

## Frequently Asked Questions

### New England Highway bypass at Singleton - Route options

September 2015

**Roads and Maritime Services is carrying out an options assessment to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass at Singleton. More information is available in the Options Identification Report at [rms.nsw.gov.au/projects](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects)**

#### Why is a bypass needed at Singleton?

A New England Highway bypass at Singleton would address current congestion and future traffic demands at this pinch point.

There is also a crash history. In the five years to June 2014, there were 143 crashes along the New England Highway between Range Road and Rixs Creek Road, including a fatality. The majority of these involved rear end crashes and cars running off the road.

A bypass would ensure the efficient operation of the New England Highway and the surrounding road network, as well as improve safety and travel times and reduce heavy vehicle traffic through Singleton. The introduction of a bypass is expected to reduce traffic by 15% to 35% from Singleton town centre.

A bypass is aimed at providing a cost effective option that provides essential access for regional NSW and supports an efficient and productive freight industry as detailed in the NSW Government's Long Term Transport Master Plan.

#### How many cars travel along the New England Highway each day?

Over 25,000 vehicles use the highway through Singleton each day with around 3750 of these being heavy vehicles.

#### What is the expected future traffic growth along the New England Highway in this area?

Traffic volumes on the highway through Singleton are predicted to increase to over 30,000 vehicles per day over the next 25 years. Forecast traffic growth is based on residential population growth forecasted by the [Bureau of Transport Statistics](#), future land developments outlined in the [Singleton Council Local Environmental Plan \(LEP\)](#), and the possible upturn of the mining sector.

#### Where would the bypass be located?

While a preferred route is yet to be identified, the bypass is expected to start to the north of

Range Road and finish to the west of Singleton Heights and McDougalls Hill.

### **How many lanes would the bypass provide?**

All options would provide one travel lane in each direction based on forecast traffic demand. The corridor width would allow for widening to two travel lanes in each direction if required in the future.

### **About the assessment**

#### **Why is an options assessment being carried out?**

An options assessment is being carried out to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass at Singleton.

Once finalised, the bypass corridor will be included within Singleton Council's Local Environmental Plan, reserving the land for future construction of the bypass.

#### **How does the options assessment differ from the preliminary feasibility study?**

A preliminary feasibility study was completed in 2013. The study shortlisted four route options and determined there was merit in further investigating potential bypass options. For further information on the feasibility study visit [rms.nsw.gov.au/projects](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects)

The route options assessment builds on the preliminary feasibility study by carrying out detailed investigations into traffic, environmental and flooding impacts, further strategic design and community consultation to refine options and identify a preferred option. This has included considering options previously not investigated as part of the feasibility study.

#### **Who is carrying out the options assessment?**

Roads and Maritime engaged AECOM in late October 2014 to carry out the options assessment on our behalf.

#### **What routes were considered?**

The assessment considered multiple corridor and route options across the township of Singleton and the surrounding suburbs to the

east and west, including Gowrie, Singleton Heights, Glenridding, Whittingham, Hunterview and Darlington.

Diagrams of the route options considered are available in the Route Options Identification Report at [rms.nsw.gov.au/projects](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects).

#### **What criteria were used to assess the corridor and route options?**

The following criteria were used to assess corridor and route options:

- Travel time/attraction
- Improvement to traffic through town/ accessibility to town
- Environment Impact –flooding
- Environment Impact – Heritage
- Environmental Protection
- Social and Amenity
- Land use and ownership
- Engineering Constraints.

#### **Have local flood plains been considered when looking at options?**

All bypass options aim to minimise flooding impacts. The next stage of the project will further consider the flood immunity of the New England Highway, prior to selecting a preferred option.

#### **Why are the southern options identified in the preliminary feasibility study no longer being considered?**

The southern route options were developed to make use of the Golden Highway before heading north along Putty Road. These routes were reviewed during the options assessment process. These options were not shortlisted for further comment as they created the longest bypass route, poor travel time savings for motorists, had the second highest cost and would provide the least benefits to the future operation of the New England Highway.

#### **Have the northern options identified in the preliminary feasibility study been shortlisted for further comment?**

Northern options 1 and 2, identified in the feasibility study were further investigated as part of the options assessment.

Northern option 1 was removed from the shortlisting process due to its high cost, while

northern option 2 has been refined to minimise flood implications for the local area and has been shortlisted for further comment.

### **Why has the central option identified in the preliminary feasibility study been modified?**

The central option identified in the preliminary feasibility study was modified to minimise flooding impacts for the surrounding properties.

### **What is the current strategic cost estimate for the options considered?**

The assessment indicated cost estimates for the options up to \$600 million in 2015 dollars.

### **Why is Roads and Maritime planning to upgrade the highway at Singleton Gowrie Gates when a future bypass is planned?**

The upgrade to the Singleton railway (Gowrie Gates) underpass is a localised solution that will provide continued light and heavy vehicle access through to Singleton. A bypass will provide an alternative route for motorists heading north to Muswellbrook and south to Newcastle. The bypass aims to reduce traffic through Singleton and further alleviate heavy vehicle limitations at Gowrie Gates.

For further information on the Singleton railway upgrade visit [rms.nsw.gov.au/projects](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects)

### **Will an upgrade of the New England Highway between the Golden Highway and Singleton be included in this bypass proposal?**

The Singleton bypass project is investigating a bypass of the New England Highway at Singleton to improve traffic flow and travel times on the highway and amenity for local traffic through town.

Upgrading or widening the New England Highway between the Golden Highway and Singleton is beyond the scope of this project.

### **How will this project affect the intersection of the Golden Highway and the New England Highway?**

Current corridor and route options proposed for the bypass are located to the west of the Golden Highway intersection.

There is another project underway which is planning to upgrade the highway between Belford and the Golden Highway, including

upgrading the Golden Highway intersection. For further information about this project visit [rms.nsw.gov.au/projects](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects)

## **Property Owner & Community Impacts**

### **When will Roads and Maritime start discussions with affected property owners?**

Once a preferred option is finalised, Roads and Maritime will start approaching affected property owners to discuss future planning.

Roads and Maritime is available to discuss potential impacts with property owners at this time but it is not possible to provide definite information on the likely impact for any part of a property until a preferred option is chosen. Contact details are available on the Roads and Maritime website.

### **Will/when will Roads and Maritime acquire affected properties?**

Roads and Maritime may need to acquire properties to build the future bypass. Acquisition will not start until a preferred option is identified and an environmental assessment is carried out.

If land acquisition is required, Roads and Maritime will contact land owners to initiate a process of consultation and negotiation.

Further information on the process Roads and Maritime use for property acquisition can be found at

[www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/projects/factsheet-property-acquisition.pdf](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/projects/factsheet-property-acquisition.pdf)

### **I own a business in the Singleton CBD. How will this affect me?**

During development of a preferred option, a socio-economic study will be completed to assess the potential impacts of a future bypass.

Information relating to studies that have been undertaken in relation to the impact of bypasses on towns is available on the Roads and Maritime website at:

[www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/resources/town-bypasses.html](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/resources/town-bypasses.html)

### **When will the bypass be built?**

Timing for construction of the bypass has not been confirmed. The NSW Government has announced \$92 million for the upgrade under Rebuilding NSW.

The New England Highway is part of the National Land Transport Network and funding for planning, improvements and upgrading is primarily a matter for the Australian Government.

Based on similar projects at least 4 years of planning and land acquisition are required before construction can begin.

### **What has been the consultation process so far?**

Feedback was collected from the community during the feasibility stage of the project. One of the key issues identified was the flooding impacts in the Singleton area, which has been considered as part of the current investigations.

We will work with the community and stakeholders, including Singleton Council during the planning process to understand issues and minimise potential impacts.

### **What happens next?**

#### **How will community feedback be considered?**

Comments and feedback from the community will be considered along with the results of investigations to select the preferred bypass route.

#### **What are the next steps for the project?**

Along with considering community and stakeholder feedback, we may need to refine traffic assessments, carry out specialist environmental studies, detailed cost estimations and flood modelling for Singleton.

Once complete, a further value management / engineering processes would be undertaken to identify the preferred route.

#### **When will a decision be made on the preferred option?**

The preferred bypass option is expected to be displayed in the second half of 2016.

#### **How can I find out more information?**

The community is invited to view the bypass options and find out more information at staffed displays to be held on 13 and 15 October 2015

from 3pm to 7pm at Quest hotel, 5-7 Civic Avenue, Singleton. Drop-in at any time to talk to the project team.

Information is also available on the Roads and Maritime website at [rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects)

### **How can I provide feedback?**

Feedback on the bypass options is invited by **Friday 23 October 2015**.

Please send us your feedback by:

Phoning: 1800 991 254 during business hours

Emailing: [singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au](mailto:singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au)

Mailing: Joel Rosendahl  
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