

# Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

## Property, planning, heritage and the environment



Blackheath over the train station looking north

### **What kind of environmental assessments and approvals will this program need to obtain before construction starts?**

We are sensitive to the area's natural environment, Aboriginal cultural heritage, local heritage and communities.

Investigations are planned on the corridor including: survey work, flora and fauna studies, geotechnical drilling, utilities investigations, technical studies, heritage studies, and archaeological surveys. Community consultation will be ongoing as a result of these investigations.

The findings from these investigations will help inform the environmental planning and assessment pathway to be used on the program.

Once preferred options are developed and concept designs completed for the program, environmental assessment reports will be prepared as required by the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. We will not impact the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

### **How will you manage the impacts from the Great Western Highway Upgrade Program?**

A key design principle is to avoid areas of environmental or community sensitivity where possible. The Environmental Assessments will identify impacts arising from the project and provide strategies to avoid or mitigate impacts. Engagement and consultation with the community and stakeholders is a key part of determining and managing potential impacts from the project.

### **What impact will you have on Aboriginal cultural heritage?**

Protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage is a key program focus. We will consult closely with local Aboriginal groups, organisations, and cultural knowledge holders to identify and either avoid or mitigate impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage.

## What impact will you have on the World Heritage Area?

The route options will not affect the World Heritage Areas of the Blue Mountains. Please see over the page for a map of the world heritage area for this part of the Blue Mountains.

## What impact will you have on the Blue Mountains National Park?

Our design principle is to avoid impacting the Blue Mountains National Park. Between Medlow Bath and Blackheath, the boundary of the national park is very close to the existing highway and impacts may be unavoidable if the highway is upgraded here. We will closely consult the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services as part of the options development process.

## What impact would you have on the drinking water catchment?

Our strategic corridor avoids directly impacting drinking water catchments. Environmental management controls will be developed as required with Water NSW to avoid indirect impacts. We will keep the community updated as the program develops further.

## What impact will you have on non-Aboriginal heritage?

Most non-Aboriginal heritage is well recorded and mapped in locations within the villages. The strategic corridor will, where possible, avoid impacting registered heritage items and places. We will consult with the Office of Environment and Heritage.

## What impact will you have on bushwalking routes?

Where possible, we will avoid impacting bushwalking routes as we are sensitive to the community's high regard for these environmental assets. However, a possible option for Blackheath would likely impact bushwalking trails to Fort Rock, Centennial Glen Creek, and Porters Pass Track. The reserved corridor between Mount Victoria and Lithgow would likely impact Berghofers Pass.

The program team will consult with stakeholders such as bush walking groups, local councils, and others to mitigate impacts during the development of these options. Further investigations need to be done to assess the impacts on these trails.

## What impact will you have on trees?

Upgrading the highway will impact biodiversity, including trees. The environmental assessment will include an assessment of tree impacts and options to mitigate, such as, offsets or alternate planting strategies. This may include the biodiversity offset scheme, but it is too early to confirm at this stage.

## What urban design features are you planning?

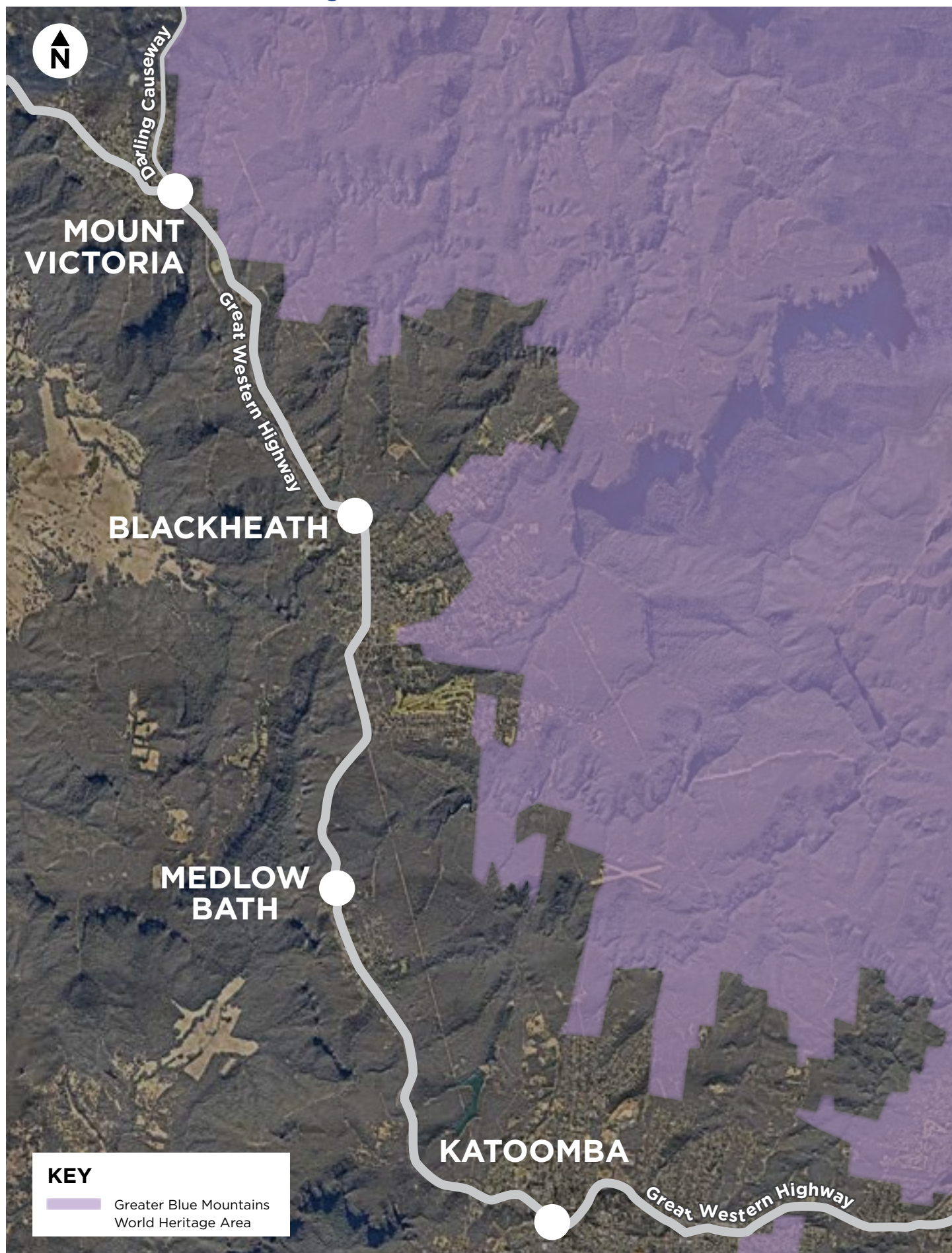
An urban design strategy will form part of the environmental assessment. It is still too early to detail precisely what this would look like, including if features like noise walls would be required. This will be an important part of future public consultation and stakeholder engagement.



From Mitchell Ridge looking at Victoria Pass



## Blue Mountains World Heritage Area





## What are the air quality and noise impacts from the program?

We will be carrying out studies to assess the possible impacts on noise and air quality. These will be detailed in the environmental assessment when the program reaches that stage.

## Will you affect my property?

The Great Western Highway Upgrade has been designed to minimise property acquisitions. However, as with all major infrastructure projects, there will be an impact on property owners. The program team is very conscious of this and will work closely with property owners.

Property owners will be consulted once they have been identified as potentially impacted.

When a property is acquired in NSW, compensation for the acquisition of land is determined under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*. More information on the property acquisition process can be found at the Centre for Property Acquisition.

We will start negotiations for property acquisition after the preferred alignment of the road corridor has been reserved and the program enters the next phase of planning and detailed design.

## Will you affect my business?

The program is in very early planning stages and we will be consulting with business owners and stakeholders to understand the potential impacts of each option.

We will consult with business owners and use innovations to come up with construction methods that will allow continued access to properties during the construction project. Socio-economic studies will be undertaken in planning approval documents delivered.

## Will you compensate me?

If your property is acquired as part of the project, Transport for NSW will make you an offer for the acquisition of your property. The offer will be based on the current market value of the property and based on recent sales in the area.

## Strategic corridor between Katoomba and Mount Victoria



### Where can I find out more on the upgrade program?



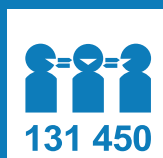
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