The Australian and NSW governments are providing $120 million to build a New England Highway bypass of Scone to improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for road users. This project update provides information about planning progress and upcoming activities.

**Background**

The New England Highway is part of the inland Sydney to Brisbane National Land Transport Network and is the primary route connecting the Upper Hunter with Maitland and Newcastle. The highway south of Scone carries 8400 vehicles a day, peaking in town at 14,000.

In April 2014, the Australian and NSW governments announced that the preferred option for the future upgrade of the New England Highway at Scone would include a highway bypass. The bypass proposal was approved in April 2016 and the Australian and NSW governments then announced further funding to bring the total commitment to $120 million to build the Scone bypass.

**Features**

Key features of the bypass include:

- a two lane highway bypass to the west of Scone passing through the Scone Golf Course
- two bridges – one over the rail line south of Scone and another over Kingdon and Liverpool streets
- access to and from the bypass to the north and south of town and midway at St Aubins Street providing for all turning movements.

**Benefits**

The bypass will remove a large number of heavy vehicles from the town centre. This will improve:

- traffic flow and amenity for local traffic
- travel times for freight and long distance traffic
- safety for all road users.

The bypass also provides an alternative route for road users wanting to travel across town uninterrupted by rail operations.
Community engagement

The community was invited to provide feedback on the environmental assessment for the bypass from December 2015 to February 2016. We received 211 submissions during the public display and a number of improvements were made to the bypass concept design after feedback from the community such as:

- **Southern and northern intersections**
  The southern bypass intersection has been modified to an interchange to improve road safety and allow for all turning movements. An underpass has been added to allow vehicles travelling from the south to access Scone without turning across oncoming traffic. This two-way underpass will also allow vehicles exiting Scone to access the bypass to travel north.

  The northern bypass intersection has been modified to allow for all turning movements. A right turn lane has been added to the bypass, allowing vehicles travelling north on the bypass to turn into Scone at the northern intersection. At this intersection, the right turn movements in and out of Scone have been separated to improve safety.

- **St Aubins Street intersection**
  The southbound left turn lane from the bypass into Scone has been moved further away from the intersection to improve visibility and safety for vehicles turning from St Aubins Street onto the bypass.

- **Access to and from private property**
  Changes have been made to improve safe access to and from properties near the southern and northern ends of the bypass.

- **Connection between the Scone Golf Club and the golf course**
  Connection between the club house and golf course has been provided under the first span of the bridge over Parsons Gully. We will continue to liaise with the Scone Golf Club and Upper Hunter Shire Council as the project progresses.

The Scone Bypass Submissions Report (July 2016) summarises community comments, our responses and details of changes to the concept design received during the display. A copy of this report can be viewed or downloaded from the Roads and Maritime website at [rms.nsw.gov.au](http://rms.nsw.gov.au).

Progress update

The environmental assessment for the bypass was finalised in April 2016.

Since then detailed design is progressing well and we have carried out a number of additional field investigations along the bypass including:

- geotechnical investigations to help us better understand ground conditions
- surveying to confirm property boundaries, existing ground features and surface levels
- work to locate underground utilities
- noise investigations.

These additional investigations were carried out to help with detailed design of the bypass.

Upcoming activities

We will be carrying out further field investigations in 2017 to help finalise detailed design of the bypass. We will continue to inform nearby residents and businesses before these activities take place.

Property acquisition negotiations with impacted land owners are continuing. All land owners subject to either full or partial acquisition have been contacted and we are aiming to finalise acquisitions in 2017.

Registrations of interest from prequalified construction contractors to build the bypass were invited from 15 November 2016 to 20 December 2016. Shortlisted companies will be invited to submit tenders in mid-2017.
Bypass development process

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Rail bridge

We displayed three town centre rail bridge options to the community from December 2015 to February 2016. There was limited support for the displayed options with some submissions questioning the need for the rail bridge once the bypass is completed and others suggesting a bridge over the rail line to the north of town may be more appropriate. We have published a community consultation report which summarises community feedback and our responses to the issues raised. A copy of this report can be viewed or downloaded from the Roads and Maritime website at rms.nsw.gov.au.

We are continuing to work with Upper Hunter Shire Council to consider options for the rail bridge and expect to provide an update to the community in 2017.

Contact Us

For more information about the Scone bypass or to join our mailing list (email or post), please contact our Project Manager, Mark Cure:

- 1800 870 751 (during business hours)
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For more information about the Scone rail bridge, please contact our Project Manager, Phil Davidson, on 1800 870 751, email Philip.Davidson@rms.nsw.gov.au or visit rms.nsw.gov.au

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