

Transport
for NSW



Harrington Road Interchange

Community consultation report

August 2023

transport.nsw.gov.au

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Executive summary

Background

The Australian and NSW Governments have committed \$60 million in funding to deliver a grade-separated interchange at Coopernook Road and Harrington Road intersections with the Pacific Highway.

Transport for NSW has developed a proposal which will create a safer connection between the towns of Harrington and Coopernook while ensuring better traffic flows, reduced congestion and improved travel times for the 5000 motorists who use this major intersection each day.

The Pacific Highway is a 960km-long major transport route that connects Sydney and Brisbane. In 2021, the NSW Government completed the duplication of the Pacific Highway providing two lanes of travel in each direction, delivered progressively over the past 30 years.

As part of the Pacific Highway duplication, designs were prepared for a future interchange at Harrington and Coopernook to allow pre-loading to occur, a process involving early construction of an embankment over soft soil that enables earth to settle evenly before construction. Pre-loading occurred in 2005 and 2012.

Following the commitment of the Australian and NSW governments in 2021 to fund this important upgrade for the communities of Coopernook and Harrington, Transport for NSW has progressed through to design and environmental assessment for the project.

The concept design is progressing. The Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is scheduled for display in late 2023.

Summary of submissions

In October 2022 the community was asked to provide feedback on the design, to help Transport understand what is important to the community and to deliver the best outcome for the community and motorists who use this section of the Pacific Highway.

The majority of submissions received by Transport during the consultation period were very supportive of the proposed upgrade. There were 30 written submissions received from the community by email and 37 comments on Facebook.

Key issues raised and comments received included:

- Considerable support for the upgrade to improve safety
- Concern that safety will continue to be compromised until the completion date
- Request to review design options including length of acceleration and deceleration lanes; size of roundabout to accommodate trucks, long vehicles, boat trailers and caravans; additional overpass; location of interchanges
- Request for safe shared pathways for cyclists and pedestrians
- Request for commuter parking bays to support ride sharing and truck changeover
- Request for improved signage
- Concern for any impact on biodiversity.

Project benefits

- Improved connection between the towns of Harrington and Cooperook
- Remove the need for motorists to turn right across the highway
- Improved traffic flow for motorists and freight and more reliable travel times
- Improved safety for all road users
- Reduce the risk and severity of crashes.

Next steps

Transport will consider all feedback received from the community about the Harrington Road interchange. We will continue to keep the community and stakeholders informed as the project progresses.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Australian and NSW Governments have committed \$60 million in funding to deliver a grade-separated interchange at Coopernook Road and Harrington Road intersections with the Pacific Highway.

Transport for NSW has developed a proposal which will create a safer connection between the towns of Harrington and Coopernook while ensuring better traffic flows, reduced congestion and improved travel times for the 5000 motorists who use this major intersection each day.

The Pacific Highway is a 960km-long major transport route that connects Sydney and Brisbane. In 2021, the NSW Government completed the duplication of the Pacific Highway providing two lanes of travel in each direction, delivered progressively over the past 30 years.

As part of the Pacific Highway duplication, designs were prepared for a future interchange at Harrington and Coopernook to allow pre-loading to occur, a process involving early construction of an embankment over soft soil that enables earth to settle evenly before construction. Pre-loading occurred in 2005 and 2012.

Following the commitment of the Australian and NSW governments in 2021 to fund this important upgrade for the communities of Coopernook and Harrington, Transport for NSW has progressed through to design and environmental assessment for the project.

The concept design is progressing. The Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is scheduled for display in late 2023.

1.2 The proposal

The proposal for the intersection includes:

- A grade separated interchange with an overhead bridge
- New roundabouts on Coopernook Road and Harrington Road
- Footpaths connecting to the local road network
- Retention of existing acceleration and deceleration lanes with left in/left out only connecting to the existing highway
- Median safety barrier dividing the Pacific Highway.

1.3 Project benefits

- Improved connection between the towns of Harrington and Coopernook
- Remove the need for motorists to turn right across the highway
- Improved traffic flow for motorists and freight and more reliable travel times
- Improved safety for all road users
- Reduce the risk and severity of crashes.

2. Consultation approach

2.1 Current Consultation

In October 2022 Transport sought community feedback on the preferred design. The feedback will help Transport to understand what is important to the community and to deliver the best outcome for the community and motorists who use this section of the Pacific Highway. It will help to complete the concept design and continue planning for this important safety upgrade.

2.2 Consultation objectives

Transport consulted with the community and key stakeholders on the proposed design to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders of the proposal
- Seek, feedback on the proposal and issues of concern for consideration in developing the project including consultation outcomes into the environmental impact assessment known as review of environmental factors (REF)
- Build a database of interested and concerned community members with whom to continue engagement during the development of the Harrington Road interchange.

2.3 Values

Our values underpin our decisions and behaviours when working with customers, colleagues, stakeholders and partners.

- **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.

2.4 How consultation was done

We consulted with the community on the Harrington Road interchange over a four-week period from 4 October 2022. Community members were encouraged to provide their feedback, leave comments and make submissions via mail, email or phone contact with the project team.

Our key consultation tools are listed in Table 1:

Table 1 – Key consultation tools

| | |
|---|--|
| Project notification Have your say – project update, letter box drop, emails | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered to 3185 residents and businesses in October 2022 |
| Webpage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project webpage published in October 2022 with latest project information including project notification with proposed design |
| Media release | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A media release issued on 4 October 2022 |
| Facebook advertisements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Facebook advertisements inviting comments on the proposal were published on 27 September and 18 October. There were two reminder posts on 20 October and 3 November 2022 |
| Stakeholder briefings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Manager liaised with representatives from MidCoast Council during the development of the proposal. The representatives were updated on the timing for consultation |

3. Consultation summary

3.1 Overview

Comments on the proposed interchange upgrade Have your say closed on 4 November 2022. During the four-week consultation period, we received 30 submissions. Most submissions included multiple comments and raised multiple issues.

Of the 30 submissions, 30 supported the proposal, 0 opposed the proposal and 30 provided suggestions or general feedback.

Key issues raised and comments received included:

- Considerable support for the upgrade to improve safety
- Concerns that safety will continue to be compromised until the completion date
- Request to review design options including length of acceleration and deceleration lanes and entry/ exit slip lanes; size of roundabouts to accommodate trucks, long vehicles, boat trailers and caravans; location of interchanges
- Request for safe shared pathways for cyclists and pedestrians
- Request for commuter parking bays to support ride sharing and truck changeover
- Request for improved signage
- Concern for any impact on biodiversity.

There were two Facebook posts on 27 September and 18 October. The commentary received was consistent with the issues raised in formal submissions and was supportive of the project. Post 1 received 100 comments, 20 shares and 66 likes. Post 2 received 125 comments, 19 shares and 62 likes. There were two additional posts on 20 October and 3 November reminding people to have their say.

3.2 Have your say submissions

Table 2 below provides a summary of all issues raised in the submissions received and Transport's responses.

Table 2

| Issue category | Number of submissions | Issues raised | Our response |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Completion timing | 7 | Support for the project to be completed as soon as possible. Relate personal experiences of dangerous turns onto the highway, competing with faster vehicles, oversized trucks and poor visibility/blind spots. | Transport for NSW plans to display the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and refined concept design in late-2023. Timing for delivery of the project is subject to planning approvals and funding allocation. We will keep the community informed as the project progresses. |
| | 1 | Concern that the time taken between initial concept design, consultation on the REF and refined concept design seems excessive (6-7 months). | |
| Design | 6 | Request that length of entry/exit lanes to and from the highway be revised to allow safe acceleration and deceleration. | The existing acceleration and deceleration lanes will be reviewed as part of the project. |
| | 1 | Suggestion to wall-off the slip lane with a physical barrier so that drivers use the whole length of the lane before moving over. | |

| | | | |
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| | 5 | <p>Suggestion to consider relocating the acceleration lanes along the Pacific Highway to improve safety and sight distance.</p> | <p>Each interchange has unique constraints and conditions to consider as part of the design. The Harrington site has many constraints including soft soils, and restrictions on the location and length of acceleration and deceleration lanes due to property ownership, and the existing bridges on either side of the project.</p> <p>Design standards require a certain length of acceleration lane to allow vehicles to reach an appropriate speed before entering the travel lanes. If the Harrington Road and Coopernook Road on ramps were relocated to the south or north (respectively) of the proposed bridge, there would not be sufficient length of acceleration lane prior to the existing bridges to allow vehicles to safely merge with the highway traffic.</p> |
| | 6 | <p>Questioning why two roundabouts are required when the interchanges at Port Macquarie, Nahiack, Forster, Taree/Old bar and Cundletown work and are safe.</p> | <p>The proposed "dumbell" interchanges are the most efficient form of interchange with only one bridge and a roundabout on either side of the highway.</p> <p>Each interchange has unique constraints and conditions to consider as part of the design. The two roundabouts in this design provide shared priority to road users as they approach the intersection, which is the most appropriate arrangement for this interchange.</p> <p>The "donut" style interchange such as at Port Macquarie and Glenthorne (South Taree) have been used where traffic volumes are considerably higher. With two bridges and considerable on and off ramps, these interchanges have more impacts on surrounding property and vegetation. They are also more expensive to build and maintain.</p> <p>The current proposal is fit for purpose and offers better value for money.</p> |
| | 2 | <p>Concern that Coopernook Road floods regularly. This would need to be raised considerably or</p> | <p>Existing levels on Coopernook and Harrington roads in relation to flood levels will be considered as part of the design.</p> |

| | | | |
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| | | Harrington will be cut off. | |
| | 5 | <p>Comment that as there are three caravan parks in Harrington as well as water activities using boats, surf skis and boards and that traffic exiting or entering the freeway from Harrington is likely to carry additional loads</p> <p>Suggestion to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan for vehicles towing caravans or loads turning onto each roundabout. 2. Camber angle of the roundabouts for safe passage of all vehicles including towed loads. | <p>The proposed roundabouts (or T-intersections) will be designed and signposted to the current road design standards.</p> <p>The roundabouts will be designed for a 19m semi-trailer, and will be adequate for trucks, caravans and trailers to navigate the intersections.</p> |
| Shared path for cyclists and pedestrians | 1 | Request by member of Bicycle NSW to provide smooth transition to the shared walkway and at an angle to enable passing on-coming cyclists and pedestrians. | The transition from the roadway to the shared path will meet current design standards. |
| | 1 | Include a decent walkway. | A shared path will be provided as part of the project. |
| | 1 | Comment that shared footpaths would be a danger to those using them. | The shared paths will be designed to the current design standards. The 2.5m wide shared path is safe for shared use. |
| | 2 | Request that a shared pathway be extended to Coopernook and Harrington. | <p>As part of this project, a shared path will be provided between Coopernook Road and Harrington Road, including on the overbridge.</p> <p>Provisions will be made for future connections to Coopernook and Harrington Roads. This will allow MidCoast Council to extend the shared</p> |

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| | | | path to Harrington and/or Cooperook in the future. |
| | 1 | Suggestion that vehicles exiting Harrington Road to head south should give way to cyclists heading south on the highway. | The proposed treatment is consistent with other off ramps on the Pacific Highway and would therefore be safer for cyclists. All road users should follow the road rules and sign and line marking. |
| Commuter parking | 6 | Request that designated parking bays be provided on both sides of the Highway to support commuter share ride and transport companies exchanging goods. | Parking for commuter share ride will be considered as part of the project. Any facilities will be managed by MidCoast Council. |
| | 2 | Suggest facilities such as picnic table, garbage bins, toilets, lighting be included at commuter parking. | |
| | 1 | Suggest provision of dedicated truck stop. | A Heavy Vehicle Rest stop was considered. However, due to local constraints it is not able to be provided. Transport for NSW are currently reviewing heavy vehicle rest stops along the Pacific Highway. |
| Other | 2 | Request to improve traffic signage. | The upgrade will be signposted to the current road design standards. |
| | 1 | Request to engage with historians and the Biripi LALC to incorporate appropriate cultural and heritage interpretive artwork and signage to the entry statements. | The development process includes consideration of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Heritage. The project will consider interpretive artwork which would be developed in consultation with MidCoast Council, Purfleet/Taree LALC and other stakeholders. |
| | 1 | Request for careful management of biodiversity as there are significant wetlands in Cooperook. | Biodiversity of the area will be considered as part of the Environmental Assessment Process. The project seeks to minimise the potential impacts to the biodiversity and wetlands that exist at the site, through |

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| | | | design and mitigation measures (controls) during construction of the project. |
| | 4 | Questions regarding changes to Harrington Road, Coopernook Road and George Gibson Drive including "Coopernook out" slip lane at the northern exit from Coopernook should be included in the current project. | Transport for NSW is planning to deliver a grade-separated interchange at the Coopernook Road and Harrington Road intersections with the Pacific Highway. The intersection of George Gibson Drive and the Pacific Highway is beyond the scope of this Project. |

3.3 Next steps

We have considered all submissions and will ensure our team is aware of concerns raised by the community. We will ensure that issues highlighted by stakeholders and the community are appropriately considered throughout the next phase of the project to further develop the design and prepare a review of environmental factors for the project.

We will continue to keep the community informed of project progress.

Appendix

Have your Say Community Update October 2022

Project development process

Timing subject to funding and business case approval



Next steps

Transport will consider all feedback received during this consultation period on the concept design for the project. Transport has engaged AECOM to complete the concept design and Review of Environmental Factors (REF). This is currently in progress. We plan to display the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and refined concept design in mid-2023.



Corner of Pacific Highway and Harrington Road

Contact us

If you have any questions about the concept design or would like more information on the project, please contact our project development team on:

- 1800 296 906 (business hours)
- Coopernook2Harrington@transport.nsw.gov.au
- nswroads.work/h2c
- Harrington Road Interchange Project Manager
- Transport for NSW
- PO Box 576, Grafton, NSW 2460



Scan the QR code to visit the project webpage.

This document contains important information about Transport projects in your area. If you require the services of an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to call Transport Projects on 1800 296 906. The interpreter will then assist you with translation.

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Pub No. 22.229

Harrington Road Interchange Project

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Transport for NSW

Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

NSW GOVERNMENT

Harrington Road Interchange Project

Have your say on the concept design

October 2022 nswroads.work/h2c

The Australian and NSW governments have committed \$60 million in funding to deliver a grade-separated interchange at the Cooperbrook Road and Harrington Road intersections with the Pacific Highway.



Intersection of Pacific Highway and Cooperbrook Road

Funding committed

The Australian and NSW governments have committed \$60 million in funding to deliver a grade-separated interchange at the Cooperbrook Road and Harrington Road intersections with the Pacific Highway.

This project will create a safer connection between the towns of Harrington and Cooperbrook while ensuring better traffic flow, reduced congestion and improved travel times for the 5,000 motorists who use this major intersection each day.

The Pacific Highway is a 960km-long major transport route that connects Sydney and Brisbane. In 2021, the NSW Government completed the duplication of the Pacific Highway providing two lanes of travel in each direction, delivered progressively over the past 30 years. As part of the Pacific Highway duplication, designs were prepared for a future interchange at Harrington and Cooperbrook to allow pre-loading to occur, a process involving early construction of an embankment over soft soil that enables earth to settle evenly before construction. Pre-loading occurred in 2005 and 2012.

Following the commitment of the Australian and NSW governments in 2021 to fund this important upgrade for the communities of Cooperbrook and Harrington, Transport for NSW has progressed through to design and environmental assessment for the project.

Transport has engaged AECOM to complete the concept design and Review of Environmental Factors (REF). Development of the concept design has commenced following site investigations earlier this year. Geotechnical investigations, services location and biodiversity assessment are planned for later in the year. Transport would consider the location of town signage in the project design and will would keep the community informed as the project progresses.

This is your chance to have your say on the concept design for the project. Your feedback will help us to understand what is important to you and to deliver the best outcomes for the community. It will also help us to complete the concept design and continue planning for this important safety upgrade.

Project benefits

- Improved connection between the towns of Harrington and Cooperbrook
- Remove the need for motorists to turn right across the highway
- Improved traffic flow for motorists and freight and more reliable travel times
- Improved safety for all road users
- Reduce the risk and severity of crashes.

Key design features

- a grade-separated interchange with an overpass bridge
- new roundabouts on Cooperbrook Road and Harrington Road
- footpaths connecting to the local road network
- retain existing acceleration and deceleration lanes with left in/left out only connecting to the existing highway
- median safety barrier dividing the Pacific Highway.

Improved traffic flow

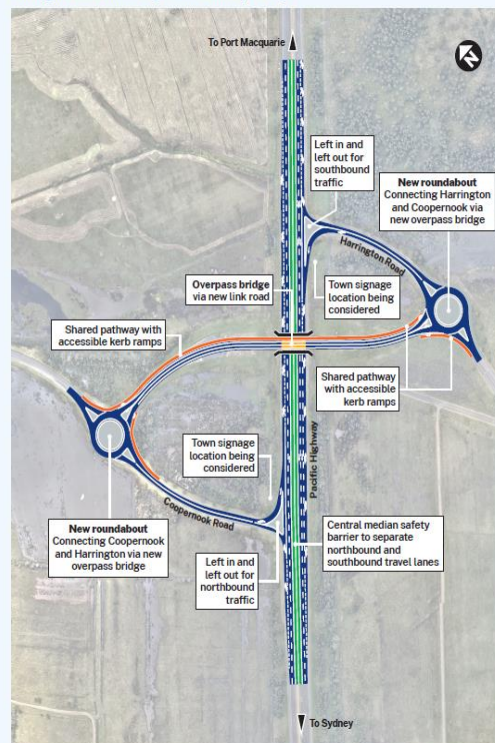
Reduced risk and severity of crashes

Community and stakeholders are invited to comment on the initial concept design for the Harrington Road Interchange. The concept design is described in detail on page 3. We invite you to provide your feedback by 5pm on Friday 4 November 2022. You can provide your feedback via the contact details on page 4.



Corner of Pacific Highway and Harrington Road

Harrington Road Interchange - Initial Concept Design



Harrington Road Interchange Project

Harrington Road Interchange Project

2

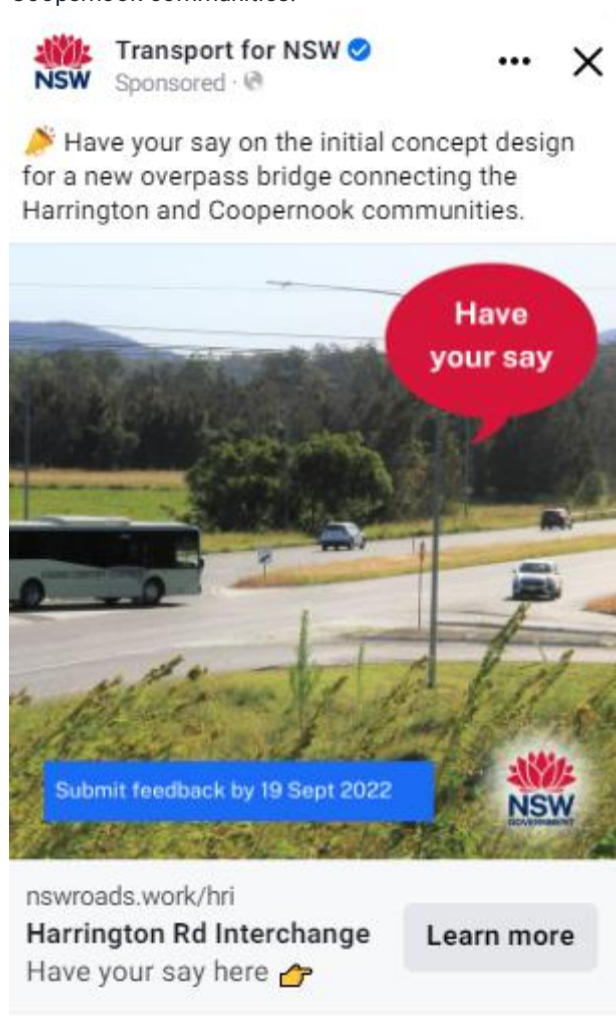
3

Facebook Ads – Have Your Say Consultation

Post 1 – HYS 7th October – 14 October

<https://facebook.com/TransportForNSW/posts/pfbid02fqv99oAVjEp77zepXNwz34fYAy7ZKVp8WVoZdPRNf4n8g7aNuv6bkEWYABigUnX4I>

🔔 Have your say on the initial concept design for a new overpass bridge connecting the Harrington and Coopernook communities.



The image is a screenshot of a Facebook advertisement. At the top left is the Transport for NSW logo, which includes the NSW state emblem and the text 'Transport for NSW' with a verified account checkmark. To the right of the logo is the word 'Sponsored' and a small globe icon. Further right are three dots and a close button (X). Below the header is a yellow megaphone icon followed by the text: 'Have your say on the initial concept design for a new overpass bridge connecting the Harrington and Coopernook communities.' The main visual is a photograph of a road interchange with a bus and cars. A red speech bubble with the text 'Have your say' is overlaid on the image. At the bottom left of the image is a blue button that says 'Submit feedback by 19 Sept 2022'. At the bottom right of the image is the NSW Government logo. Below the image, the text 'nswroads.work/hri' is displayed, followed by 'Harrington Rd Interchange' and 'Have your say here' with a hand cursor icon. To the right of this text is a grey button that says 'Learn more'.

Post 2 – HYS 2 20 – 26 Oct

<https://facebook.com/TransportForNSW/posts/pfbid029b2o3IEqGT5pBH39ShgDVihjqCotvf uFkp9Sok2HYfWackQ21nbugaNrPLGuj57cl>

Have your say on the Harrington Rd Interchange concept design, featuring an overpass bridge & roundabouts to increase safety. 📍



Posts 3 and 4 - HYS 20 Oct – 4 Nov

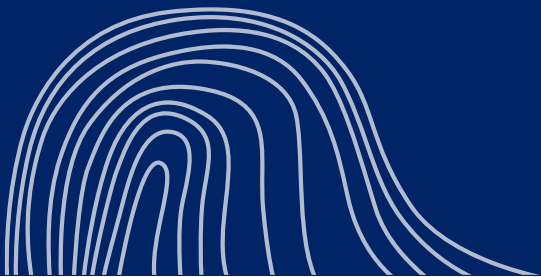


<https://facebook.com/TransportForNSW/posts/pfbid025pPkfyG2fyJuSUdGiBvBCK6Fhz9237orDq78WxabINkumc2bxJRBdW74vTAXuRT5I>

Last chance? have your say on the proposed Harrington Road Interchange. Submit your feedback by Friday 4 November.

Facebook posts 20 October to 3 November encouraged the community to review the concept design on the project webpage and submit feedback by Friday 4 November when consultation period ends.

Comments – overall “We need it, we support it, just get it done”



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