Executive summary

Roads and Maritime Services is planning to upgrade the Golden Highway between Mudies Creek at Whittingham and Putty Road at Mount Thorley to improve safety, freight efficiency and flood immunity.

The proposed upgrades are part of a package of work being delivered on the Golden Highway, between Whittingham and Dubbo, to improve safety, traffic efficiency, network reliability and freight access.

This Community Consultation Report provides a summary of the community consultation carried out by Roads and Maritime Services in April and May 2018 on the concept designs for the Golden Highway upgrades at Mudies Creek and Whittingham.

The upgrades involve:

• Building a new road crossing at Mudies Creek to withstand a one in 100 year flood. The new 30 metre long bridge would be three metres higher than the current road level to improve travel reliability along the highway during flood events.

• Upgrading a six kilometre section of highway between Whittingham and Mount Thorley. Improvements include providing a smoother road surface, wider road shoulders and five metre clear zones, safety barriers, and overtaking lanes in both directions to improve safety and traffic flow.

The community and stakeholder feedback received was generally supportive of the proposal. Key issues raised include the design of the proposed upgrades, such as intersection treatments and safety barriers, and the location of proposed overtaking lanes. We will consider these issues in finalising the detailed designs.

The community also provided feedback on detour arrangements and impacts which will be managed and mitigated during the construction process. We will consult further with impacted residents before work starts on the proposed upgrades.

The decision

Following a review of the feedback received, we have decided to proceed with further development of the project. The key issues outlined in this report will be considered when finalising the detailed designs.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Roads and Maritime Services is planning to upgrade the Golden Highway between Mudies Creek at Whittingham and Putty Road at Mount Thorley to improve safety, freight efficiency and flood immunity.

The proposed upgrades are part of a package of work being delivered on the Golden Highway, between Whittingham and Dubbo, to improve safety, traffic efficiency, network reliability and freight access.

The NSW Government is providing $109 million funding, with an additional $24 million funding from the Australian Government, for the package of work on the Golden Highway.

The package of work includes intersection improvements, road rebuilding, shoulder widening, overtaking lanes, rest area improvements and flood immunity projects.

1.2. The proposal

The proposal involves:

• Building a new road crossing at Mudies Creek to withstand a one in 100 year flood. The new 30 metre long bridge would be three metres higher than the current road level to improve travel reliability along the highway during flood events.

• Upgrading a six kilometre section of highway between Whittingham and Mount Thorley. Improvements include providing a smoother road surface, wider road shoulders and five metre clear zones, safety barriers, and overtaking lanes in both directions to improve safety and traffic flow.

The upgrades would be carried out in three stages to help minimise impacts to road users:

Stage 1 – Road rebuilding and shoulder widening between Mudies Creek and about one kilometre west of Range Road.

Stage 2 – Building overtaking lanes between about one kilometre west of Range Road and Putty Road.

Stage 3 – Building the new Mudies Creek bridge.
2. Consultation approach

2.1. Consultation objectives
We consulted with the community and key stakeholders on the proposal to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders of the proposal and possible impacts
- Seek feedback on the proposal and issues of concern for consideration in developing the detailed design and method of construction
- Build a database of interested and concerned community members with whom we can continue to engage with during the proposal's development.

2.2. Values
Our values underpin our decisions and behaviours when working with customers, colleagues, stakeholders and partners.

- **Customer focus** - We place the customer at the centre of everything we do
- **Collaboration** - We value each other and create better outcomes by working together
- **Solutions** - We deliver sustainable and innovative solutions to NSW's transport needs
- **Integrity** - We take responsibility and communicate openly
- **Safety** - We prioritise safety for our people and our customers.
2.3. How consultation was done

We consulted with the community during April and May 2018 on the concept designs for the Mudies Creek and Whittingham upgrades. Community members were encouraged to provide their feedback and leave comments via mail, email, online feedback form or phone contact with the project team. Our key consultation tools are listed below:

| Table 1 |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| **Project update** | • Delivered to 150 residents in Whittingham, Glenridding and Mount Thorley, covering the project area and the proposed detour routes.  
• Direct emailed to the freight network, businesses located in Mount Thorley industrial estate, emergency services, Singleton Military Base and Singleton Shire Council.  
• A copy of the Project update is available at **Appendix A**. |
| **Media release** | • A media release was distributed on Wednesday 18 April by Upper Hunter MP Michael Johnsen to local media outlets.  
• A copy of the media release is provided at **Appendix B**. |
| **Webpage** | • Project webpage updated on Wednesday 18 April with the latest project information including the project update  
• An online feedback form was available on the webpage which provided a simple format for readers to send feedback.  
• The webpage could be found at rms.work/goldenhighway. |
| **Facebook** | • A Facebook post inviting comment was published on the NSW Roads Facebook page on Wednesday 18 April 2018. The post linked to the webpage and encouraged readers to complete the online feedback form.  
• A copy of the Facebook post and summary of engagement is available at **Appendix C**. |

3. Consultation summary

3.1. Overview

Comments on the proposed upgrades closed on Wednesday 9 May 2018, with 25 submissions received about a range of issues. Some submissions included multiple comments and raised multiple issues.

The feedback received in formal submissions was generally supportive of the proposed upgrades. Key concerns or issues related to the proposed upgrades included:

- Detour arrangements and impacts
- Design of the proposed upgrades, including intersection treatments and safety barriers
- Location of overtaking lanes.
Other issues raised included:

- The need to prioritise the New England Highway and Golden Highway intersection upgrade
- Suggestion that a Singleton Bypass utilising the Golden Highway could address flooding issues at Whittingham
- Suggestions for other road improvements along the Golden Highway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue category</th>
<th>Number of submissions</th>
<th>Issues raised</th>
<th>Roads and Maritime response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for the proposed upgrades</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Support for the concept designs for the proposed upgrades on the Golden Highway at Mudies Creek and Whittingham.</td>
<td>Support for the proposed upgrades has been noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detour arrangements and impacts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Query as to whether the Mitchell Line of Road will be closed during construction.</td>
<td>We propose to close Mitchell Line Road and detour traffic via Putty Road or Range Road at times outside of peak hours during construction. We will consult further with impacted residents prior to implementing any detour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Request that signs be installed telling truck drivers not to use exhaust brakes along Range Road during road diversions due to increase noise for local residents.</td>
<td>Prior to implementing the detour we will review the detour, including current road conditions, and implement any mitigation measures that are required. We will consult further with impacted residents prior to implementing any detour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The new Range Road intersection with New England Highway is dangerous, unlit and the surface is breaking up. The intersection needs lighting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Concerns about trucks speeding on Range Road during detour and the danger that presents for residents. Request to drop speed limit to 60km/h during the detour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of proposed upgrades</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clarification of proposed work specifically whether the work at Whittingham do not provide for dual carriageway in both directions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue category</td>
<td>Number of submissions</td>
<td>Issues raised</td>
<td>Roads and Maritime response</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Whittingham involves building dual carriageway in both directions.</td>
<td>The Golden Highway would be upgraded to provide a smoother road surface, wider road shoulders, five metre clear zones, safety barriers and overtaking lanes in both directions to improve safety and traffic flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Suggestion to straighten the curves to the south of Range Road, due to a number of crashes at this location.</td>
<td>The proposal includes safety improvements to the section of highway east of Range Road, including wider road shoulders, improved road surface, improved clear zones and safety barriers. The option of realigning this section of the highway was considered; however, due to funding availability this work could not be included in the proposed design at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Query as to whether the plans between Whittingham and Mount Thorley provide for a dedicated westbound right turn lane into Mitchell Line Service Road.</td>
<td>The proposal provides for a three metre widened shoulder westbound at Mitchell Line Service Road to allow vehicles to pass by a turning vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Query as to whether the plans between Whittingham and Mount Thorley provide for a left turning lane into Range Road.</td>
<td>The proposal provides for a three metre widened shoulder eastbound into Range Road to allow vehicles to pass by a turning vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Query as to whether the planned safety barriers will be motorcycle friendly due to the area being popular for motorcycle travel.</td>
<td>The proposed safety barriers are standard complying barriers in accordance with relevant standards. There are no specific provisions for motorcyclists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtaking lanes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Suggestion that the overtaking lanes should be built along the hill/incline section commencing 2.3 kilometres east of range road, for about one kilometre uphill, as this is a constant source of delays for road users heading west.</td>
<td>The proposal includes safety improvements to the hill/incline section east of Range Road. The option of constructing a westbound overtaking lane in this area was considered; however, due to safety considerations including the existing alignment and location of property accesses in this area, this option was not adopted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Request for an</td>
<td>We’re also working to progress a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue category</td>
<td>Number of submissions</td>
<td>Issues raised</td>
<td>Roads and Maritime response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway and Golden Highway intersection</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Priority should be given to a flyover at the New England Highway and Golden Highway intersection to address safety and congestion issues.</td>
<td>Priority project to provide two travel lanes in each direction on the New England Highway between Belford and the Golden Highway. A flyover would be built at the Golden Highway and New England Highway intersection for vehicles turning right from the Golden Highway towards Maitland and Newcastle. The NSW Government has announced $85 million under the Rebuilding NSW Plan for the upgrade to improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for motorists. We're now improving the design for the intersection in light of community feedback. More information is available online at rms.work/B2G.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Additional lanes should start where the Golden Highway meets the New England Highway.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singleton Bypass</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Singleton bypass should utilise the Golden Highway and Putty Road to avoid the flooding at Whittingham.</td>
<td>A preferred option for a Singleton bypass was announced in December 2016, which involves building a new section of highway west of Singleton starting near Newington Lane and rejoining the New England Highway north of McDougalls Hill. For more information on the Singleton bypass please visit rms.nsw.gov.au.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Building the Singleton bypass would solve a lot of the road problems at Whittingham.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for other road improvements (inside the project area)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Request to replace table drain from the bottom of Newthew Hill on the southbound lane due to flooding issues.</td>
<td>This work is outside the scope of this project. However this request has been forwarded to our Asset Maintenance team for investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for other road improvements (outside the project area)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Improvements are needed for the Mitchell Line of Road and Putty Road intersection. Suggestion includes providing dual lanes through to the turnoff to Broke, due to traffic congestion in the area.</td>
<td>The Putty Road and Mitchell Line of Road intersection has recently been upgraded. Additional upgrades in this area are outside the current scope of the Golden Highway package of work currently being delivered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Facebook post reached 23,888 people during the consultation period to raise awareness of the proposal and consultation. The post received 464 reactions, comments and shares and 4,440 clicks, including the webpage link. Of the reactions (eg. like/love/dislike) on the post, 100 per cent were positive. The commentary was mixed with some supportive of the proposal and others saying the priority should be given to upgrading the Golden Highway and New England Highway intersection.
Key issues about the proposed upgrades raised in the comments on the Facebook post included:

- Support for overtaking lanes at Whittingham
- Support for the proposed upgrades and a request that work be completed soon.

Other issues raised but not specific to this section of work included:

- Support for overtaking lanes at Ogilvies Hill and Winery Hill
- Building a flyover at the Golden Highway and New England Highway intersection should be the priority
- Suggestion that building the Singleton Bypass would ease congestion at Whittingham
- Concerns about congestion at Maitland roundabouts
- Concerns about quality of roadwork in other areas – New England Highway at Muswellbrook and Aberdeen
- Suggestions for upgrades needed at other intersections on the Golden Highway.

3.2. Recommendations

The feedback was generally supportive of the proposal, and raised a number of issues relating to the project which will be considered when progressing the project. A number of issues outside the scope of work were also raised. These comments have been noted and would need to be considered for future funding. Based on this feedback, we will be proceeding with further development of the project. The key issues outlined in this report will be considered when finalising the detailed designs.

We will work closely with stakeholders and local residents in relation to the potential impacts of this project. We will do this by:

- Informing the community and stakeholders of consultation outcomes and the next steps for the proposal via publication of this report
- Ensuring community and stakeholder comments and suggestions are considered when finalising the detailed design
- Continuing to carry out communication activities as the project progresses and informing the community through the Roads and Maritime website and project notifications.

3.3. Next steps

We have considered all submissions and will ensure our project team is aware of concerns raised by the community. We will ensure that issues highlighted by stakeholders and the community are appropriately addressed when finalising the detailed designs.

We will continue to keep the community informed of the project progress.
Golden Highway Upgrades

Mudies Creek and Whittingham

Roads and Maritime Services – Project update, April 2018

Roads and Maritime Services is planning to upgrade the Golden Highway between Mudies Creek at Whittingham and Putty Road at Mount Thorley to improve safety, freight efficiency and flood immunity.

Community and stakeholder feedback on the concept designs is invited by Wednesday 9 May 2018.

Background

The proposed upgrades are part of a package of work being delivered on the Golden Highway, between Whittingham and Dubbo, to improve safety, traffic efficiency, network reliability and freight access.

The NSW Government is providing $109 million funding, with an additional $24 million funding from the Australian Government, for the package of work on the Golden Highway.

The package of work includes intersection improvements, road rebuilding, shoulder widening, overtaking lanes, rest area improvements and flood immunity projects.

Project overview

The upgrades involve:

• Building a new road crossing at Mudies Creek to withstand a one in 100 year flood. The new 30 metre long bridge would be three metres higher than the current road level to improve travel reliability along the highway during flood events.

• Upgrading a six kilometre section of highway between Whittingham and Mount Thorley. Improvements include providing a smoother road surface, wider road shoulders and five metre clear zones, safety barriers, and overtaking lanes in both directions to improve safety and traffic flow.

The upgrades would be carried out in three stages to help minimise impacts to road users:

Stage 1 – Road rebuilding and shoulder widening between Mudies Creek and about one kilometre west of Range Road. Work is expected to start in the second half of 2018.

Stage 2 – Building overtaking lanes between about one kilometre west of Range Road and Putty Road. Work is expected to start in late 2019.

Stage 3 – Building the new Mudies Creek bridge. Work is expected to start in late 2019.
Golden Highway upgrade between Mudies Creek and Whittingham

- Roadside safety barrier to be installed
- Five metre clear zones will be provided along sections of the highway
- Road approaches to be realigned and raised
- Existing electrical poles to be retained
- New bridge over Mudies Creek

**Key**
- Stage 1 – Shoulder widening and sections of road rebuilding
- Stage 2 – Proposed locations of overtaking lanes
- Stage 3 – Mudies Creek Bridge and associated work
- Safety barrier installation

**Map Details**
- Golden Highway
- To Warkworth
- To Belford
- Mount Thorley
- Whittingham

**Diagram Sections**
- A Safety barrier installation west of Range Road
- B Safety barrier installation east of Range Road
- C Mudies Creek Bridge
Project Benefits
The proposed upgrades would:
• Provide a flood immunity level of at least a one in 100 year flood for Mudies Creek
• Improve safety for road users
• Provide a smoother road surface
• Improve travel times and reliability by providing improved overtaking opportunities
• Improve freight access by catering for higher productivity vehicles including up to 30 metres in length
• Maintain and improve the ability to cater for over dimension and over mass loads.

Potential traffic impacts
Over the next two years there will be several major road projects in construction along the Golden Highway including:
• Upgrade between Mudies Creek and Whittingham
• Overtaking lanes at Ogilvies Hill and Winery Hill near Jerrys Plains
• Golden Highway and New England Highway intersection upgrade at Belford.

These construction activities will be disruptive for motorists, residents and stakeholders. Impacts at Whittingham may include:
• Delays and disruptions to traffic flow and travel times due to lane closures and reduced speed limits through work zones
• Detours at times via Range Road or Putty Road to help minimise traffic delays, improve worker safety and reduce the duration of the work
• Restrictions in place at times for oversized vehicles.

Travel time delays may be significant with journeys expected to take up to an additional 30 minutes between Belford and Denman during some stages of construction for these major projects.

Motorists will be advised to plan their journeys ahead of time using the latest information on traffic conditions available by calling 132 701, visiting livetraffic.com or downloading the Live Traffic NSW App. Signage will also be in place to advise motorists of changed traffic conditions along the highway.

Residents impacted by detour arrangements would be notified ahead of time and the duration of any detour would be minimised to help reduce impacts.

We will also keep the freight industry informed of traffic impacts, restrictions and timing to help with planning journeys during construction.
Involving the community and stakeholders

We are working with the community and stakeholders during the planning process to identify issues and minimise potential impacts of the proposed upgrades.

Feedback received will be considered to finalise the environmental assessment and detailed design.

We will continue to keep the community informed as the project progresses and before work starts.

Have your say

Feedback on the proposed upgrades is invited by Wednesday 9 May 2018:

02 4908 7667
todd.hainsworth@rms.nsw.gov.au
rms.work/goldenhighway

Todd Hainsworth
Project Manager
Roads and Maritime Services
Locked Bag 2030
Newcastle, NSW 2300

If you need help understanding this information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to call us on 02 4908 7667.

Golden Highway looking east from the access intersection for the Mushroom Composters property
18 April, 2018

WELCOMING FEEDBACK ON THE PROPOSED ROAD UPGRADES OF THE GOLDEN HIGHWAY IN THE UPPER HUNTER REGION

Michael Johnsen MP, Member for Upper Hunter invites our Upper Hunter electorate community to provide feedback on proposed road upgrades on the Golden Highway at Whittingham, Ogilvies Hill and Winery Hill west of Jerrys Plains.

Mr. Johnsen said the NSW Government is providing $109 million with an additional $24 million provided by the Australian Government, for a package of work being delivered on the Golden Highway between Whittingham and Dubbo.

“These proposed upgrades are part of the package of work which aims to improve safety, network reliability and freight access along this vital route,” Mr. Johnsen said.

“The proposal for Whittingham involves building a new 30 metre long bridge across Mudies Creek, which would be three metres higher than the current road level to improve travel reliability on the highway during flood events.

“A six kilometre section of the Golden Highway between Whittingham and Mount Thorley would also be upgraded including providing overtaking lanes in both directions, a smoother road surface, as well as safety barriers, wider road shoulders and improved clear zones,” Mr. Johnsen said.

Mr. Johnsen said there are also proposed upgrades of a two kilometre section near Ogilvies Hill and a seven kilometre section between Bowmans Crossing and Saddlers Creek, around nine kilometres west of Jerrys Plains also known locally as Winery Hill.

“These proposals aim to improve safety and traffic flow by providing overtaking lanes in both directions, new signage and line marking at Ogilvies Hill and Winery Hill,” Mr. Johnsen said.

“In addition to this, the proposal would include rebuilding and realigning the road, shoulder widening, providing improved clear zones and drainage improvements along these sections of the Golden Highway,” concluded Mr. Johnsen.
Roads and Maritime Services invites the community and stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed upgrades by Wednesday 9 May, which can be provided by mailing the Golden Highway Program Office, Roads and Maritime, Locked Bay 2030, Newcastle 2300.

For more information about the proposed upgrades please visit the Roads and Maritime website at www.rms.work/goldenhighway.

Media: 65431065
Appendix C
We'd love to hear what you think about our proposed upgrades for the Golden Highway at Whittingham, Ogilvie’s Hill and Winery Hill.

- Increased overtaking opportunities
- Improved travel reliability during flood events
- Smoother road surface
- Improved safety

Review the concept designs and have your say online at rms.work/goldenhighway.