The NSW Government is investing more than $500 million to upgrade the Newell Highway from the Victorian to Queensland borders. As part of this upgrade, we are delivering about 30 overtaking lanes over four years through the Newell Highway Program Alliance.

There are now 15 lanes either completed or in construction. We have completed eight, have seven in construction and another eight in development. We are ahead of time and on budget.
In January 2019, the NSW Government partnered with BMD and AECOM to form the Newell Highway Program Alliance. This strategic partnership will accelerate the delivery of about 30 overtaking lanes over four years compared to the likely eight years it would take to fund and deliver the overtaking lanes using traditional procurement methods. This innovative mode of delivery will result in a minimum of 45 kilometres of new overtaking lanes to improve safety, reduce travel times, allow more accurate travel planning and improve freight efficiency.

The Newell Highway is the freight backbone of our state, moving produce and goods from the Victorian to Queensland borders and everywhere along the way. Upgrading it is key to this Government’s commitment to boosting the economic capacity and output of regional NSW, to supporting regional communities, and to building a safer, smoother and more reliable highway. Delivering overtaking lanes might seem like a small addition but it makes a big difference to the businesses relying on efficient freight movement along the corridor, as well as the local communities who use the route alongside heavy vehicles. They keep people and businesses moving, safely.

The Newell Highway Program Alliance has been a great success in efficient and effective infrastructure delivery, evident in the fact that we’ve now hit 15 overtaking lanes under construction or completed, six months ahead of schedule. We’re on target to deliver the program in four years, instead of eight, which means a great deal in regional communities and to our agricultural, mining, manufacturing and forestry industries. This is about delivering for regional NSW, and we’re getting on with it.

NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads
Paul Toole

Delivering for regional NSW

Heavy vehicles make up between 26 per cent and 52 per cent of all traffic on the Newell Highway.
Program update – we are halfway through already

Five overtaking lanes were completed in 2019 which included northbound and southbound overtaking lanes at Dustys Creek and Marthaguy, and a southbound overtaking lane at Medway.

This year we have seen the completion of the Bundaburrah northbound and southbound overtaking lanes in February and the Telescope northbound overtaking lane in April.

The completion of these projects has delivered 12 kilometres of overtaking lanes on the Newell Highway. These overtaking lanes will increase road capacity and overtaking opportunities for the mix of vehicles on the Newell Highway.

The eight overtaking lanes will save about 10 minutes in travel time enabling more efficient transport of freight and providing benefits to regional industry and communities.

Projects currently in construction include:

- Bundure – northbound and southbound overtaking lanes
- Peak Hill – southbound overtaking lane
- Pilliga – northbound and southbound overtaking lanes
- Fullers – southbound overtaking lane
- Chinamans Road – northbound overtaking lane.

Overtaking lanes due to start the first half of 2020 include:

- Tap Hill and Lower Tap – two northbound overtaking lanes
- Coobang – northbound overtaking lane extension.

Projects in planning include:

- Redbank – southbound overtaking lane extension
- Gillenbah Forest – southbound overtaking lane
- Charles Street – southbound overtaking lane
- Landervale – northbound overtaking lane
- Willows Road – southbound overtaking lane
- Bergen - northbound and southbound overtaking lanes.

Benefits

- **More efficient travel**
  More overtaking lanes on the Newell Highway will provide more efficient journey times.
- **Improving road safety**
  The overtaking lanes will increase road capacity and overtaking opportunities for the mix of vehicles on the highway.
- **Increasing overtaking opportunities**
  More overtaking lanes will reduce driver frustration and enable safer overtaking opportunities.
- **Improving freight efficiency**
  The overtaking lanes will provide a more secure transport route for the freight and agricultural industry.
- **Connecting communities**
  The overtaking lanes will provide better and safer connections between communities on the highway.

Freight focus

The Newell Highway is a critical freight corridor for connecting regional communities with each other and important domestic markets and ports.

Additional overtaking lanes allow heavy vehicles to safely overtake slower moving vehicles. This improves freight travel times and reduces driver frustration and fatigue creating a safer road environment for all. Increased sealed shoulder width, wide centre lines and audio tactile line marking also deliver a safer road corridor for heavy vehicles and other drivers by reducing the risk of vehicles running off the road.

These improvements on a major freight corridor are appreciated by transport operators and heavy vehicle drivers who regularly travel the route.
### Regional involvement

The Alliance has been providing opportunities for local contractors and suppliers to tender for work. The Alliance has held five supplier information sessions over the last six months and about 80 suppliers have registered their interest to receive tender packages. The Alliance has also been working with Councils and Chambers of Commerce to raise exposure of opportunities and encourage local businesses to get involved.

### Benefits of partnering with local business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved productivity and competitiveness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business growth by enhancing workforce skills and expansion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upskilling of local workers and consistency of work enabling continuous career development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience to enable involvement in other Government projects.</td>
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**Ben Gunn, Director of WorkControl:** “WorkControl has been working with the Alliance since it started at Dustys Creek and has been involved on six other projects. Benefits of working for the Alliance include getting a designer’s perspective of traffic management, learning new ways of risk, crew and site management. Working on a major project in Western NSW has led to other opportunities.”

**“Working with the Alliance was a big deal for Orange Hire. We had to compete against some big players and it shows regional businesses can compete with bigger companies and win work.” Richard Chamberlain, Business Development Manager of Orange Hire.**

### People and employment

In addition to delivering road user benefits, the overtaking lanes will provide opportunities for skills, training and development of the local and regional community.

The Alliance has created a working environment that values and utilises the contribution of staff from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The consistency of work on the Alliance has enabled skills development, training, and career development. Employees also have the option to move to other projects once the current project is completed providing the opportunity for ongoing employment.

**Base layer preparation and stabilisation at Telescope.**
**South Dubbo Veterans and Community Men’s Shed**

Timber from the Medway construction site was donated to the South Dubbo Veterans and Community Men’s Shed. Local families were able to use the timber as firewood or to build wooden furniture. The firewood helped keep 15 families warm last winter.

**Working with landowners**

The Alliance continues to work with landowners to lease land for our site compounds and purchase gravel. It’s important to us to keep money in local communities, particularly during these unprecedented times. The Alliance works with landowners to:

- Manage noise, dust and traffic impacts
- Install fencing and screening
- Minimise impacts to property operation, agreeing on location, size and access points for compounds
- Give advanced notice about what to expect during works
- Reinstate or improve compound areas after construction
- Avoid construction and landowner vehicle interface.

**Respecting roadside tributes**

Roadside tributes are placed around the NSW road network to acknowledge the loss of someone to road trauma and the Alliance recognises these are an important part of the grieving process.

The Alliance worked with the family of a roadside tribute at Dustys Creek to have it respectfully removed prior to construction and safely stored. The family attended the reinstatement of the roadside tribute and were grateful for the Alliance’s respect and repair work on the tribute.

**Safety and traffic management**

To date, delays across each of our worksites have been limited to 1.5 minutes and we have kept two lanes open for 93 per cent of the time, keeping freight and people moving along the Newell Highway.

The Alliance has used several initiatives to enhance road user safety as they travel through work zones while at the same time increasing the safety of workers onsite. The initiatives implemented include:

- Advance spotters
- “Hazard lights on when stopped” signage
- Traffic separators
- Rumble strips
- Wide load information bays
- Variable Speed Limit (VSL) signage.

These safety initiatives are vital for the safety of the freight industry with heavy vehicles making up between 26 per cent and 52 per cent of all traffic, depending on the point along the highway.

These initiatives used together are a first for Transport for NSW.
Environmental management

Some of the Alliance’s proactive environmental measures include:

**Water use:** When the Alliance was formed NSW was in drought and it was recognised that water saving measures needed to be adopted from the beginning. Town water use was minimised and the Alliance sought approval to use secondary treated water on construction sites rather than reclaimed water. Around 4,700,000 litres of secondary treated water has been used on construction sites instead of potable water.

**Waste management:** The Alliance has initiated several activities to help remove waste near project sites. These include:
- Rubbish collection from all sites – not just in the project area
- Rubbish categorisation to enable recycling where possible
- Perished rubbish disposal near the road corridor, such as old car body and rubber tyres, which are unsightly to road users and impact on community amenity
- Opportunistic rubbish collection.

Innovation

The Alliance has adopted the use of survey drones to enable efficient, accurate, and safe mapping of project sites. The Alliance has used drones on 13 sites and has saved about 26 weeks of site work.

The drone is flown within the road corridor and each survey takes about a day. The use of drones has enabled the design investigations to be carried out in a shorter timeframe, minimised impact to the community, and avoided traffic control measures. The level of detail provided by the drone has enabled greater certainty in the design and reduced construction risk.

The Alliance will not fly any drones over private properties without permission.

Safety

The Alliance’s commitment to safety is reflected in its safety report card.

**No lost time injuries and no medical treatments**

The Alliance responded to Coronavirus by changing work hours to protect staff travelling to and from site and putting in place measures that responded to government restrictions. This enabled the Alliance to keep operating and delivering for the people of NSW. To date the Alliance has reported no cases of Coronavirus.

The volume of rubbish collected to date, includes:

- 24 cubic metres of rubbish
- 4 cubic metres of tyres
- 1 cubic metre of recyclable waste

Survey drones have been used on 13 sites.

Waste collected is categorised to enable recycling where possible.
Completed overtaking lanes at Marthaguy.

For more information:

If you would like to receive updates on the project, please email info@newellHPA.com.au to be included in the distribution group.

For more information about the project:

1 800 577 295 (during business hours, toll free)
info@newellHPA.com.au
nswork/nhpa

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