

Olympic Highway intersection upgrades through Wagga Wagga

Community consultation report

Roads and Maritime Services | October 2019



Summary

This report summarises Roads and Maritime Services' consultation with the community and key stakeholders on proposed Olympic Highway intersection upgrades at Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street.

In September 2018, the NSW Government committed funding for improvement work at the Olympic Highway intersections with Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street to address traffic flow issues.

There has been a boom in residential development in Wagga Wagga's northern growth area, including Gobbagombalin, Estella and Boorooma housing estates, with plans to release more residential land in the area in coming years.

The Olympic Highway intersections with Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street have been identified as areas experiencing traffic delays and with poor crash histories relative to the state average. These intersections service surrounding residential, commercial and industrial areas.

Roads and Maritime would like to thank the community and stakeholders for considering the need for improvements at these intersections and everyone who took the time to provide feedback.

Consultation

Roads and Maritime invited feedback on Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street intersections from 3 June 2019 to 28 June 2019.

During the consultation, about 390 comments were provided by email, phone, letter and via an online consultation map.

See section 3 for a summary of feedback and responses provided.

Key feedback included:

Old Narrandera Road intersection

- experience of current road conditions
- road safety issues
- traffic congestion
- local road issues.

Travers Street intersection

- road safety issues
- congestion during peak times.

Pine Gully Road intersection

- road safety issues
- local road issues.

Other feedback

- pedestrian and cyclist safety issues
- suggestions for alternative solutions.

Next steps

After considering all responses in line with project objectives, Roads and Maritime better understands existing community challenges at each intersection.

Roads and Maritime will consider this feedback to develop preferred options to upgrade both the Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street intersections. Preferred options will be developed to meet the following objectives:

- improve safety, access and traffic efficiency
- improve travel time and reduce delays on this section of the Olympic Highway
- reduce crash frequency and severity along this section of Olympic Highway.

The community will be kept informed as the project progresses. This report and other project information will be published on Roads and Maritime's website. Roads and Maritime expects to announce the preferred intersection options later in 2019.

For more information about the project, please contact the South West project team at south.west.projects@rms.nsw.gov.au.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In September 2018, the NSW Government committed funding for improvement work at the Olympic Highway intersections with Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street intersections to address traffic flow issues.

Residential development is continuing in Wagga Wagga's northern growth area, including Gobbagombalin, Estella and Boorooma housing estates. In 2016, 1229 lots were developed with a future potential for 3802 lots across the three release areas. Daily traffic crossing Gobbagombalin Bridge (2015-2018) is currently growing about seven per cent per year, with morning and evening peak hour growth exceeding 11 per cent.

The Olympic Highway intersections with Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street have been identified as needing improvement to address safety concerns and traffic efficiency. These intersections service surrounding residential, commercial and industrial areas.

Roads and Maritime proposes to develop preferred options to upgrade both intersections to improve safety, access and travel time to support future Wagga Wagga residential growth.

2. Consultation approach

2.1 Consultation objectives

Roads and Maritime consulted with the community on issues currently impacting road users at Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street intersections to:

- seek comment, feedback, ideas and suggestions to consider when developing a preferred option for each intersection
- build a database of interested and concerned community members so we can continue to engage during further project development and delivery.

2.2 Values

Our values underpin our decisions and behaviours when working with customers, colleagues, stakeholders and partners.

- customer focus - we place the customer at the centre of everything we do
- collaboration - we value each other and create better outcomes by working together
- solutions - we deliver sustainable and innovative solutions to NSW's transport needs
- integrity - we take responsibility and communicate openly
- safety - we prioritise safety for our people and our customers.

2.3 How the consultation was done

On 3 June 2019, about 33,500 postcards (see Appendix A) inviting feedback on the intersections were distributed to residents in Wagga Wagga, Coolamon and Junee. Variable message boards were placed near the Olympic Highway intersections with Travers Street and Old Narrandera Road to inform road users about an opportunity to provide feedback. Comments were accepted via email, post, phone or on the online consultation map.

Social media posts (see Appendix B) provided updates and increased awareness about the online feedback tool. Two posts on the NSW Roads Facebook page reached about 25,000 people.

A media release was also issued (see Appendix B)

Table 1: Consultation methods

Tool	Method
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads and Maritime webpage published with project information: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/south-western/olympic-highway-intersection-upgrades/index.html
Online consultation map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 322 comments received between 3 June and 28 June 2019
Media releases and coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media release issued by Roads and Maritime 3 June 2019. See Appendix C Olympic Highway intersection upgrades call for feedback – <i>The Daily Advertiser</i> 6 June Speak up about Olympic Highway – <i>The Daily Advertiser</i> 26 June Channel 9 Wagga road safety upgrades 5 June Prime7 Olympic Highway road safety upgrades 5 June ABC Radio interview 6 June ABC Radio public feedback 6 June
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook post 7 June 2019, reach 22,808 people Facebook post 26 June 2019, reach 3,036 people See Appendix B
Postcard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Postcard delivered to 33,500 households in Wagga Wagga, Junee and Coolamon
Emails, phone calls and face-to-face meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67 comments received between 3 June and 28 June 2019

3. Consultation summary

3.1 Overview

Roads and Maritime gave community members and stakeholders an opportunity to share feedback and location-specific information using an online tool - Enabling Community Consultation Online (ECCO).

Roads and Maritime would like to thank the community and stakeholders for providing valuable feedback on current issues and suggested improvements. About 390 responses were received (see Figure 1) showing:

- 52 per cent of respondents thought there were safety issues at Old Narrandera Road intersection
- 26 per cent of respondents thought Travers Street intersection could be improved
- road safety was a concern for 80 per cent of respondents
- cyclist and pedestrian safety was a point of concern for 12 per cent of respondents.

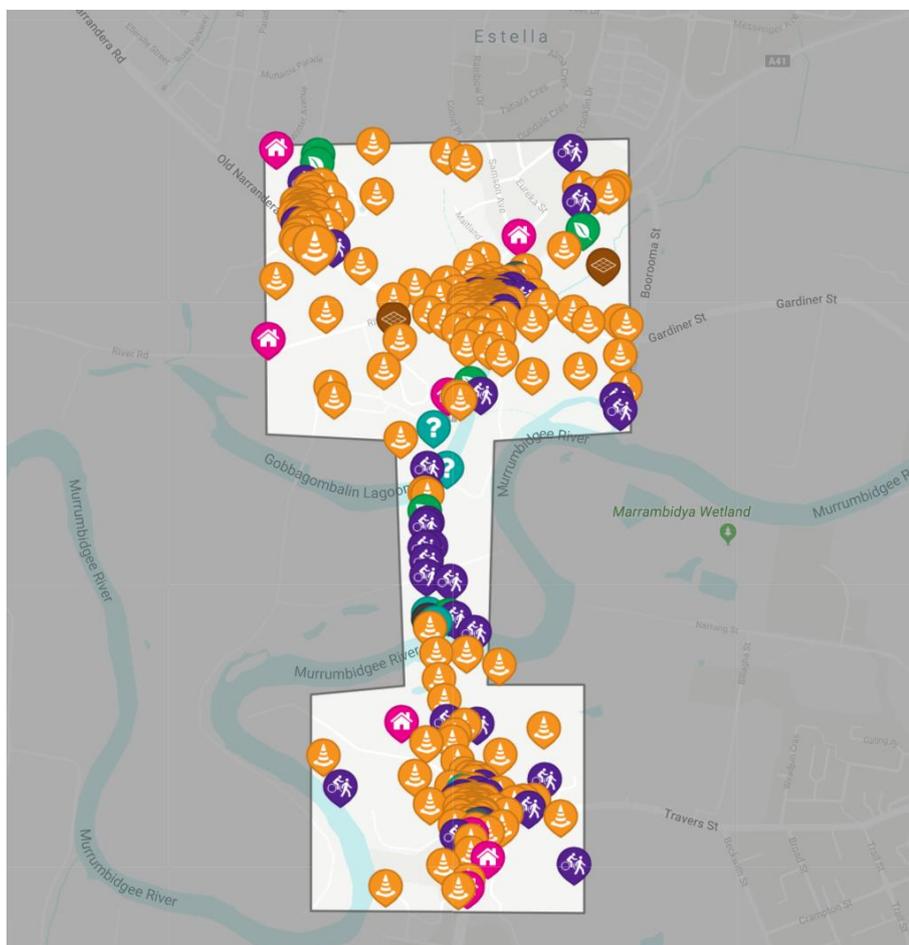


Figure 1- The online ECCO tool enabled the community to submit feedback online, with each icon representing a comment.

3.2 Old Narrandera Road

Feedback

Many community members mentioned they felt unsafe when using the intersection. Key safety concerns raised include:

- lack of instruction and knowledge about how to use this intersection type
- poor visibility, especially in bad weather conditions
- high traffic volumes during peak times making it hard to find gaps to merge onto the Olympic Highway
- highway vehicles exceeding the speed limit making it unsafe to merge onto the Olympic Highway
- southbound merging lane is too short, requiring vehicles to merge into highway traffic.

Community members also reported they had witnessed many near-misses at this location and road users taking dangerous risks.

Key suggestions for intersection improvements include:

- intersection upgrades to include building a roundabout or traffic lights
- extending and changing the current southbound merge lane so Olympic Highway traffic merges with Old Narrandera Road traffic
- building a grade-separated interchange with options to connect to the Olympic Highway and/or Gardiner Street in North Wagga Wagga
- upgrading and improving the local road network to ensure better connections linking the Wagga Wagga city centre with the northern suburbs
- introducing a reduced speed limit within this area to help address safety issues.

Figure 2: Old Narrandera Road suggestions (simplified)

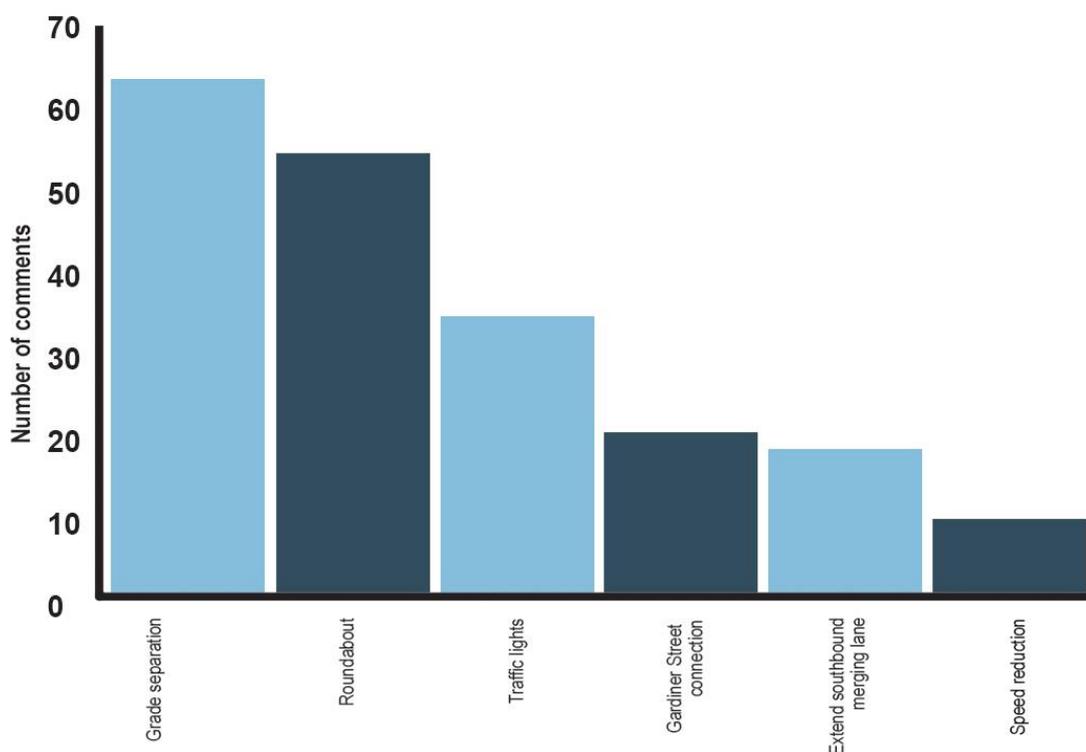


Figure 2 - Simplified community suggestions - not all topics covered in graph.

Response:

Roads and Maritime is currently carrying out intersection modelling to determine impacts on traffic from various intersection options. Options being investigated include both roundabout and traffic light options. Traffic modelling includes assessing reduced speed limits to investigate safety benefits, impacts on traffic flows and capacity.

Traffic modelling will include allowance for future traffic growth. Roads and Maritime will use this information to design any intersection changes, including changes to merge lanes, to safely meet growing traffic demand.

Roads and Maritime will investigate a potential connection with Gardiner Street in the longer term.

Roads and Maritime will work with Wagga Wagga City Council to ensure all levels of the city's road network are considered in any upgrades.

3.3 Travers Street

Feedback

The main issues raised for this intersection were:

- northbound vehicles incorrectly using the right hand turning lane to jump the queue and continue travelling across the bridge
- severe congestion during peak times
- line marking causes confusion and creates safety issues
- poor driver behaviour, eg not safely using the roundabout
- merging lane lengths are too short resulting in reduced decision making time and potentially increasing crashes
- road line marking is slippery, creating a safety issue.

Many intersection improvement suggestions were received to help traffic flow, efficiency and safety. Key suggestions include:

- providing a slip lane for southbound Olympic Highway vehicles turning left into Travers Street
- removing the roundabout and installing traffic lights to help regulate traffic flow
- improving intersection signage to better inform road users about travelling lanes and providing activated signs for when there is a crash on the bridge
- removing the roundabout and replacing with underpasses connecting Travers and Moorong streets to remove current conflicts with Olympic Highway traffic
- removing or reducing access from the Olympic Highway to Travers Street, encouraging traffic to use Kincaid Street or alternative accesses
- providing traffic lights that operate only during peak times to regulate flow.

Figure 3: Travers Street suggestions (simplified)

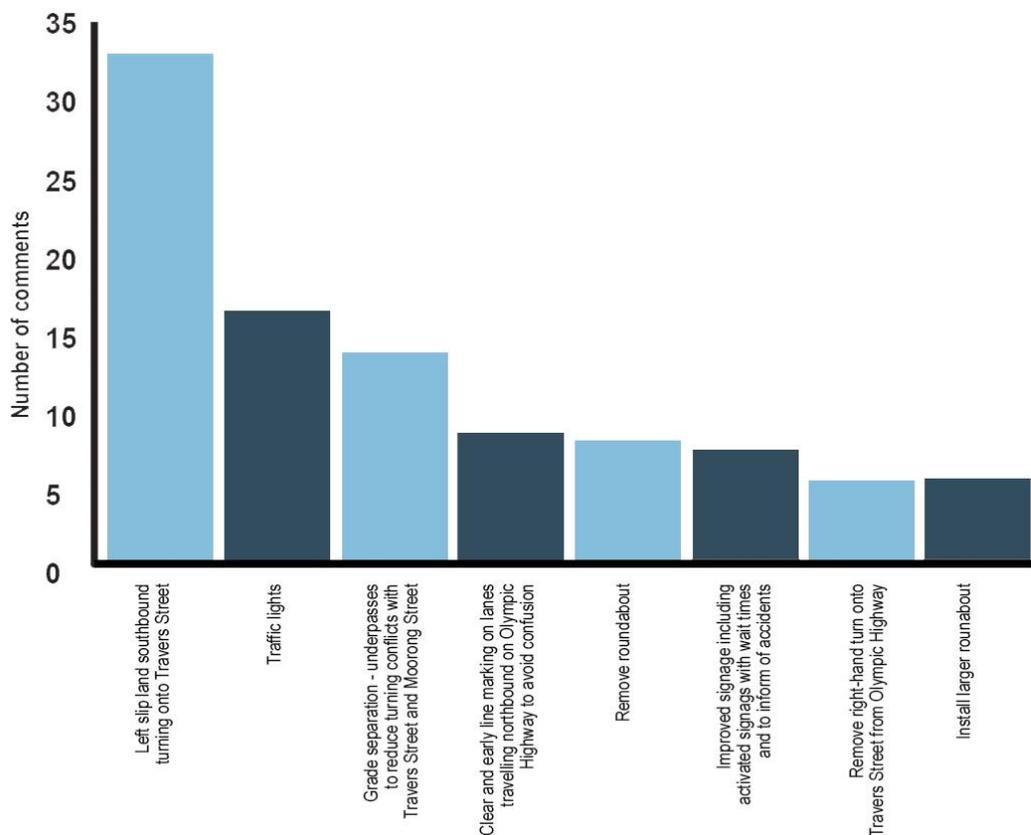


Figure 3 - Simplified community suggestions - not all topics covered in graph.

Response:

Roads and Maritime is currently carrying out intersection modelling to determine impacts on traffic from various intersection options. Options being investigated include traffic signals, turning lanes and preventing some turning movements to reduce conflicts.

Roads and Maritime will work with Wagga Wagga City Council to consider how Travers Street intersection options may impact other roads (eg Kincaid Street) or local access requirements. Intersection signage requirements will be considered during the design process.

3.4 Pine Gully Road

Although Pine Gully Road intersection with Old Narrandera Road was not targeted in this call for feedback, many responses mentioning issues and solutions were received.

Main issues included:

- safety concerns for road users (cyclists and cars) due to a lack of lighting
- unsafe road user behaviour witnessed (cutting corner and not obeying stop sign)
- poor quality road requiring maintenance (people avoiding potholes).

Key suggestions for improving this intersection included:

- removing a stop sign for vehicles turning left onto Old Narrandera Road as it currently causes congestion in peak times
- providing a dedicated turning lane for Old Narrandera Road vehicles turning left onto Pine Gully Road
- providing lighting, improved signage and clear line marking
- upgrading this intersection to include a roundabout.

Response:

As a local road, Wagga Wagga City Council is responsible for Pine Gully Road's management and operation. Roads and Maritime has provided these comments to Council and will continue to work together to improve Wagga Wagga's local road network.

3.8 Other feedback

Other feedback included:

- the need to provide an additional river crossing connecting the northern suburbs to central Wagga Wagga
- the need to duplicate Gobbagombalin Bridge.
- suggestions on alternative upgrades to improve network efficiencies
- providing safe cyclist and pedestrian access between central Wagga Wagga and the northern suburbs
- requests for improved vegetation and landscaping to improve the entrance to Wagga Wagga
- suggestions for improved local road quality and connections
- concerns raised about a lack of residential services in the northern suburbs
- the need to investigate and develop bypass or ring road options

Figure 4: Other suggestions (simplified)

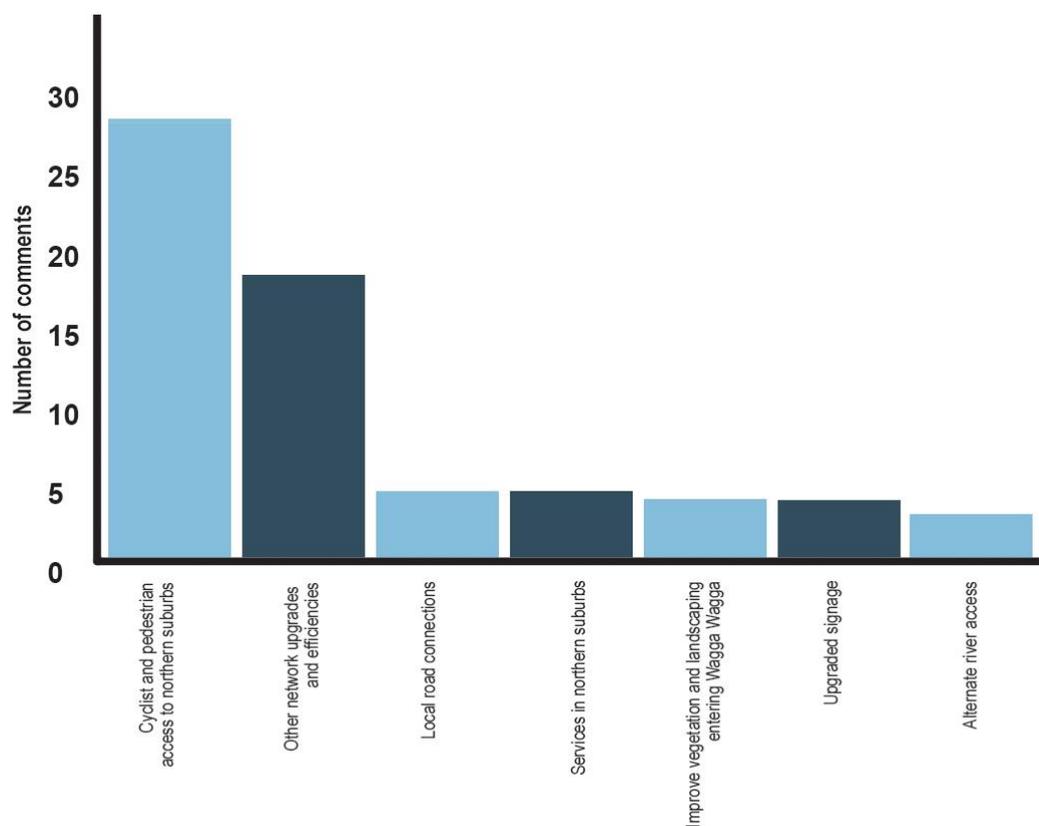


Figure 4 - Simplified community suggestions - not all topics covered in graph.

Response:

This purpose of this consultation was to seek feedback on the Olympic Highway intersections with Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street.

Roads and Maritime will consider broader road network issues when developing intersection upgrade options. However, bridge duplication, bypass, ring road or other major network upgrades are potential longer term solutions to investigate in future years. Although these longer term suggestions are not considered part of this intersection upgrade project, Roads and Maritime will continue to plan for the future and engage with our community and key stakeholders, including Wagga Wagga City Council, to ensure the State road network meets the city’s needs as it continues to grow.

Roads and Maritime has also provided feedback to Council on community concerns about pedestrian and cyclist access. Council currently has an Active Travel Plan in place addressing pedestrian access in the area.

4. Next steps

Roads and Maritime will consider feedback provided along with the results of other technical studies (including traffic modelling) to develop preferred options to upgrade both the Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street intersections with the Olympic Highway.

The community will be kept informed of progress. This report and other project information will be published on Roads and Maritime’s website. Roads and Maritime anticipates announcing preferred intersection options later in 2019.

For more information please contact the South West projects team by emailing south.west.projects@rms.nsw.gov.au.

5. Appendices

Appendix A- 'Have your say' Postcard June 2019



Olympic Highway intersection upgrades through Wagga Wagga

Have your say

Roads and Maritime Services is developing a project to improve safety and traffic flow at the Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street intersections.

Roads and Maritime is currently in early planning for this project, which aims to:

- improve safety, access and traffic efficiency at the Olympic Highway intersections with Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street
- improve travel time and reduce delays on this section of Olympic Highway
- reduce crash frequency and severity along this section of Olympic Highway.

Community consultation is an important part of this process. Your involvement will help us understand issues and suggest explore possible solutions.

Have your say

- Use the interactive online tool at rms.work/OHIU
- Email south.west.projects@rms.nsw.gov.au
- Write to Olympic Highway Intersection Improvements, PO Box 484, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650



The survey closes 5pm Friday 28 June 2019

RMS.19.1254

Olympic Highway intersection upgrades through Wagga Wagga



Appendix B - Facebook posts June 2019

NSW Roads
Published by CoSchedule App [?] · 7 June · 🌐

WE NEED YOU! 📍 We're planning upgrades of Wagga's Olympic Highway intersections at Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street and want to hear your feedback!

Go to <https://rms.social/OlympicHwy>, drop a pin on the map and share your thoughts on the main concerns and possible improvements with these intersections.



NSW Roads
Published by CoSchedule App [?] · 26 June at 05:00 · 🌐

Time is running out to have your say on the Olympic Highway intersections at Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street, north of Wagga Wagga. We need your feedback to help us plan upgrades of these intersections.

See our new interactive consultation map at <https://rms.social/OlympicHwy> and have your say before Friday 28 June.



3 June 2019

HAVE YOUR SAY ON OLYMPIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Wagga Wagga residents and motorists travelling along the Olympic Highway are invited to provide feedback as part of planning for intersection upgrades at Old Narrandera Road and Travers Street.

Roads and Maritime Services Acting Director South West NSW Nicola Gentle said the NSW Government is investing in road and bridge upgrades in Wagga Wagga to help ease congestion and improve safety.

“The Olympic Highway through Wagga Wagga provides an important regional and local link from suburbs north of the Murrumbidgee River, Bomen Freight Hub and Charles Sturt University,” Ms Gentle said.

“Traffic numbers in the area have risen due to an increase in land development at Estella, Gobbagombalin, Boorooma, and north of the river.

“Heavier traffic is placing increased pressure on intersections at Travers Street and Old Narrandera Road. The upgrades aim to improve safety, access, travel efficiency and travel times in the area.

“While we’re not looking at changes to Gobbagombalin Bridge as part of this work, the proposed upgrades will improve traffic flow in this increasingly busy area.”

Roads and Maritime Services is now calling for feedback to help identify issues and opportunities at these intersections.

“Participating is easy,” Ms Gentle said.

“Go online to the project website, access the interactive map and add comments to specific locations.

“The online map allows us to better understand community feedback by pinpointing the exact location to which a comment is referring. Feedback may fall into categories including the environment, traffic and road safety, property and access, public transport or parking.

“The community is also asked to provide feedback on potential future upgrades at the Gobbagombalin Bridge and a possible Olympic Highway connection with Gardiner Road, providing a link to Wiradjuri Bridge at North Wagga Wagga.

The community can provide feedback until 5pm on Friday 28 June. To submit your comments, see our interactive online tool at rms.work/ohiu.

For more information about the project, please visit rms.work/ohiu or email south.west.projects@rms.nsw.gov.au.



www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/south-western/olympic-highway-intersection-upgrades/index.html



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