



Sealing of the Silver City Highway Broken Hill to Tibooburra

Commemorative Community Update

Connecting the Corner Country

Reopened on Wednesday 1 July, 2020



Transport for NSW project team practicing physical distancing on the Silver City Highway

The NSW Government committed \$145 million to rebuild and seal the remaining sections of the Cobb and Silver City highways.

Today we commemorate the completion of the works on the Silver City Highway between Broken Hill and Tibooburra, proudly delivered earlier than scheduled, improving freight access, flood immunity, regional development and road safety.

The history

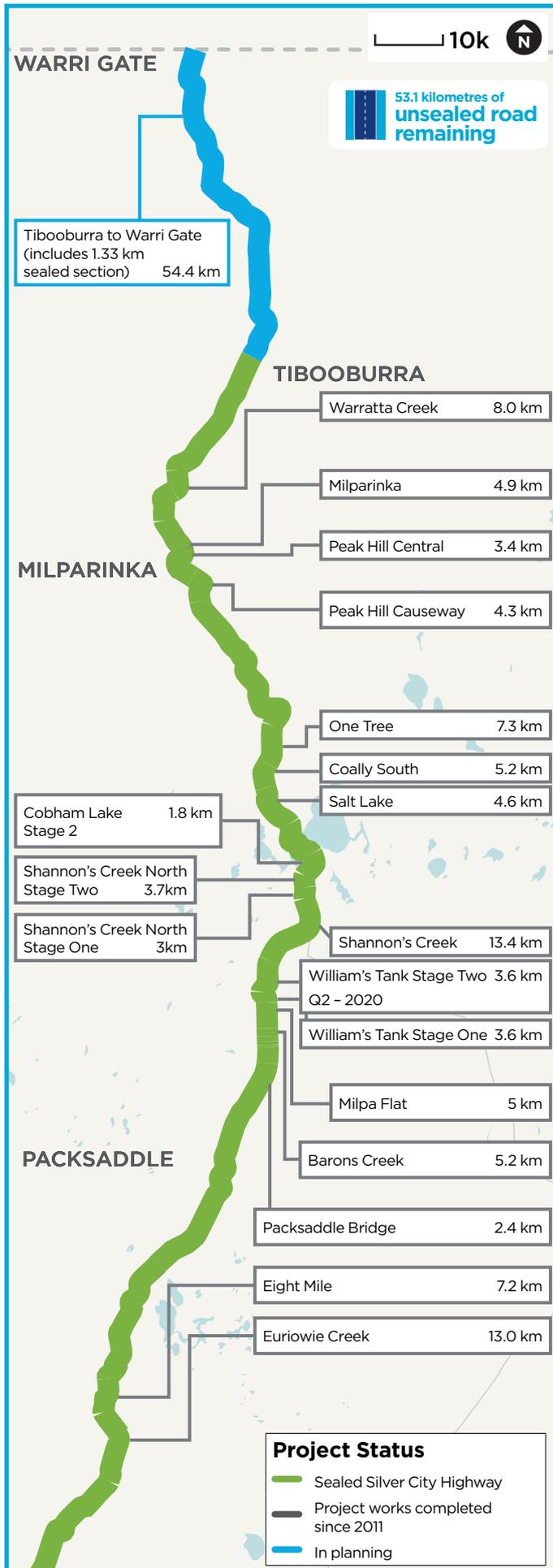
The Silver City Highway connects Buronga, on the Victorian border with the Queensland border via Broken Hill and Tibooburra.

The first motorised vehicles started travelling between Broken Hill and Tibooburra in the 1920s. It is said to have taken three days as they followed the tracks that were formed by horses and camels, repeatedly getting bogged in sand hills. Travelling via camel took eight days, which meant the reduction to three was a significant improvement at the time.

The upgrade works have seen the existing road rebuilt to include table drains on both sides of the road, eliminating pooling rain water, resulting in a dramatic decrease in closures each year, more reliable access and a smoother journey.

Now 100 years on we can travel between these remote locations in just over 3.5 hours.

The journey



Surface preparation, Eight Mile, Silver City Highway



Road construction underway at Peak Hill Central on the Silver City Highway



Rock crushing at Peak Hill Central on the Silver City Highway



Sealing at Milpa Flat on the Silver City Highway



Euriowie, Silver City Highway - placing the new seal on the road

The challenges

Unsealed roads in the far west can remain closed for weeks after rain. Even small amounts of rain (5-10mm) have seen the Silver City highway close due to the slippery surface rendering it unsafe and unusable for days at a time.

These closures directly impact local residents, farmers, businesses, essential services and interstate road users.

Previously, unsealed sections of the highway would be maintained by completing formation grading, which smooths the dirt road by removing corrugations or washed out sections. However, with wind, rain and traffic, the highway would lose around 10mm of material each year to dust and erosion.



Transport for NSW teams spent many nights away from their families, living and working on site

Working remotely, in extreme heat while enduring dust storms and harsh environmental conditions, the project team continued delivering.

During construction, the team carefully mitigated the impacts on this isolated and fragile environment. Soil containing seeds of the endangered Creek Wattle were extracted and stored for later rehabilitation in the local area.

Extensive consultation and careful planning was also undertaken to ensure impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage were avoided.

Prioritising sustainable water usage within the local area was a necessity during the project. Transport staff proactively managed this by storing water in tanks and bladders to increase water efficiency and mitigate evaporation loss.



Silver City Highway at Euriowie looking South with the Barrier Range to the right

The rewards



The Royal Flying Doctor Service plane landing on the now sealed Shannon's Creek Airstrip



Royal Flying Doctor Service, NSW Government staff and community members participate in an emergency landing drill at Shannon's Creek Airstrip

The Shannons's Creek airstrip supports the Royal Flying Doctor Service by creating a safe landing space, 24 hours a day, in all-weather conditions for medical emergencies.

Residents of properties in the area who had previously travelled up to two and a half hours to get to a hospital, are now be able to get to help faster.

Completing the Packsaddle bridge enabled access to the Shannons Creek emergency airstrip in periods of wet weather.



Packsaddle bridge keeping the Silver City Highway open after rain



More reliable
access to schools
and medical services



Connecting
communities



Improved connectivity
for the freight and
livestock industry



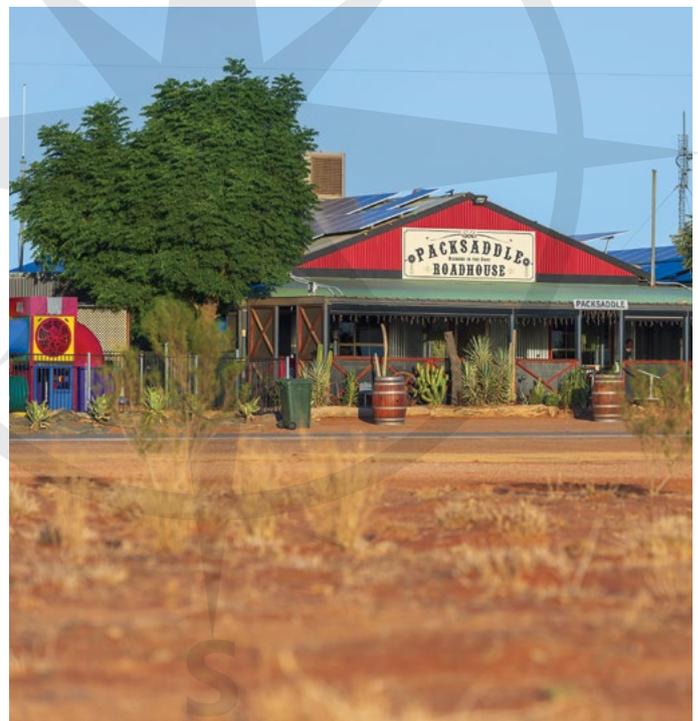
Tibooburra Outback Public School students

"Having a sealed road from Broken Hill to Tibooburra will have a positive impact on the Tibooburra Outback School staff and students, with specialist educational services and professional development opportunities more accessible to support learning outcomes."

Kelly Bryden
Principal,
Tibooburra Outback Public School

"Now that the highway is sealed, travellers can visit all year round without the threat of being stranded when it rains. We definitely don't miss the corrugation and flat tyres either! This has opened up the NSW Corner Country so more people can experience this beautiful part of Australia."

Mia & Arnie Degomouis
Packsaddle Roadhouse



Packsaddle Roadhouse

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nswroads.work/farwestseals

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Thank you for your patience during this important work.



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