicle movements in Blackheath are dangerous goods (numbers would be similar in Medlow Bath). The bulk of dangerous goods carried is fuel – liquid or gas.

Transport for NSW must further assess the entire length of the upgraded highway between Katoomba and Lithgow before any change to the size of vehicles is allowed.

The amount of freight moved on the Great Western Highway will continue to grow with or without the upgrade. The broader upgrade will provide the freight industry with opportunities to use modern, more productive heavy vehicles (up to 30m) that meet the highest safety and performance standards.

### **Heavy vehicle noise**

Upgrading the Highway from Katoomba to Lithgow will allow us to improve the alignment by straightening out curves and flattening steep grades as much as possible which will reduce heavy vehicle noise.

We will also investigate relocating speed signs and providing new signage to reduce heavy vehicle compression braking at Medlow Bath.

Providing a Highway more suited to modern heavy vehicles will mean less engine emissions and noise, less interactions between heavy vehicles and local traffic, less exposure to driver fatigue and error, and reduced congestion on an improved highway for all to use.

As part of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program, we will carry out a noise assessment as outlined in the Environmental Protection Authority's Road Noise Policy and Transport for NSW's Noise Criteria and Mitigation Guidelines. We will explore noise mitigation strategies as part of the noise assessment.

### **5.2.7 Safety upgrade**

Several submissions raised questions about Foy Avenue, Bellevue Crescent, traffic, and timing.

*“What are the interim measures for Foy Ave?”*

*“The most urgent upgrade needed in Medlow Bath is turning lanes for Foy Ave and Bellevue St. Solution to these problems must be resolved before or with your proposed upgrade.”*

*“Will the safety upgrade at Bellevue and Foy Avenues be commenced prior to the widening?”*

*“The Safety Upgrade through Medlow Bath promised in 2016 is a priority and must begin as a matter of urgency before a fatality occurs. Most urgent attention is Bellevue Cres and GWH and to a lesser extent Foy Ave. A dedicated left turning lane heading west and a dedicated right turning lane, heading south is required. Wide road shoulders are required for passing traffic on the left and also enabling emergency service vehicles to pass adequately.”*

*“As this is a 60 km/h zone (which is essential for safety), there is no need for a dual carriageway. Rather the space should be used to provide safe turning bays for businesses and roads and improving pedestrian crossing with traffic lights. This would 1. Deliver safety improvements. 2. Save a substantial amount of money.”*

#### **5.2.7.1 TfNSW response**

##### **Foy Avenue and Bellevue Crescent**

The Great Western Highway Safety Upgrade Program started in 2013 and included a three-lane upgrade at Forty Bends, safety upgrades through Hartley Valley, safety upgrades in Mount Victoria village and the safety upgrade work at Blackheath which opened to traffic in December last year. The budget allocation for this program has been expended.

In November 2018, Transport for NSW announced that the safety upgrades at Blackheath would be the final section of the Safety Upgrade Program to be completed, and committed to investigate the next highest priority safety upgrade along the route in the forthcoming Great Western Highway Upgrade Program. While we recognise Medlow Bath did not benefit from the Safety Upgrade Program, we recognise the safety needs

and have prioritised this length first, to allow improvements to be delivered.

While Foy Ave is out of scope for the Medlow Bath project we acknowledge community concern about the Foy Avenue and Bellevue Crescent intersections.

Following feedback gathered during the Medlow Bath consultation, we are investigating the feasibility of short term improvement measures to improve safety at Bellevue Crescent and Foy Avenue, including road widening to provide turning bays.

Upgrades between the villages require more complex environmental assessment and approval, taking additional time to plan before construction can begin. This approach at Medlow Bath would prioritise and deliver safety upgrades through the section while the broader planning is progressing.

### 5.2.8 Public transport

Several submissions raised questions about buses, the rail corridor, and the proposed pedestrian bridge.

*"The bus stop in front of the Hydro has similar issues to the crossing near the Hydro - ie is not well located. Because most bus users are school kids or residents, the only reason it is convenient is because of its proximity to the existing (poorly located) crossing?"*

*"Will there be room for bus shelters at the two proposed bus stops on the highway?"*

*"If the pedestrian bridge can impinge upon the railway land, why can't the highway do likewise?"*

*"Keep our level crossing across the train tracks -it has good equal access and is safe! We don't want a huge ugly overhead bridge with lifts. This is a ridiculous waste of taxpayers' money. Pedestrian lights to cross the highway will solve this danger."*

*"A giant bridge with 4 lifts and 4 sets of steps is unnecessary. There is no evidence that the current railway crossing is dangerous. However the crossing of the highway is dangerous. It would make sense to install a*

*pedestrian crossing with traffic lights at this spot. A bridge would ruin the views of the historic village of MB for ever."*

*"Have you surveyed the train station? Got passenger data? Know how exposed it is on the station? The weather howls through there, south westerly..."*

*"The proposed design will remove the "unofficial" angled parking along the Hydro, which is heavily used. Are there options to develop more parking on the other side of the railway station along Railway Parade that could feed into the pedestrian bridge?"*

*"I don't let my children cross, even with me, at the level road crossing. The island in the middle is unsafe and often damaged. We walk up to the lights at the bridge and it's difficult as very steep. I would very strongly support a pedestrian bridge to allow for safer crossing."*

*"No one would use the bridge when there is already a pedestrian bridge that could be fitted with a lift onto the station."*

*"Is the pedestrian bridge in mazda land?"*

*"Can we have an underpass instead?"*

*"What happens to the lifts in a power outage?"*

*"The overpass needs to be fully accessible for people who are visually impaired and wheelchair accessible... Along Railway parade where the lift will be there is no safe walking area as everyone has to walk on the road and around parked cars from that lift going north there is no footpath this needs to be added for the safety for anyone with a disability or older generation. The overpass needs extra lighting and bumper dots on the ground for visually impaired people. Also good signs that can be scanned with your phones/devices so the phone can translate the information this includes braille on all signs. The overpass also need a cover due to weather conditions."*

*This overpass needs to be fully accessible to everyone as Medlow Bath has a lot of tourists."*

*"This pedestrian over bridge must have ramps, at both ends and onto the station."*

### 5.2.8.1 TfNSW response

#### Rail corridor

We are consulting with NSW Trains and Sydney Trains to determine the extent of retaining walls needed and transport corridor widths at Medlow Bath. The potential for landscaping along the railway/roadsides will also be discussed further.

We will continue these discussions throughout project development to reach the best outcome for Medlow Bath, while also ensuring safety in the rail corridor.

#### Buses

We will review the facilities and locations for buses during the next stages of design, in partnership with local bus operators. We will provide bus shelters and suitable pathway connections at any new or relocated bus stops as part of the project.

We do not propose to change the existing bus turning circle in Railway Parade. Access will be maintained for school buses that currently use Railway Parade and we will investigate improvements in Railway Parade more generally as part of the project development.

#### Pedestrian bridge

Transport for NSW has a long term strategy to replace all level crossings with safer alternatives where users are not required to enter the railway corridor or interact with live train tracks.

We propose to provide a fully accessible crossing of the Highway and railway that does not require users to interact with traffic or trains as part of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program at Medlow Bath.

The proposed pedestrian bridge would be built to disability design standards identified within the Transport Access Program. For more information on the Transport Access Program visit <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/tap-3>.

This would include accessibility considerations including path grading and widths, lighting, tactile devices and wayfinding signage. For more information on our Disability Inclusion Plan visit <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/reports-and-publications/disability-inclusion-action-plan-2018-2022>.

A pedestrian bridge upgrade can greatly improve the ease of access to the railway station for residents, commuters and tourists further encouraging public transport use through improved transport accessibility.

We will work to ensure the design of the proposed pedestrian bridge fits with the character of Medlow Bath, and respects the heritage status of Medlow Bath Railway Station, while improving the connectivity between the township on both sides of the road railway corridor. Ramps are not proposed, to reduce the visual and physical impact of the bridge. We will also consider wind impacts in the design of the bridge.

The proposed pedestrian bridge would be located on the southern end of the platform where most users cross, directly linking with bus stops on the Highway and with school buses and commuter parking in Railway Parade.

Users would be able to access the proposed pedestrian bridge lifts and stairs from four locations:

- the area at the southern end of the Mazda car park on the western side of the Highway
- next to the bus bay on the eastern side of the Highway
- the southern end of the train platform
- Railway Parade opposite the turn bay.

The proposed pedestrian bridge would be constructed by Transport for NSW and serviced by NSW Trains, who have access to reliable power and maintenance capacity to ensure service is maintained for the lifts at all times.



## Other options

There is no location in Medlow Bath with the available space below the railway and the Highway that would allow for a pedestrian underpass. A pedestrian bridge is the most practical and safe option to provide a fully accessible crossing of both the Highway and the railway line that does not require users to interact with traffic or trains.

We do not propose to upgrade the existing pedestrian bridge at the northern end of the platform as this northern location does not closely link to bus stops, proposed commuter parking and known pedestrian activity. It would not be able to provide the necessary levels of pedestrian accessibility due to steep grades in Station Street and longer connections would limit the accessibility for disabled transport users. This pedestrian bridge will, however, be left in place.

Pedestrian activated traffic signals would not be well suited to the Great Western Highway at Medlow Bath. Pedestrian signals operate on demand, making them unable to be coordinated with the Station Street lights. This would create uncontrolled congestion during peak periods while offering limited improvement to public transport accessibility.

Despite the limitations, pedestrian activated traffic lights which link to the existing railway level crossing will be examined in the next stage of design to inform the traffic assessment, economic appraisal and Review of Environmental Factors to assure the best value for money upgrade is considered and confirmed.

## 5.2.9 Walking and cycling

Several submissions raised questions about pedestrians, cyclists, and safety issues.

*“At the moment the dominance of the highway (and cars) is a real problem for our little town. I’d support anything that could be done to ameliorate that visually and encourage people to get out and about in Medlow and its surrounds more (whether by foot or on bike).”*

*“It appears that the roadway in the Medlow vicinity is going to be moved much closer to the path thus creating a safety issue with the drafts of high speed close by passing of monster trucks. Our oldsters on canes and zimmers don’t need to be thrown off balance by strong blowing winds.”*

*“There will be many squashed cyclists and pedestrians up against the heritage wall when impatient reckless drivers try to overtake on the inside lane in the 900 m of 4 lanes before merging back into 3 lanes north of MB.”*

*“Can we have a concrete buffer and narrower medium as a buffer between pedestrian/cycle path and four lane traffic?”*

*“One additional pedestrian crossing of the highway is needed for the village residents in the southern part of the village.”*

*“The shared walking & cycle path along in front of the Hydro is unsafe with vehicles in and out of driveways and traffic so close without the parking buffer. Why can’t the wall be moved to its correct alignment, or the path be on Hydro land...”*

*“Put a pedestrian path west of the wall – no shared path! Its state land – not hydro land.”*

*“What is going to happen to the bike/ pedestrian path that was put in by the Blue Mountains Council a few years back? I use this frequently for both walking and riding to Katoomba and Blackheath.”*

*“Stop the rat run along Station Street between Medlow Bath and Blackheath when there is traffic congestion or the highway closed. This stretch of road is a shared walking and cycle path, is unsuitable for two-way vehicle access and becomes a safety issue when highway users attempt to use it to bypass traffic congestion and road closures.”*

### 5.2.9.1 TfNSW response

#### **Pedestrian and cyclist facilities**

The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program aims to upgrade and improve access for walking and cycling along and across the corridor by providing high quality facilities.

We may need to realign parts of the cycle trail, but Transport for NSW are committed to providing walking and cycling connections that link to existing trails and path networks in the Blue Mountains. The shared path in Medlow Bath would connect with the existing walking trail network between Katoomba and Blackheath.

The council and railway access trail extending from Station Street and running west of the railway line is primarily in place to be used for emergency vehicle access and as a pedestrian and cyclist trail. We are not proposing to upgrade this access trail. Maintenance and safety of this trail is a council responsibility.

#### **Safety**

We will provide road shoulders in Medlow Bath for vehicle breakdowns and on-road cyclist use as part of the upgrade.

The shared path provided on the western side of the Great Western Highway is for pedestrians and recreational cyclists. We will investigate changes in the design to provide a landscaped buffer between the shared path to better separate pedestrians and traffic. The path can also be marked with a dashed centreline to encourage sharing of the path.

We are not proposing any impacts to the Hydro Majestic stone wall or curtilage due to its heritage value. Preserving this wall and its relationship with the pathway is in keeping with the character of Medlow Bath.

### 5.2.10 Business

Several submissions raised business-related questions about the Hydro Majestic, the United Service Station and tourism businesses in the area.

*“Where will Hydro guests park? On weekends the parking in front of the Hydro is full. I understood that you are offering an underground car park for them. If that is so, where will be the entrance and the exit to it? A lane from the highway?”*

*“Is the Hydro paying for the right turn as was required in their DA?”*

*“Does TfNSW consider its consultations with Hydro are sadly biased, because Hydro commercially driven outcomes are inconsistent with MB residents non-commercial outcomes?”*

*“This design is going to destroy the iconic hydro majestic values such as its views from the highway to the Megalong. The noise will also impact the hotel and surrounding properties!”*

*“The Hydro hosts the Roaring 20s festival every year and this attracts hundreds of people. This will impact on traffic coming in and out of the hotel.”*

*“Concerned that if people can't turn right out of Hydro that the Hydro will open the back gate for traffic to exit through Bellevue. There are hundreds of cars parked in the Hydro car park and to have them come out Bellevue would impact negatively on liveability in Bellevue Cres and create a through road instead of maintaining a quiet street.”*

*“Why does the Hydro score a free right hand turn, whilst the fuel station loses its turn (that it paid for). This disadvantages people wanting to use the fuel station that are heading east and it greatly disadvantages the fuel station proprietors.”*

*“I also feel that once the upgrade has been completed that some businesses in the area will be affected and will require some assistance in helping them maintain their business or be compensated in some way.”*

### 5.2.10.1 TfNSW response

#### Hydro Majestic

We value each community voice equally as part of our consultation process. We are engaging with the Hydro Majestic and working with them collaboratively to address any impacts on this heritage-listed tourist attraction. We will also continue to engage with the community to help make sure that we balance the needs of the Hydro Majestic with the needs of the community.

This will include negotiation over the value of the current road reserve in use by the Hydro Majestic and establishing access in line with the approved Hydro Majestic development application and Transport for NSW works deed.

The development application identifies a right turn into the Hydro Majestic, but no right turn out.

All parking for Hydro Majestic guests will be provided on the premises. The current development application for the Hydro Majestic already identifies the extension of the car park to provide additional parking within the premises. Transport for NSW will not provide an underground carpark for the Hydro Majestic and is not aware of any proposal of that nature. As a result of community feedback during our consultation we are not proposing to connect Bellevue Crescent to the Highway via the Hydro Majestic and United Service Station land. Such a proposal is a matter for the local council to determine.

All street parking will be removed for the upgrade as part of the Transport for NSW design as providing parking on the highway would potentially impact on the Hydro Majestic heritage stone wall. We will assess the impact of removing eight commuter spaces as part of the environmental assessment and provide appropriate commuter parking on Railway Parade near the Rural Fire Service property to compensate any public commuter parking loss on the highway.

We will conduct noise and traffic modelling as part of the environmental assessment and provide suitable noise mitigation where the need is identified. Traffic modelling will also include analysis of seasonal peak periods and special events such as the Roaring 20s Festival.

#### United Service Station

Through consultation with residents and the United Service Station we have gained a much clearer understanding of their business needs and customer catchments. We have also clarified the reliance of local residents on the service station for shopping and the volumes of traffic coming from the west wanting to access the service station. We will investigate options to best provide access for drivers coming from the west to access the Service Station.

Right turns will not be permitted out of the service station. Traffic exiting the service station will be permitted to turn left only.

#### Tourism

We will complete a socio-economic impact assessment as part of the environmental assessment, which will examine the potential impact on any known businesses in Medlow Bath. This will help us to mitigate impacts and make the most of opportunities for positive long term improvements generated by the Program.

Community consultation will be ongoing throughout the project and will continue to help us identify any businesses in the Medlow Bath area, to assure their needs are considered by the project.

## 5.2.11 Road safety

Several submissions raised questions about road safety at Bellevue Crescent as well as broader issues such as driver behaviour, speed enforcement, lighting, motorcycle safety, and falling trees.

*“With the proposed duplication, once you manage to turn right from Bellevue, you then have to sit in a seagull or merging lane when there is a constant stream of traffic heading towards Katoomba. How will this be safer?”*

*“How can TfNSW think that vehicles entering and exiting the highway will act as a prevention from overtaking/undertaking?”*

*“Please don’t just fix the roads sort out the lane hogs etc that cause the problems!”*

*“Having 4 lanes of traffic through Medlow Bath will create another bottleneck and cause cars to speed up and undertake trucks or slower vehicles. Have you considered blocking lanes until it can be joined with Katoomba?”*

*“Will the street lighting be upgraded along this section of Highway? How will street light glare impacts be managed on adjacent & surrounding properties?”*

*“What are you doing about Motorcycle safety? Will there be motorcycle safety rails (full length)?”*

*“I also fully support speed cameras for Medlow Bath. The one in the lower mountains is very effective. Needs speed cameras on the overhead pedestrian bridge to stop the “rat run” between the lanes to get ahead before the lanes merge?”*

*“Speed cameras give fines after the fact, does not stop accidents or dangerous driving in real time. So how do you make it safe?”*

*“Suggestion that Transport move the 70 speed limit sign closer to Katoomba to match the extended 60 speed limit length towards Blackheath.”*

### 5.2.11.1 TfNSW response

#### Driver behaviour

We thank the community for highlighting observed safety issues involving poor driver behaviour in Medlow Bath. We will consider lane widths, speed limit, allowing for space to encourage police presence and the use of enforcement cameras during the next phase of design to further reinforce traffic calming and speed compliance through the village.

The village centre is being designed with suitable lane widths, markings, signposting and turning bays to provide improved access for local traffic. The safer separation and interactions between local traffic and highway through traffic combines to calm traffic naturally, while also providing much safer opportunities for access along the corridor.

The Great Western Highway project team liaises with the freight and road safety branches of transport for NSW to support them in driver education programs aimed at improving driver behaviour in the Blue Mountains.

Widening the Highway to four lanes through the village, while retaining the 60km/h speed limit, will provide a substantial immediate benefit to the safety of road users, by providing safer opportunities for turning traffic along the Highway.

We will further investigate a range of safe intersection options as part of the traffic study that supports the environmental assessment.

#### General

The Program is a broad strategic improvement for the Great Western Highway from Katoomba to Lithgow, which will deliver long-term benefits, including safety improvements, for all transport users, cyclists and pedestrians along the length.

The Great Western Highway upgrade to four lanes between Emu Plains and Katoomba completed in 2015, has resulted in a 76.8% drop in fatalities and a 27.7% drop in overall casualty crash rates where someone is hurt. It is expected the Medlow Bath project will also result in significant safety benefits.

Traffic on the Great Western Highway is projected to grow and the upgrade is being planned with long term resilience and capacity. This upgrade will improve congestion and safety, and cater for future growth beyond 2033.

### **Lighting**

We will consider the appropriate level of street lighting needed to improve safety without compromising the character and heritage of Medlow Bath. Where possible LED lighting would be used to reduce power consumption and reduce waste light spill onto properties.

### **Motorcycle safety**

The Program aims to improve the alignment and grades of the Highway more generally, with careful attention paid to providing safe roadsides for all users as part of a design consistent with latest Road Design Standards.

We will provide motorcycle safety rails where warranted as part of the Program between Katoomba and Lithgow.

### **Speed enforcement**

TfNSW is committed to improving driver behaviour and speed compliance through Medlow Bath. We will work with the enforcement branch within TfNSW to establish the most suitable method of enforcing speed through Medlow Bath as part of the project upgrade.

We will also investigate relocating speed signs and providing new signage as part of the project development.

## **5.2.12 Design**

Several submissions raised questions about the design, provisions for buses, roadsides, median widths, pedestrians, turn lanes, and the road alignment.

*“Where will the proposed retaining walls go in Station Street?”*

*“Have you considered moving the ‘corridor’ closer to the train tracks? This clearly will improve safety for all pedestrians and reduce the impact of acoustics of residents.”*

*“The proposed ‘nature strip’ is misleading. Once all turning bays are taken into account only about 20–25% of the strip will be ‘green’. The rest will be metal dividing fences and retaining walls – just like Blaxland. Factor in the removal of nearly all trees and Medlow Bath will look like a wasteland...”*

*“Entry / exit lanes filtering traffic from the GWH into the united servo and vice versa are a must. Driveway style entries directly onto the highway without shoulders must be a last resort solution.”*

*“If the duplication of the highway through Medlow Bath village goes ahead, will the single lane from Katoomba feed into the left of the two lane – thus allowing and encouraging vehicles to attempt to overtake; or will it feed into the right of the two lanes – thus allowing slow, or turning vehicles to pull over but also encouraging this on a hurry to overtake on the left? Similarly with the single lane from Blackheath.”*

*“How does east bound traffic access the service station & those properties fronting the Highway between the service station & Foy Avenue?”*

### 5.2.12.1 TfNSW response

#### Roadsides

To allow room for the upgrade to be carried out in the existing road corridor, all parking would be removed from the Great Western Highway. As part of the Medlow Bath project we will investigate providing commuter parking on Railway Parade near the Rural Fire Services property, which is closely located to the eastern pedestrian bridge stairs and lift.

The project will push the Highway as far toward the railway corridor as possible. We will investigate shifting the corridor into railway land as part of the next stage of design as it may help to provide a wider corridor, which would improve opportunities for landscaping, tree planting and the separation of pedestrians from traffic.

We are refining the design in Station Street to try to avoid low retaining walls along the front of properties between the Mazda dealership and Station Street. We will also investigate ways to retain the two way traffic in Station Street that currently provides access to existing homes west of the Mazda dealership.

#### Median

Gaps in the median will be provided for traffic turning bays and emergency vehicle access. Providing the median will allow space for turn lanes and tree planting that will remain into the future. Subject to traffic modelling, we will provide as much median for tree planting and vegetation as possible in the design and will explore ways to extend the design length of the planted median.

Throughout the design process, landscape character and visual impact are assessed as part of the environmental assessment requirements. An Urban Design and Landscape Plan will be developed for Medlow Bath and our team will be guided by the Beyond the Pavement policy, the landscape design guidelines.

For more information go to [www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/partners-suppliers/documents/centre-for-urban-design/beyond-pavement.pdf](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/partners-suppliers/documents/centre-for-urban-design/beyond-pavement.pdf)

#### Turn Lanes for driveways

Subject to traffic modelling, we will review the provision for left turn lanes into the United Service Station, the Hydro Majestic and other property driveways along the length. Providing two lanes for traffic in addition to a two metre wide shoulder will provide safe space for vehicles entering and exiting driveways along the Highway.

#### Lane assignment

The proposed design directs the single lane feeding traffic heading west from Katoomba into the left lane of the duplicated Highway. Traffic travelling east from Blackheath is fed into the right lane as it is now. Both assumptions would be further reviewed in the next stage of design.

All eastbound traffic will be required to use the turning bays provided as part of this design to perform right turns or U-turn movements. We will carry out detailed traffic modelling and a traffic study to inform design.

### 5.2.13 Outside project scope

Several submissions raised questions about adjoining sections of the project, the road corridor, alternate options and rail, which were outside the scope of the community consultation on the Medlow Bath design. The comments were registered on the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program feedback database.

*“What is happening between Medlow Bath and Blackheath?”*

*“Why not just develop the dirt road north of Station Street to allow for emergencies?”*

*“The speed limit message on the whole is confused and not getting through to all people. People in Sydney and Bathurst are being sold the idea that the speed limit will increase to 100km/h when this is not the case or how it is being presented here.”*

*“Prefer possible design that minimises impact on Coachhouse lane.”*

*“TfNSW change the sequence. Use the funds designated for Medlow Bath to upgrade the section from South Bowenfels to Forty Bends to allow travel at 100kph. This will give a true time saving. Using those funds in Medlow Bath will create a 950m eyesore which is dangerous and will create more bottlenecks.”*

*“I suspect a Medlow Bath tunnel keeps getting rejected because its faster cheaper and quicker to build 4-5 lanes along the flat strip - which is short sighted. Tunnels through entire upper blue mts might deliver a quicker trip promised by the Minister and will preserve upper blue mts for local and tourist traffic only. This would create an economic tourism boom for the area. However, I suspect there isn't enough money for any tunnels and this whole thing will be shelved after TfNSW has built its 950m widening through Medlow Bath leaving a white elephant.”*

*“Why is there only one option for Medlow Bath? Why is Blackheath offered alternatives and Medlow Bath is not?”*

*“Why can't Medlow have a tunnel?”*

*“Put freight on rail instead.”*

*“Upgrade Bells Line of Road instead.”*

*“Build Medlow Bath residents their own local road to avoid traffic.”*

*“Consideration should be given to a by-pass of Medlow Bath that connects with the electricity corridor and fire trail that sits at the eastern side of Medlow. The bypass would carry freight and through traffic leaving tourist and local traffic for Medlow village. It would enable Medlow to grow into a charming mountain village much like Leura.”*

*“Consider a very long tunnel option e.g. Lapstone to Hartley.”*

*“As the GWH is completely unsuitable to be THE E-W road freight corridor, what plans do you have for an alternative corridor?”*

### **5.2.13.1 TfNSW response**

#### **Adjoining sections**

The sections either side of Medlow Bath are being progressed as part of Program development. Investigations and studies are being undertaken to assess the suitability of upgrade options through these sections.

We are currently seeking tenders for the detailed design and environmental assessment of the sections from Katoomba to Blackheath (excluding Medlow Bath) and from Little Hartley to Lithgow.

The Program will address known safety issues between Katoomba and Lithgow; improving intersections, straightening curves and flattening grades to provide a design consistent with latest Road Design Standards.

The council and railway access trail extending from Station Street and running west of the railway line is primarily in place to be used for emergency vehicle access and as a pedestrian and cyclist trail. We are not proposing to upgrade this access trail. Maintenance and safety of this trail is a council responsibility.

#### **Coachhouse Lane**

As a result of community consultation we have been able to remove any confusion over prior revisions of the Blue Mountains City Council local environmental plan, which does not currently contain any easements over these properties.

Transport for NSW is investigating the relocation of rail power infrastructure to prevent Highway widening impacts at Coachhouse Lane.

We are currently consulting with NSW Trains and Sydney Trains about how the upgrade will interact with rail corridor assets. We will continue these discussions throughout project development to reach the best outcome for Medlow Bath, while also ensuring safety in the rail corridor.

### Other options/alternate routes

An upgrade of the Great Western Highway in Medlow Bath is constrained by ridgetop terrain, private property along the Highway, and the rail line.

Bypassing the township on the east was considered in the 1950s and ruled out due to impacts on the residential area. Bypassing further to the east would impact on the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park and sensitive water catchment areas, and shift the alignment onto difficult and steep undulating terrain. By keeping the Great Western Highway on the ridgeline through Medlow Bath and beyond we can reduce environmental impact while still providing opportunities to support and enhance the character of Medlow Bath village as a tourist destination.

A tunnel under this short length of community is not feasible at this location. The corridor is already well defined and well suited to traditional road widening, so we can upgrade the Highway with minimal property acquisition and environmental impact. It is also a more cost effective option which would be quicker to build.

Building a very long tunnel under the mountains would be prohibitively expensive to both build and operate, and would only divert the traffic that is actually travelling all the way through the mountains.

A longer tunnel would fail to serve the nearly 40% of road freight that begins or ends its journey within the Blue Mountains, supporting the local economy.

We appreciate that many residents on the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow would prefer to see traffic diverted over Bells Line of Road. Even if the Bells Line of Road was upgraded – and early indications suggest this would be at a cost far in excess of this program – significant traffic volumes would still remain on the Great Western Highway. An upgrade of the Bells Line of Road would also potentially have a significant impact on the World Heritage Area and has extremely challenging terrain.

Upgrading Bells Line of Road would not address the traffic or safety concerns currently on the Great Western Highway. The construction impact on the World Heritage Area around Bells Line of Road, the extremely challenging terrain and the preference for traffic to use the Great Western Highway do not make upgrading this route a viable alternative at this time, however it remains a long term priority of the Government.

By upgrading the Great Western Highway we can provide improved access for local communities between Katoomba and Lithgow without the need for providing separate local road connections between townships.

Upgrading the existing Highway will improve congestion and provide more efficient and reliable journeys for all road users travelling in, around and through the Blue Mountains and better connect communities in the Central West. The Program will address known safety issues between Katoomba and Lithgow; improving intersections, straightening curves and flattening grades to provide a design consistent with latest Road Design Standards.

The upgrade will also improve access for pedestrians and cyclists, address local traffic safety and access issues, and provide greater resilience in times of emergency and extreme weather.

The Great Western Highway is an important route identified as part of the Land Transport Network (Roads), which has been developed through collaboration between Commonwealth, State, and Territory governments. It details the road and rail routes connecting economic hubs.

The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program is aligned strategically to the following Australian and NSW Government plans, policies, and frameworks.

- NSW Future Transport 2056
- NSW Freight and Port Plan 2018–2023
- NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy Framework
- NSW Road Safety Plan 2021



- The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019
- Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan 2018
- NSW Tourism and Transport Plan 2018
- Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036
- A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW.

The existing sections of the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow that have not yet been upgraded are already at capacity during peak periods, which impacts the movement of residents and restricts the growth of tourism. The duplication of the Great Western Highway will support future traffic growth in line with forecasted projections without the need for an alternate connection.

#### 5.2.14 Resilience

Several submissions raised questions about access/egress and emergency response during incidents such as bushfires.

*“We need an alternate exit out of East MB in emergencies.”*

*“It is VITAL that Medlow has a local road leading to Katoomba, which doubles as an Emergency exit during times of bushfire, traffic jams, highway accidents etc. Is this in your plan?”*

*“Resurface and make roads with the necessary wide shoulders to allow for safe passing for emergency service vehicles. Having 2 lanes each way does not guarantee such vehicles can pass in situations of vehicle accidents. Traffic in each direction can be at a standstill.”*

*“Upgrade the dirt road from Station St to Hydro for emergency ambulance and firetrucks...”*

*“Stop the rat run along Station Street between Medlow Bath and Blackheath when there is traffic congestion or the highway closed. This stretch of road is a shared walking and cycle path, is unsuitable for two-way vehicle access and becomes a safety issue when highway users attempt to use it to bypass traffic congestion and road closures.”*

*“Need to ensure access remains via Coachhouse Lane on the eastern side of Medlow Bath for emergencies as it is the only way out if something occurs to block access at the traffic lights.”*

*“The Medlow Bath RFS support appropriate and suitable landscaping that achieves a softening of the built form, particularly in the Village, and that is also resilient to fire. It has been our experience that the use of materials such as bark/organic mulch and fibre-based sound walls can lead to these elements combusting. We acknowledge that these are generally unlikely to lead to an immediate or critical risk to the community, however their ignition can result in excess smoke and the diversion of a disproportionate quantity of fire fighting resources to extinguish such materials.”*

*“In times of bushfire, access across the carriageway must be considered to enable safe firefighting operations, movement of firefighting appliances – particularly in the event of a fire overrun – and refuge from fire overrun. We support the use of physical barriers to separate oncoming traffic, for the road safety outcomes they achieve, however consideration and further consultation should be undertaken to identify suitable modifications/treatments of median barriers to provide for access across the carriageway. These may include depressed medians, gaps in barriers or other design elements.”*

### 5.2.14.1 TfNSW response

#### Access/egress

We are aiming to improve resilience and connectivity of all mountains communities through the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program. We will investigate opportunities to improve these key aspects of the Highway operation as the project develops.

The feasibility of a second crossing of the rail at Medlow Bath near Rutland Road is also being investigated. That study will be included in the investigations informing the Katoomba to Medlow Bath section of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program.

#### Emergency response

One of the aims of the upgrade is to improve management of traffic flow during natural or other disaster events such as bushfires. Resilience of the road network and protection of the road as a transport corridor during emergencies will form a key part of considerations during the design process.

We will consider opportunities for contraflow and emergency service access in the next round of design and will also review the width of shoulders in Medlow Bath with consideration for emergency service access.

The council and railway access trail extending from Station Street and running west of the railway line is primarily in place to be used for emergency vehicle access and as a pedestrian and cyclist trail. We are not proposing to upgrade this access trail. Maintenance and safety of this trail is a council responsibility.

As part of the Medlow Bath to Blackheath design we will explore improved connections to walking trails more generally, which may also assist with emergency access during instances of bushfires in the national park.

We propose to retain the emergency access gate at the end of Coachhouse Lane which will also serve as a key emergency services access point to the Highway north of Medlow Bath. This location would also connect to the proposed walking, cycling and emergency access trail running beside the upgraded Highway between Medlow Bath and Blackheath.

We appreciate the feedback received from the Medlow Bath Rural Fire Service during consultation and will continue to consult with this group throughout project development.

### 5.2.15 Consultation

Several submissions raised questions about online consultation, made complaints and raised issues with the process implemented.

*“Request to postpone consultation until we can go face-to-face.”*

*“Extend consultation deadline.”*

*“Elderly residents are unable to access or participate in online sessions.”*

*“Will the Q&A be available on your website?”*

*“I am uneasy by the amount of anti-upgrade sentiment I have been reading in our local newspaper and being distributed in letterboxes. Much of which makes vague, negative predictions with no research or facts being sited to support these statements.”*

*“Some of what the action groups in town are putting in our mailboxes is just so ridiculous and untrue. I’ve lived here a long time and seen the traffic increase. The extra lane will help the highway cope with the busy times. Most of the community feel like this, it’s just the small minority, making the loudest noise.”*

*“It’s great you are hearing local concerns. How much are they prioritised over those who want to speed through the mountains as fast as possible?”*

*"I feel that this Consultation process will be but a box ticking venture as I read the glossy brochure delivered to Mellow Bath residents. Submissions end today, and in September, tenders will be called. I cannot see any changes happening when the government is heading full speed down this road of (de)construction. I am very disappointed. Consultation means telling the residents what they will be getting, I am afraid."*

### 5.2.15.1 TfNSW response

#### Online consultation

In line with NSW Health advice, the NSW Government is being cautious about conducting face-to-face meetings and consultations during the current pandemic. Unfortunately this restricted our ability to conduct face-to-face consultation sessions in Medlow Bath.

We are very conscious of the need for all of the community to have their say. In response to community feedback we extended the consultation period by an additional two weeks, with consultation concluding on 31 August 2020. This was to allow more time to provide feedback through the many channels available, including post, phone, email, online consultation sessions, an online form and an interactive map. Transport for NSW also conducted personal phone interviews with residents who were unable to participate in online consultation sessions.

#### Frequently asked questions

Transport for NSW mailed a leaflet to residences in Medlow Bath, outlining frequently asked questions and answers from the consultation, as well as a map explaining features of the proposed strategic design. This map enabled residents unable to view the design online, to have a clear view of the proposed design for Medlow Bath and book in for a phone consultation.

Frequently asked questions from the consultation period are also included in the recent Community Update, available on the on the website at [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway).

#### Complaints

We are aware that the Great Western Highway acts as the main local street for Medlow Bath and other mountains townships. The upgrade program must strike a balance between addressing local concerns as well as those of other road user; however, the safety of all road users during and beyond construction on and off the proposed design is a key priority of the upgrade program. All feedback received by the project team is weighted equally.

We appreciate that many stakeholders and interest groups have different opinions and ideas about the Program, and we are working to consult positively with all stakeholders.

Official project information can be found at [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway).

#### Process

We are committed to ensuring that the proposed strategic design is developed appropriately and incorporates and acknowledges feedback and concerns of the local community and stakeholders.

Our community consultation is based on the principle of ensuring that the Blue Mountains community, Central West community and the broader NSW community, including key stakeholders and interest groups, are aware of and involved in consultation opportunities about the proposed duplication.

This initial stage of consultation in Medlow Bath was focussed on gaining local knowledge and input. The next stage of consultation in mid-2021 will be broader and will seek formal input from communities along the corridor and beyond on specific aspects of the design and environmental assessment package.

Consultation was open to people in all locations and advertised on social media as well as through more traditional methods to assure consultation was transparent and inclusive.

## 6. Recommendations

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Community consultation is a key factor in refining the project design. We heard during consultation many valuable anecdotal stories of driver behaviour which has prompted us to investigate different approaches in our design and conduct further studies.

### 6.1 Improvements in design

Suggested improvements to the design contributed by the community include:

- Consider options for the intersection at Bellevue Crescent
- Review intersection treatments for traffic performing U-turns
- Provide suitable access points to the United Service Station and properties on the Highway between Bellevue Crescent and Station Street
- Review the design impacts in Station Street to retain two way traffic and reduce the need for retaining walls
- Increase separation between the shared path and Highway traffic
- Consider enforcement measures to manage speed through Medlow Bath
- Investigate opportunities to improve resilience and emergency service access
- Consider noise impacts and potential treatment measures
- Preserve community funded trees and remove failing Radiata Pines along the Highway
- Enhance the roadsides and medians using trees and landscaping.

### 6.2 Interim safety works

We acknowledge community concern about safety at the Foy Avenue and Bellevue Crescent intersections. Following feedback gathered during the Medlow Bath consultation, we are investigating the feasibility of short term improvement measures to improve safety at Bellevue Crescent and Foy Avenue.

These interim improvements need to be investigated, designed and planned before construction can begin but would be quicker to complete. These upgrades would also support the construction of the widening through Medlow Bath while being delivered sooner to improve the safety of both intersections while planning continues for the full Medlow Bath project.

**Upgrading the highway is critical considering increased usage and especially weekends where day-trippers create diabolical congestion.**

Feedback received during consultation

## 7. Next Steps

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The Medlow Bath section of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program is progressing, with MRB Technical Services appointed to refine the design and move the project closer to construction. Transport for NSW will work closely with the contractor to refine the design, based on community feedback from public consultation.

There will be further consultation in 2021, once the team have progressed the design and environmental assessment. A Review of Environmental Factors will be available for consultation in mid-2021. We anticipate that physical work on the upgrade at Medlow Bath could begin in mid-2022.



The Great Western Highway at Medlow Bath

# 8. Appendices

## Appendix A – Postcard



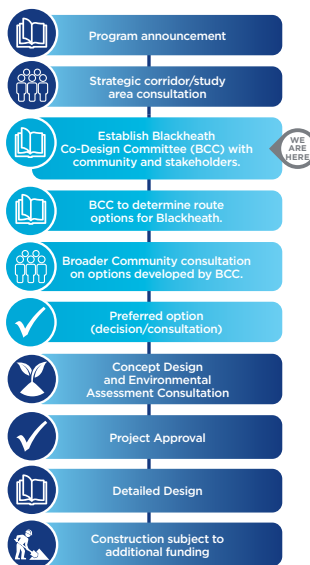

The NSW Government is investing \$2.5 billion towards upgrading the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow. In Blackheath, we want to work with the community to refine potential options and ensure local knowledge contributes to the best possible outcomes for Blackheath. We are now seeking community nominees for the Blackheath Co-Design Committee (BCC).

### Nominations now open for Blackheath Co-Design Committee

The Committee will work together to refine options for the upgrade of the Great Western Highway in Blackheath.

Representatives must:

- be a current resident or landowner in Blackheath;
- be able to demonstrate involvement in local community groups and/or activities;
- have knowledge and awareness of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program, particularly in Blackheath, and local community concerns;
- not be an elected representative in any level of government; and
- be willing to adhere to the Committee’s code of conduct.



Ongoing community engagement

**For more information**

For more information or to apply, please go to [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway) or contact our project team.

1800 953 777

@ [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au)

**131 450**

This document contains important information about road 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 the project team on 1800 953 777. The interpreter will then assist you with translation.



Transport for NSW

# Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

## Medlow Bath upgrade

Frequently Asked Questions | August 2020



The upgrade to Medlow Bath will allow dual lanes and safety improvements

Transport for NSW has extended consultation on the proposed strategic design in Medlow Bath until 31 August 2020.

Due to advice received from NSW Health in light of the developing COVID-19 situation we moved consultation online and understand this option is not accessible to all. These FAQs address many of the questions raised during consultation so far.

There is still time to submit your feedback by getting in touch with the project team via the contact details on the back page of this flyer.

- the corridor is well defined, so we can upgrade the highway with minimal property and environmental impacts.

It is common on major road projects to upgrade townships like this first, so they do not suffer from congestion when the links between the towns are upgraded.

### Why are you upgrading Medlow Bath first?

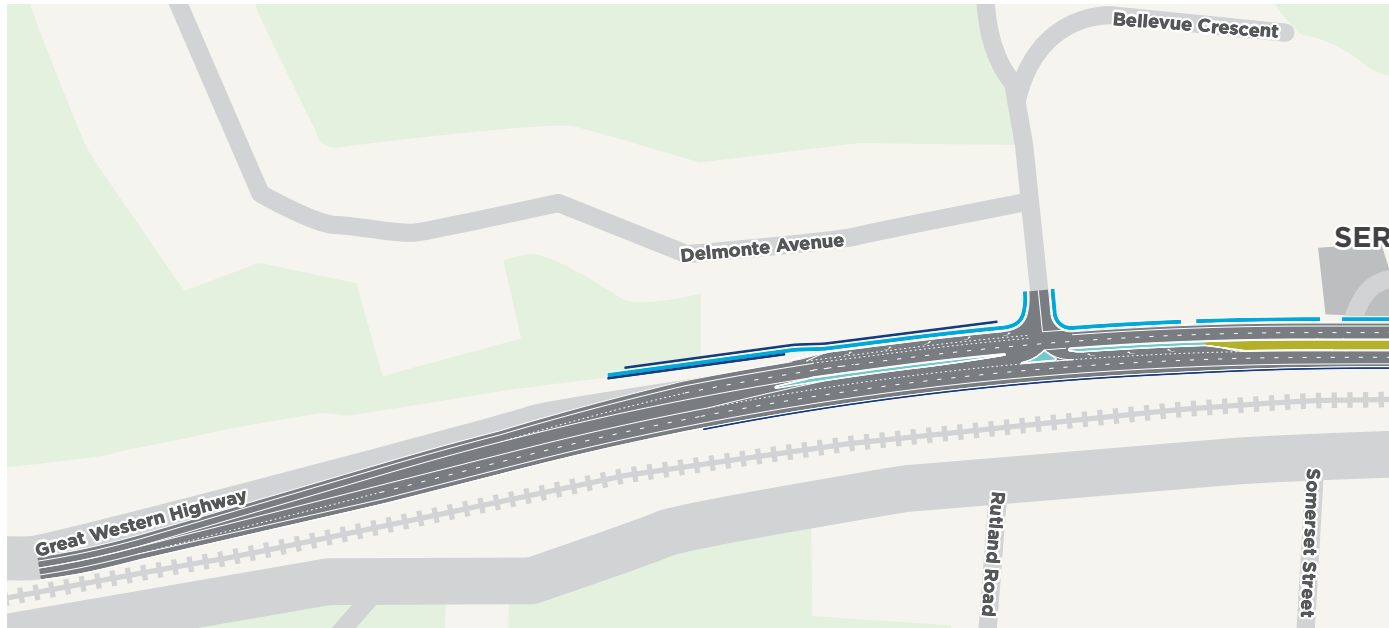
The Government has prioritised Medlow Bath to be the first section of the Great Western Highway upgraded because:

- we can address known safety concerns and provide ongoing safety benefits for local traffic and pedestrians

### When will this project start?

We are currently taking feedback to develop the preferred concept design. Site investigations for noise, soil, utilities and traffic will begin at the end of 2020. Environmental Assessment is planned for the middle of 2021, and construction from mid 2022 in line with latest project timelines.

## Draft Medlow Bath Strategic Design



### Benefits at a glance



**Safer turning and access**  
at Bellevue Crescent



**Improved access**  
to the Hydro Majestic



**Safer pedestrian crossing over**  
highway and rail



**Improved access**  
to the railway station



**New shared pathway**  
for pedestrians and cyclists



**New landscaping in the median**

### Can you upgrade the sections between the towns first?

Biodiversity constraints and steep terrain on those sections means several years of planning and environmental assessment will be needed. While we undertake those assessments, we will deliver this project at Medlow Bath so we can provide immediate and ongoing safety benefits at Medlow Bath.

### Can you do safety upgrades instead?

The jointly funded \$250 million Great Western Highway Safety upgrade between Katoomba and Lithgow has now been completed. While we recognise Medlow Bath did not benefit from that program, we recognise

the safety needs and have prioritised this length first, to allow safety improvements to be delivered.

Safety upgrades deliver shorter term isolated fixes for safety problems. The upgrade program is a broader strategic improvement for the Great Western Highway from Katoomba to Lithgow, delivering long-term benefits for all transport users along the length.

### Can the upgrade bypass Medlow Bath?

Medlow Bath is constrained by the ridgetop terrain, private property and the rail line. Bypassing the existing highway through the township on the east was considered and ruled out in the 1950s.

The existing corridor through Medlow Bath is well suited to widening. The proposal builds on work completed in 2002 during the bridge replacement over the railway lines at Station Street.

### Can Medlow Bath have a tunnel?

The upgrade through Medlow Bath is not suited to a tunnel, due to the existing gradient and short length of this section and would not address safety issues currently on the Highway. Widening the highway within the existing corridor is the most responsible approach within the program budget.

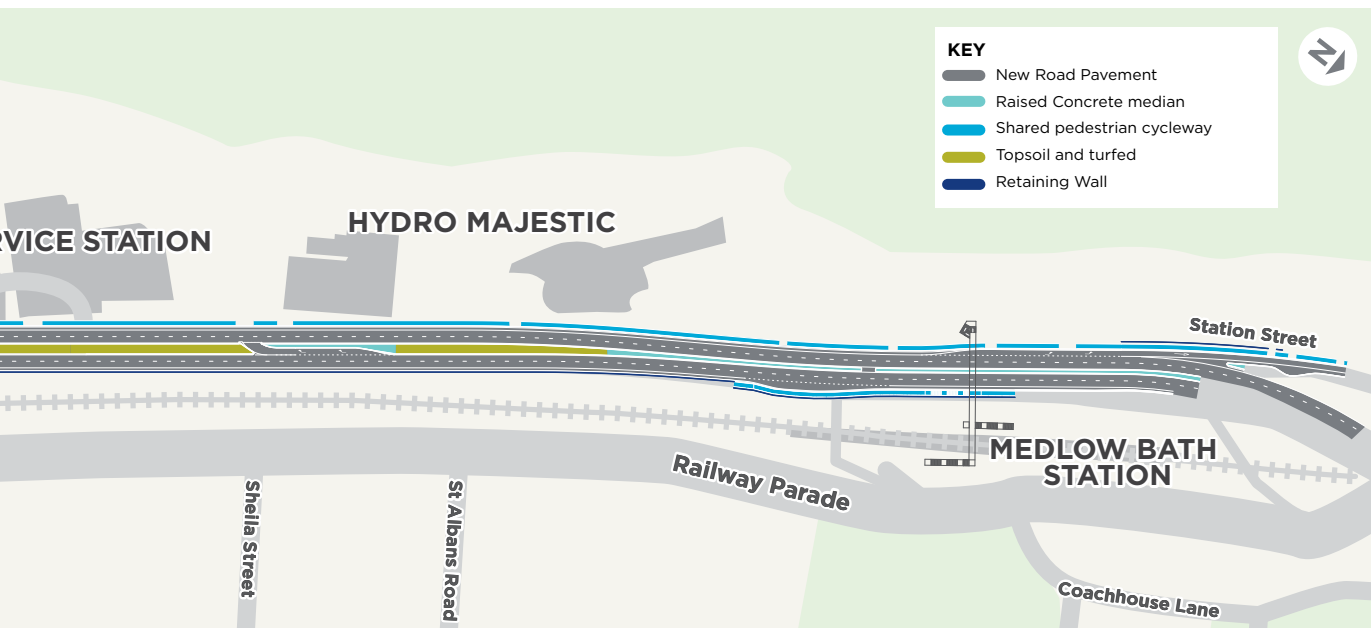
### Will the speed limit change in Medlow Bath?

There are no plans to increase the 60km/hr speed limit through Medlow Bath.

### Can you make the Bellevue Crescent intersection safer?

This will be addressed in the proposed Medlow Bath upgrade. A seagull intersection with turning lanes is proposed and we are investigating other options following community feedback.





**KEY**

- New Road Pavement
- Raised Concrete median
- Shared pedestrian cycleway
- Topsoil and turfed
- Retaining Wall



We are also investigating short term improvements that we can provide to improve safety while the upgrade is planned and built.

A new pedestrian bridge with lifts and stairs would allow pedestrians of all abilities to access Railway Parade, the train station platform and the eastern side of the Highway without interacting with traffic and trains.

To avoid impacting the heritage stone wall along the front of the Hydro Majestic, all street parking will be removed for the upgrade. We will assess the impact of this as part of the environmental assessment.

**Can you make the Foy Avenue intersection safer?**

Foy Avenue is out of scope for this initial part of the project, however we are investigating short term improvements we can provide to increase safety.

**Can we have a pedestrian underpass?**

There is no location in Medlow Bath with the available space required to allow a pedestrian underpass below both the railway and the highway.

We are consulting with the Hydro Majestic about the redevelopment and the highway upgrade to achieve the best possible outcome for the community of Medlow Bath.

**What will happen to access on Coachhouse Lane?**

While Coachhouse Lane is currently not included in this part of the project, we are speaking to the residents of Coachhouse Lane. We are working on our preliminary design with the goal of avoiding impacts to properties and access on Coachhouse Lane.

**Will there be any property impacts?**

There is likely to be a minimal part property acquisition required to provide the pedestrian bridge. We are already in discussions with the affected landowner.

**How high will the retaining wall between the road and the railway be?**

The retaining wall will be approximately one meter high. We do not anticipate the existing levels of the highway will significantly change as part of this design.

Impacts to private properties would be limited to driveway and footpath adjustments.

Amenity impacts such as noise will be considered as part of the environmental assessment.

**Can you build a noise wall?**

Noise impacts will be considered as part of a comprehensive noise study however a noise wall would likely reflect train noise back to the east and traffic noise to the west.

**Where will the pedestrian bridge be and what will it look like?**

The proposed location of the pedestrian bridge starts from the southern corner of the Mazda Dealership crossing the Highway and railway corridor and ending at the turning bay on Railway Parade.

**What will happen to parking in front of the Hydro Majestic?**

Current parking in front of the Hydro Majestic is on the road corridor and most is required to be relocated as part of its redevelopment project.

We will conduct noise modelling as part of the environmental assessment and provide suitable noise mitigation where the need is identified.

## How will the road design manage overtaking and bottlenecks at either end of Medlow Bath?

There may be some localised congestion at the merge points, similar to what currently exists. Bottlenecks will improve progressively as the adjoining sections of the Great Western Highway upgrade are completed. Local traffic entering and leaving side streets, properties and businesses, will also help to prevent traffic from overtaking or undertaking through the township.

The community has suggested a speed camera be installed to deter speeding and dangerous overtaking. We will explore this as the project develops.

## What will the upgrade's capacity for the future provide?

Four lane highways can comfortably accommodate over 50,000 vehicles a day, giving the road many years of capacity into the future. Current traffic volumes at Medlow Bath exceed 19,000 vehicles per day, which is already reaching the capacity of the existing road.

## What will happen to the bike track?

We may need to realign parts of the track however we intend to maintain the bike and walking trail.

## What will happen to the roadside trees?

There is a possibility that we will need to remove some trees from the roadside. If we need to take existing trees from the roadside, we will aim to relocate or replace those where possible as part of the environmental assessment.

The Medlow Bath Residents Association has identified a redwood tree (*Thuja Plicata*) used in 2008 to improve streetscape, as the preferred tree for planting at Medlow Bath.



The project team are examining short term safety fixes that can be used at identified locations like Foy Avenue



The upgrade will preserve existing access to the Hydro Majestic and protect the heritage stone wall along the front

## Do you have funding for the whole upgrade?

The NSW Government has committed \$2.5 billion towards upgrading the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow. This includes planning for projects such as Blackheath and delivery of Medlow Bath among other sections of the 34km project.

Partial or staged funding of an upgrade program of this magnitude is common and we will seek additional funding as required.

## Can you put more freight on rail instead?

The Great Western Highway Upgrade is being developed alongside long-term rail options, as both are needed to meet future demand and address current issues around congestion, journey reliability and safety.

A large number of trucks on the highway are moving freight from local suppliers or supporting local businesses and freight that cannot be transported by rail.

The NSW Government is committed to moving more freight from road to rail and already invests in the rail freight network to increase capacity, but this is not a substitute for investing in our road freight network.

## Next Steps

TfNSW is collating feedback received from the community on the proposed strategic design for Medlow Bath.

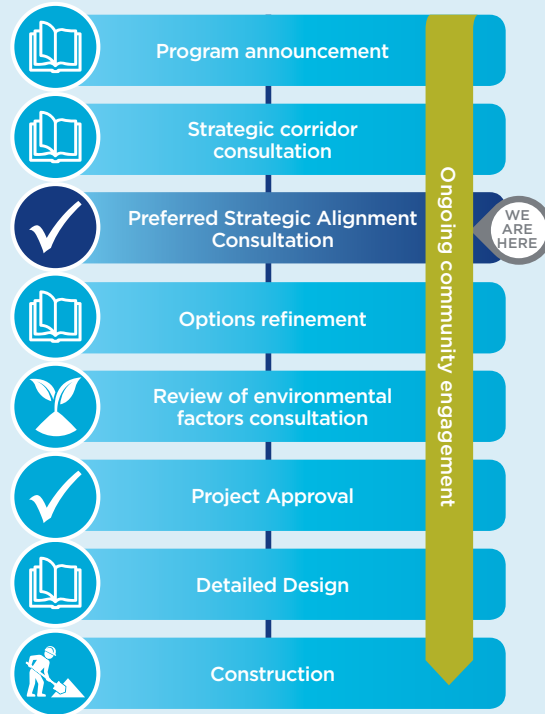
TfNSW is also calling for design tenders for the Medlow Bath upgrade, with a contract expected to be awarded by the end of September.

There will be further consultation in 2021, once the team have progressed the design and environmental assessment.

A Review of Environmental Factors will be exhibited for consultation in mid 2021.

We anticipate that physical work on the upgrade at Medlow Bath could begin in mid 2022.





## Medlow Bath



## Contact the Great Western Highway Upgrade team

### Never miss an update

Please be sure to sign up to our distribution list. By signing up you'll never miss an update about the project. You can call, email or write to us to let us know your details. You can also sign up for updates online at [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway).

-  [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway)
-  [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au)
-  1800 953 777
-  Great Western Highway Upgrade Program  
PO Box 2332, Orange NSW 2800



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 953 777.



August 2020  
20.259

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## Appendix C – Bespoke Meeting Letter



29 June 2020

Dear Resident,

The Great Western Highway Upgrade Team was in the area today to meet residents, listen to your feedback on the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program in Medlow Bath and invite you to an information session with other residents in your street in July.

Transport for NSW is planning to progress the Medlow Bath section of the Program and we want to engage with you to discuss the strategic design.

The proposed program to upgrade the Great Western Highway at Medlow Bath will look to provide safer access for pedestrians crossing the highway and for vehicles entering Bellevue Crescent and the Hydro Majestic.

**We invite you to share your knowledge, thoughts and suggestions for improvements to the intersection of Bellevue Crescent and the Great Western Highway as we move toward a preferred design for the Medlow Bath section of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program.**

**Please join us for a session on Bellevue Crescent and Delmonte Avenue on Thursday 23 July 7-8pm, Venue TBC**

**You can register to attend this information session by visiting [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway).**

Wider community consultation will continue to take place and we continue to meet with other key stakeholders like the Hydro Majestic.

Transport for NSW will hold this consultation session face to face if Covid-19 appropriate. We are following NSW Health advice and changing the way we approach community consultation in response to the Coronavirus outbreak.

These sessions are an opportunity to talk closely with the project team about design options and what you want the project to focus on for the community from the beginning.

We are looking for feedback on:

- improving intersections and providing turning lanes
- increasing connectivity across the completed highway for pedestrians and local traffic
- how to ensure resilience and emergency access is maintained
- maintaining the speed limit through Medlow Bath
- how to minimise noise impacts on the village
- [visual](#) identity and landscaping opportunities.

If you are unable to attend these sessions you can provide feedback to the project team on 1800 953 777 or via email at [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au).

Kind regards,  
Project Team

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Transport for NSW  
Great Western Highway Upgrade Program | PO Box 2332 | Orange, NSW, 2800  
P 1800 953 777 | [W nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway) | ABN 18 804 239 602



29 June 2020

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Transport for NSW is planning to progress the Medlow Bath section of the Program and we want to engage with you to discuss the strategic design.

The proposed program to upgrade the Great Western Highway at Medlow Bath will look to provide safer access for pedestrians crossing the highway and for vehicles entering Bellevue Crescent and the Hydro Majestic.

**We invite you to share your knowledge, thoughts and suggestions for maintaining access along Coachhouse Lane as we move toward a preferred design for the Medlow Bath section of the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program.**

**Please join us for a session on Coachhouse Lane on Thursday 30 July, 7-8pm, Venue TBC**

**You can register to attend this information session by visiting [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway).**

Wider community consultation will continue to take place and we continue to meet with other key stakeholders like the Hydro Majestic.

Transport for NSW will hold this consultation session face to face if Covid-19 appropriate. We are following NSW Health advice and changing the way we approach community consultation in response to the Coronavirus outbreak.

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We are looking for feedback on:

- improving intersections and providing turning lanes
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- how to minimise noise impacts on the village
- visual identity and landscaping opportunities.

If you are unable to attend these sessions you can provide feedback to the project team on 1800 953 777 or via email at [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au).

Kind regards,  
Project Team

## Appendix D – Newspaper Advertisement



Transport for NSW

### Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

## Have Your Say: Medlow Bath design and consultation

The NSW Government is investing \$2.5 billion towards upgrading the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow. The upgrade, once completed, will reduce congestion, and provide safer, more efficient, more reliable journeys for all road users travelling in, around and through the Blue Mountains, and better connect communities with Sydney and the Central West.

You are invited to have your say on the strategic design of the section of the Great Western Highway upgrade at Medlow Bath, between Station Street and 400m south of Bellevue Crescent.

Transport for NSW will hold some consultation sessions face to face if Covid-19 appropriate. Please register for a session so that we can keep you up to date on the location.

**Community Consultation Sessions:**

- Wednesday 22 July: 7-8pm
- Thursday 23 July: 1-2pm
- Tuesday 28 July: 12-1pm and 7-8pm (online)
- Wednesday 29 July: 7-8pm
- Thursday 30 July: 1-2pm

**Phone Consultation**

- 1800 953 777

**Email**

- [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au)

To register for a session, view an interactive map and provide your comments online please go to [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](http://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway)

For more information please visit [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](http://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway) email [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au) or call the project team on 1800 953 777.

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Transport for NSW

### Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

## Have Your Say: Medlow Bath consultation extended until 31 August 2020

Transport for NSW has extended the consultation period on the proposed design of the upgraded Great Western Highway through the village.

Community consultation will be extended two weeks in recognition of the continuing impacts COVID-19 is having on public meetings and will now end on 31 August 2020.

The extension of the consultation period will help make sure everyone gets a chance to have their say.

**You can book an over-the-phone consultation on 1800 953 777 or provide feedback online by:**

- Submitting an online feedback form at [www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/great-western-highway/katoomba-to-lithgow/interactive-portal.html](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/great-western-highway/katoomba-to-lithgow/interactive-portal.html)
- Pinning a comment on the interactive map at [www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/great-western-highway/katoomba-to-lithgow/interactive-portal.html](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/great-western-highway/katoomba-to-lithgow/interactive-portal.html)
- Emailing [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au)

For more information please visit [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](http://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway) email [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au) or call the project team on 1800 953 777.

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Appendix E – Social Media Posts

**NSW Roads**  
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Subscribe to updates on the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program and upcoming consultation opportunities in Medlow Bath.



NSWROADS.WORK/SUBSCRIBE  
**Medlow Bath consultation**  
Great Western Highway upgrade

[LEARN MORE](#)

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

**NSW Roads**  
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Have your say on the Medlow Bath strategic design. Drop a comment on the interactive map or register for one of our consultation sessions.



NSWROADS.WORK/DESIGN  
**Medlow Bath consultation**  
Great Western Highway upgrade

[LEARN MORE](#)

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

**NSW Roads**  
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You've now got longer to have your say on the best way of upgrading the highway through Medlow Bath. Submit feedback by 31 August!



NSWROADS.WORK/DESIGN  
**Medlow Bath consultation**  
Great Western Highway upgrade

[LEARN MORE](#)

**NSW Roads**  
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Remember to have your say on the proposed strategic design at Medlow Bath. Consultation closes 31 August!



NSWROADS.WORK/DESIGN  
**Medlow Bath consultation**  
Great Western Highway upgrade

[LEARN MORE](#)

## Appendix F – Media Releases

### Medlow Bath residents invited to have their say on Great Western Highway design

7 July 2020

Medlow Bath residents are invited to have their say on the Medlow Bath section of the Great Western Highway upgrade as early design work begins.

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole said community consultation will start this month and be delivered initially online and via the phone to ensure the safety of the community and staff during the evolving Coronavirus situation.

"We already have initial feedback from the community from our first round of consultations last year, which highlighted some key issues for consideration," Mr Toole said.

"We are now looking for more detailed feedback from the Medlow Bath community to progress the design for the Medlow Bath section, and we'll be asking locals to share their knowledge, thoughts and suggestions as we move toward a preferred design.

"As part of the upgrade, we will explore ways to improve pedestrian access crossing the highway and for vehicles to safely access Bellevue Crescent and the Hydro Majestic Hotel."

Member of the Legislative Council and Blue Mountains resident Shayne Mallard said this would be the community's opportunity to talk closely with the project team about the current strategic design and what they want the project to focus on for the community.

"The Medlow Bath community has long been aware of the need for an upgrade to improve safety and reduce congestion, so it's really exciting that they are now getting the chance to go into the detail of what an upgrade might look like," Mr Mallard said.

"With such a narrow corridor and important environmental and local heritage to work around, the options are limited, which is why it is so important that the community gets to have their say down to the smallest details so we can get the best outcome for everyone."

The community can register for the online community consultation sessions by visiting [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway)

A presentation will be delivered to attendees, followed by information on how attendees can best provide feedback.

#### Community Consultation Sessions:

- Wednesday 22 July: 7-8pm
- Thursday 23 July: 1-2pm
- Tuesday 28 July: 12-1pm and 7-8pm
- Wednesday 29 July: 7-8pm
- Thursday 30 July: 1-2pm

#### Online interactive map

- [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway)

Residents unable to attend these sessions can provide feedback to the project team on 1800 953 777 or via email at [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au). Additional consultation will be held with key business stakeholders including the Hydro Majestic.

Transport for NSW has gone out to tender for a design firm to progress the site investigations, the design, and the environmental assessment work for the Medlow Bath section of the upgrade, from Station Street to 400 metres south of Bellevue Crescent.

Transport for NSW is following NSW Health advice and changing the way it approaches community consultation in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. Face-to-face consultation sessions will be considered at a later stage, where appropriate.

More information on the project can be found at [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway)

The project team can be contacted on 1800 953 777 or at [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au)



## Medlow Bath residents have more time to consider Great Western Highway design

6 August 2020

Medlow Bath community members now have until the end of August to contribute their local knowledge to the design of the upgraded Great Western Highway through their village.

Transport for NSW A/ Director West Alistair Lunn said community consultation will be extended two weeks in recognition of the continuing impacts COVID-19 is having on public meetings.

"We had hoped to be able to provide a number of face-to-face consultation sessions with the community on this important work to achieve the best possible design for the highway through Medlow Bath," Mr Lunn said.

"However, being COVID-safe has meant interested community members accessing information and talking to the project team online or directly over the phone, which needs some extra time.

"The extension of the consultation period will help us make sure everyone gets a chance to have their say."

Mr Lunn said information collected from community feedback will inform the design and environmental assessment for the Medlow Bath section of the upgrade, from Station Street to 400 metres south of Bellevue Crescent.

"This is about achieving the best design along the existing road corridor, which can accommodate the duplication, while ensuring that the key outcomes of a safer and less congested road are achieved," he said.

"The team has already received valuable community insight into ways to improve pedestrian access across the highway and vehicular access to local streets and businesses."


"The community has also made it very clear they want some local intersections made safer and we will look at incorporating these safety improvements into the upgrade."

Mr Lunn said all of the information collected from community members will help inform the final design for the upgraded highway through the town.

There will be a further opportunity for consultation with the Medlow Bath community mid-way through 2021.

The community can book an over-the-phone consultation on 1800 953 777 or provide feedback online via:

- [Katoomba to Lithgow interactive portal](#)
- [gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gwhd@rms.nsw.gov.au)

 1800 953 777

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

 [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway)



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 953 777**.

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