

# Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

## Project benefits fact sheet

October 2020



The upgrade program will reduce congestion and improve safety on the highway

The NSW Government is investing \$2.5 billion towards upgrading the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow to a four lane carriageway. Once completed, the upgrade will reduce congestion and deliver safer, more efficient and reliable journeys for those travelling in, around and through the Blue Mountains, while also better connecting communities in the Central West.

The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program aims to:

- Improve safety: reducing safety risks along the corridor for all road users
- Improve network performance: improve congestion and travel time reliability
- Improve and drive regional economic development and productivity
- Enhance liveability and amenity: maintain and improve local amenity and character, and protect environmental and cultural assets
- Improve resilience and future proof: provide a dependable and adaptable transport network that enables continuity of transport and essential services.



## Improve safety

The upgrade program aims to reduce crash rates between Katoomba and Lithgow, which are currently higher than the NSW average for similar roads.

Transport for NSW has recorded a 77% reduction in fatal crashes and a 28% reduction in casualties between Leura and Warrimoo since the highway was duplicated and upgraded.

Duplicating lanes will provide safer overtaking opportunities and allow us to provide median treatments, which help prevent head on collisions. In addition, duplication means faster access and better traffic management opportunities for emergency services.

Improving gradients and straightening curves as much as possible will also help to improve safety along this section of the Great Western Highway.

## Improve network performance

The Great Western Highway is a key corridor of national significance and has rising traffic volumes. The daily average traffic volume entering/exiting Blackheath is more than 16,000 vehicles.

This volume is greater than the daily volumes on already duplicated highways such as the Hume Highway at Goulburn, the Princes Highway at Berry and the Pacific Highway at Grafton.

Traffic peaks and congestion are common throughout the week, but especially on weekends and during special events and the school holidays. The Great Western Highway upgrade will provide more opportunities for traffic to overtake slow moving vehicles, and make sure the road can cope with peak periods and growing traffic. Duplication will also allow contraflow and access for emergency services during incidents and emergency events.

The upgrade will also improve how the highway interacts with active transport users, pedestrians and bus and train commuters.



Duplication will allow for better management of traffic during incidents and emergencies

## Drive regional economic development and productivity

The Great Western Highway is the key east west connection for Sydney and NSW and freight is vital to regional communities' economic prosperity and survival.

Around half of all freight in the Blue Mountains is carried on the road network, and around 40 per cent of road freight between Katoomba and Lithgow either begins or ends its journey locally, supporting the local economy. Separating heavy and light vehicle traffic with dual carriageway allows freight to move more efficiently.

To meet future demand, the upgraded highway will be designed to carry modern, more productive Performance Based Standards (PBS) heavy vehicles.

PBS vehicles have the highest safety standards and, because they can carry more, this can mean fewer truck trips to move the same amount of freight. PBS vehicles can also stop and turn in the same space.

For more information on PBS vehicles and the Great Western Highway visit [nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway](https://nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway)



The Great Western Highway will remain a vital link for the Central West

## Liveability and amenity

The upgrade will be completed in stages over the next decade, with significant planning and consultation required on each section. The NSW Government is committed to minimising impacts to the natural environment, local heritage and property.

Where we are able to bypass towns, this will separate local and long distance traffic, improve pedestrian and cyclist safety through the townships, and give towns back to the communities.

## Resilience and future proofing

The 2019/2020 bushfire season highlighted the need to ensure our highways are resilient and adaptive in times of emergency. This has been at the forefront of our thinking as we plan for the upgrade. Dual carriageway will allow for better traffic management or contraflow capability in times of congestion, and bypasses will provide alternative access routes in times of emergency.

## Consultation

Transport for NSW is sensitive to the needs of the local community and all road users. We will continue to engage with the community and affected stakeholders, with multiple consultation opportunities as the program progresses.



Bushfire damage near the Darling Causeway



## Strategic Business Case

The project team is working closely with expert advisors and is well under way in developing the Program Strategic Business Case for the entire length of the corridor, which will consider multi-modal and alternative corridor options for improving transport across the Blue Mountains.

The Strategic Business Case is expected to be completed at the end of 2020.

The Great Western Highway is an important route identified as part of the Land Transport Network (Roads), which has been developed through collaboration between Commonwealth, State, and Territory governments.

This upgrade has also been listed by Infrastructure Australia as a priority initiative. This means that it is officially recognised as a priority infrastructure investment which Australia needs in order to secure a sustainable and prosperous future.

The upgrade program is aligned strategically to the following Australian and NSW Government plans, policies, and frameworks:

- NSW Future Transport 2056
- NSW Freight and Port Plan 2018-2023
- NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy Framework
- NSW Road Safety Plan 2021
- The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019
- Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan 2018
- NSW Tourism and Transport Plan 2018
- Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036
- A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW.

The Great Western Highway Upgrade Program also responds to government's commitment to invest in regional NSW, and recognises the strategic need to invest in and grow the Central West. The Program Strategic Business Case will include analysis that supports this investment.

## Contact the Great Western Highway Upgrade team

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