The information in this sheet was developed to provide more detail about the Rankin Park to Jesmond project and to respond to questions raised in community feedback about the project.

The Rankin Park to Jesmond project is the fifth and final section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass. The 3.4 kilometre bypass would be built between Lookout Road, New Lambton Heights, and Newcastle Road at Jesmond, to the west of John Hunter Hospital. Funding to complete the project was announced by the NSW Government in June 2014.

In February 2015, Roads and Maritime Services invited stakeholders and the community to provide early feedback on the project to help us understand potential issues for consideration in developing and refining the design. The information below was developed to provide more detail about the project and to respond to questions raised in the community feedback.

**Project need and benefits**

**Why is the project needed and what are its benefits?**
The project would finalise construction of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass, which provides improved traffic flows across the western suburbs of Newcastle and connects key regional destinations such as Bennetts Green, Charlestown and Jesmond shopping centres, John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle University and the Pacific Highway.

The Rankin Park to Jesmond section of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass would provide traffic relief to key parts of the surrounding road network, in particular the existing route of Lookout Road, Croudace Street and Newcastle Road.

The road network surrounding the project currently has high levels of existing traffic congestion and delays at key intersections. These issues are likely to worsen in the future as traffic volumes increase, with existing traffic volumes along this route currently around 40,000 to 60,000 vehicles per day. The Rankin Park to Jesmond project is expected to deliver major benefits to motorists by providing improved north-south travel conditions and bypass 11 sets of traffic lights along the existing route.

**Current status and design review**

**What do the terms “preferred route corridor”, “strategic design”, “refined strategic design” “concept design” and “detailed design” refer to in relation to the Rankin Park to Jesmond project?**
In 2006 Roads and Maritime completed a route options study. The study identified a ‘preferred route corridor’ with a strategic design developed to fit within the corridor. The strategic design was developed in sufficient detail to establish engineering feasibility and to allow a realistic evaluation of design aspects such as vertical and horizontal alignment of the bypass.
In 2007 Roads and Maritime displayed the preferred route corridor and strategic design for comment. In 2008 Roads and Maritime released a Submissions Report to provide responses to submissions received during the 2007 public display and how they had been considered in finalising the preferred route corridor.

The preferred route corridor was chosen because it provided the best overall balance between traffic, environmental, geotechnical, engineering and economic considerations.

The preferred route corridor was subsequently updated in Newcastle City Council’s Local Environmental Plan (LEP) so that the corridor was protected for the future road bypass.

In June 2014, construction funding was announced for Rankin Park to Jesmond. A key task following the funding announcement was to collect updated environmental and engineering data for the new bypass. This includes undertaking detailed environmental surveys throughout the bushland corridor and the collection of various forms of traffic and engineering data. This is an ongoing process with additional data collected to inform the strategic design review as it progresses.

The updated environmental and engineering data is an input to the detailed review of the strategic design (2007) in order to develop a ‘refined strategic design’ – this is the work currently being undertaken by Roads and Maritime. The refined strategic design is expected to be displayed for community comment later this year.

The refined strategic design will be more detailed than then previous strategic design (2007) produced for the Rankin Park to Jesmond project. However, it is not the final design and the community will be encouraged to view and comment on the refined strategic design and its supporting documentation that will be provided as part of the public display.

Following the display of the refined strategic design, the project team will consider community feedback which will be used as input to the next design phase being concept design and environmental assessment. The concept design goes into more detail to allow a thorough assessment of potential environmental impacts to be undertaken. For example, this phase will utilise the results of geotechnical investigations for the design of bridge structures and will utilise results of noise testing for the design of any noise mitigation works required as part of the project.

As part of the development of the concept design and environmental assessment for the project, potential impacts to the surrounding environment will be assessed and opportunities to avoid and minimise impacts will be further investigated. Roads and Maritime will continue to refine the design further taking into account feedback from the refined strategic design display and any additional engineering and environmental information once obtained from site investigations. The intent is to produce an integrated ‘concept design’ that responds to environmental, engineering and community considerations.

The concept design and environmental assessment will be exhibited for public comment and this is expected by mid-2016.

Subject to approval of the environmental assessment by the Minister for Planning, the project will then move from ‘concept design’ into ‘detailed design’ phase. The detailed design will further progress the design into detailed plans suitable for construction purposes. Community consultation will continue throughout all these design phases.

In summary, the development of the design for the Rankin Park to Jesmond project will step through:
- Preferred route corridor
- Strategic design
- Refined strategic design
- Concept design and
- Detailed design.
Roads and Maritime is currently reviewing the strategic design, which is the early stages of the project design cycle.

**What is Roads and Maritime currently doing on the Rankin Park to Jesmond project?**

Roads and Maritime is currently reviewing and refining the strategic design which was displayed in 2007 to develop a refined strategic design. The refined strategic design is expected to be displayed for community comment later this year.

A range of environmental and engineering studies are being done as part of this work including:

- Road and bridge design
- Environmental surveys
- Traffic data collection and traffic modelling
- Utility and ground surveys
- Geotechnical investigations, including underground mine workings.

The project poses challenges in both design and construction due to the area’s heavily vegetated steep terrain, historic mine workings, endangered flora and fauna, proximity to local residences, and high volumes of traffic where the project connects to the existing road network at the northern and southern ends of the project.

The strategic design review subsequently involves consideration of a range of environmental, engineering and community issues including:

- Local ecology and environmental impacts
- Access and connectivity across the corridor for both animals and people
- Proximity of residents including potential noise, traffic and visual impacts
- Access requirements for John Hunter Hospital
- Undulating terrain and design fit into the landform
- Geotechnical risks including mine subsidence
- Design features such as grades, typical cross sections and design speed
- Constructability and future maintenance requirements
- Provision for pedestrians and cyclists
- Design layout of the southern interchange at Lookout Road and McCaffrey Drive, including a review of the need for a northbound on-ramp and/or southbound off-ramp
- Design layout of the northern interchange at Newcastle Road and Newcastle Inner City Bypass.

**In the 2007 strategic design why doesn't the southern interchange provide a northbound on-ramp from McCaffrey Drive to the bypass or a southbound off-ramp from the bypass to McCaffrey Drive and Lookout Road?**

The 2007 strategic design included a southern interchange at Lookout Road and McCaffrey Drive with Lookout Road/McCaffrey Drive connected as a bridge over the bypass. This layout would separate the north-south traffic on the bypass and the east-west traffic on Lookout Road/McCaffrey Drive at this location.

The 2007 strategic design did not provide a northbound on-ramp from McCaffrey Drive to the bypass or a southbound off-ramp from the bypass to McCaffrey Drive and Lookout Road. This was due to:

- The traffic modelling that was done as part of the preparation of the 2007 strategic design indicated the forecast traffic volumes using both ramps would be low and therefore their inclusion in the project could not be economically justified.

- The steep grade of the proposed bypass under McCaffrey Drive and the undulating topography on the northern side of McCaffrey Drive make the provision of the northbound on-ramp and southbound off-ramp at this location difficult for design and construction. These factors also make the ramps costly.
However the current review of the 2007 strategic design involves a detailed review of the design and configuration of this southern interchange including the need and justification for providing a northbound on-ramp and/or southbound off-ramp.

This review includes:
- Assessing the forecast usage of the ramps based on updated traffic surveys and traffic modelling
- Assessing traffic impacts on the surrounding road network, with analysis based on providing ramps and analysis based on not providing the ramps. This includes assessing increases or decreases to traffic volumes on surrounding roads such as Grandview Road, Marshall Street, Cardiff Road and McCaffrey Drive
- Developing designs for the ramps to estimate their cost and to assess environmental impacts.

**What is the project team doing in relation to the potential connection from the bypass to the John Hunter Hospital?**

Development of the refined strategic design of the bypass includes investigation in consultation with NSW Health Infrastructure and Hunter New England Local Health District regarding the need, form and function of the proposed western access to John Hunter Hospital.

The outcome of the investigation and related consultation will be included in the refined strategic design which is expected to be displayed for community comment later this year.

**Community engagement**

**How is Roads and Maritime engaging with stakeholders and community during the development of the Rankin Park to Jesmond project?**

Roads and Maritime is committed to consulting with stakeholders and the community to identify any potential issues or concerns relating to the project.

Stakeholders and the community will be kept informed of the development of the project through regular project updates. Project updates will be posted on the project website and delivered to households in and around the study area. Interested stakeholders and community members can be added to a mailing list by registering their details on the project website or by contacting the project team by email or phone.

The project team is also consulting with key local stakeholders including Newcastle City Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, John Hunter Hospital (NSW Health Infrastructure and Hunter New England Local Health District), Fire & Rescue NSW (bushfire management), and utility authorities.

Key previous community consultation and communication activities included:
- Display of the preferred route corridor for comment (February 2007)
- Release of Newcastle Inner City Bypass Rankin Park to Jesmond Submissions Report (March 2008)
- Community update (June 2014)
- Project update (February 2015)
- Community information drop-in sessions at Jesmond (March 2015)
- Project update (May 2015)

Stakeholders and the community will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the refined strategic design, concept design and environmental assessment. Future community consultation activities include:
- Display the refined strategic design for comment later this year
- Display the concept design and environmental assessment for comment by mid-2016. (This display will be undertaken and managed by the NSW Department of Planning & Environment).

The public displays will be promoted and advertised to provide advanced notice of upcoming dates. Roads and Maritime will continue to offer the following contact points for project information as part of ongoing community engagement:
Assessing and managing potential environmental impacts

How will the project’s environmental impacts be assessed?
The Rankin Park to Jesmond project will be assessed under a specific act and will involve NSW Government agencies outside of Roads and Maritime Services.

In December 2014 Roads and Maritime Services submitted a State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) Application to the Department of Planning and Environment (DP&E) for the project to be assessed under Part 5.1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A) EP&A Act. The SSI Application is available to view on the Roads and Maritime website.

Roads and Maritime is required to produce an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and approval from the Minister for Planning would be sought. The EIS reviews the potential environmental, economic and social benefits of the project’s concept design. It also assesses the potential impacts of the project and details how the concept design avoids or minimises effects on the environment and local communities. Where impacts cannot be avoided, management measures are identified to minimise these impacts.

The environmental assessment also considers a detailed description of the construction work required for the project and describes how the project would function once it is built.

What is a State Significant Infrastructure application?
Part 5.1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 deals with the assessment and approval of State Significant Infrastructure (SSI). Major infrastructure proposals, in particular linear infrastructure projects such as roads, railway lines or pipes, may be considered as State Significant Infrastructure. The Minister for Planning’s approval is required for SSI projects, with input sought from local government, other NSW Government agencies and the community as part of the assessment process.


The SSI application provides detailed information on the project, results from preliminary biodiversity surveys within the bushland corridor, potential impacts from the project, as well as future studies proposed to be undertaken to assess potential impacts and associated mitigation measures.

As a result of the SSI application the Department of Planning & Environment issued the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) in March 2015.

In preparing the SEARs, State government agencies and local authorities were consulted to identify key issues and environmental assessment requirements. The EIS will include an environmental impact assessment consistent with the SEARs. The issued SEARs are placed on the NSW Department of Planning & Environment’s website at http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6888.

What will Roads and Maritime do about noise and other impacts from the new bypass project?
Roads and Maritime is committed to avoiding or minimising the potential effects of projects on the environment and local communities. As part of the development of the concept design and environmental assessment for the project, potential impacts to the surrounding environment will be
assessed and opportunities to avoid and minimise impacts will be further investigated.

The following studies will be undertaken as part of developing the concept design and environmental impact assessment.

**Noise and vibration**
A noise and vibration study will be prepared to provide a detailed assessment of potential noise impacts of the project consistent with the NSW Road Noise Policy (DECCW 2011). This work will include noise modelling, which will be used to determine noise levels as a result of the project and if noise mitigation is required. At this stage it is too early to predict in detail the exact type and nature of noise mitigation that will be required for the Rankin Park to Jesmond project. More information regarding noise is available in the Roads and Maritime Noise Fact Sheet (December 2011) [http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/projects/factsheet-noise.pdf](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/projects/factsheet-noise.pdf)

**Biodiversity**
Biodiversity surveys and assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the project will be prepared, with specific reference to vegetation and habitat clearing and any related impacts to threatened species. This will be undertaken in accordance with the NSW Office of Heritage and Environment’s Framework for Biodiversity Assessment (NSW Office of Heritage and Environment (2014). Since the June 2014 funding announcement Roads and Maritime has undertaken various fauna and flora surveys in the bushland area and is consulting with key stakeholders such as Newcastle City Council, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and local Landcare groups.

**Traffic and transportation**
A traffic and transport study will be prepared to provide a detailed assessment of the project including potential impacts on the surrounding road network.

Since the June 2014 funding announcement Roads and Maritime has been undertaking various traffic surveys to assist with providing a detailed assessment of existing and predicted traffic movements. This traffic assessment is a major input into the review and development of the southern interchange at Lookout Road and McCaffrey Drive and the northern interchange at Newcastle Road, Jesmond.

**Visual Amenity**
A Landscape Character and Visual impact study will be prepared to assess visual impacts and assist in developing the concept design and mitigation measures to integrate the design with the existing landform and landscape.

**Connectivity and access to bushland corridor**
The potential impacts on the use of the bushland corridor by recreational activities (walking and cycling) will be assessed, including consideration of existing and proposed pedestrians/bicycle networks.

**Air quality**
Studies will assess the potential construction and operational impacts on local and regional air quality, including details of the proposed mitigation measures to prevent the generation and emission of dust.

**Drainage and water quality**
Drainage investigations will be done to assess and manage potential impacts on existing flood regimes and downstream receivers. Water quality assessment of the potential erosion, sediment and water quality impacts will be undertaken and mitigation measures to manage water pollution during construction and operation will be examined.

**Cyclists**
A traffic and transport study will be developed to provide a detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the surrounding road network, including maintaining existing cycle routes and consideration of opportunities to integrate recreational and commuter cycleway and pedestrian elements with existing and proposed networks, including those identified in the Newcastle Cycling Strategy and Action Plan.
Geotechnical investigations
Geotechnical investigations are required both within the bushland area and at the southern connections to Lookout Road, New Lambton Heights, and at the northern end near Newcastle Road, Jesmond. Geotechnical investigations are an important part of planning activities and the findings will be used to inform the concept design and environmental assessment. Geotechnical investigations started in the bushland area in March 2015 and will continue during the development of the project.

Underground mine workings
The majority of the project lies over abandoned mine workings dating back to the late 1800s. Thorough analysis of the geotechnical investigations will be carried out to determine the extent and condition of mine workings and the need and type of any remedial work required to eliminate the risk of subsidence. Roads and Maritime has experience in this area from projects such as the Hunter Expressway and will undertake investigations and designs in consultation with the NSW Mine Subsidence Board.

Property acquisition and access
What is the current status of property acquisitions for the project?

Will Roads and Maritime Service need to enter my property?
Roads and Maritime Services sometimes need to enter private property to carry out field investigations to assist in the development of road projects. You will be contacted by Roads and Maritime if access to your property is required. A fact sheet answering some commonly asked questions about why Roads and Maritime would need to access properties and the rights of landowners in this situation is available here [http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/projects/factsheet-access-to-private-property.pdf](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/projects/factsheet-access-to-private-property.pdf)

Key dates
Key project milestones and timeframes include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Expected Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW Government announces funding to complete the Rankin Park to Jesmond project</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI Application submitted to Department of Planning and Environment</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI Application made available on DP&amp;E website.</td>
<td>January 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) received from Department of Planning and Environment</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refined strategic design placed on public display for comment</td>
<td>Second half of 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Assessment placed on public display for comment. This display will be undertaken and managed by the</td>
<td>Mid 2016</td>
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</table>
Submission report placed on public display for information | Post EA display
---|---
Minister for Planning Infrastructure decides on project approval | Late 2016
Construction to commence (subject to project approval) | Late 2017

**Further information**

If you require further information please contact the project team by:

Email: rp2j.community@aurecongroup.com

Project information line: 1800 818 433


Mail: Roads and Maritime Services, Hunter Regional Office, Locked Bag 2030 Newcastle NSW 2300