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 the upgrade of the New England Highway at Rutherford.

Transport for NSW is planning an upgrade of this intersection to improve travel times and safety between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road.

The proposed intersection includes:

- widening the New England Highway between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road to provide an additional travel lane in each direction and wider shoulders
- resurfacing the highway between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road to provide a smoother surface
- installing a new raised median to help prevent vehicles from crossing over to the wrong side of the road
- building new bus bays on both sides of the highway, east of Racecourse Road, to improve access to public transport
- removing the right turn movement out of Primewest Rutherford to improve traffic flow and safety for motorists entering the highway from the commercial precinct. This movement will become left in and left out only
- considering introducing parking restrictions along the service road to maintain large vehicle movements into adjacent properties.

Key issues raised by the community included concerns about pedestrian, cyclist and motorist safety, speed limit of the highway, traffic flow and congestion at the Racecourse Road and Anambah Road roundabouts and access to Primewest Rutherford. We will consider these issues in finalising the design of the project.

A majority of feedback related to issues on the nearby road network and pedestrian and cyclist facilities 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 upgrade design.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Transport for NSW is planning to upgrade the New England Highway at Rutherford. 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 travel times and safety between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road
- cater for expected residential and commercial growth in the area
- improve access to public transport.

1.2 The proposal

The proposed upgrade includes widening the highway between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road to provide an additional travel lane in each direction. It will also involve providing wider shoulders, resurfacing the highway, installing a new raised median and building new bus bays.
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 September 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>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Notification</td>
<td>Delivered via mail to 600 residents and stakeholders in the Rutherford area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emailed to Primewest Rutherford, freight network, emergency services and Maitland City Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A copy of the project notification is available at <a href="#">Appendix A</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webpage</td>
<td>Project website updated on Monday 9 September.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The webpage can be found at nswroads.work/rutherford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook advertisement</td>
<td>Facebook advertisement inviting comment was published on the NSW Roads Facebook page on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>method</td>
<td>details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook post</td>
<td>Friday 13 September. The post linked to the survey and encouraged readers to provide feedback. A copy of the Facebook advertisement at Appendix B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper advertisement</td>
<td>A newspaper advertisement was published in the Maitland Mercury on Wednesday 4 September. The advertisement encouraged readers to provide feedback. A copy of the newspaper advertisement is available at Appendix C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Consultation summary

3.1 Overview

Comments on the proposed upgrade closed on Wednesday 18 September, with 61 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 pedestrian, cyclist and motorist safety, speed limit of the highway, traffic flow and congestion at the Racecourse Road and Anambah Road roundabouts and access to Primewest Rutherford. Three objections were submitted. A range of issues were also raised concerning the surrounding road network, which are outside the scope of this project.

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

<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 proposal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Support for proposal</td>
<td>Support for proposal is noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian and cyclist facilities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Request for pedestrian and cyclist facilities on both sides of the highway to improve safety and access to the commercial precincts.</td>
<td>The objective of this project is to improve traffic efficiency on this section of the highway. Shared paths would be considered in the future to meet the demands of growing development in the area. Comments have been provided to Maitland City Council and Transport for NSW’s Regional Planning team for consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Concerns over pedestrian safety due to location of the new bus bays and bus stops.</td>
<td>Transport for NSW consulted with Maitland City Council and local bus companies when determining the location of the bus bays and bus stops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed limit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Request to increase speed limit.</td>
<td>The speed limit is 60 km/h which is consistent with the speed limit on the New England Highway in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other road improvements in the surrounding area</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Traffic congestion and issues at the Maitland roundabout and flyover.</td>
<td>This is outside the scope of the project. Transport for NSW is delivering stage one and developing stage two of the traffic management improvements at the New England Highway, Church Street and Cessnock Road roundabout. For more information go to rms.work/maitland.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Traffic congestion and safety at the New England Highway and Aberglasslyn Road intersection.</td>
<td>This is outside the scope of the project. Transport for NSW is currently investigating improvements to the highway near Aberglasslyn Road and sought feedback from the community on a proposal in late 2019.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Request for duel lanes along the highway in Maitland.</td>
<td>This is outside the scope of the project. Comments have been provided to Transport for NSW’s Regional Planning team for consideration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of the proposal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Suggestion to install traffic lights to address traffic congestion in the area.</td>
<td>Traffic lights are outside the scope of the project and will be considered as part of future planning in the area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Objection to proposal | 3 | Objection to banning the right turn movement out of Primewest Rutherford | Objection to the proposal noted.  
Transport for NSW has carefully considered the access options at Primewest Rutherford during the design of the proposal. The proposed upgrade aims to improve traffic efficiency, safety and travel times for motorists travelling between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road by providing an additional travel lane in each direction of the highway. The provision of an additional lane in each direction of the highway would increase the risk of crashes for motorists turning right out of Primewest. The provision of two lanes on the highway and the nearby Anambah Road roundabout provides an alternative route for customers travelling east towards Maitland from the Primewest site.  
Due to increasing traffic volumes of the highway, maintaining a right turn or installing an upgraded access to Primewest, such as traffic lights or a roundabout, would decrease traffic efficiency for motorists on the highway. |
| Objection to proposal | 4 | Objection to this project being prioritised over other traffic issues in Maitland | Objection to proposal is noted |
| Objection to proposal | 1 | No issues on this section of the highway and no need to widen the road | Objection to proposal is noted  
Transport for NSW’s proposal involves providing two lanes in each direction between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road to improve traffic flow and safety as well as cater for expected residential and commercial growth in the area.  
Widening the highway is needed to provide an additional travel lane in each direction. |
The Facebook post reached 27,632 people during the consultation period to raise awareness of the proposal and consultation. The post received 2302 reactions, comments and shares. Of the reactions (eg. like/love/dislike) on the post, 80 per cent were positive. The commentary was mixed with some supportive of the proposal and many concerned about other traffic issues in the surrounding road network.

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

- support for the upgrade
- priority needs to be given to other areas with traffic issues in Maitland
- concerns that the right turn ban will increase congestion at the Racecourse Road and Anambah Road roundabouts
- need for an overarching plan that addresses all traffic issues in Maitland.

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 roundabouts
- improvements for motorists entering the Hunter Expressway from Rutherford
- Singleton Bypass is needed to improve safety and traffic flow
- priority should be given to the New England Highway and Golden Highway intersection
- priority should be given to the New England Highway and Aberglasslyn Road intersection
- funding should be used for other projects around the Hunter region.

3.2 Recommendations

A majority of 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.

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 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 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 upgrade of the New England Highway, Rutherford

The NSW Government is investing in a proposal to improve travel times and safety between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road.

Roads and Maritime Services is seeking your feedback on a proposal to upgrade the New England Highway at Rutherford. The proposal involves providing two lanes in each direction between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road to improve traffic flow and safety as well as cater for expected residential and commercial growth in the area.

We have included a map to show the proposed work which will involve:

- widening the New England Highway between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road to provide an additional travel lane in each direction and wider shoulders
- resurfacing the highway between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road to provide a smoother surface
- installing a new raised median to help prevent vehicles from crossing over to the wrong side of the road
- building new bus bays on both sides of the highway, east of Racecourse Road, to improve access to public transport
- installing parking restrictions along the service road to maintain vehicle movements into adjacent properties and improve safety
- removing the right turn movement out of Primewest Rutherford to improve traffic flow and safety for motorists entering the highway from the commercial precinct. This movement will become left in and left out only.

The project is currently in early planning and construction is dependent on future funding.

How can you give feedback?
You are invited to provide feedback by Monday 16 September to our Project Manager, Todd Hainsworth, at todd.hainsworth@rms.nsw.gov.au or:

Todd Hainsworth
Roads and Maritime Services
Locked Bay 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, Todd Hainsworth on 02 4908 7667 or todd.hainsworth@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 7667.
Have your say on a proposal to upgrade the New England Highway at Rutherford.

Closes 18/9.
Roads and Maritime Services

Have your say – New England Highway upgrade at Rutherford

Community and stakeholders are invited to comment on a proposed design to provide two travel lanes in each direction on the New England Highway at Rutherford.

The upgrade between Racecourse Road and Anambah Road will improve traffic flow, travel times and safety.

Visit rms.work/rutherford to find out more information and view the proposed design.

Please send your feedback to our Project manager, Todd Hainsworth at: todd.hainsworth@rms.nsw.gov.au or:

Todd Hainsworth
Roads and Maritime Services
Locked Bay 2030
Newcastle NSW 2300

Comments are invited until 5pm on Wednesday 18 September 2019 and will be considered in finalising the design.

For more information contact our Project manager on (02) 4908 7667 (during business hours) or email todd.hainsworth@rms.nsw.gov.au.