

Proposed upgrade of Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow

August 2019

1. Why do we need the upgrade?

Cessnock Road is an important regional transport route connecting the Maitland area with the Hunter Expressway. The road is subject to flooding at Testers Hollow, which affects local residents, commuters and freight in the surrounding area.

The proposal would improve connectivity between the Maitland area, Hunter Expressway and broader community during flooding events, as well as substantially reduce the impact of flooding on Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow. It would also reduce flood-related road damage costs, improve safety and reduce hazards.

2. What does the proposed upgrade involve?

The upgrade involves building a new two-lane road about 1.5 metres higher than the existing Cessnock Road to improve flood immunity. It would be built alongside the existing Cessnock Road to minimise traffic impacts during construction.

The proposal would reduce the frequency, duration and impact of flood events along Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow. It would also improve connectivity between the Maitland area, Hunter Expressway and broader community.

3. Why did you choose this option?

A number of options were considered for the height of the new road. The proposal is considered the best overall solution as it:

- significantly reduces the impact, frequency and duration of flood events along Cessnock Road
- improves connectivity between the Maitland area and broader community
- has the least environmental impact and property acquisitions
- minimises the cost of construction, maintenance and traffic disruption.

For more information on the options considered, you can view the review of environmental factors [here](#).

4. What is an Annual Exceedance Probability?

Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) refers to the likelihood of a flood event occurring in any one year. This is another way of describing the random nature of flood events compared to Average

Recurrence Interval (ARI). For example, the same flood could be described as five per cent AEP or one in 20 year ARI.

The proposed upgrade involves building a new road about 1.5 metres higher than the existing Cessnock Road. This would allow access in a five per cent AEP flood event, which would substantially reduce the impact of flooding along Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow.

5. When are you starting and how long would it take to build?

Construction of the proposal would be expected to start in mid-2020 and take about two years to complete, subject to project approval.

6. Why would it take so long to build?

The proposed upgrade of Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow is a complex job which involves building a new two-lane road with two metre wide shoulders, as well as installing new drainage to allow flood water to pass freely under the new road.

There would be minimal traffic impacts during construction, as the new road would be built alongside the existing Cessnock Road. Existing speed limits and property access would also be maintained.

7. What is happening to the old road? Can we still use it when it isn't flooding?

It would not be possible to use the old Cessnock Road after the new road is constructed, as it will have a channel cut through it to improve drainage. This channel is required to protect the new road during flood events.

8. How many lanes would the proposal provide?

The proposed upgrade would provide a new two-lane road between Gillieston Heights and Cliftleigh, as well as two metre wide shoulders for improved cyclist access.

The new road would be built alongside the existing Cessnock Road to minimise traffic impacts during construction. Existing speed limits and property access would also be maintained.

9. I am a cyclist – are you providing bike lanes?

The proposed upgrade of Cessnock Road at Testers Hollow would provide a new two-lane road between Gillieston Heights and Cliftleigh. The new road would include two metre wide shoulders for improved cyclist access.

10. Will you be acquiring properties as part of the project?

Partial acquisition of a private property has been completed for the proposed upgrade. The process to acquire a parcel of council owned property is under way.

11. I live nearby – will my property be impacted by the work?

There would be some temporary construction noise impacts to properties located near the construction area. Measures would be taken to minimise potential noise impacts, including construction activities taking place generally during the day.

The road would be built alongside the existing Cessnock Road to minimise traffic impacts. Existing speed limits and property access would be maintained throughout construction.

Consultation would be carried out with all potentially affected residents before noisy construction activities start.

12. Where is the project up to?

An environmental assessment outlining potential impacts of the proposal is on display and community comments are invited until 5pm on 17 September 2019. We will then prepare a submissions report, which summarises the feedback received and our responses.

After the finalisation of the environmental assessment and submissions report, we will continue to consult with the community and stakeholders before work starts. Construction would take about two years to complete, however timing would be confirmed after project approval.

13. What are the environmental impacts of the proposal?

Roads and Maritime has prepared a review of environmental factors (REF) to assess the potential impacts of the proposal, which may include dust, noise and vibration, removal of some vegetation, small partial property acquisitions as well as impacts on visual, landscape and Aboriginal heritage.

The REF is on display between 20 August and 17 September 2019. You can view it [here](#).

14. Aboriginal heritage investigations

Roads and Maritime and members of the Aboriginal community completed a detailed site investigation which identified a number of Aboriginal cultural heritage artefacts present on the project site. Roads and Maritime will apply for the permits to manage impacts to these artefacts and ongoing consultation and investigations would take place before construction.

More information can be found in the REF, which can be viewed [here](#).

15. How can I provide feedback on the REF?

Stakeholders and the community are invited to comment on the REF via email or post by 5pm on 17 September 2019.