Great Western Highway upgrade, Katoomba to Mount Victoria

A series of four community workshops were held in February to identify and discuss safety issues and concerns on the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Mount Victoria as part of the $250 million revised investment package for the highway.

These meeting notes consolidate the question and answer discussions and present the feedback received from the first workshop, held in Mount Victoria.

Workshop details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Wednesday 13 February 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>6.30 – 8.30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Mount Victoria Public School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendees</td>
<td>27 community members attended</td>
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Purpose of the meeting

- Provide background and update of the upgrade of the Great Western Highway between Mount Victoria and Lithgow
- Explain the revised investment package and why the project has been extended to Katoomba
- Provide existing information on safety and crash statistics from police reports
- Find out what the community’s safety issues are.

Summary of discussion

Following short presentations by Peter Dearden Regional Manager, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) and Hilary Johnson Road Safety Manager, RMS, questions were taken from the room. The following table provides a summary of the discussion, including questions and answers, held at the workshop. Please contact the project team on 1800 035 733 if the matters you raised at the workshop have not been included below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Comments / questions</th>
<th>RMS response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fog is a significant factor.</td>
<td>The police crash reports contain a more detailed breakdown of factors involved in crashes (including fog and other weather conditions). A top line summary of the most significant factors has been provided for this presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Why is Mount Victoria township not included in any of the sections?</td>
<td>The Mount Victoria township was included in the previous Mount Victoria to Lithgow work. This project covers the section of the Great Western Highway from Mount Victoria (from the edge of the previous study area) to Katoomba.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Based on the statistics presented, approximately half the crashes seemed to have been caused by speed – this is a significant proportion and speeding is obviously a major safety issue.</td>
<td>Speed is recorded in the police report where the speed was considered to be unsafe for the conditions at the time of the crash. The driver was not necessarily exceeding the legal speed limit in all cases where speed was listed as a contributing factor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Are you looking at data regarding the types of vehicles involved in the reported crashes? The vehicle type (i.e. truck, car, motorcycle) is an important consideration, particularly where speeding is concerned.</td>
<td>The breakdown of vehicle type is provided in the police crash reports and that is something that RMS is looking at and will be taking into account when planning for the future safety upgrades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>As a pedestrian I see a lot of speeding on the highway, and significant numbers of vehicles driving through red traffic lights.</td>
<td>Your comment has been noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Speed is the overriding problem. Has the implementation of speed cameras been properly considered on this stretch of highway? The introduction of fixed, marked speed cameras would solve the issue.</td>
<td>There is currently a heavy police presence on the highway and levels of enforcement have greatly increased. Mobile speed camera vans are widely used but there are no current plans to install fixed speed cameras between Mount Victoria and Katoomba. RMS will take advice from the police regarding the future need for speed cameras.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Speed was likely to have played a part in the serious truck accident in Blackheath last week. From a local point of view, we think a speed camera on the Govetts Leap Road intersection would solve a lot of problems.</td>
<td>Your comment has been noted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Item 8
Turning right from the highway into Govetts Leap Road is a bit of an issue. The right turn lane is short and I don’t feel safe waiting in the middle of the road, so often turn left, do a U-turn and go straight across the intersection instead.

Your comment has been noted.

### Item 9
Cars and trucks always run the red light outside the pub at Station Street in Mount Victoria. A camera on these lights or a speed camera would generate a lot of revenue!

Your comment has been noted.

### Item 10
Wildlife is a factor on the highway – would you consider fencing?

Given the geographical location of the highway and its proximity to the National Park, the presence of wildlife between townships is highly likely. Fencing would only be considered around known wildlife corridor locations, where it impacts on road safety.

### Item 11
Momentum is also a factor to consider in relation to trucks and the effects of speed for various vehicle types.

The recent RMS ‘Road Rules’ campaign picked up on this issue of momentum, in the area of safe gaps between vehicles.

### Item 12
In Blackheath the majority of accidents occur outside the shops.

The vast majority of these crashes are small manoeuvring incidents and low speed ‘bumps’ rather than high speed or serious crashes. The narrowness of the road at this point also contributes to the issue.

### Community feedback

The 13.5 kilometre section of highway from Katoomba to Mount Victoria was split into five sections for the purposes of the workshop. Attendees were asked to tell us their safety issues on the highway for each of the five sections. The following maps present the community comments received under the following categories (as used on the RMS online collaborative map).
Section 1 Mount Victoria to Blackheath

General comments for this section:

- Great concern about Station Street intersection. To access highway I turn right at Station Street and often sit waiting to turn when a truck thunders past on each side of my vehicle. The continued use of the intersection is an accident in waiting!
- Drain on right as highway meets old highway opposite drive of 142 – cars dropping wheel into it.
Section 2 Blackheath township

General comments for this section:

- Trucks run red lights in Mount Victoria at night
- Reduce speed to 50 km/h through Mount Victoria and Blackheath once safety upgrade works done

(14 comments)
Section 3 Blackheath to Medlow Bath

General comments for this section:
- Variable speed limit signs to reduce speed in fog, black ice etc.
- Severe weather incidents can close this section of the GWH. Need to provide clear advice to motorists of closures well in advance to avoid congestion, queues and rat running.
Section 5 Medlow Bath to Katoomba

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Sharp bend. In the past a bus has left the road here and one vehicle has lost its load traveling west – both were traveling too fast for the bend.