



# Hampden Bridge

## Community update

June 2025



Transport for NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and pays respect to Elders past and present.

Thank you to everyone who attended the drop-in session on Thursday 5 June at Kangaroo Valley Public Hall, to discuss the load limit reduction on Hampden Bridge.

The new reduced load limit of 23 tonnes is now in effect.

Transport for NSW acknowledges this load limit reduction from 42.5 tonnes has significant impacts on those who take heavy loads across the structure.

Regular inspections and maintenance on the bridge will continue. Over the next few months, some parts of the bridge that have been damaged will be repaired or replaced. The community will be informed in advance of any work. While the community may notice small changes on the bridge, this work will not affect the bridge's character or its heritage value.

Transport is also looking at temporary options to enable the crossing to return to a 42.5 tonne load limit as soon as possible. These temporary options may involve strengthening the existing bridge, installing a temporary crossing next to the existing bridge or developing a detour that crosses the river at a different location. These options are being assessed, and a preferred option will be confirmed within three months, although initial assessments indicate temporary strengthening of the existing bridge is unlikely to be possible. If one of these temporary options is found to be viable, it may provide a river crossing with a 42.5 tonne load limit while work continues to develop a longer-term solution. This will take between nine months to two years to complete, depending on the preferred option.

Concurrently, options to upgrade the existing bridge to a 42.5 tonne load limit are also being developed. This will require upgrades and strengthening to the existing bridge, pending heritage and engineering approvals. We will also explore and evaluate options for a new crossing against upgrades to the existing bridge. This work is complex, and it is expected these investigations could take up to 12 months.

We understand this load limit reduction has impacted your community. We genuinely appreciate your patience and understanding as we work towards finding a solution that will serve the community safely and efficiently into the future. We greatly value your feedback and will keep you updated as more information becomes available.

## Questions and answers from the community

A number of questions were raised at the community drop-in session, many of which were similar in nature. Answers to these questions can be found below. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact us.

**Email:** [HampdenBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HampdenBridge@transport.nsw.gov.au)

**Phone:** 1800 317 290

**Post:** PO Box 477, Wollongong NSW 2520



## Temporary traffic arrangements at the bridge

### What is going to happen with the 10 km/h speed limit?

The 10 km/h speed limit was introduced as a mitigation measure to maintain safety for all road users. Following engagement with our Freight Branch, a decision has been made to retain the 10 km/h speed limit until a solution is found. This is to ensure the safety of all customers who are crossing the bridge.

## Previous bridge work and investigations

### Why hasn't Transport tried to repair the old bridge or build a new bridge sooner?

Transport has carried out extensive maintenance work and investigations over the past 30 years to help preserve the bridge in its current form.

### Why didn't Transport anticipate the bridge's deterioration through previous assessments?

Transport has consistently carried out work with the main objective of preserving the bridge in its existing form, as required due to its State Heritage Register status. This has included regular maintenance, structural assessments and targeted upgrades designed to extend the life of the bridge while maintaining its character and functionality.

New advanced engineering findings have concluded the bridge is overloaded, causing ongoing damage to the critical elements of the bridge. These findings mean a bridge load limit must be imposed for public safety and to ensure the bridge remains open into the future.

Transport is exploring three temporary options to enable the crossing to return to a 42.5 tonne load limit as soon as possible, as well as concurrently looking at options to upgrade the existing bridge to a 42.5 tonne load limit. We are also investigating the possibility of building a new bridge.

### Have environmental assessments been carried out in the last 10 years?

Environmental and heritage assessments have been carried out for all work completed to date, in line with NSW Government legislative requirements. As Australia's only surviving colonial road suspension bridge, Hampden Bridge is listed on State Heritage, National Trust Heritage and Engineers Australia registers.

All maintenance work has been carried out in accordance with the approved Heritage Conservation Management Plan.

## Compensation

### Is compensation available for affected community members? What assistance will be provided?

The Hampden Bridge load reduction does not trigger an automatic right to compensation for road users. Transport does not consider that reducing the load limit on Hampden Bridge gives rise to an actionable claim.

Should a member of the public, upon consideration of the above, believe they have incurred an actionable loss, they should write to the Transport for NSW Liability Claims & Recoveries team at [public.liability@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:public.liability@transport.nsw.gov.au) setting out the basis of their claim and providing supporting evidence that demonstrates the losses that are being claimed.

## Road closures

### How should the community manage Transport's planned road closures?

Transport carries out regular routine maintenance work on Macquarie Pass, Mount Ousley Road and Picton Road, which require temporary road closures three to four times a year. These planned maintenance closures are integral to maintaining safety for road users and are scheduled to minimise impacts and avoid unplanned closures in peak times.

To receive advanced updates about these closures, please subscribe to our mailing list by emailing [southprojects@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:southprojects@transport.nsw.gov.au) with your name and the works/roads on which you would like to be updated. We understand you may need to further plan your journey because of these closures, and we encourage you to plan ahead using [livetraffic.com.au](http://livetraffic.com.au).

## Options under consideration

### Is the old downstream bridge site being considered for a new bridge?

Transport is aware of the old bridge location. All potential alignments will be considered as part of any investigations into a new bridge to confirm the best location.

### Can modern, lightweight materials be used to strengthen the bridge?

As a significant State Heritage Register-listed structure with an approved Heritage Conservation Management Plan, Hampden Bridge is subject to limitations on the types of materials which can be used to repair the bridge. As part of the development process to upgrade the existing bridge, all options for material types and sizes will be assessed and discussed with heritage experts to understand what can and can't be used in upgrading the bridge.

### **When will the community know what option is viable?**

Transport is investigating three temporary options to restore the 42.5 tonne load limit as soon as possible: strengthening the existing bridge, installing a temporary crossing next to the existing bridge and developing a detour route that crosses the river at a different location. These options are being assessed for viability and, once a preferred option is confirmed, will be shared with the local community and industry stakeholders. It is anticipated a temporary option will be finalised within three months.

### **Could a bridge be built offsite?**

Parts of a temporary bridge could be built offsite and delivered to site for installation. However, some bridge components, including the supports and piers, must be built on site. Development and approvals for the temporary bridge are the items that would take the most time to complete.

Similarly, upgraded components for the existing bridge could be built offsite to reduce construction timeframes.

Construction methodology will be evaluated during the development process to confirm the approach that minimises impacts to the community.

### **How much would a full repair of the existing bridge cost?**

Cost estimates are not yet available and will be determined once upgrade options are finalised. We will share this information with the community as planning and development progresses and more information becomes available.

Funding for the repairs of the existing bridge would need to be prioritised against other Transport projects across the state.

### **When will the community receive an update on findings and next steps?**

We are prioritising the assessment of options to return the bridge load limit to 42.5 tonne as soon as possible. Once a preferred option is confirmed,

we will share this information with the community and industry stakeholders. A preferred temporary option is expected to be confirmed within three months.

### **Is repairing the old bridge a priority over building a new one?**

Transport's highest priority is to repair the State Heritage-listed bridge as per legislative requirements. Additionally, Transport is considering all available options to allow the river crossing to return to a 42.5 tonne load limit. We are committed to finding the most effective solution while respecting the bridge's heritage significance.

### **Does Transport own all the land it needs?**

As planning for temporary and long-term solutions is in the very early stages, land requirements cannot be confirmed at this stage.

### **What is the timeline for a replacement bridge?**

At this stage, no final decision has been made on a new bridge. Funding for a new bridge would need to be prioritised against other Transport projects across the state.

Transport is exploring and evaluating long-term options that include an existing bridge upgrade or a new bridge. It is anticipated investigations to confirm the preferred longer-term option for the river crossing could take up to 12 months. If a new bridge is approved, development and construction could take from five to eight years.

Transport acknowledges the community and users of the bridge are seeking more detail about the process involved in delivering a potential new bridge. We are currently in the early stages of planning and do not have definitive answers regarding timelines. This remains subject to ongoing planning, technical assessments and community consultation.

### **When did bridge option investigations begin?**

Investigations into options for the bridge started once the load limit reduction was confirmed.

### **Is there a dedicated team working exclusively on this bridge project?**

The project is being managed by an experienced project manager with extensive bridge project development expertise, supported by technical staff across various areas, including structural engineers and environmental and heritage specialists.

## PULL OVER BAYS

**Can parking areas be provided on each side of the bridge to load and unload equipment? Will traffic control operate 24 hours a day to ensure safety while equipment crosses the bridge?**

Parking areas are now being investigated following community feedback.

Individual requirements to unload and 'walk' equipment across the bridge, including vehicle types and weights, must be submitted to Transport.

Rubber tyre and track vehicles may be considered depending on circumstances, however metal track vehicles cannot cross due to potential bridge deck damage.

## ENFORCEMENT

**How will vehicle weights be monitored and the 23 tonne load limit enforced?**

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) enforces the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), including road compliance and enforcement, mass and dimension limits and the Heavy Vehicle Safety Stations Program. The NHVR is aware of the upcoming load reduction on Hampden Bridge and Transport cannot comment on their enforcement activities.

Breaches can be reported to the NHVR online or by phone on 13 NHVR (13 64 87). The NHVR also offers a confidential reporting line 1800 931 785. More information can be found [here](#).

NSW Police can also enforce mass and dimension offences. Breaches and incidents can be reported to Nowra Police Station or via the Police Assistance Line (PAL) on phone 131 444.

**What penalties apply for exceeding the load limit?**

Loading breach categories are outlined in Part 4.4 Division 2 of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL). A link to this information is provided [here](#).

## PERMITS

**Why can't a permit system be implemented?**

Under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) can only issue permits for restricted access heavy vehicles (Class 1, 2 or 3). Hampden Bridge is gazetted for general access vehicles and no permit authority exists under current legislation. More information on general access and restricted access heavy vehicles can be found [here](#).

**Can emergency service vehicles over 23 tonnes cross the bridge?**

Emergency service vehicles over 23 tonnes are allowed to cross the bridge in an emergency under emergency services legislation. They are not permitted to cross the bridge under non-emergency situations.

If a vehicle needs to cross the bridge during an emergency, we ask they inform us following the event so we can inspect the bridge for any damage. Emergency service vehicles can contact us at [projectservices@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:projectservices@transport.nsw.gov.au).