



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



Transport for NSW

Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

Medlow Bath Upgrade Review of Environmental Factors

Flora and fauna fact sheet

July 2021



Exotic tree growth along the Great Western Highway at Medlow Bath (image credit: RPS)

Together the Australian and NSW Governments are investing more than \$4.5 billion towards upgrading the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow. 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) is committed to protecting the flora and fauna of the Blue Mountains by minimising impacts to the natural environment.

The proposed Medlow Bath Upgrade will not impact National Park land. The upgrade design follows the existing corridor using areas of high disturbance in preference to native vegetation, to reduce impacts to flora and fauna.

Transport is presenting a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and Concept Design for the Medlow Bath Upgrade for community consultation from 26 July to 24 August 2021.

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



**Minimising
impacts to the natural
environment**



Sydney Peppermint – Silvertop Ash heathy open forest located in Medlow Bath

Biodiversity assessments

Transport has completed extensive biodiversity studies of the proposed Medlow Bath Upgrade corridor.

We conducted background research and habitat assessments to determine the likely occurrence of:

- Threatened and protected terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna species and their habitat
- Threatened ecological communities
- Important habitat for migratory species
- Declared areas of outstanding biodiversity value.

A field survey over five days in December 2020 provided an inventory of land and water flora and fauna including a list of known and potential threatened communities, populations and species listed under the NSW Biodiversity

Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act) and/or the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

One specific plant community – the Sydney Peppermint - Silvertop Ash heathy open forest – was identified on sandstone ridges. This is not a listed threatened ecological community. The remainder of the proposed upgrade corridor consists of highly disturbed roadside areas with mostly exotic grasses, herbs, shrubs and trees.

No threatened flora or fauna species were identified. No areas were classed as key fish habitat and no aquatic species or critical habitat, as listed as threatened under the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994, were identified.

You will find more information in the Medlow Bath Biodiversity Assessment prepared by RPS for the REF, at nswroads.work/gwhdconsult

Minimising impacts to flora and fauna

Transport is committed to minimising environmental impacts during construction and delivery of the upgrade. The Medlow Bath Biodiversity Assessment report identifies impacts to biodiversity for both the construction and operational phases of the project and includes mitigation measures where appropriate.

Existing trees and new tree plantings

We know that the trees planted along the Highway are important to local residents. We will do everything possible to relocate these existing trees and will replace any trees that cannot be relocated.

We are committed to planting trees in areas suitable for landscaping and will consult with Blue Mountains City Council on the species to be planted. Trees chosen will be in keeping with the character and heritage of Medlow Bath.

We will also work with Sydney Trains to determine appropriate ways to provide screening for local residents, without compromising on safe clearance below the Sydney Trains 11kv power lines.

When we are building

We are not expecting construction to have a significant impact on threatened biodiversity.

We estimate that the Medlow Bath Upgrade will result in the clearing of about 0.36 hectares of native vegetation. The loss of vegetation and habitat will not have a direct impact on threatened species, ecological communities or their habitats in the local area.

Some highly mobile threatened fauna species which use roadside margins for foraging, such as the Gang Gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*), Little Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta pusilla*), Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*) and Varied Sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*), may experience a minor impact from the initial loss of vegetation.

Reducing the impact of our work

We will minimise impacts to the natural environment during construction and operational phases of the project by managing the vegetation clearing process, providing supplementary fauna habitats (such as nest boxes for appropriate species), re-establishing native vegetation, managing weeds, and installing erosion and sediment controls where required.



Transport will provide supplementary fauna habitats for appropriate species

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 mitigation measures of a project. Feedback on this REF will inform the approval of the proposed Medlow Bath Upgrade.

What is a Concept Design?

The Concept Design is a project design that is developed in sufficient detail to allow an assessment of likely environmental, social and economic impacts so that stakeholders can consider the proposed project and provide feedback. The concept design may change based on feedback provided by stakeholders.

View the REF and Concept Design

You can view the Medlow Bath Upgrade REF and Concept Design at our virtual consultation room at nswroads.work/gwhdconsult

Have your say

We will hold online consultation sessions where you can ask our team any questions you have and tell us what you think.

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

Wednesday 28 July **Saturday 31 July**
1.00–2.30pm 12.30–2.00pm

Tuesday 3 August **Thursday 5 August**
6.30–8.00pm 6.30–8.00pm

Register for our Microsoft Teams live-stream consultation sessions at nswroads.work/gwhdconsult

Contact us on **1800 953 777** or gwhd@transport.nsw.gov.au to book a personal phone consultation if you prefer.

Face-to-face consultation

As COVID-19 restrictions are once again in place, we regret we are unlikely to be able to offer face-to-face consultation at this time.

Consultation will be held online to ensure your safety and comply with COVID-19 restrictions.

If restrictions ease before consultation ends we will organise face-to-face consultation, in line with existing guidelines at that time.

How to make a formal submission

We welcome all feedback on the Medlow Bath Upgrade 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/gwhdconsult or mail a printed submission to:

Great Western Highway Upgrade Program
Medlow Bath Upgrade REF & Concept
Design PO Box 2332, Orange NSW 2800

Consultation and exhibition is open from 26 July - 24 August. All formal submissions must be received by midnight, 24 August.

Contact us

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

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