

Transport  
for NSW

# Strategic Options Consultation Report

Newell Highway Flood Mitigation –  
West Wyalong to Forbes

October 2023



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OFFICIAL

# Acknowledgement of Country

Transport for NSW acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal people and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

Many of the transport routes we use today – from rail lines, to roads, to water crossings – follow the traditional Songlines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country that our nation’s First Peoples followed for tens of thousands of years.

Transport for NSW is committed to honouring Aboriginal peoples’ cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this report

Between Tuesday 20 June 2023 and Thursday 27 July 2023, Transport for NSW (Transport) carried out public consultation on the strategic options for the Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes (WW2F) project.

Residents, businesses and stakeholders in the Bland Shire, Weddin Shire and Forbes Shire Local Government Areas (LGAs) were invited to provide feedback on the project.

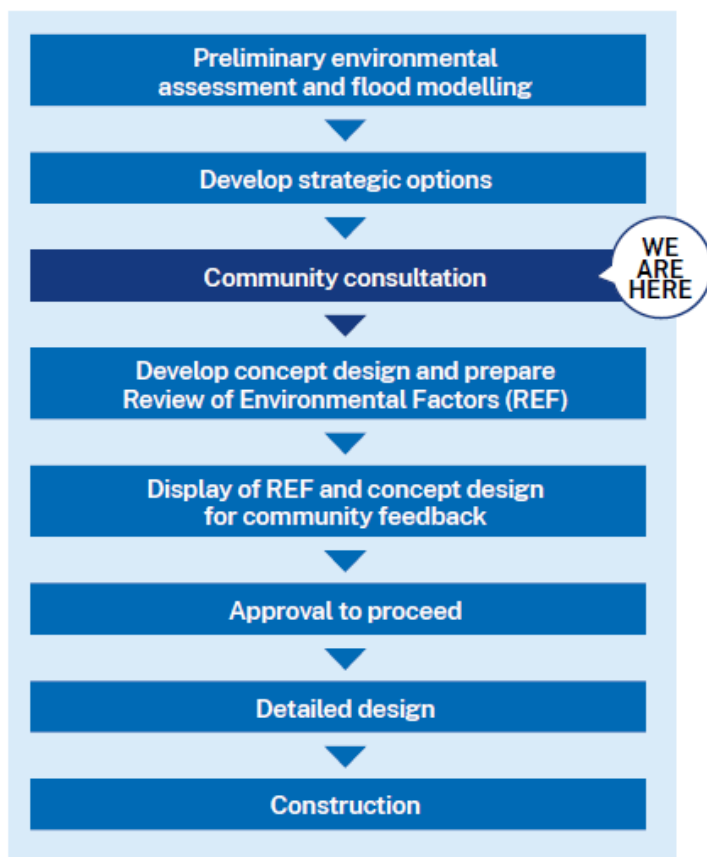
Flood-affected residents in the project footprint were also asked to consider sharing records from the 2022 and/or previous flood events to assist the project’s continuing flood studies.

This consultation report summarises the community and stakeholder engagement activities undertaken during the strategic options consultation.

The report includes a summary of the feedback received during the consultation period.

The project team will use the feedback provided to help inform the project design.

**Figure 1. Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes project stages**

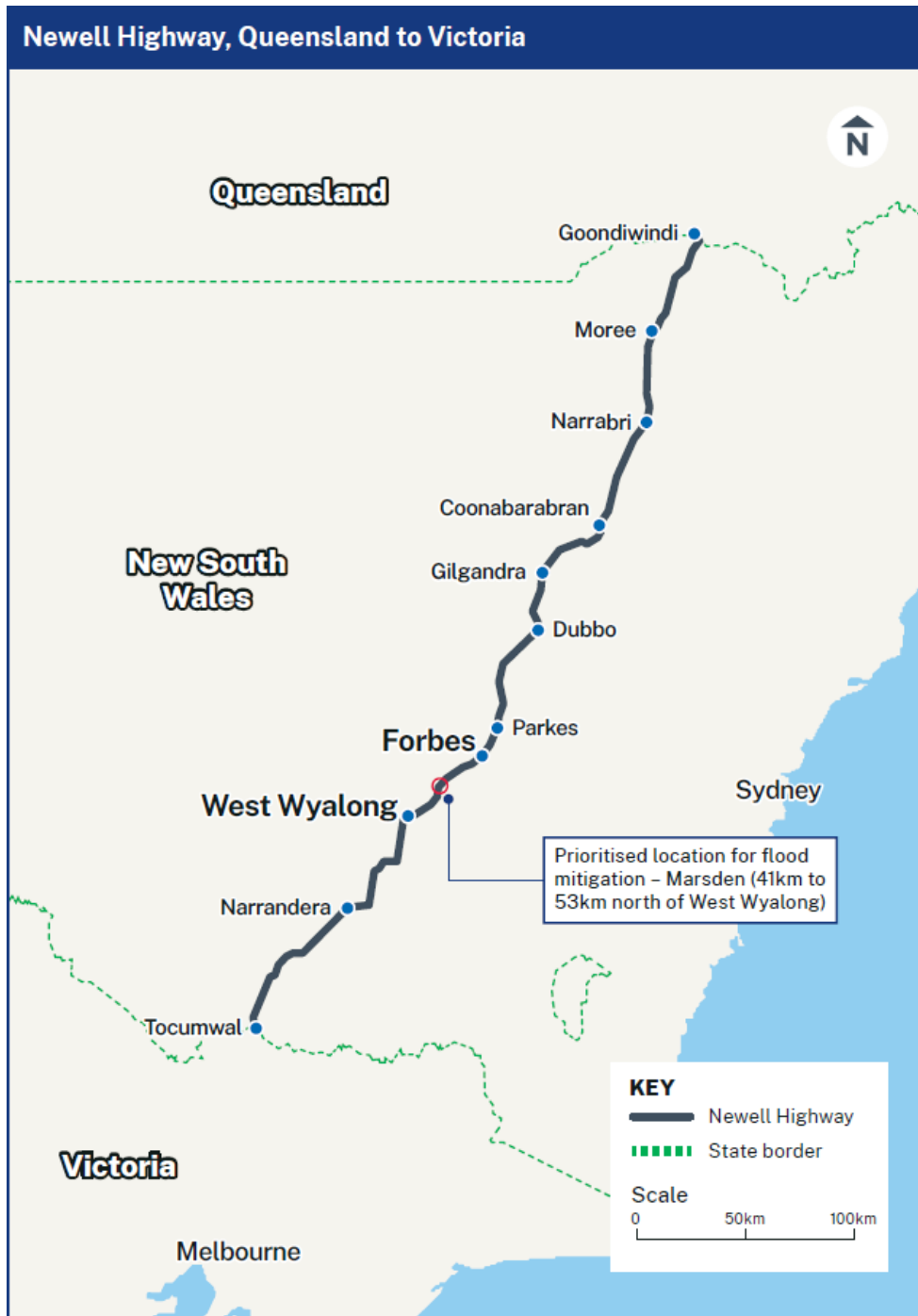


## 1.2 Background

The Newell Highway is a major interstate transport connection for freight and tourists and serves as a link to regional centres in western NSW.

The Australian Government and the NSW Government have committed to flood mitigation works on the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes.

Figure 2. Location of the project



Transport is investigating potential flood mitigation solutions for the Newell Highway between Compton Road, West Wyalong and Hereford Street, Forbes.

The primary objective of the project is to reduce the amount of time the Newell Highway is closed between West Wyalong and Forbes during and after flood events.

The Newell Highway is prone to flooding between West Wyalong and Forbes and has a history of road closures during periods of heavy rain in the Lachlan catchment.

From late October 2022, the highway was closed for seven weeks when around 20 kilometres of this section was flooded. From September 2016, the highway was closed for six weeks due to flooding.

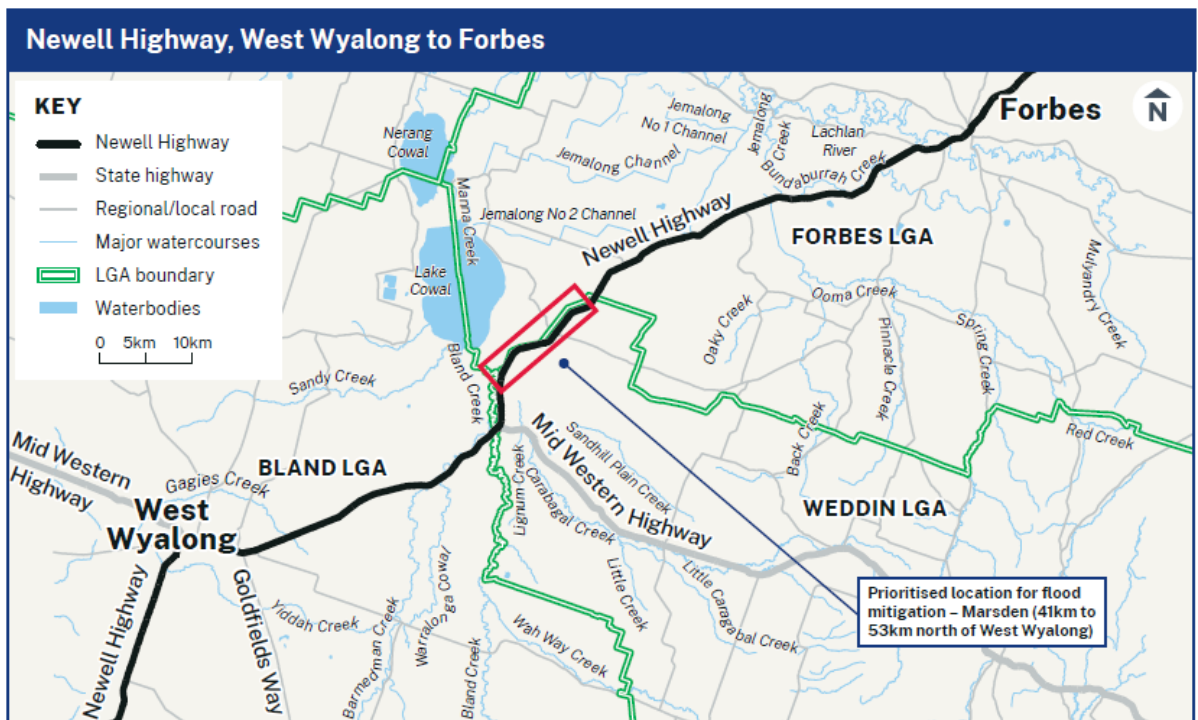
Comprehensive flood studies have found the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes is particularly susceptible to flooding by the Lake Cowal/Bland Creek catchment at Marsden.

Studies have also identified which causeways across the highway flooded first in 2022, stayed closed the longest, the depth of water at each and the susceptibility of the pavement to damage caused by the floodwaters.

On the basis of these studies, Transport is investigating around 11 kilometres of flood mitigation treatments at Marsden as this will significantly reduce the length of time the highway is closed during and after any future flood events.

Proposed treatments include installing box culverts (small bridges) to allow water to pass freely under the highway, raising the road level and laying a more robust pavement that would allow the road to remain open to traffic for longer during flood events.

**Figure 3. Prioritised location for flood mitigation**



**Figure 4. Proposed treatments at Marsden**



Figure 5. Project benefits

The infographic is set against a light blue background and contains four benefit statements, each with a corresponding icon:

- Saving travel time** by reducing road closures (Icon: a clock face)
- Improving road safety** (Icon: a car on a road with a hand pointing to it)
- Keeping freight moving** and communities connected (Icon: a truck and a person)
- Reducing maintenance costs** by improving pavement resilience (Icon: a person working on a road surface)



Above and below: Aerial views of flooding at Marsden, 27 October 2022



## 2. Consultation approach

### 2.1 Values

Transport's values underpin our decisions and behaviours when working with colleagues, customers, communities, 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.

### 2.2 Consultation objectives

Transport consulted with the community and stakeholders in Bland Shire, Weddin Shire and Forbes Shire LGAs during June and July 2023 to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders that flood mitigation at Marsden has been prioritised, why Marsden has been prioritised, and what treatments are proposed.
- Seek community and stakeholder feedback on the proposed flood mitigation plans to help inform the project design.
- Ask flood-affected residents to consider sharing their flood records from 2022 and/or previous flood events to assist continuing flood studies.
- Encourage the community and key stakeholders to sign up for eNewsletter updates to stay informed about the project.

### 2.3 How consultation was done

Our approach to consultation provided an opportunity for the community and stakeholders to engage with the project team across a range of mediums including written, online, face-to-face and telephone.

A hard copy community update and survey were distributed to all residences in Bland Shire, Weddin Shire and Forbes Shire LGAs. The survey included reply paid address details so those who wished to provide handwritten feedback could post their response at no cost to themselves.

The community update and survey had a QR code to easily access the project's online engagement portal, where people could engage through a variety of online tools including an interactive map, online survey, and an ideas/feedback board.

Other ways input could be provided included via email, talking with the project team at a face-to-face or online consultation session, or by a phone consultation.

Soft copies of the community update and survey were made available on the project's online engagement portal and the project webpage, and provided to business, freight, and emergency services stakeholders to distribute to their networks.

The project team met with Livestock, Bulk and Rural Carriers Association (LBRCA), West Wyalong Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), Bland Shire Council, Weddin Shire Council, Forbes Shire Council, and property owners adjacent to the prioritised location at Marsden.



The Regional Director West presented on the project at the Weddin Shire Council Ordinary Meeting on 20 July 2023 and the Forbes Shire Council Ordinary Meeting on 20 July 2023.

Two face-to-face consultation sessions were held, and an online consultation session was also offered.

Our key consultation tools/activities are listed below.

Further analysis of the outcomes of consultation is provided in section three.

**Table 1. Key consultation tools/activities**

Tool/activity	Description
<p><b>Community update and survey with reply paid address</b> Appendix A and Appendix B</p>	<p>A four-page community update and four-page survey were distributed to all residences in Bland Shire (3,128), Weddin Shire (2,271) and Forbes Shire (4,863) LGAs via Australia Post unaddressed mail service.</p> <p>The community update provided information on the project and invited community and stakeholder feedback to help inform the project design. The survey replicated the questions in the online survey in a format that could be completed by hand and posted to the project team using the reply paid address details.</p> <p>The community update and survey were made available on the project online portal at <a href="http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation">www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation</a> and the project webpage at <a href="http://nswroads.work/ww2f">nswroads.work/ww2f</a></p> <p>Fifty copies of the community update and survey were posted to the following councils and Members of Parliament to display in their offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bland Shire Council</li> <li>• Weddin Shire Council</li> <li>• Forbes Shire Council</li> <li>• The Hon. Michael McCormack MP – Member for Riverina</li> <li>• Mr Phillip Donato MP – Member for Orange, Member of the Legislative Assembly</li> <li>• The Hon Steph Cook MP – Member for Cootamundra, Member of the Legislative Assembly</li> <li>• The Hon. Jenny Aitchison MP – Member for Maitland, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.</li> </ul> <p>Soft copies of the community update and survey were provided to West Wyalong and Forbes business chambers, freight industry and emergency services stakeholders to distribute to their networks.</p> <p>Hard copies of the community update and survey were available at the face-to-face consultation sessions and provided to the Central West Livestock Exchange in Forbes and NSW Farmers Conference in Sydney.</p>

Tool/activity	Description
<p><b>A3/A4 poster</b> Appendix C</p>	<p>Posters promoting the consultation were provided to councils, libraries, medical centres and other key community locations in West Wyalong, Grenfell and Forbes.</p>
<p><b>Social media posts</b> Appendix D</p>	<p>Three posts on the Transport for NSW Facebook page were staggered to appear over six weeks to promote the consultation, with truck drivers geotargeted as an audience segment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post 1 – 22 to 29 June 2023</li> <li>• Post 2 – 3 to 10 July 2023</li> <li>• Post 3 – 17 to 24 July 2023</li> </ul> <p>The social posts were on-shared by Bland Shire Council, Weddin Shire Council, Forbes Shire Council, Business West Wyalong, Forbes Business Chamber, Central West Livestock Exchange and local community groups.</p>
<p><b>Media release</b> Appendix E</p>	<p>A media release was distributed via the project website and through engagement with local media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on Marsden for Newell Highway flood mitigation program (20 June 2023)</li> </ul> <p>The media release is available at <a href="https://nswroads.work/ww2f">nswroads.work/ww2f</a></p>
<p><b>Online engagement portal</b></p>	<p>An online engagement portal at <a href="https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation">https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation</a> provided information about the project, tools to provide feedback including an interactive map where comments and/or images could be pinned at a specific location, online survey, ideas/feedback board and a registration form for the consultation sessions.</p>
<p><b>Webpage</b></p>	<p>The project webpage at <a href="https://nswroads.work/ww2f">nswroads.work/ww2f</a> was updated with the latest project information including the community update, survey and a link to the online engagement portal.</p>
<p><b>Stakeholder group meetings</b></p>	<p>Meetings were held with the following stakeholder groups to provide a briefing on the project and the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livestock, Bulk and Rural Carriers Association (LBRCA) – 10 July 2023</li> <li>• West Wyalong Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) – 17 July 2023</li> <li>• Bland Shire Council – 17 July 2023</li> <li>• Marsden landowners – 18 July 2023</li> <li>• Weddin Shire Council – 18 July 2023</li> <li>• Forbes Shire Council – 20 July 2023</li> <li>• Weddin Shire Council Ordinary Meeting – 20 July 2023</li> <li>• Forbes Shire Council Ordinary Meeting – 20 July 2023.</li> </ul>

Tool/activity	Description
<p><b>Consultation sessions</b></p>	<p>Face-to-face and online consultation sessions were offered:</p> <p><b>West Wyalong – Monday 17 July 2023 4.30pm–6.30pm</b> West Wyalong Services &amp; Citizens Club (Auditorium) 100 Monash Street, West Wyalong</p> <p><b>Forbes – Tuesday 18 July 2023 4.30pm–6.30pm</b> Club Forbes (Gallipoli Function Room) 41-43 Templar Street, Forbes</p> <p><b>Online consultation session – Thursday 20 July 6.30pm–8pm</b> via MS Teams.</p>
<p><b>Phone consultations</b></p>	<p>Phone consultations were promoted as a way people could provide input.</p>
<p><b>Subscribe for eNewsletter updates</b></p>	<p>The opportunity to subscribe for eNewsletter updates to stay informed about the project was provided on the online engagement portal, the consultation session registration form, the online survey, the hard copy survey and when signing in at the face-to-face consultation sessions.</p>
<p><b>Phone</b></p>	<p>The project hotline was publicised for the community to contact the project team with queries and to book phone consultations. The hotline number is 1800 741 636.</p>
<p><b>Email</b></p>	<p>The project email address was publicised for the community to contact the project team with queries and to book phone consultations. The project email address is <a href="mailto:newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au">newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au</a></p>

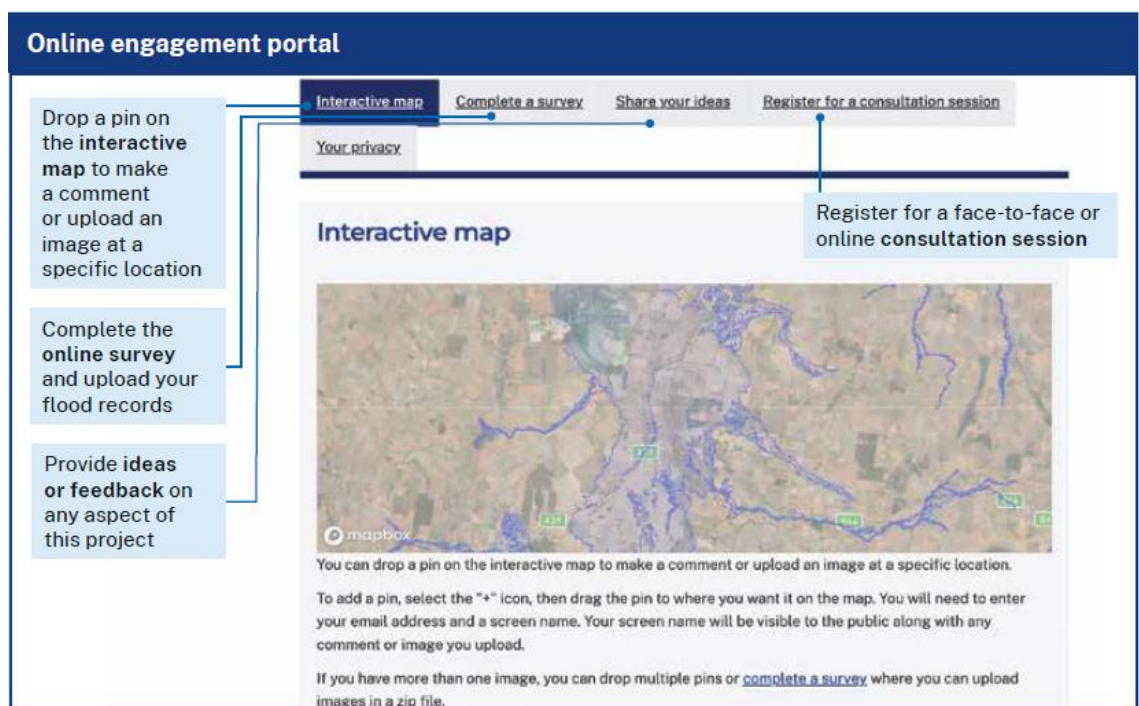


Illustration of online engagement tools from June 2023 Community Update

## 3. Consultation summary

### 3.1 Overview

Transport received a total of **88 written responses** during the WW2F strategic options consultation: 57 online surveys, 15 pins on the online interactive map, 15 hard copy surveys and one emailed letter.

The project team **interacted with around 105 people** during the consultation period, including around 67 people in stakeholder meetings, 25 attendees at face-to-face consultation sessions and 13 phone consultations.

Valuable feedback, information and flood records were provided by a **range of stakeholder groups** including councils, LALCs, property owners, business owners, freight industry, emergency services and individual community members.

**56 people subscribed for eNewsletter updates** to stay informed about the project.

**Table 2. Engagement outcomes**

Tool/activity	Engagement measure
<b>Community update and survey with reply paid address</b>	<b>Total hard copy distribution: 10,262</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bland Shire LGA –3,128</li> <li>• Weddin Shire LGA –2,271</li> <li>• Forbes Shire LGA –4,863</li> </ul>
<b>Social media posts</b>	<b>Total reach: 81,833 people with 1,610 engagements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three social media posts targeting the general community reached 43,156 people with 782 engagements</li> <li>• Three social media posts targeting the freight industry reached 38,677 people with 828 engagements</li> </ul>
<b>Online engagement portal</b>	<b>1,113 aware participants</b> (visited at least one page) <b>157 informed participants</b> (visited multiple pages, downloaded a document, contributed to an engagement tool) <b>68 engaged participants</b> (contributed to an engagement tool)
<b>Online survey</b>	<b>57 online surveys submitted</b>
<b>Online interactive map</b>	<b>15 pins dropped on the online interactive map by 3 contributors</b>
<b>Online ideas/ feedback board</b>	<b>0 posts to the online ideas/feedback board</b>
<b>Hard copy survey</b>	<b>15 hard copy surveys returned via reply paid mail</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>1 letter received by email</b>

Tool/activity	Engagement measure
<b>Stakeholder group meetings</b>	<b>8 meetings attended by around 67 people</b>
<b>Consultation sessions</b>	<b>Total attendees: 25</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Wyalong consultation session (17 July 2023) –14 attendees</li> <li>• Forbes consultation session (18 July 2023) –11 attendees</li> <li>• Online consultation session (20 July 2023) –0 attendees</li> </ul>
<b>Phone consultations</b>	<b>13 phone consultations</b>
<b>Subscribe for eNewsletter updates</b>	<b>56 subscribers for project updates</b>



Consultation session at West Wyalong, 17 July 2023

## 3.2 Summary of issues raised by stakeholders

### 3.2.1 Councils

Transport’s investigations into potential flood mitigation solutions for the Newell Highway between Compton Road, West Wyalong and Hereford Street, Forbes spans three LGAs – Bland Shire, Weddin Shire and Forbes Shire.

The prioritised location for flood mitigation at Marsden (41km to 53km north of West Wyalong) falls within Weddin Shire LGA.

The project team met face-to-face with councillors and senior council officers from Bland Shire Council, Weddin Shire Council and Forbes Shire Council during the consultation period to provide a briefing on the project and the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback.

The Regional Director West presented on the project at the Weddin Shire Council Ordinary Meeting on 20 July 2023 and the Forbes Shire Council Ordinary Meeting on 20 July 2023.

Weddin Shire Council submitted an online survey with written feedback.

The table below summarises the feedback provided by the three councils.

**Table 3. Summary of council feedback**

Issue	Feedback
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very strong support for the work starting as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern regarding the funding for the scope of mitigation works required.</li> </ul>
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the prioritisation of Marsden for flood mitigation works to reduce the amount of time the highway is closed between West Wyalong and Forbes during and after flood events.</li> <li>• Importance of understanding flooding behaviour and letting floodwaters follow their natural course.</li> <li>• Importance of the proposed box culverts equalising the flooding on both sides of the highway at Marsden.</li> <li>• Need for use of the most resilient pavement option available to minimise emergency works and heavy patching following flood events and reduce road closures for maintenance.</li> </ul>
Construction impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of maintaining traffic flow on the Newell Highway during construction so motorists do not divert to local roads.</li> <li>• Importance of understanding vehicle movements on the feeder road network and the impact of diversions to local roads not suited to heavy vehicle traffic.</li> <li>• Request for dilapidation surveys and reports on local roads impacted by the project prior to construction commencing.</li> <li>• Request for assurance that construction at Marsden would not impact on Weddin Shire Council Road Maintenance Council Contract (RMCC) arrangements.</li> </ul>
Economic and social impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep concern about economic impacts of highway closures. Local businesses are isolated from their clients and then find it difficult to regain clients who have found an alternative supplier. Detouring through-traffic may discover new routes and places to visit, making them less likely to drive through towns in the future. Communities are socially disconnected.</li> </ul>

Issue	Feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern about the impact on the freight industry when the Newell Highway is closed.</li> <li>• Interest in working with Transport to generate positive social outcomes for the community and to collaborate on supply markets for construction materials.</li> </ul>
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for continued consultation, including with the communities of Quandialla and Caragabal which have limited internet connection, and extending to Parkes Shire LGA.</li> <li>• Need for improved advice to freight industry during flood events and construction activities so they understand journey time delays for their chosen route.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for Water NSW to better manage the catchment with regards to the identification and removal of illegal levee banks.</li> <li>• Need to be mindful of the location of the former Marsden cemetery.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.2 Local Aboriginal Land Councils

Transport’s investigations into potential flood mitigation solutions for the Newell Highway between Compton Road, West Wyalong and Hereford Street, Forbes spans three Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) – West Wyalong LALC, Condobolin LALC and Peak Hill LALC.

The prioritised location for flood mitigation at Marsden (41km to 53km north of West Wyalong) falls within West Wyalong LALC and is in close proximity to Condobolin LALC.

During the consultation period, Transport provided information on the project and an invitation to meet with the project team to West Wyalong LALC, Condobolin LALC and Peak Hill LALC.

A face-to-face meeting was held with West Wyalong LALC’s CEO on 17 July 2023, and representatives from West Wyalong LALC and Condobolin LALC attended the consultation session at West Wyalong.

The table below summarises the feedback provided at the meeting with West Wyalong LALC.

**Table 4. Summary of Local Aboriginal Land Council feedback**

Issue	Feedback
Aboriginal cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Wyalong LALC indicated they are willing to work together with Transport on all aspects of the project.</li> <li>• West Wyalong LALC has a dedicated keeping place where artefacts found around the Marsden location could be stored and displayed on Country.</li> <li>• Request for Transport to complete a heritage site inspection of the prioritised location at Marsden and report findings to West Wyalong LALC.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.3 Property owners adjacent to the prioritised location

The WW2F Project Manager sought to contact all property owners adjacent to the prioritised location at Marsden via telephone at the beginning of the consultation to provide a project update, seek feedback in recognition of their thorough knowledge of the area and to request any flood records they may be willing to share to assist the project’s continuing flood studies. Eleven phone consultations were held, with a wealth of valuable information and flood records shared.

Property owners at Marsden kindly hosted an onsite meeting with the project team on 18 July 2023 and invited their neighbours. This allowed the project team to meet face-to-face with 14 owners close to the prioritised location, including many of those the project manager had spoken with on the phone. The project team appreciated the property owners engaging with Transport and the opportunity to hear their feedback directly, including frustration over long-standing issues with flooding.

Several property owners attended the face-to-face consultation sessions at West Wyalong and Forbes and provided important feedback while discussing the large maps of the project footprint and/or flood records they brought with them.

**Table 5. Summary of property owner feedback**

Issue	Feedback
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very strong support for the work starting as soon as possible, with property owners noting they wrote as a group to the then Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight in October 2016 and the issues raised are yet to be resolved.</li> </ul>
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deep concern regarding the funding for the scope of mitigation works required.</li> </ul>
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of understanding how the catchment is managed and the impact of levees constructed for cotton cropping, noting that illegal levees may be in place.</li> <li>Importance of understanding flooding behaviour and letting floodwaters follow their natural course.</li> <li>Need for sufficient culverts to equalise the water levels on both sides of the highway at Marsden to reduce damage to the road and to farmland.</li> <li>Need to consider the invert levels of culverts and new design road level in relation to Lake Cowal’s spillway level.</li> </ul>
Economic and social impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property owners at Marsden are unable to access towns for food or medical services during highway closures.</li> <li>Flooding over thousands of hectares of farmland for extended periods of time impacts farming operations and property owners’ livelihoods.</li> <li>Economic impacts are compounded by social isolation during flood events.</li> </ul>
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property owners have a large collective knowledge of the movement of floodwaters in and around the Newell Highway and Lake Cowal which can and should be drawn upon.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.4 Business owners

Soft copies of the community update and survey were provided to Business West Wyalong and Forbes Business Chamber, along with an invitation to meet with the project team.

Business West Wyalong and Forbes Business Chamber encouraged their members to participate in the consultation, including by forwarding the community update, survey and consultation session details to their networks and on-sharing social posts.

Ten online surveys were submitted by participants identifying themselves as business owners in West Wyalong or Forbes.



**Table 6. Summary of business owner feedback**

Issue	Feedback
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of raising the road level and installing box culverts to stop the flooding problem moving to another area.</li> </ul>
Economic and social impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bypassing towns for up to seven weeks due to flooding caused some local businesses to close.</li> <li>Importance of keeping the Newell Highway open as it is the major trade corridor between Melbourne and Brisbane and towns in between.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.5 Freight industry

Soft copies of the community update and survey were provided to freight industry bodies Livestock, Bulk and Rural Carriers Association (LBRCA), Road Freight NSW (RFNSW) and Natroad, along with an invitation to meet with the project team and provide feedback.

LBRCA distributed the information to their network and met with the project team online, providing valuable feedback on behalf of their members.

Hard copies of the community update and survey were provided to the Central West Livestock Exchange in Forbes and NSW Farmers Conference in Sydney.

The three social posts were geotargeted to truck drivers in the Bland Shire, Weddin Shire and Forbes Shire LGAs to seek feedback from this target audience.

Sixteen online surveys were submitted by participants identifying themselves as heavy vehicle drivers or freight owner/operators. Three of the surveys were submitted by interstate freight owners/operators or truck drivers from Victoria.

**Table 7. Summary of freight industry feedback**

Issue	Feedback
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very strong support for the work starting as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preference for concrete pavement, with a belief that it holds up better and improves drainage.</li> <li>Request for consideration of type of grooving in concrete pavement to mitigate tyre wear on heavy vehicles.</li> </ul>
Construction impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern that disruption to traffic flow during construction will impact heavy vehicle driver journey time and fatigue management.</li> <li>Concern that construction and/or flood events will push traffic onto secondary roads which are not designed for heavy vehicles.</li> <li>Drivers will divert if the travel route takes too long, and owners will ask drivers to divert if the road is too rough and will damage vehicles.</li> <li>Importance of keeping the existing highway well maintained during construction of the new pavement.</li> </ul>
Economic and social impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact on the freight industry when the Newell Highway is closed due to flooding.</li> <li>Costs to freight owners from damage to vehicles caused by poor condition of the highway or detour routes unsuited to heavy vehicles.</li> <li>Impacts of traffic control on driver journey time and fatigue management.</li> </ul>

Issue	Feedback
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for good communication with drivers such as VMS around one hour before works to assist with journey time and fatigue management.</li> <li>• Need for good communication with industry if significant delays are expected.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong concern about the current state of the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes.</li> <li>• Need to consider impact of heavy vehicle diversions to secondary roads and ensure suitable alternate routes are maintained.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.6 Emergency services

Soft copies of the community update, survey and consultation session details were provided to the following Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) for distribution to their networks: Bland Shire LEMC, Weddin Shire LEMC, Forbes Shire LEMC, Parkes Shire LEMC, Lachlan Shire LEMC, Cowra LEMC, and Cabonne LEMC.

The LEMCs are comprised of all emergency services in their respective shires, including NSW Police, NSW Ambulance, NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW State Emergency Service (SES), NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), as well as energy and water providers, and NSW Government community, health and local land services.

The NSW State Emergency Service provided a written response to Transport’s notification of the proposed project works under section 2.13 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021 Act.

Three local SES members attended the West Wyalong and Forbes consultation sessions and provided a wealth of information regarding previous floods and flooding impacts.

**Table 8. Summary of emergency services feedback**

Issue	Feedback
Construction impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NSW SES requested notification if there were likely to be significant traffic delays during construction as this may impact the ability for emergency vehicles to use the route.</li> </ul>
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NSW SES requested further consultation during development of the concept design and environmental assessment.</li> <li>• Importance of good and current information about the status of the highway during flood events to assist local SES with stock retrievals.</li> </ul>
Emergency response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to ensure workers and people using the site during and after the upgrade are aware of the flood risk, for example by using signage.</li> <li>• Need for improved communications on detour routes and value of permanent flood detour route signage that is flipped up/down when detours are in place – less work for staff to implement and the community get used to the standard detour routes used.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of regular and effective maintenance of existing and new drainage structures and channels to reduce the impacts of flooding.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.7 Community members

Feedback from online survey and hard copy survey respondents who identified themselves as a property owner/resident between West Wyalong and Forbes, resident of West Wyalong or resident of Forbes largely reflected the comments of other stakeholder groups as included in this report. Many of these respondents also identified themselves as heavy vehicle drivers, freight owner/operators, or business owners in West Wyalong or Forbes.

**Table 9. Summary of community feedback**

Issue	Feedback
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very strong support for the work starting as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to raise the road height and install ample box culverts to prevent floodwater from backing up and the problem moving to another area.</li> <li>• Importance of understanding flooding behaviour and letting floodwaters follow their natural course.</li> </ul>
Economic and social impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of highway closures on local businesses due to lack of access for through-traffic and tourists.</li> <li>• Limited availability of supplies for residents during flooding and cost of fuel to travel around floodwaters.</li> <li>• Damage to vehicles and farm equipment from travelling on local roads affected by heavy vehicle diversions.</li> <li>• Social isolation of residents cut off by floodwaters, including separation of families so children can attend school.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for mitigation in other known flood locations between West Wyalong and Forbes, not just Marsden.</li> <li>• Impact of illegal levee banks and need for monitoring of catchment areas.</li> <li>• Need for regular maintenance of existing culverts.</li> </ul>

## 4. Recommendations

Key recommendations for future community and stakeholder consultation from the WW2F strategic options consultation include:

- Continue consulting with the councils and communities of Bland Shire, Weddin Shire and Forbes Shire LGAs.
- Include face-to-face consultation with the communities of Quandialla and Caragabal which have limited internet connection for online consultation, and extend consultation activities to Parkes LGA.
- Continue consulting with West Wyalong LALC, Condobolin LALC and Peak Hill LALC.
- Continue consulting with property owners adjacent to the prioritised location at Marsden.
- Consult directly with the business community and local heavy vehicle drivers to better understand their needs and potential impacts.
- Work closely with the freight industry, emergency services, utility service providers and other NSW and Australian government bodies as the project continues through the planning stages.
- Continue to provide more detail about road design, delivery timeframes and consultation to the community and key stakeholders as it becomes available.

## 5. Next steps

Transport will consider all feedback received as part of the planning process for the project.

The feedback will help to inform the project Strategic Business Case and will assist in determining and developing the scope of the concept design to meet the budget.

The next phase of the WW2F project involves the preparation of the concept design and the Review of Environmental Factors (REF).

Transport recognises that flood mitigation treatments can alter the local environment and we will be carefully considering all potential impacts of the project through our environmental assessment process. We will actively look at ways to reduce the impact of the upgrade on the community, stakeholders and the environment.

Once prepared, both the concept design and the REF will be displayed for public comment.

During the next phases of the project, we will continue to provide updates to the community and all identified and/or interested stakeholders using a variety of communication channels, including but not limited to:

- eNewsletters
- Website updates – visit [nswroads.work/ww2f](https://nswroads.work/ww2f)
- Online portal updates – visit <https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation>
- Community updates
- Media releases
- Community consultation sessions
- Social media
- Print and broadcast media.

The community and stakeholders can contact the project team by calling 1800 741 636 or emailing [newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au) to subscribe for eNewsletter updates or with any questions, concerns or suggestions about the project.

## 6. Appendix

### 6.1 Appendix A. Community update



Aerial view of flooding at Marsden showing the Newell Highway in the foreground, 27 October 2022

The Australian Government and the NSW Government have committed to flood mitigation works on the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes.

Transport for NSW (Transport) is investigating potential flood mitigation solutions for the Newell Highway between Compton Road, West Wyalong and Hereford Street, Forbes.

The primary objective of the project is to reduce the amount of time the Newell Highway is closed between West Wyalong and Forbes during and after flood events.

Transport will prioritise flood mitigation around Marsden as flood studies have shown that this area flooded first, had the deepest water across the road and was where the highway stayed closed the longest.

Proposed treatments include installing box culverts (small bridges) to allow water to pass freely under the highway, raising the road level and laying a more robust pavement that would remain open to traffic for longer during flood events.

**Your input is important in helping Transport provide the best possible flood mitigation solutions.**

We are seeking community and stakeholder feedback to help inform the project design until 27 July 2023.

We invite you to talk to the project team or scan the QR code to provide your input through our online engagement portal at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation)



## Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes

### Project background

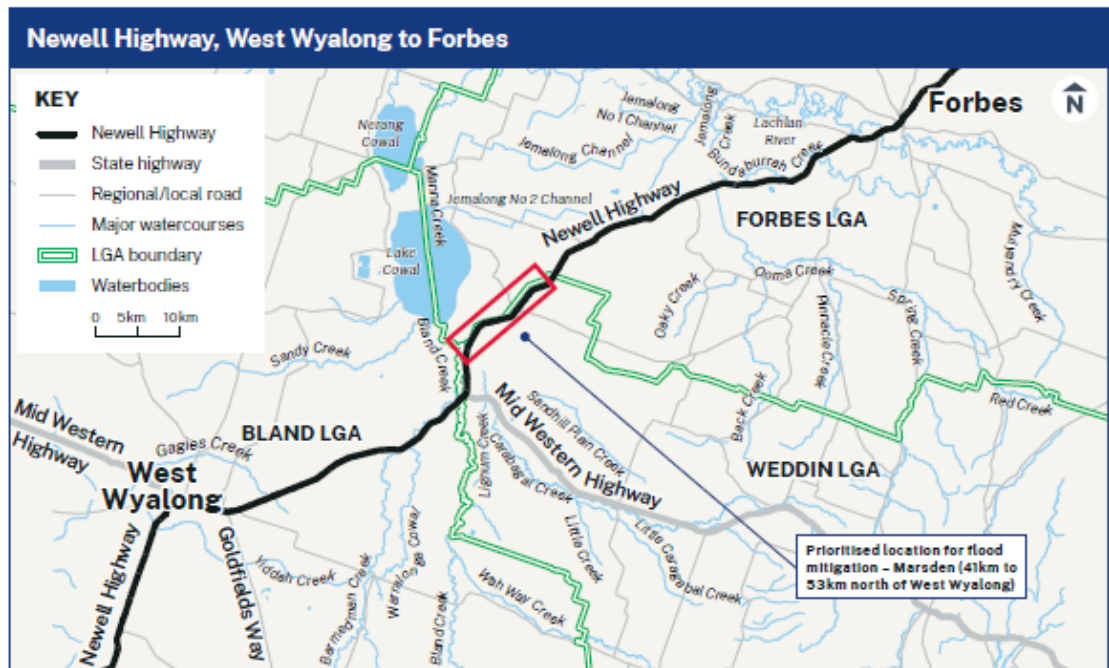
The Newell Highway is prone to flooding between West Wyalong and Forbes and has a history of road closures during periods of heavy rain in the Lachlan catchment.

From late October 2022, the highway was closed for seven weeks when around 20 kilometres of this section was flooded. From September 2016, the highway was closed for six weeks due to flooding.

Comprehensive flood studies have found the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes is particularly susceptible to flooding by the Lake Cowal/Bland Creek catchment at Marsden.

Studies have also identified which causeways across the highway flooded first in 2022, stayed closed the longest, the depth of water at each and the susceptibility of the pavement to damage caused by the floodwaters.

On the basis of these studies, Transport is proposing to provide around 11 kilometres of flood mitigation treatments at Marsden as this will significantly reduce the length of time the highway is closed during and after any future flood events.



Appendix A. Community update

## We want to hear from you

Transport is seeking your feedback on the proposed plans for flood mitigation on the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes.

We would value your insights on the treatments proposed at Marsden, along with any other ideas or comments on the project that you would like to provide.

We would also appreciate any flood records, for example photographs of floodwaters or rainfall records, from the 2022 or earlier flood events that you would be willing to share with us to assist our continuing flood studies.

We recognise you have lived through the impacts of the floods and highway closures and we value your feedback, information and insights.

You can provide input through:

- scanning the QR code to access our online engagement portal at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation)
- posting the printed survey to our reply paid address
- talking with the project team at a face-to-face or online consultation session
- calling us on 1800 741 636 or emailing us at [newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au) to book a phone consultation.



### Online engagement portal

The screenshot shows a navigation bar with four main options: [Interactive map](#), [Complete a survey](#), [Share your ideas](#), and [Register for a consultation session](#). Below the navigation bar is a 'Your privacy' link. The main content area features an 'Interactive map' with a satellite view of the region. A callout box on the left explains: 'Drop a pin on the interactive map to make a comment or upload an image at a specific location'. Another callout box on the right explains: 'Register for a face-to-face or online consultation session'. Below the map, there is text explaining how to use the map: 'You can drop a pin on the interactive map to make a comment or upload an image at a specific location. To add a pin, select the "x" icon, then drag the pin to where you want it on the map. You will need to enter your email address and a screen name. Your screen name will be visible to the public along with any comment or image you upload. If you have more than one image, you can drop multiple pins or [complete a survey](#) where you can upload images in a zip file.'

 **Saving travel time**  
by reducing road closures

 **Improving road safety**

 **Keeping freight moving**  
and communities connected

 **Reducing maintenance costs**  
by improving pavement resilience



Appendix A. Community update

**Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes**

**Talk to the project team**

We will hold face-to-face consultation sessions at West Wyalong and Forbes where you can drop in to talk to the project team.

We will also hold an online consultation session for those who prefer to engage this way or can't attend a face-to-face session.

**Face-to-face consultation sessions**

**Monday 17 July 4.30pm–6.30pm**  
West Wyalong Services & Citizens Club (Auditorium)  
100 Monash Street, West Wyalong

**Tuesday 18 July 4.30pm–6.30pm**  
Club Forbes (Gallipoli Function Room)  
41-43 Templar Street, Forbes

**Online consultation session**




**Thursday 20 July 6.30pm–8pm**  
Please register for a consultation session at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation)


**Onsite or online meetings**

If you have site-specific project questions or concerns and would like the project team to meet with you at your property, please contact us and request an onsite meeting. We can also organise an online meeting to discuss your questions or concerns if you prefer.

**Contact us**

Please contact the project team if you have any questions or would like more information:

-  1800 741 636
-  [newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au)
-  [nswroads.work/ww2f](http://nswroads.work/ww2f)

 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 741 636.

June 2023  
23.041

Privacy Transport for NSW ("TfNSW") is subject to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 ("PPPI Act") which requires that we comply with the Information Privacy Principles set out in the PPPI Act. All information in correspondence is collected for the sole purpose of assisting in the delivery of this project. The information received, including names and addresses of respondents, may be published in subsequent documents unless a clear indication is given in the correspondence that all or part of that information is not to be published. Otherwise TfNSW will only disclose your personal information, without your consent, if authorised by the law. Your personal information will be held by TfNSW at 51-55 Carrington Street Parkes NSW 2870. You have the right to access and correct the information if you believe that it is incorrect.

**Subscribe for project updates**

Sign up for eNewsletter updates when you complete our survey or email or call us to subscribe, so you never miss a project update.

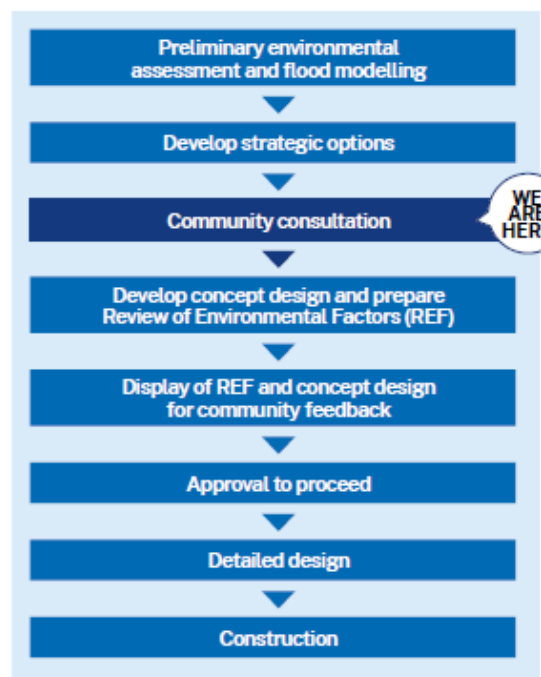
**Next steps**

Following the close of the consultation period we will provide a summary of the feedback received on our online engagement portal and we will also distribute this via eNewsletter to those who have subscribed for project updates.

If you own property within or close to the project footprint we will be reaching out to you soon, as we understand you will want to know what the proposed works may mean for you.

We recognise that flood mitigation treatments can alter the local environment and we will be carefully considering all potential impacts of the project through our environmental assessment process.

Please don't hesitate to contact the project team if you have questions, concerns or suggestions about the project now or in the future.





## 6.2 Appendix B. Survey

Transport for NSW

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Survey | June 2023

# Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes

The Australian Government and the NSW Government have committed to flood mitigation works on the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes.

Transport for NSW will prioritise flood mitigation around Marsden as flood studies have shown that this area flooded first, had the deepest water across the road and was where the highway stayed closed the longest.

More detail about the project can be found at [nswroads.work/ww2f](http://nswroads.work/ww2f)

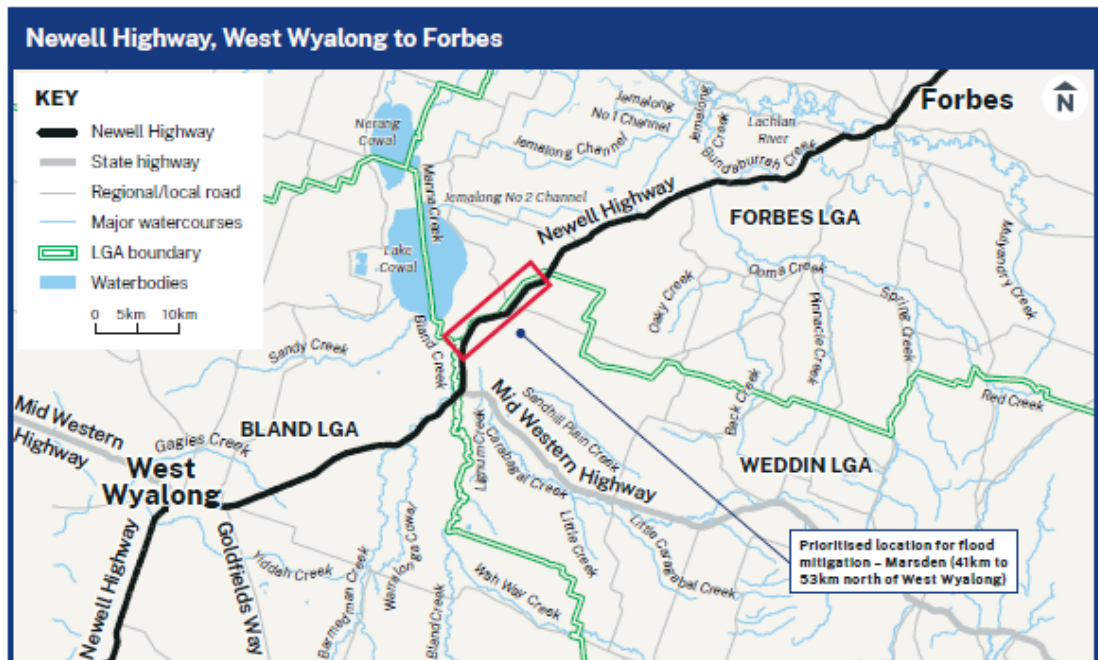
We are seeking community and stakeholder feedback to help inform the project design until 27 July 2023.

We are also seeking flood records and photos to support the flood modelling for the project.

You can scan the QR code to complete this survey online, or upload your records on our online engagement portal at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation)

If you prefer, you can email records to [newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au) or post them to us using the reply paid details provided.

Thank you for your contribution towards this important work.



Transport for NSW  
[nswroads.work/ww2f](http://nswroads.work/ww2f)



Appendix B. Survey

3. Do you have any flood records from the 2022 or previous flood events that you would be willing to share with us to assist our continuing flood studies?

e.g. photographs of floodwaters, rainfall records (daily or other), record of the height floodwaters reached such as a flood mark on a building or fence.

Yes  No

If yes, please provide a brief description of the flood records you will provide.

Text input area for flood records description.

You can upload your photos/flood records on our online engagement portal at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation), email them to [newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au) or post them to us via reply paid post. Thank you for sharing your records with us.

4. If necessary, could a Transport for NSW officer contact you to discuss the information you have provided?

Yes – I have provided my contact details below  No

5. Would you like to be added to our eNewsletter list to receive project updates?

Yes – I understand my details will be held only for the purposes of providing information on this project  
 No

Name  
Email address  
Address (optional)  
Phone number (optional)

Thank you for your input. We will continue to consult with you as the project progresses.

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the project team on:

1800 741 636

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



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 741 636.

[nswroads.work/ww2f](http://nswroads.work/ww2f)

June 2023 23.042

Transport for NSW ("we") is committed to protecting your personal information. Information collected will be used for the purpose of public consultation on the Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes project ("the project"). We may release reports which outline how community feedback on the project has been considered but will not disclose any personal information provided in those reports. We will not disclose your personal information to third parties unless you consent or as authorized by law. Providing personal information is voluntary, but if you do not provide it, we may not be able to communicate with you directly for future consultation opportunities. Your information will be managed by Transport for NSW in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. For further information, please visit [www.transport.nsw.gov.au/about-us/transport-privacy](http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/about-us/transport-privacy). If you wish to access, amend or remove the personal information we have collected, you can email [newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:newell.upgrade@transport.nsw.gov.au)



Appendix B. Survey

To mail this survey, fold along the dotted lines and seal with clear tape.  
Post your completed form (no stamp required) to the address below.

Fold here first

**Delivery Address:**  
PO Box 334  
PARKES NSW 2870

No stamp required  
if posted in Australia



Transport for NSW  
Newell Highway Flood Mitigation  
Survey  
Reply Paid 91070  
PARKES NSW 2870

Fold here second

## 6.3 Appendix C. A3/A4 poster

Transport for NSW

# Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes



Aerial view of flooding at Marsden, 27 October 2022

The Australian Government and the NSW Government have committed to flood mitigation works on the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes.

---

### Your input is important in helping Transport for NSW provide the best possible flood mitigation solutions.

We are seeking community and stakeholder feedback to help inform the project design until 27 July 2023.

We invite you to talk to the project team or scan the QR code to provide your input through our online engagement portal at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation)



### Talk to the project team

#### Face-to-face consultation sessions

**Monday 17 July 4.30pm–6.30pm**  
West Wyalong Services & Citizens Club (Auditorium)  
100 Monash Street, West Wyalong

**Tuesday 18 July 4.30pm–6.30pm**  
Club Forbes (Gallipoli Function Room)  
41-43 Templar Street, Forbes

#### Online consultation session

**Thursday 20 July 6.30pm–8pm**

Register for a consultation session at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation)



### Find out more

 1800 741 636

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

 [nswroads.work/ww2f](http://nswroads.work/ww2f)

23.044

## 6.4 Appendix D. Social posts

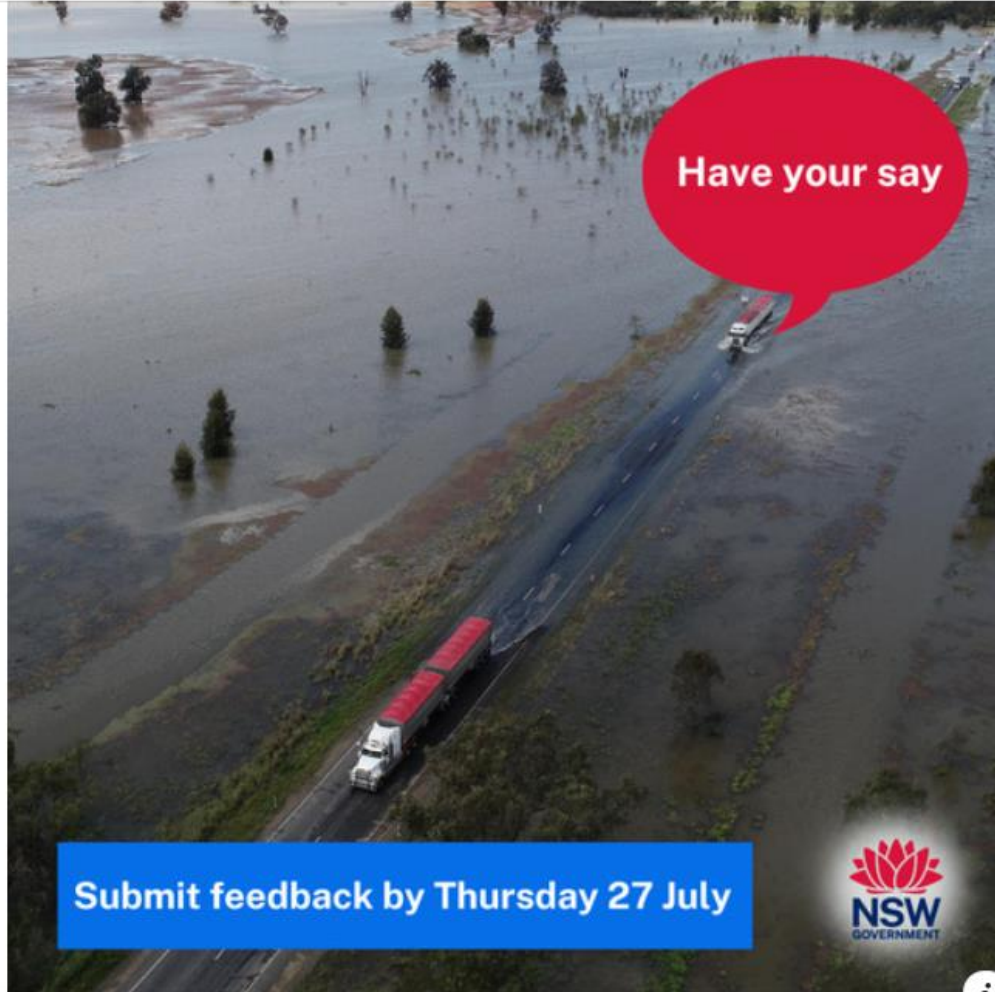
### Post 1 – 22- 28 June 2023



9 June at 09:48 · 🌐



👉 Have your say on the proposed flood mitigation plans for the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes.



[HAVEYOURSAY.NSW.GOV.AU](https://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au)

**Have your say** 👉

Survey closes 27 July

[Learn more](#)

👍👏 Amy Slessor and 60 others

58 comments 36 shares

Appendix D. Social posts

Post 2 – 3-10 July

**Transport for NSW** 9 June · 🌐

👤 Register for a consultation session and chat to the team working on the Newell Hwy Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes project.

**Community consultation sessions**

Monday 17 July 4.30pm–6.30pm  
West Wyalong Services & Citizens Club (Auditorium)  
100 Monash Street, West Wyalong

Tuesday 18 July 4.30pm–6.30pm  
Club Forbes (Gallipoli Function Room)  
41-43 Templar Street, Forbes

HAVEYOURSAY.NSW.GOV.AU  
**Consultation sessions**  
Register here 👉

[Learn more](#)

15 3 comments 12 shares

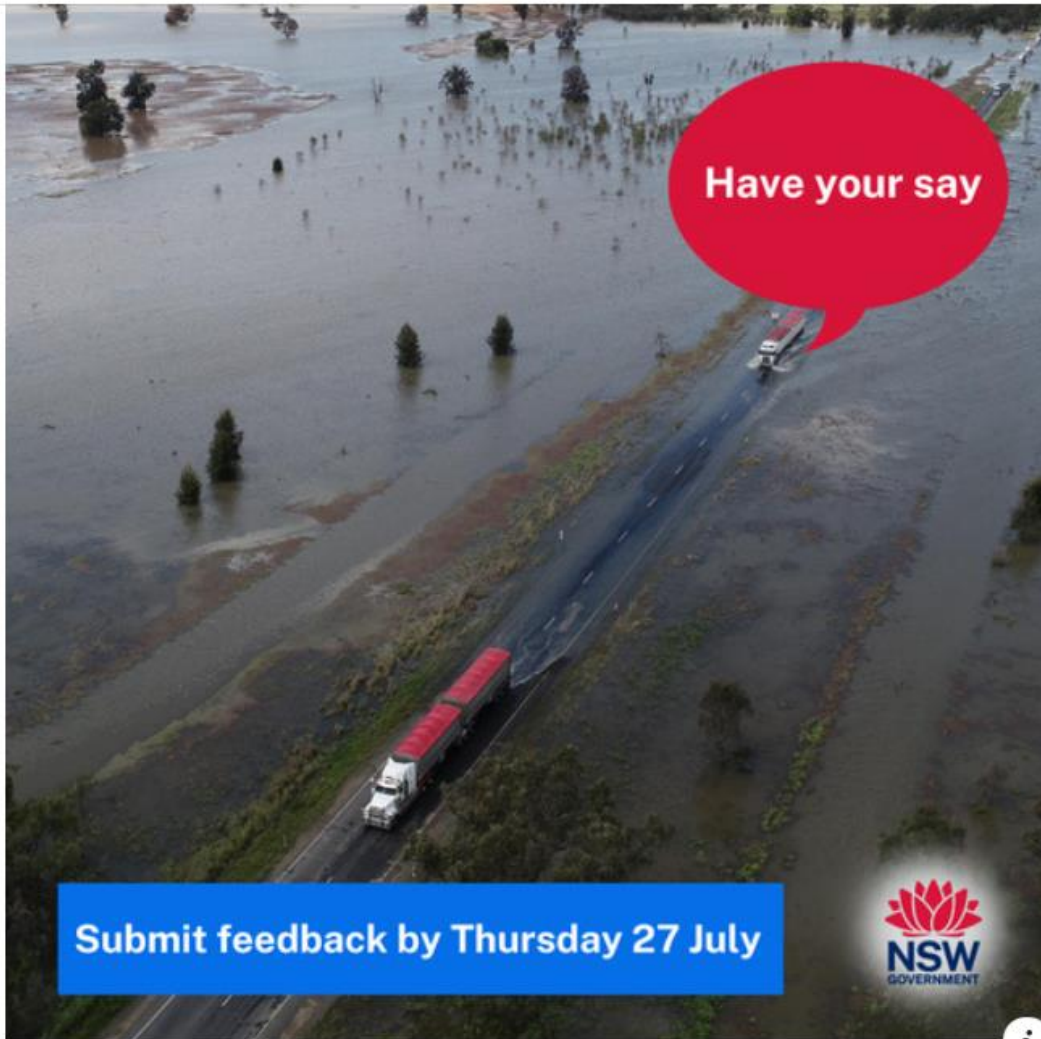


Appendix D. Social posts

Post 3 – 17-24 July 2023



🕒 Last chance! Have your say on the proposed Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes project before 27 July.



HAVEYOURSAY.NSW.GOV.AU

Have your say 👉

Survey closes 27 July

Learn more

👍 13

7 comments 4 shares

## 6.5 Appendix E. Media release

OFFICIAL



**The Hon Catherine King MP**  
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development and Local  
Government

**Senator Deborah O'Neill**  
Senator for New South Wales



**The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP**  
NSW Minister for Regional Transport and  
Roads

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

#### **FOCUS ON MARSDEN FOR NEWELL HIGHWAY FLOOD MITIGATION PROGRAM**

*Vision pack available [here](#)*

Valuable flood data collected during last year's seven-week closure of the Newell Highway will help guide a flood-mitigation program, alongside feedback from upcoming community consultation, aimed at reducing the length of future closures.

The Australian and New South Wales governments have committed to flood mitigation works on the highway, which runs through the flood plain between West Wyalong and Forbes.

Proposed treatments include installing box culverts (small bridges) to allow water to pass freely under the highway, raising the road level and laying a more robust pavement that would remain open to traffic for longer during flood events.

Initial repairs to flood damage from late 2022 on the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes are now complete. Work delivering overtaking lanes to improve safety on this section of the highway is continuing.

Transport for NSW will hold both face-to-face and online consultation sessions next month. Register your attendance or provide input through the online portal at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ww2f-flood-mitigation).

#### **Face-to-face consultation sessions:**

- **Monday 17 July 4.30pm–6.30pm**  
West Wyalong Services & Citizens Club (Auditorium)  
100 Monash Street, West Wyalong
- **Tuesday 18 July 4.30pm–6.30pm**  
Club Forbes (Gallipoli Function Room)  
41-43 Templar Street, Forbes

**Online consultation session: Thursday 20 July 6.30pm–8pm**

OFFICIAL

Appendix E. Media release

OFFICIAL

For more information on the Newell Highway Flood Mitigation – West Wyalong to Forbes project, visit [nswroads.work/ww2f](https://nswroads.work/ww2f).

**Quotes attributable to Federal Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Minister Catherine King:**

“Planners have analysed data from the 2022 flood to prioritise the 11-kilometre section of highway at Marsden that floods first and remains under water the longest.

“Local residents and freight operators will not be surprised to learn the flood modelling shows the Newell Highway is particularly susceptible to flooding by the Lake Cowal/Bland Creek catchment at Marsden.

“The studies show that the Marsden area flooded first, had the deepest water across the road and was where the highway stayed closed the longest.

“By making work around Marsden the priority for flood mitigation investment, we can ensure we significantly reduce the length of time the Newell Highway is closed during and after any future flood events.”

**Quotes attributable to NSW Regional Transport and Roads Minister Jenny Aitchison:**

“Understanding the experiences of road users impacted by the flooding event is an important exercise to do on top of the hydrological work.

“Transport for NSW is seeking feedback from community and stakeholders on the proposed flood mitigation as part of the planning process.

“We are launching an online engagement portal and interactive map to allow people to give us feedback on the project. The community can also help support our flood modelling and studies by sharing their flood records or photographs.

“We will be reaching out to landholders in the study area, and holding face-to-face and online consultation sessions where people can drop in to talk to the project team. The feedback, information and insights people share will be used to help inform the project design.”

**Quotes attributable to Federal Senator for New South Wales Deborah O’Neill:**

“We recognise that flood mitigation treatments can alter the local environment and all potential impacts of the project will be considered through the environmental assessment process.

“By reducing the length of time the highway is closed during future flood events, we will be helping to keep our communities connected, we will be supporting economic activity in Forbes, West Wyalong and surrounding districts, and we will be helping keep open one of the key routes for freight movements across regional NSW.”

20 JUNE 2023

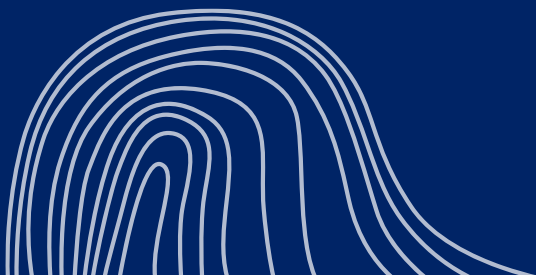
**MEDIA CONTACT:  
MINISTER KING – LYNDAL CURTIS 0497 847 212**

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

**MINISTER AITCINSON – WENDY FITZGIBBON 0408 427 540**





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