

Bells Line of Road Improvement Program – Frequently asked questions

The NSW Government is nearing completion on a \$48 million program to improve traffic efficiency on Bells Line of Road between Lithgow and Kurrajong Heights.

Overall program

How were the locations of the overtaking lanes selected?

In 2012, the Australian and NSW governments announced the Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan for Bells Line of Road. The plan outlines a process to guide the short, medium and long term future development of this important road corridor.

This work is part of the short to medium term improvements for the corridor.

The locations of the proposed overtaking lanes were chosen by Roads and Maritime considering the topography, potential impacts to property and vegetation as well as safe sight line. Roads and Maritime consider that no major increase in traffic volume is anticipated on Bells Line of Road as a result of the proposal to improve road safety and traffic efficiency.

Why are some of the overtaking lanes asphalted and not others?

Every new overtaking lane on Bells Line of Road is designed to match the existing road surface, local topography and to support the construction methods being used. For example, the overtaking lane at Site 2, Kurrajong Heights was completed with a spray seal to match the existing surface in that area. The overtaking lane at Site 1, four kilometres west of Kurrajong Heights was finished with hot mix to resolve the uneven topography in the area.

The overtaking lanes on Bells Line of Road are considered fit for purpose by Roads and Maritime.

What happened to the road surface at overtaking lane, Site 3?

In extreme hot weather, like that experienced last summer, bleeding can occur (where part of the pavement solution starts to melt), such as that experienced at Site 3. This occurs throughout Sydney. Site 3 is now open and provides a safe passing for motorists. DM Roads is continuing to monitor the road surface.

How has the \$48 million on the Bells Line of Road Improvement program been spent?

As part of the Bells Line of Road Improvement program, Roads and Maritime :

- is completing the seventh new overtaking lane between Kurrajong and Lithgow
- has completed safety improvements at three locations on Bells Line of Road, including slope improvement work at Mount Tomah and crash cluster site improvements eastbound of Bell.
- has improved signage and road marking along the corridor

Why was the overtaking lane at Site 5 cancelled?

Given the cost of the combined improvement program and community feedback, Roads and Maritime determined OT5 could be removed as there are other westbound overtaking opportunities along the alignment.

Now that the overtaking lane at Site 5 is cancelled does this mean there are additional funds available to do alternative work on Bells Line of Road?

Roads and Maritime has no current plans for additional alternative work on Bells Line of Road.

Are the new overtaking lanes safe?

Yes. Roads and Maritime carries out independent NSW state governed road safety audits for every new project during design, following construction and 12 months after projects are in operation. The safety of road users is paramount to us.

Can I turn into my property or into a side street across an overtaking lane or painted median?

Yes. NSW road rules allow the use of a painted median of an overtaking lane to enter or exit a driveway and street.

Roads and Maritime completed construction in late 2016 on the overtaking lane at Site 3. This included a painted median that is wide enough to provide westbound motorists a safe location to slow down, give way to traffic and turn right into private properties along this section of Bells Line of Road. Motorists can also use the median to turn right out of their properties and into the westbound lane.

What is happening with plans to make Bells Line of Road a dual carriageway?

In November 2009, the Australian and NSW governments jointly announced plans for a Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan (the Plan) for Bells Line of Road. The Plan was prepared by Roads and Maritime and outlines a process to guide the development and reservation of a road corridor for a future upgraded Bells Line of Road. It also recommends measures and priorities for the short, medium and long term future development of this important road corridor. The Plan is available at <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-west/bells-line-of-road/index.html>

Overtaking lane at Site 6, Bilpin

Can the direction of the overtaking lane at Site 6 be reversed?

No. The direction of overtaking lane Site 6 was chosen based on a range of financial, environmental, safety and logistical factors, including:

- the need to provide an eastbound overtaking opportunity in the vicinity
- avoiding a westbound arrangement where left turns into Horsfield Road would require unsafe slowing of vehicles on approach to the overtaking diverge
- the need to provide good site distance steep embankments on the westbound side which would require significant earthwork and/or retaining walls
- major conflict with high voltage electricity lines
- avoiding property strip acquisition where possible
- the need to minimise clearing in a highly sensitive area.

Has Roads and Maritime sought environmental approval to remove trees for this work?

The particular location and direction of overtaking lane Site 6 has been chosen to minimise the environmental impact of the design. Clearing in this area been done with approval from the Federal Government under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act).

Will there be a dedicated turning bay for eastbound motorists travelling into Horsfield Road or the service station west of Mount Tootie Road?

No. This is out of scope for the overtaking lane at Site 6 project.

Will Bilpin Fire Shed have safe access at all times during construction work?

Yes. Roads and Maritime and DM Roads will work closely with Bilpin Rural Fire Brigade to ensure safe access for the Fire Shed at all times.

Will Bilpin Fire Shed be able to enter and exit safely once the overtaking lane at Site 6 is complete?

Yes. There will be adequate sight distance across the overtaking lane to maintain visibility exiting westbound towards Mount Tootie Road.

Safety for the Fire Shed driveway travelling eastbound towards Bilpin will be maintained.

Why is the overtaking lane going into the 60km/hr zone at Bilpin village?

The overtaking lane at Site 6 was the best location considering the topography, potential impacts to property and vegetation as well as safe sight lines to existing speed signage. Overtaking lanes are designed to provide safe overtaking opportunities within the sign posted speed limit.

Will the school bus still be able to drop off children outside the Bilpin Fire Shed once the overtaking lane at Site 6 is complete?

Roads and Maritime and DM Roads will invite bus companies to inspect the overtaking lane following completion and determine whether the area continues to be considered a safe bus stop location.

Why was the overtaking lane at Site 6 put on hold in April?

The project was put on hold while we investigated community feedback and concerns. Following our investigations we have confirmed that the project should proceed without change and have resumed construction.

General questions

What is Roads and Maritime Services role on Bells Line of Road?

Roads and Maritime Services is a NSW government agency established on 1 November 2011 under s.46 of the *Transport Administration Act 1988*.

We are an operating agency within the Transport cluster. Roads and Maritime is the operating agency delivering value for our customers and the community through safe, efficient and quality road and maritime networks as part of the transport system.

We deliver projects and programs to reliably and safely improve the movement of people and goods by various transport modes, including through the state road and freight network, NSW waterways, the public transport network and active transport such as cycling and pedestrian networks. For more information visit our website www.rms.nsw.gov.au

Who are DM Roads and what is their role on Bells Line of Road?

DM Roads (previously DownerMouchel) was awarded the Stewardship Maintenance Contract in the Sydney West zone in 2014 by Roads and Maritime. Under this contract, DM Roads maintains 971 kilometres of road network and 2870 kilometres of lane network.

As the Stewardship Maintenance Contractor, DM Roads carries out regular maintenance along the Bells Line of Road corridor to Darling Causeway on behalf of Roads and Maritime.

DM Roads are also responsible for all areas of project delivery including stakeholder and community engagement through to construction of the overtaking lanes on Bells Line of Road.

For general enquiries, complaints and defects, contact enquiries_NSW@dmroads.com.au. To give network feedback, general ideas or improvement suggestions contact watchman@dmroads.com.au. To report an urgent safety concern or hazard, phone 1800 332 660.

Who maintains vegetation and tree trimming along Bells Line of Road and how can I ensure visibility and safety is maintained?

DM Roads maintains vegetation and tree trimming along Bells Line of Road. DM Roads asset inspectors carry out weekly drive-by inspections of the Bells Line of Road corridor and monitor hazards within the road clear zone and select tree and vegetation removal to maintain a safe operating road environment.

For general enquiries, complaints and defects, contact enquiries_NSW@dmroads.com.au. To give network feedback, general ideas or improvement suggestions, contact watchman@dmroads.com.au. To report an urgent safety concern or hazard, phone 1800 332 660.

Who maintains pot holes and resurfacing along Bells Line of Road and how can I ensure defects are repaired as quickly as possible?

DM Roads carries out regular maintenance along the Bells Line of Road corridor up to Darling Causeway on behalf of Roads and Maritime. This maintenance includes potholing, asphalt patching and asphalt resurfacing and is prioritised against the 2870 kilometres of lane network under the Stewardship Maintenance Contract.

For general enquiries, complaints and defects, contact enquiries_NSW@dmroads.com.au. To give network feedback, general ideas or improvement suggestions, contact watchman@dmroads.com.au. To report an urgent safety concern or hazard, phone 1800 332 660.

Who maintains the other roads in the area?

Roads and Maritime maintain the state road network, including Bells Line of Road and the Great Western Highway. Local roads are maintained by local government area councils. Contact details for local councils around the Bells Line of Road corridor are:

- Lithgow City Council – email council@lithgow.nsw.gov.au or phone 02 6354 9999
- Hawkesbury City Council – email council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au or phone 02 4560 4444
- Blue Mountains City Council – email council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or phone 02 4780 5000

Other projects on Bells Line of Road

Safety improvement work on Chifley Road, Lithgow

In December 2015, Roads and Maritime completed a \$1.25 million project to extend an eastbound overtaking lane on Chifley Road, 5.9 kilometres east of Lithgow. This upgrade created a safer overtaking opportunity for motorists and was consistent with the Bells Line of Road Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan.

The NSW Government is proposing to upgrade sections of Chifley Road between Bell and Lithgow as part of the Bells Line of Road Corridor. The upgrades will provide long-term road safety benefits, more reliable travel times and improve regional access and efficiency.

For more information visit our website <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-west/bells-line-of-road/chifley-road-upgrade.html> or contact ChifleyRoadUpgrade@rms.nsw.gov.au.

Richmond intersection improvements – Stage 2, Bells Line of Road and Grose Vale Road

The Australian and NSW Governments have committed \$18 million to improve traffic conditions at key intersections on Kurrajong Road, March Street and Bells Line of Road, on approach to Richmond Bridge. Roads and Maritime Services is improving the intersection of Bells Line of Road and Grose Vale Road/Terrace Road, North Richmond. Work started in June and includes:

- installing or improving dedicated turning lanes on all sides of the intersection
- providing two westbound lanes from Pitt Lane to about 90 metres west of Grose Vale Road
- removing about 21 parking spaces and relocating bus zones
- installing seven 15 minute parking spaces on the eastbound side of Bells Line of Road to offset the removal of longer term parking necessary for the improvements of the intersection.

For general enquires about the Richmond intersection improvements, contact nsw_projects@dmroads.com.au or 1800 332 660.
