Safety improvements on the New England Highway, Rutherford

Community Consultation Report
Transport for NSW | March 2020
Executive Summary

This Community Consultation Report provides a summary of the community consultation carried out by Transport for NSW to support the display of the concept design for safety improvements on the New England Highway at Rutherford.

Transport for NSW is planning to improve safety and travel times between Aberglasslyn Road and John Street.

The proposal involves:

- extending the right turn lane on the New England Highway by 70 metres for motorists turning right into Aberglasslyn Road from the east. This would improve traffic flow along the highway, by providing additional space for vehicles wanting to turn right into Aberglasslyn Road.
- installing a new raised concrete median to prevent vehicles from making a right turn movement into South Street from the highway. South Street will become a left in and left out only.
- improving line markings and resurfacing the highway
- removing the right turn movement into Walter Street for motorists travelling east on the highway. Signage will be installed to remind motorists that they can no longer turn right at this intersection.
- installing a new pedestrian refuge on South Street to allow pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Eastbound motorists wanting to access South Street and Walter Street from the highway can do so by using the traffic lights located at the John Street intersection and travelling west along Gillies Street.

Key issues raised by the community included concerns about traffic light phasing at the Aberglasslyn intersection, access to Telarah due to changes to the South Street intersection and increased traffic on the local road network due to banning the right turn movement into South Street and Walter Street. We will consider these issues in finalising the design of the project.

Some of the feedback related to issues on the nearby road network which are outside the scope of the project. These comments have been noted and passed on to Transport for NSW's Regional Network Planning team.

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 project design.
## Contents

Executive Summary .............................................................................................................. 2

1 Introduction.............................................................................................................................. 4  
  1.1 Background..................................................................................................................... 4  
  1.2 The proposal.................................................................................................................... 4

2 Consultation approach........................................................................................................... 5  
  2.1 Consultation objectives ................................................................................................. 5  
  2.2 Values............................................................................................................................. 5  
  2.3 How consultation was done ......................................................................................... 6

3 Consultation summary.......................................................................................................... 7  
  3.1 Overview......................................................................................................................... 7  
  3.2 Recommendations ........................................................................................................ 12  
  3.3 Next steps ..................................................................................................................... 12

**Appendix** .......................................................................................................................... 13
1 Introduction

1.1. Background

Transport for NSW is planning to improve safety on the New England Highway, between Aberglasslyn Road and John Street.

The New England Highway is part of the inland route of the Sydney to Brisbane National Land Transport Network and the primary route connecting the Upper Hunter with Maitland and Newcastle.

The upgrade will:

- improve safety and travel times between Aberglasslyn Road and John Street
- improve safety for pedestrians on South Street
- help reduce crashes along this section of the highway

1.2. The proposal

The proposed safety improvements involve extending the right turn lane on the highway, installing a new raised median to prevent vehicles turning right into South Street, improving line markings, resurfacing the highway, removing the right turn movement into Walter Street and installing a new pedestrian refuge on South Street.
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. The feedback will be incorporated into the environmental impact assessment known as the review of environmental factors (REF)
- 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 in November 2019 on the concept design. Community members were encouraged to provide their feedback, leave comments and make submissions via mail, email or phone contact with the project team or by filling out an online survey. Our key consultation tools are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Delivered via mail to 550 residents and stakeholders in the Rutherford area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emailed to emergency services, local schools and Maitland City Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A copy of the project notification is available at Appendix A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webpage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Project website updated on Monday 25 November.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The webpage can be found at rms.nsw.gov.au/nehrutherford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Facebook advertisement inviting comment was published on the NSW Roads Facebook page on Thursday 28 November. The post linked to the webpage and encouraged readers to provide feedback by clicking on the survey link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A copy of the Facebook advertisement at Appendix B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A media release was issued to local media outlets on Thursday 28 November.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A copy of the media release is available at Appendix C.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3 Consultation summary

3.1 Overview

Comments on the proposed upgrade closed on Friday 6 November, with 52 submissions received about a range of issues. Some submissions included multiple comments and raised multiple issues.

The feedback received in formal submissions raised a number of issues including concerns about traffic light phasing at the Aberglasslyn intersection, access to Telarrah due to the changes to the South Street intersection and increased traffic on the local road network due to banning right turn movements into South Street and Walter Street. A range of issues were also raised concerning the surrounding road network, which are outside the scope of the project. Nine objections were submitted.

After considering all responses, along with the proposal’s aims and design requirements, we have decided to proceed with the project unchanged.

Table 2
<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>Traffic light phasing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Traffic congestion due to traffic light phasing at Aberglasslyn Road intersection and John Street intersection.</td>
<td>Traffic lights in New South Wales form a part of the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System (SCATS), which allocates the length of green times, based on real time traffic flows. Sensors embedded beneath the road measure the flow and density of traffic approaching the signals in each direction and the green time is allocated accordingly. The length of time the signals stay green varies in response to changing traffic conditions. We have noted your feedback and have passed it on to the SCATS team. We will continue to monitor the phasing of the traffic lights and traffic queues once this project has been completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Safety improvements on the New England Highway, Rutherford – March 2020
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal design</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Suggestion to widen highway at the Aberglasslyn Road intersection</th>
<th>Transport for NSW is unable to widen the highway at this intersection due to the location of underground utilities, traffic lights and footpaths as well as the availability of funding.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Access to Aberglasslyn Road intersection for motorists turning left out of South Street</td>
<td>The objective of this proposal is to improve safety and travel times for the almost 30,000 motorists who travel along this section of the highway each day. Alternate options for motorists are available via Walter Street and John Street. Motorists will be able to make a left turn onto the highway and then turn right into John Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Length of the lane extension</td>
<td>Transport for NSW carried out traffic modelling and studied crash data when developing this proposal. The length of the turning lane into Aberglasslyn Road will be extended by 70 metres. This length was chosen to maximising the available space for vehicles turning right into Aberglasslyn Road while also maintaining safety and access to the Caltex petrol station. We will continue to monitor traffic queues along this section of the highway once the project has been completed to see if any other adjustments are required to the phasing of the traffic lights and turning lanes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Objection to the proposal | 2 | Access to Telarah for residents | The objective of this proposal is to improve safety and travel times for the almost 30,000 motorists who travel along this section of the highway each day. The traffic lights on John Street provide a safer route for motorists wanting to access Telarah via South Street.  

Transport for NSW has consulted directly with businesses located in South Street and will continue to work closely with these businesses as the project progresses.  

The objective of this proposal is to improve safety and travel times for the almost 30,000 motorists who travel along this section of the highway each day. The traffic lights on John Street provide a safer route for motorists wanting to access Telarah via South Street.

The right turn movement into Walter Street will be restricted, with signage advising motorists of this change. The traffic lights on John Street provide a safer route for motorists wanting to access Walter Street.

Transport for NSW has consulted directly with Ambulance NSW and will continue to work closely with emergency services as this project progresses. In case of an emergency, Ambulance NSW can make a right turn into Walter Street, with their sirens on.

The pedestrian refuge on South Street will provide a safer option for people wanting to cross the road at this location. This is an opportunity to provide another safety benefit to local residents while upgrading this section of the highway. |
| --- | --- | Impacts to businesses |
| 2 | Access to Walter Street for motorists and emergency vehicles |
| 1 | Pedestrian improvements not needed |
Banning right turn movements 11 Increased traffic on local road network Traffic modelling was carried out when developing this proposal and will continue to monitor traffic volumes once the project has been completed.

Maitland City Council has endorsed the proposal and is progressively upgrading local roads in the area, which will assist with some of the increases in traffic on local roads.

Traffic modelling was carried out when developing this proposal and will continue to monitor traffic volumes and traffic queues once the project has been completed.

Other road improvements 9 Request for additional upgrades The objective of this proposal The objective of this proposal is to improve safety and travel times for the almost 30,000 motorists who travel along this section of the highway each day.

Additional upgrades are outside the scope of the project. We will pass your feedback on to Transport for NSW’s Regional Maintenance Team and Maitland City Council for consideration.

Support for proposal 10 Support for proposal Support for proposal is noted.

The Facebook post reached 28,536 people during the consultation period to raise awareness of the proposal and consultation. The post received 240 reactions, comments and shares. Of the reactions (eg. like/love/dislike) on the post, 94 per cent were positive. The commentary was mixed with some supportive of the proposal and many concerned about traffic congestion and safety along this section of the highway as well as in the surrounding road network.

Key issues about the proposed safety improvements raised in the comments on the Facebook post included:

- support for the safety improvements
- need to widen the highway and realign the intersection
- safety for motorists due to traffic congestion and speed limit along this section of the highway
• concern about traffic light phasing and length of the right turn lane into Aberglasslyn Road
• queuing at the intersection and access for emergency services.

Other issues raised but not specific to the proposed upgrade included

• safety of motorists travelling along the highway
• priority should be given to improving the Maitland flyover and addressing traffic congestion at the Maitland roundabout
• development in the area putting pressure on road network
• pedestrian safety for school students crossing Aberglasslyn Road
• priority needs to be given to roads accessing Hunter Expressway
• funding should be used for other projects around the Hunter region.

3.2 Recommendations

Some of the feedback related to issues on the nearby road network which are outside the scope of the project. These comments have been noted and passed on to Transport for NSW’s Regional Planning team and Maitland City Council.

Based on this feedback, we will be proceeding with further development of the project.

We will work closely with local residents and stakeholders 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 Transport for NSW 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 the community and stakeholders are appropriately addressed when finalising the detailed design.

We will continue to keep the community informed of the project progress.
Appendix

Have your say – Proposed safety improvements on the New England Highway, Rutherford

The NSW Government is investing in a proposal to improve safety and travel times between Aberglasslyn Road and John Street.

Roads and Maritime is seeking your feedback on a proposal to improve safety on the New England Highway at Rutherford.

In the five years up until June 2019, there were 33 crashes along this section of the highway, 24 of which resulted in injury. We have included a map to show the proposed work which will involve:

- extending the right turn lane on the New England Highway by 70 metres for motorists turning right into Aberglasslyn Road from the east. This would improve traffic flow along the highway, by providing additional space for vehicles wanting to turn right into Aberglasslyn Road;
- installing a new raised concrete median to prevent vehicles from making a right turn movement into South Street from the highway. South Street will become a left in and left out only;
- improving line markings and resurfacing the highway;
- removing the right turn movement into Walter Street for motorists travelling east on the highway. Signage will be installed to remind motorists that they can no longer turn right at this intersection;
- installing a new pedestrian refuge on South Street to allow pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Eastbound motorists wanting to access South Street and Walter Street from the highway can do so by using the traffic lights located at the John Street intersection and travelling west along Gilles Street.

How can you give feedback?

You are invited to provide feedback by Friday 6 December to our Project Manager, Viet Nguyen, at viet.nguyen@rms.nsw.gov.au or:

Viet Nguyen
Roads and Maritime Services
Locked Bag 2030, Newcastle NSW 2300

We will consider your feedback and continue to keep you updated as the project progresses.

Contact

If you have any questions, please contact our Project Manager, Viet Nguyen on 02 4908 7724 or viet.nguyen@rms.nsw.gov.au. For more information on our projects, visit rms.nsw.gov.au.

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 7724.

mns.nsw.gov.au
Have your say on plans to improve safety and traffic flow near Aberglasslyn Rd, Rutherford.
Thursday, 28 November 2019

HAVE YOUR SAY ON SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS ON THE NEW ENGLAND HWY AT RUTHERFORD

The community is invited to have its say on a proposal for safety improvements on the New England Highway at Rutherford between Aberglasslyn Road and John Street.

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads and Infrastructure Chris Gulaptis said safety and traffic flow would be improved for almost 30,000 motorists who use the highway each day.

“The proposed work involves extending the right turn lane on the New England Highway for motorists turning right into Aberglasslyn Road from the east,” Mr Gulaptis said.

“A new raised central median will be installed to prevent vehicles from making a right turn movement into South Street from the highway, making this intersection ‘left in’ and ‘left out only’.

“To improve safety along this section of the highway, the right turn movement into Walter Street will also be removed for motorists travelling east.

“Motorists wanting to access South Street and Walter Street from the highway will do so by using the traffic lights located at the John Street intersection and travelling west along Gillies Street.”

The proposal also involves improving pedestrian safety by installing a new pedestrian refuge on South Street, improved line markings, new signage and road resurfacing.

Further information about the proposal, including a design layout, is available for view at rms.worksathethecvterford.

Community members interested in having a say on the proposal are encouraged to email Viet.Nguyen@rms.nsw.gov.au or write to Viet Nguyen, Transport for NSW, Locked Bag 2030, Newcastle NSW 2300 by Friday 6 December.

All feedback will be carefully considered and the community kept informed as the proposal progresses.

MEDIA: Eileisha Rogers | 0439 867 112