

# Community Update



**Transport**  
Roads & Maritime  
Services

JULY 2013



## New England Highway – Bolivia Hill upgrade

The Australian Government has committed \$80 million as part of the Nation Building Program toward the planning and construction of an upgrade and safety improvements to the New England Highway at Bolivia Hill, about halfway between Glen Innes and Tenterfield.

### Project background

The New England Highway is a major link from the Hunter to New England and beyond.

Bolivia Hill is a section of the New England Highway about halfway between Glen Innes and Tenterfield. The existing highway through the area has narrow traffic lanes and shoulders, with a rock face on one side of the road and a steep valley on the other. The road is also steep with a number of tight curves.

The Bolivia Hill project involves developing route options and identifying a preferred route to upgrade and improve safety on this section of the New England Highway. Once a preferred route has been identified, the project will move into design and construction. Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) has engaged Cardno to assist in the upgrade investigations.

The preferred route will need to consider how to achieve the following objectives:

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

### What planning has been carried out?

Initial investigations have been carried out to help develop preliminary route options. These investigations identified a number of constraints that influence the location and design of preliminary route options, including:

- alignment of the existing highway
- steep terrain of the study area
- environmental constraints, including ecologically endangered communities, plants, animals and threatened species, and
- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage, including the disused Great Northern Railway Line.

The project team is currently preparing the Preferred Route Option Report, which will detail the environmental and technical investigations, as well as community and stakeholder consultation, carried out to date. This report will also show each of the preliminary route options and explain the development and assessment process for each. A recommended route will also be identified.

Community feedback on the Preferred Route Option Report and recommended option will be invited in coming months.

## Planning process



## Community and stakeholder consultation

A number of community information sessions were held in Tenterfield and Glen Innes in November 2012, providing an opportunity for the community to meet the project team, discuss the study area, issues with the existing highway, and suggest route options for the Bolivia Hill upgrade. The project team also met with and briefed landowners throughout the study area, as well as Tenterfield Shire and Glen Innes Severn Shire councils.

The community identified a number of issues and suggestions for consideration in the development of preliminary route options, including the need to improve the gradient and alignment of the road and address possible rock falls and black ice.

Community members also suggested a number of specific route options and design considerations, which include straightening or widening the road, providing additional lanes, and using the existing highway alignment where possible.

All community feedback is being considered in the development and assessment of the preliminary route options. The Preferred Route Option Report, to be published in the coming months, will detail how community feedback was considered in the development of preliminary route options and the selection of the recommended route option.

## What are the next steps in the project?

The recommended option and Preferred Route Option Report will be available to view online at the project website and a number of locations throughout Tenterfield and Glen Innes in the coming months, providing an opportunity for the community to discuss the study investigations and preferred route with the project team before it is finalised.

Following this consultation, the preferred route will be finalised considering community feedback and results of further technical and environmental investigations. A final Preferred Route Option Report will also be prepared, outlining how the results of additional investigations and community feedback informed the development and selection of the preferred route.

## Contact us

If you would like to be kept up-to-date as the project progresses, please contact the project team at:

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