Bells Line of Road corridor improvement program

Overtaking lane for Site 1

Westbound overtaking lane four kilometres west of Kurrajong Heights

July 2015

Community Consultation Report
Executive summary

This Community Consultation Report provides a summary of the community consultation carried out by Roads and Maritime Services for a proposal to widen Bells Line of Road four kilometres west of Kurrajong Heights to install a second overtaking lane. Key matters raised by the community included business and social impacts, project cost and an alternative route option.

The decision

We have considered the comments received and have decided to the proposal. Construction work to build the overtaking lane will start in December 2015.
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Introduction

Background
In 2012, the Australian and NSW governments jointly released the Bells Line of Road Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan (BLOR Corridor Plan). The Plan outlined a process to guide the short, medium and long term future development of this road corridor as well as setting objectives to improve road safety and maintain traffic efficiency.

As a priority seven overtaking lanes are proposed for the corridor between Kurrajong Heights and Mount Tomah with work to be carried out during the next three years to deliver these improvements.

Roads and Maritime Services has completed a one kilometre eastbound overtaking lane 7.5km west of Kurrajong Heights, between Pattersons Ridge Fire Trail and Glenara Road. This work (Site 4) took approximately seven months to build and was opened to traffic in late September 2014.

The proposal
Roads and Maritime is proposing to widen Bells Line of Road four kilometres west of Kurrajong Heights to install a second overtaking lane (one kilometre in length). The nearest T-intersection is Val Wheeler Drive, 1.8 kilometres west of the start of the overtaking lane. The site includes approximately 700 metres of westbound overtaking lane plus tie-in areas to safely match the existing road.

The proposal aims to:

- Improve traffic efficiency for road users
- Improve the road safety environment
- Minimise environmental impacts
- Avoid the need for private property acquisition or revocation of National Park land
- Provide a value for money solution within the proposed project budget.

Consultation approach
On 27 April 2014, Roads and Maritime distributed 850 notifications from Kurrajong Heights to Mount Tomah along the Bells Line of Road (see appendix C for the distribution map). In addition 100 copies were made available at the Bilpin Post Office. See appendix A for the April 2014 consultation material.

In May and June 2014, Roads and Maritime representatives doorknocked residents living near the proposed overtaking lane and gave them information about the proposal, including investigation work being carried out to inform the proposal. See appendix B for the May and June 2014 consultation material.

On 16 July 2014, Roads and Maritime distributed 850 letters to the same area seeking feedback and views on the proposal. See appendix D for the July 2014 consultation material.

Consultation summary
We received comments from 11 community members about the proposal. Two respondents supported the proposal, five requested more information and clarification and four raised matters about business and social impacts, project cost and an alternative route option. The matters raised during consultation and our responses are outlined in the below table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Roads and Maritime response</th>
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| Financial and possible environmental impacts which could affect home business One comment | Roads and Maritime will work to minimise the impact of construction on the environment, local community and road users. A Review of Environmental Factors will be prepared to identify and minimise any potential environmental impact.  
Roads and Maritime acknowledge that construction of the proposal would have temporary impacts on local traffic and access as a result of construction vehicle movements and the temporary partial or complete closure of roads.  
A Traffic Management Plan would be implemented to minimise impacts on existing road users and would include measures to maintain adequate safe access to properties during construction. Any disruption of access during construction would be managed in consultation with affected landowners. |
| Making the road more accessible to heavy vehicles is going to be detrimental to tourism One comment  | Bells Line of Road is a state road and plays an important role in meeting both domestic and commercial transport needs. The proposed upgrades to overtaking lanes have been designed to maintain the effective movement of goods and people on this through route between Lithgow and Richmond.  
The new overtaking lanes would increase capacity, allow motorists to safely overtake trucks, buses and vehicles towing caravans. This would help reduce the number of risky manoeuvres motorists sometimes take to overtake these vehicles.  
The proposed overtaking lanes would increase opportunities for all motorists, including tourists, that are using the route to pass slow moving vehicles.  
The proposal aims to:  
- Improve traffic efficiency for road users  
- Improve the road safety environment  
- Minimise environmental impacts  
- Avoid the need for private property acquisition or revocation of National Park land  
- Provide a value for money solution within the proposed project budget.  
The provision of additional overtaking opportunities on Bells Line of Road between Kurrajong Heights and Lithgow would not change accessibility of the road for heavy vehicles. The proposal would provide a safer route for all road users. |
| Concern that speed limit is increased to 100 km/h | Roads and Maritime is responsible for the setting and signposting of safe and appropriate speed limits in NSW accordance with NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines.  

Speed limits in NSW, as in other parts of Australia, are determined by a number of factors including the road geometry, surrounding conditions, road usage, adjacent development, vehicle types and volumes, crash history and the number of access points along the route.  

Roads and Maritime aims to provide consistent speed limits for motorists on NSW roads, which accurately reflect the road and surrounding environment in line with the NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines.  

Two speed limit reviews have been carried out by Roads and Maritime in 2008 and 2012 on Bells Line of Road and the speed limits at that time were considered to be appropriate and in accordance with the Speed Zoning Guidelines.  

The speed limits on Bells Line of Road provide consistent 60 km/h speed limits through residential/commercial areas and 80 km/h on rural stretches. A 100 km/h speed limit is only warranted on higher quality lengths of rural road. |
|---|---|
| The government should build a new four lane road from the M7 Motorway to Lithgow and a breakdown lane on Bells Line of Road | In 2012 the Australian and NSW governments jointly announced a Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan (the Plan) for the Bells Line of Road. It recommended measures and priorities for the short, medium and long term future development of the road corridor.  

The two broad improvement programs included:  
- A major upgrade in the longer term, with associated connections to the broader road network and corridor reservation in the interim (eastern section).  
- Short and medium term improvements focused on the existing corridor (primarily focussed on overtaking lanes and road safety along the central and western sections).  

Any work to upgrade Bells Line of Road beyond the current safety upgrades is part of Roads and Maritime future planning for the road network. |
Recommendations
Roads and Maritime has considered all of the feedback received and has decided to proceed with the proposed overtaking lane on Bells Line of Road four kilometres west of Kurrajong Heights.

Next steps
Construction work to build the overtaking lane is expected to start in December 2015. We will provide more information to the community about the expected impacts before work starts.
Appendix A – April 2014 consultation material

To the householder/business operator

APRIL 2014

Investigation work – Bells Line of Road corridor improvement program, Kurrajong to Mount Tomah

Investigation work – Bells Line of Road corridor improvement program, Kurrajong to Mount Tomah.

Roads and Maritime Services will carry out essential field investigation activities as part of the safety improvement program from Wednesday 30 April.

The NSW Government recently announced a $48 million, four year safety improvement program for the Bells Line of Road. The preliminary work for this project has started and Roads and Maritime are now carrying out further investigation along the corridor to inform detailed design for the improvement work. Roads and Maritime has contracted DownerMoeluch to deliver this work.

Seven overtaking lanes are proposed for the corridor between Kurrajong Heights and Mount Tomah with work to be carried out during the next four years to deliver these improvements. The field investigation activities will be undertaken during the next few months and include:

- surveys of the road surface and surrounding landforms
- environmental, covering biodiversity, noise and geotechnical studies.

A map has been provided to help better explain the locations of the various types of investigation work.

This essential work will be carried out between 8am and 5pm from Mondays to Fridays until late June, weather permitting.

Changed traffic conditions

The majority of the work will be carried out off the road using surveying equipment and other hand-held technical equipment. Staff will not be accessing any private properties.

Due to the narrowness of the road, in some locations there will be partial lane closures in place while work is carried out to ensure the safety of road users and workers. Road users are asked to follow the direction of traffic controllers, adhere to reduced speed limits and follow traffic signs.

There will not be any noise associated with this work. Roads and Maritime and DownerMoeluch apologise for any inconvenience this work may cause and appreciate the patience of residents and motorists.

For further information please contact DownerMoeluch on 1800 332 666 or enquiries_nsw@downermoirech.com.

Outside business hours, for more information on scheduled road work, visit www.livetraffic.com or download Live Traffic NSW App or call 132 701.

For more information contact DownerMoeluch
Phone number: 1800 332 666, email: enquiries_nsw@downermoirech.com
Appendix B – May and June 2014 consultation material

To the householder/business operator

MAY 2014

Noise monitoring investigations – Bells Line of Road corridor improvement program, Kurrajong to Mount Tomah

Roads and Maritime Services will carry out essential field investigation activities as part of the safety improvement program from Wednesday, 28 May 2014.

Roads and Maritime is proposing seven overtaking lanes for the corridor between Kurrajong Heights and Mount Tomah with work to be carried out during the next four years to deliver these safety improvements.

Before this work can take place, noise monitoring is required to assess the potential impact of the new lanes. Roads and Maritime will be carrying out this noise monitoring from 28 May 2014 to 13 June 2014. Roads and Maritime has contracted DownerMouchel to deliver this work. To set up the monitoring equipment, DownerMouchel may require access to your property.

What this will involve

This noise monitoring investigation will include:
- Placing an unattended logger on your property to continuously capture data for up to 10 days to gather noise level trends.
- A qualified noise consultant using a handheld sound level meter attending the area for shorter periods to assess various sources of noise.

Each method involves the use of equipment that only records noise levels. It does not record actual sounds such as conversations.

The field officers will carry DownerMouchel photo identification. If the project team requires access to your property and you have agreed to provide access, you will be contacted directly by telephone at least 24 hours in advance.

How do you agree to provide access to your property?

Enclosed is a form for you to complete in agreement to give DownerMouchel staff access to your property to carry out investigations. The property access agreement form will also assist the field team to understand your needs. It will help us to minimise any disturbance to you or your property and ensure that we address any special considerations or conditions of entry onto your property.

It would be extremely helpful if you could fill in this form at your earliest convenience and return it to us in the reply paid envelope enclosed or by emailing enquiries_nsw@downermouchel.com.

Will you need to be home?

It is not essential that you stay home when the field staff visit. If you are not home, a courtesy card will be left in your mailbox recording the date and time of the visit. However, if you are home, you are more than welcome to accompany staff as the investigations are carried out, where it is safe for you to do so.

Further information

Thank you again for your assistance with this matter. We appreciate you taking the time to help us with this essential investigation work.

For further information please contact the project team on 1800 332 660 or enquiries_nsw@downermouchel.com.

Outside business hours, or for more information on scheduled road work, visit www.livetraffic.com or download Live Traffic NSW App or call 132 701.

Translating and Interpreting Service

If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 13 14 50 and ask them to call DownerMouchel on 1800 332 660.

For more information, contact DownerMouchel
T 1800 332 660 E enquiries_nsw@downermouchel.com

For information on scheduled road work, visit www.livetraffic.com
or outside business hours call the Transport Management Centre on 132 701
Investigation and improvement work for the Bells Line of Road Corridor Improvement Program

Roads and Maritime Services will carry out essential field investigation activities and slip remediation work on the Bells Line of Road from Monday 2 June until mid-August.

The NSW Government recently announced a $44 million, four year safety improvement program for the Bells Line of Road. Under the program, Roads and Maritime is proposing to install seven overtaking lanes for the corridor between Kurrajong Heights and Mount Tomah. Roads and Maritime has contracted DownerMouchel to deliver this work.

Slip remediation work

This work includes vegetation and tree removal, scaling, rock removal and the installation of a rock mattress and gabion wall retaining embankment between Coach House Road and Van Wheeler Drive in Kurrajong Heights. This work will improve road user safety and reduce the risk of further erosion damage.

This work will take place from 7am to 5pm between Monday 16 June and mid-August, 2014, except Sundays, weather permitting.

Changed traffic conditions

Minor delays are expected due to changed traffic conditions. Partial lane closures will be in place while work is carried out to ensure the safety of road users and workers. Road users are asked to follow the direction of traffic controllers and to adhere to reduced speed limits and follow traffic signs.

There will be some noise associated with this work, but every effort will be made to minimise the impact on residents.

Roads and Maritime and DownerMouchel apologise for any inconvenience this essential clay work may cause and appreciate the patience of residents, businesses and road users.

Up to date information, including any date changes and detours, will be displayed on electronic message signs along the road.

Field investigation work

The field investigation work will include a biodiversity survey to assess the potential impact of the new overtaking lanes on flora and fauna. DownerMouchel requires access to some private properties in order to carry out this survey. Affected property owners will be contacted in writing and by phone to discuss consent for survey purposes and access arrangements. Affected properties will also be door-knocked.

For more information contact DownerMouchel
Phone number: 1800 332 660, email: engineering_news@downermouche.com

What will the field investigation work involve

The field investigation will survey the local koala population. The project team will be taking measurements and samples of scats (droppings), taking photos of the surrounding habitat and will also be conducting spotlighting, shining a torch light into the trees, to look for koalas. This is to understand the wider population of koalas in the area.

This essential work will be carried out between 7am and 8pm from Monday 2 June to Friday 6 June, weather permitting.

The project team will require access to private properties and in the vicinity of the road alignment at various times during the five days. Some properties may need to be visited more than once by field team members while the investigations are being carried out.

The field workers will carry Roads and Maritime or DownerMouchel photo identification. If the study team requires access to a property and the property owner has agreed to provide it, they will be contacted directly by telephone at least 24 hours in advance.

How does a property owner agree to provide access to their property?

There is a consent form for affected property owners to complete and sign to give Roads and Maritime and DownerMouchel access to their property to carry out investigations. The property access agreement form will also assist the field team to understand the needs of property owners. It will help us to minimise any disturbance to the property owners and ensure that we address any special considerations or conditions of entry onto properties.

If contacted, it would be extremely helpful if property owners could fill in the consent form at their earliest convenience and return it to us in the reply paid envelope provided or by emailing: engineering_news@downermouche.com. Property owners may also hand completed forms directly to a field officer as they door-knock the area.

Will property owners need to be home?

It is not essential that property owners stay home when the field staff visit, if they are not home, a courtesy card will be left in their mailbox recording the date and time of the visit. However, if property owners are home, they are more than welcome to accompany staff as the investigations are carried out, where it is safe for them to do so.

Thank you for your co-operation and understanding during this essential work.

For more information contact DownerMouchel
Phone number: 1800 332 660, email: engineering_news@downermouche.com

Outside business hours, or for more information on scheduled road work, visit www.livetraffic.com or download Live Traffic NSW application or call 132 791.
Investigation work – Bells Line of Road corridor improvement program, Kurrajong Heights to Bell

Roads and Maritime Services will continue to carry out essential field investigation activities as part of the safety improvement program from Monday 7 July.

The NSW Government recently announced a $48 million four year safety improvement program for the Bells Line of Road. The preliminary work for this project has started and Roads and Maritime are now carrying out further investigation along the corridor to inform detailed design for the improvement work. Roads and Maritime has contracted DownerMouchel to deliver this work.

Ten overtaking lanes are proposed for the corridor between Kurrajong Heights and Bell with work to be carried out during the next four years to deliver these improvements. Field investigation activities will continue to be undertaken until late September and include:
- surveys of the road surface and surrounding landforms
- environmental, covering biodiversity, noise and geotechnical studies.

This essential work will be carried out between 8am and 5pm from Mondays to Fridays until late September, weather permitting.

Changed traffic conditions
The majority of the work will be carried out off the road using surveying equipment and other hand-held technical equipment. Staff will not be accessing any private properties.

Due to the narrowness of the road, in some locations there will be partial lane closures in place while work is carried out to ensure the safety of road users and workers. Road users are asked to follow the direction of traffic controllers, adhere to reduced speed limits and follow traffic signs.

There will not be any noise associated with this work. Roads and Maritime and DownerMouchel apologise for any inconvenience this work may cause and appreciate the patience of residents and motorists.

For further information please contact DownerMouchel on 1800 332 660 or enquiries_nsw@downermouchel.com.

Outside business hours, or for more information on scheduled road work, visit www.livetraffic.com or download Live Traffic NSW App or call 132 791.

For more information contact DownerMouchel
Phone number: 1800 332 660, email: enquiries_nsw@downermouchel.com
Appendix C – distribution area

The distribution area is highlighted in yellow on the map:

- Berambling, population of 28
- Bilpin, population of 843
- Kurrajong Heights, population of 873.
Appendix D – July 2014 community update

To the householder/business operator

JULY 2014

Have your say - Proposal for an overtaking lane as part of the Bells Line of Road corridor improvement program

Roads and Maritime Services is seeking community and stakeholder feedback on a proposal to widen the Bells Line of Road eastbound and westbound lanes four kilometres west of Kurrajong Heights.

Roads and Maritime is proposing to install an overtaking lane about 1.1 kilometres in length to improve safety on the Bells Line of Road.

The NSW Government is fully funding a $48 million, four year safety improvement program for the Bells Line of Road. The program will include the building of seven overtaking lanes and other safety improvements including signage and line marking. Roads and Maritime has contracted Dower/Mouchel to deliver this work.

The works are being carried out to enhance road safety for the local communities along the Bells Line of Road. This will lead to:

- Improved traffic flow and a reduction in traffic delays.
- Road safety improvements for all road user groups.
- Enhanced and improved urban design.
- Improved design and signage.

Seven overtaking lanes are proposed for the corridor between Kurrajong Heights and Bell with work to be carried out during the next four years to deliver these improvements. The first of the seven lanes is already under construction.

To finalise detailed design, Roads and Maritime is seeking community and stakeholder feedback on this overtaking lane (OT1) in the corridor program. We have provided a map to provide more information about this proposal. This letter is to seek your views. We would appreciate your feedback by Wednesday 30 July 2014. Please send your written comments by post to:

The Project Manager
Bells Line of Road Corridor Improvement Strategy
Locked Bag 6501
St Leonards, NSW, 2065

or contact Dower Mouchel on 1800 332 660 or at enquiries_nsw@dowermouchel.com.

Roads and Maritime will consider feedback in finalising its decision about this proposal and will continue to keep the community and stakeholders updated.

For more information contact Dower Mouchel
Phone number: 1800 332 660 email: enquiries_nsw@dowermouchel.com