

# New England Highway safety improvements at Kootingal

November 2020

## Background

The NSW Government has provided \$50 million for important safety improvements on the New England Highway between Uralla and Willow Tree as part of the Saving Lives on Country Roads program. The program has been developed to help address the disproportionate number of people dying on country roads.

As part of the program, Transport for NSW developed a proposal for a number of road safety improvements between Sandy Road and Braefarm Road, Kootingal.

We invited the community to provide feedback on the proposal outlined below over a three-week period in September and October:

- Close intersections with the highway at Wilson, Gill and Privet streets to separate local traffic from through traffic on the highway
- Restrict access to the highway from Laurel, Oak and Pine streets to left-out only
- Make improvements to Dorothy Avenue/Betts Lane, Chelmsford Street, Yarrol Road and Sandy Road intersections
- Rebuild and widen the road
- Install widened centre line on the highway to increase the separation of vehicles
- Remove a number of roadside trees to reduce the risk of impact during a crash and improve visibility at intersections
- Install roadside guardrail to reduce the risk of a vehicle hitting an object when leaving the road.

## Community consultation

We received 73 submissions via an online survey, email and post. A large majority of the feedback we received was positive and supported the proposal.

To address some of the issues raised during the feedback period, we have produced frequently asked questions, which are outlined later in this document.

We have spoken to a number of people individually to discuss their feedback.

Based on the feedback we have made some changes to the proposal.

## Changes to the proposal

After considering the feedback, we have made the following amendments to the proposal:

- Making Privet Street left-out only to be consistent with Laurel, Pine and Oak streets
- Rather than building cul-de-sacs at the end of Wilson and Gill streets, we will connect these two roads via a short sealed service road (125 metres)
- Working with Tamworth Regional Council to investigate the potential for street lighting at the Sandy Road intersection
- Offsetting the right turn bay into Sandy Road to improve site distance.

## What happens next

We will now work to finalise the project design, including the amendments listed above.

Construction will start early in 2021 and we will keep the community updated as the project progresses.

We will work with the community throughout the construction phase to minimise impacts where possible.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or would like more information on the Kootingal safety improvements project please contact our project team:



(02) 6640 1331



[Grafton.regional.office@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Grafton.regional.office@transport.nsw.gov.au)



[transport.nsw.gov.au](http://transport.nsw.gov.au)



371-377 Goonoo Goonoo Road, Tamworth NSW 2340



If you need help understanding this information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450** and ask them to call us on 6640 1331

## Frequently asked questions

### **Will Sandy Road be upgraded as part of the project?**

While Transport for NSW has plans to improve safety at the Sandy Road intersection, Sandy Road itself is under the ownership of Tamworth Regional Council. As such, TfNSW has shared all of the feedback we received about Sandy Road with council.

### **Why has the proposal been changed from closing Privet Street to making it left-out only?**

We received a number of submissions from people requesting Privet Street to remain OPEN or be changed to left-out only. Making Privet Street left-out only will ensure it doesn't become a highly trafficked intersection and will mean it is consistent with the nearby Laurel, Pine and Oak streets.

### **Will the speed limit be reduced?**

This is not currently proposed as part of the project. The intersection upgrades and other treatments will improve road safety in the area. The speed zone has not been reduced at this location in the past because it would be inconsistent with NSW speed zoning guidelines, which consider factors such as roadside development, access, traffic patterns, road condition and crash history. The New England Highway at Kootingal is consistent with comparable rural highways in NSW.

### **Why are some side roads being closed or access restricted?**

The side roads do not have safe turning facilities. It is a safer outcome for all road users for traffic to be directed to designated intersections which have safe turning facilities, such as right turn bays, left turn bays and acceleration lanes. Once the work at Kootingal is complete these intersections will be Dorothy Avenue, Chelmsford Street and Sandy Road.

### **Why not improve access to Laurel, Pine and Oak streets rather than restrict access?**

This option was considered, it would not be the best outcome as it would increase traffic volumes on these side streets. It is also worth noting the intersections earmarked for upgrades are within close proximity to these side streets.

### **Why are some trees being removed?**

Tree removal has been minimised as much as possible to reduce the environmental impact of the project. There are some trees close to the road for which TfNSW has no options other than to remove. Removing these trees is needed to improve sight lines at intersections, facilitate additional road width to accommodate new turning lanes or widening. Roadside safety barriers are being installed to significantly reduce the amount of trees that will be removed as part of the project.

### **Will Sandy Creek bridge be upgraded?**

It is not planned to upgrade Sandy Creek bridge as part of this project.

### **What improvements are being made to Sandy/Porcupine Lane intersection?**

The turn bay into Sandy Creek Road will be offset so that sight lines are not blocked by an opposing vehicle turning right into Porcupine Lane. A new southbound acceleration lane will be constructed for vehicles turning left out of Sandy Road onto the New England Highway. Safety barrier will be installed in some locations where required. We are also working with Tamworth Regional Council to investigate flag level street lighting to improve night time visibility at the intersection.

**What improvements are being made to Yarrol Road intersection?**

A right turn bay will be built at the Yarrol Road intersection to make it safer for vehicles turning right into Yarrol Road.

**What improvements are being made to Chelmsford Street intersection?**

A northbound acceleration lane will be built at Chelmsford Street due to the crest south of Chelmsford Street, which results in poor sight distance. This will mean motorists turning right out of Chelmsford Street will be able to turn right into a designated northbound acceleration lane. The acceleration lane will allow motorists to pick up speed before merging right into the northbound travel lane.

**What improvements are being made to Dorothy Street/Betts lane intersection?**

A northbound acceleration lane is being built in place of the existing right turn bay into Betts Lane, improved left turn lane into Dorothy, improved shoulder width for northbound traffic south of Betts Lane. Tree removal to improve sight lines.

**Are there any additional overtaking lanes being installed?**

No, additional lanes are not being built as part of the project.

**Are there any overtaking lanes being removed?**

No, the existing southbound overtaking lane south of Moonbi will be retained. Over the length of the project some centreline line marking will be changed to double lines to stop overtaking where it is not safe to do so.

**How will the project improve road safety for this area of the New England Highway?**

Road safety will be improved by the following treatments; Roadside safety barriers, wide centrelines, intersection upgrades, side street closures/restricted access, improved pavement surface, improved road width.

**What is the crash history for this area?**

In the past 20 years that has been a total of 45 recorded traffic crashes on the New England Highway between Sandy and Braefarm roads.

**Will right turns be permitted into Laurel, Pine, Oak, and Privet streets?**

No. The only traffic movements allowed at these streets will be left-out only onto the New England Highway.

**Will bin collection services be impacted by the changes at side streets?**

Transport for NSW is working with Tamworth Regional Council in regards to potential changes to bin collection arrangements for Laurel, Pine, and Oak streets.

**When will the project start and finish?**

The project is planned to start early 2021 and finish mid-late 2021.