



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



Transport for NSW

Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

Little Hartley to Lithgow (West Section)

Review of Environmental Factors – Landscape character and visual impact fact sheet

November 2021



Transport respects the unique natural environment and cultural heritage of the upgrade corridor

Together, the Australian and NSW Governments have committed more than \$2.5 billion towards the East and West sections of the Great Western Highway Upgrade, between Katoomba and Blackheath, and between Little Hartley and Lithgow, respectively. The Great Western Highway Upgrade will reduce congestion, deliver safer, more efficient and reliable journeys for those travelling in, around and through the Blue Mountains, and better connect communities in the Central West.

Transport for NSW (Transport) recognises that the Hartley Valley has unique natural and cultural scenic qualities.

The Little Hartley to Lithgow upgrade seeks to deliver a project which responds to and is sensitively integrated within its surrounds.

Transport is presenting a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and concept design

for the Little Hartley to Lithgow upgrade for community consultation from **22 November to 21 December 2021**.

We invite the community and other interested stakeholders to submit feedback to help inform next steps for the proposal.



**Respecting
character and
responding to place**

Landscape character and visual impact assessment

Transport has carried out an extensive assessment of the potential impacts of the upgrade on landscape character and visual amenity.

Five individual landscape character zones (LCZs) were identified and assessed: Butlers Creek Valley, Hartley Ridge, River Lett Valley, River Lett Hill, and Forty Bends.

The assessment found that the upgrade would have a high to moderate impact across four of the LCZs when it is operational, due to vegetation clearing, the introduction of new infrastructure, and associated earthworks.

The proposal is expected to have a moderate impact on one LCZ (Forty Bends), where only minor changes to the existing character and environment are proposed.

Landscape and urban design strategy

Transport respects the strong sense of place that residents, as well as visitors and through-traffic, attach to the Hartley Valley.

The upgrade provides an opportunity to balance the amenity and liveability of the towns and villages along the highway, with the movement of traffic on the road.

The proposal uses landscape and urban design principles in the road design in order to minimise visual impacts and allow the upgrade to respond to the existing landscape, vegetation and heritage features.

We are exploring opportunities to help people engage with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage, along with the nature and character of the places in the Hartley Valley and through to Lithgow.

As part of this work, we are developing an active transport strategy to promote better pedestrian and cycling connections. We invite community feedback on features that could be included.

We will also seek community feedback and input into our Cultural Interpretation Strategy, to help celebrate local stories and heritage along the route, during 2022.

Our urban design objectives

- Develop an integrated design that compliments the existing beauty, ecology and character of the Hartley Valley and its setting
- Minimise impacts to heritage sites, significant trees and cultural values of the community
- Create a road corridor that responds to the natural and cultural environment, and the underlying character of the Hartley Valley and surrounds.

For more information, please see REF Chapter 6.9 and the Urban Design and Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment report.



Aerial view of Butlers Creek Valley looking east towards Victoria Pass

Reducing the impact of our work

We will use urban design to minimise visual impacts, for example, by:

- designing structures to reduce their bulk
- seeking ways to make the road less visually dominant
- integrating bridges and retaining walls into their surroundings
- blending cuttings and embankments into the surrounding terrain.

We will remove as little vegetation as possible and take every opportunity to provide plantings, particularly in areas where screening is required.

Both native and exotic species will be planted, to fit in with the existing landscape. We will use more mature plants where possible, as visual impacts will be reduced as vegetation grows.

We welcome further suggestions to help integrate the design into its surroundings and minimise impacts on heritage and culture that is important to the community.

When we are building

During construction, temporary impacts will include views of earthmoving and construction equipment, stored materials and stockpiles. We will provide suitable barriers to screen views from nearby residences.

Temporary lighting will be screened or diverted to reduce unnecessary light spill.

Site facilities will be returned to their pre-construction condition when works are finished.



Artist's representation of McKanes Falls Road at intersection with the Great Western Highway, looking west (indicative only, final layout to be determined through detailed design)

What is an REF?

Transport has legal obligations to assess and mitigate impacts that may result from a proposed activity. An REF details these legal obligations, and the environmental impacts and proposed mitigation measures of a project.

What is a concept design?

The concept design is developed in sufficient detail to allow an assessment of likely environmental, social and economic impacts so stakeholders can provide feedback. It may change based on feedback received.

View the REF and concept design

You can view the Little Hartley to Lithgow REF and concept design at:

- our virtual consultation room at nswroads.work/gwhwestconsult
- Lithgow City Council Administration Centre
- Lithgow Library Learning Centre

Have your say

We are planning to hold a mixture of online and COVIDSafe face-to-face consultation sessions.

We recommend that you view the REF and concept design before you speak with the team or make a submission.

Speak to the project team

General online sessions

Tuesday 30 November 6.30pm–8.00pm

Saturday 11 December 12.30pm–2.00pm

Targeted online sessions

Coxs River Road/Baaners Lane

Thursday 2 December 6.30pm–8.00pm

Jenolan Caves Road/River Lett Hill

Thursday 9 December 6.30pm–8.00pm

Face-to-face sessions

Saturday 4 December 1.00pm–3.15pm*

Lithgow Civic Ballroom – Tony Luchetti Showgrounds, George Coates Avenue, Lithgow

Tuesday 7 December 5.30pm–7.45pm*

Hartley Community Hall, Corner Great Western Highway and Mid Hartley Road, Hartley

*Book a 45 minute time slot

Register for a consultation session at

nswroads.work/gwhwestconsult

Bookings are essential for face-to-face sessions, which will be held pending COVID restrictions or the occurrence of local cases at the time of the events. QR code sign in and proof of double vaccination status will be required.

Contact us on **1800 953 777** or

gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au to book a personal phone consultation if you prefer.

How to make a formal submission

We welcome all feedback on the Little Hartley to Lithgow REF and concept design.

To have your input formally considered, and receive a response in the consultation report, use our online submission form at nswroads.work/gwhwestconsult, email us at gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au, or mail a printed submission to the address below.

Consultation is open from 22 November to 21 December 2021. All formal submissions must be received or postmarked by midnight, 21 December.

Contact us

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



nswroads.work/gwhd



gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au



1800 953 777



Great Western Highway
Upgrade Program

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