

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Bells Line of Road – Chifley Road upgrade Scenic Hill and Clarence road over rail bridge

September 2016

**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 upgrade would provide long-term road safety benefits, more reliable travel times and improve regional access and efficiency.**

#### Why is the upgrade needed?

The Bells Line of Road and its westerly extension, Chifley Road, form one of two major routes which link the Sydney urban area with Lithgow and the NSW Central Western region, through the Blue Mountains.

A strategic corridor plan completed by the Australian and NSW governments in October 2012 identified improvement work for the Bells Line of Road corridor, including safety and traffic improvements for Chifley Road.

The combination of narrow lanes and shoulders and poor vertical and horizontal road alignment has led to a high crash rate along Chifley Road.

Chifley Road has an average annual crash rate per kilometre of 0.36 which is more than four times the average annual crash rate for similar rural roads in NSW.

The planned future upgrade would address this and improve road safety for all road users.

#### What does the upgrade involve?

The proposal would upgrade Scenic Hill, located about three kilometres east of Lithgow, and Clarence road over rail bridge located about five kilometres west of Bell.

The proposal includes providing a descending lane and improving the grade and curve at Scenic Hill, and replacing the existing Clarence road over rail bridge.

Key features of the proposal include:

- Widening and realigning Chifley Road at Scenic Hill and providing an additional descending lane and median barrier
- Improving the intersection at the Lithgow Ex-Prisoner of War Memorial on Scenic Hill
- Providing improved concrete drains along road cuttings
- Replacing and removing the existing road bridge over the railway line at Clarence
- Widening and realigning the approaches to the new road bridge over the railway line
- Improving the Clarence Colliery Road intersection with Chifley Road.

## Can I have a say in this project?

Yes. Roads and Maritime has prepared a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) to examine the potential impacts of the proposed upgrade to Chifley Road and outline measures to reduce and manage the impacts. Community and stakeholder comment is invited.

The REF follows the display of a preliminary concept design, 15 February to 21 March 2016, which encouraged community and stakeholder feedback to help guide our decision making and design. A community consultation report outlining and responding to the feedback has been placed on Roads and Maritime's website.

The REF will be placed on display until Wednesday 26 October 2016. It's available to view or download from the Road and Maritime website

at [rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-west/bells-line-of-road/chifley-road-upgrade](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-west/bells-line-of-road/chifley-road-upgrade)

Alternatively you can visit the following display locations:

### **Lithgow City Council,**

180 Mort Street, Lithgow NSW 2790

Open weekdays 8.15am to 4pm

### **Lithgow Library,**

157 Main Street, Lithgow NSW 2790

Open weekdays 9am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 12pm.

### **Road and Maritime Services District Office**

15-33 Coerwull Road, Bowenfels NSW 2790

Open weekdays 9am to 4pm

## What if I want to speak to someone about this project?

Roads and Maritime will hold community information drop in sessions to seek feedback on the REF and to give the community an opportunity to speak to the project team.

### ***Our project team will be available at:***

The Union Theatre, Bridge Street, Lithgow,

Thursday 13 October 2016, 5pm to 8pm

Saturday 15 October 2016, 12pm to 3pm.

## Property owner and community impacts

### **Is the upgrade expected to affect properties?**

The design of the upgrade aims to minimise impacts on properties. However, there are a number of properties expected to be impacted during the construction phase.

Roads and Maritime is committed to working with property owners and local residents through the proposal.

Should the proposed project proceed, Roads and Maritime will need to acquire partial amounts of land from several property owners and we'll work closely with these individuals.

Find out more about the property acquisition process at [rms.nsw.gov.au/acquisition](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/acquisition)

### **When will Roads and Maritime start talking to affected property owners?**

Face-to-face talks with potentially affected property owners have started.

It is important to remember the project is still in the concept design stage. This means more development of the design needs to happen and will change based on community feedback, further investigations and developments in the design process.

It is important to **have your say** on the planned upgrade to Chifley Road, including potential property impacts.

If you think your property may be affected call the Roads and Maritime Project Manager, on 1800 874 897.

### **When will construction start?**

Subject to approval and funding, construction could start mid 2018.

### **How long will construction take?**

At this stage, subject to approval and funding, construction would be completed late 2019 to early 2020.

### **Are you going to close the road to carry out the work?**

Chifley Road would remain open to traffic throughout the work. Road users may experience short-term disruptions including travel delays during traffic switches, safety barrier work and paving, when traffic controls or lane closures are in place. Speed limits would also be reduced during the work. These disruptions would be short-term, with minor impacts on road users expected.

### **Would I still have access to my property during construction?**

Roads and Maritime aims to minimise impact to property access, where possible. If impact to properties is identified during planning and construction we will discuss this with property owners to determine access options and provide as much advanced notice as possible.

### **Will you be moving the Ex-POW memorial on Scenic Hill?**

No. However, access to the Ex-POW Memorial may be restricted for short periods to enable the work to be completed safely.

### **Will I be affected by the noise of this work?**

Work would, as far as practicable, be carried out during standard construction working hours – 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 1pm Saturday.

Noise criteria have been set by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage to manage construction noise. A Noise and Vibration Management Plan would be prepared to manage noise and vibration through implementing mitigation measures to reduce construction noise levels to the extent that is feasible and reasonable.

### **What about the environmental impacts of the proposed work?**

Roads and Maritime commissioned technical experts to assess the potential impacts of the proposal and to identify safeguards and management measures to avoid or limit these impacts.

The main impacts that are likely to occur as a result of the proposal are summarised in the Review of Environmental Factors.

### **Why aren't the Clarence Cuttings included in this upgrade?**

Roads and Maritime investigated widening this area and identified several environmental and constructability constraints, as well as low road-user benefit.

### **Will the work on Scenic Hill and the Clarence road over rail bridge happen at the same time?**

Roads and Maritime would stage the work to minimise impact to the local community and motorists.

### **Are you removing any trees?**

The proposal would clear about 13 hectares of native vegetation. The majority of the proposal footprint would overlies already disturbed areas within the existing road corridor.

### **Are you impacting any Aboriginal heritage sites?**

No Aboriginal heritage sites were found within or near the proposal area during database searches or field surveys and no areas of potential for Aboriginal heritage sites were identified in the proposal area.

### **What other options were considered?**

Roads and Maritime started to investigate alternatives for upgrading Chifley Road between Bell and Lithgow in 2014. The options considered by Roads and Maritime included:

1. Widening of the narrow (former) railway cuttings east of Clarence
2. Widening and barrier treatments for the Clarence road over rail bridge
3. Providing a descending lane at Scenic Hill
4. Improving the final west bound curve at Scenic Hill
5. Other safety improvement work as detailed in the Strategic Business Case (October 2014, updated June 2015).

A strategic assessment evaluated and prioritised the options and considered a range of safety, design, environmental and financial factors and drew on the findings of the road safety review and crash analysis, benefit-to-cost ratio analysis, preliminary environmental investigation, constructability review, geometric road design and various cost estimates.

## **Why are you replacing the Clarence road over rail bridge but not the one near Mount Victoria Village?**

The upgrade to Chifley Road is being developed through the Bells Line of Road Corridor Improvement Program to address the poor crash history and generally poor horizontal and vertical alignment and narrower than standard lane and shoulder widths compared to similar roads. The replacement of the existing road bridge over the railway line at Clarence is also required due to the bridge's existing poor condition and post and chain wire safety barriers which do not meet current standards.

The long-term upgrade of the Great Western Highway between Mount Victoria and Lithgow includes a new highway alignment to the eastern side of the Mount Victoria Village (bypassing the existing road bridge over the railway line). This alignment is included in the overall concept design for the Great Western Highway between Mount Victoria and Lithgow which was completed in 2013.

Due to funding constraints, the Australian and NSW governments agreed in 2012 on a revised package of upgrades to improve safety and travel conditions between Katoomba and Lithgow. This decision addressed recommendations from an independent review of the upgrade of the Great Western Highway west of Katoomba. Accordingly, the current Mount Victoria Village safety upgrade project focuses on the most effective use of available funds to deliver necessary safety improvements through the corridor.

## **What happens next?**

### **What are the next steps for the project?**

The REF will be placed on display until Wednesday 26 October 2016. All comments received will be considered to finalise the design.

A submissions report summarising the feedback received during consultation and a response to each comment will be available later this year.

We will continue to keep the community updated as the project progresses.

## **How can I provide feedback?**

Consider the REF and **send us your feedback by Wednesday 26 October 2016.**

**Phone:** 1800 874 897 within business hours

**Email:** [ChifleyRoadUpgrade@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ChifleyRoadUpgrade@rms.nsw.gov.au)

**Mail:** Bells Line of Road/Chifley Road Upgrade project team

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Parramatta NSW 2124