



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



Bolivia Hill upgrade

April 2016

This project update outlines the issues raised during the feedback period for the review of environmental factors for the Bolivia Hill upgrade and provides information about the project's next steps. The Federal and NSW governments have committed funding for planning and building the upgrade of the New England Highway at Bolivia Hill.

Roads and Maritime Services is delivering the New England Highway upgrade at Bolivia Hill, about halfway between Glen Innes and Tenterfield. The existing highway through the area has narrow traffic lanes shoulders, with a rock face on one side and a steep, rocky valley on the other.

The project involves building about 2.1km of new road pavement, a new 320m long bridge that avoids the creek line, 3.5m wide lanes in each direction and widened road shoulders to improve safety.

Review of environmental factors (REF)

To assess the potential environmental and social impacts of the proposed Bolivia Hill upgrade, an REF was prepared and placed on display for comment for a four-week period from 25 September 2015.

The feedback received by Roads and Maritime relating to the proposal and the REF has been collated in a submissions report, which is available on the project website.

Roads and Maritime received 15 submissions, each of which was examined to understand and respond to the issues raised. The main issues related to:

- The strategy for existing roadside memorials
- The need for an overtaking lane
- Local traffic access
- Biodiversity protection
- Traffic delays during construction
- Heritage protection
- Project justification.

After considering the issues raised in the feedback from the public and government agencies, additional environmental safeguards have been included to manage and address comments raised in the submissions.

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) requested additional Aboriginal heritage surveys be carried out to confirm the previous studies for the project site. These were completed with the Local Aboriginal Land Council and project archaeologists. While the additional surveys confirmed previous findings, the project's boundaries have been altered and buffer zones marginally increased as a precautionary measure.

Project benefits

A range of route options were considered in the project's strategic concept design phase. The preferred route, Option 7b, was selected as it best met the project objectives.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Improve road safety
- Improve road transport productivity, efficiency and reliability of travel
- Minimise impact on the natural, cultural and built environment

The REF is now finalised and the project will proceed with the minor changes described above. Roads and Maritime thanks everyone who reviewed the REF and provided feedback.

What happens next?

Detailed design has started, including geotechnical surveys at the site of the new bridge. Once the detailed design is complete, tenders will be invited for construction of the project.

For more information

Please contact the project team by:

Phone: 6640 1300

Email: BoliviaHillUpgrade@hyderconsulting.com

Web: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/northern-nsw/bolivia-hill-new-england-highway

Project timeline

May 2011 - The Australian Government committed funding towards planning for the Bolivia Hill upgrade

September 2011 - Route option development started

November 2012 - Roads and Maritime held two community drop-in sessions to discuss the route options

May 2013 - Funding committed to develop and build the Bolivia Hill upgrade

September 2013 - Roads and Maritime held two community drop-in sessions to discuss the recommended preferred route

February 2014 - Preferred route announced

2015 - Carried out concept design and environmental impact assessment for the preferred route

September 2015 - Display the review of environmental factors

February 2016 – REF determined and detailed design underway

We are here

Early 2017 – Complete detailed design and invite tenders for construction