

WOLLOMBI ROAD

REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS & DESIGN OPTIONS



ENGAGEMENT REPORT



Acknowledgement of Country

Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the traditional lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock Local Government Area.

Journey Through Time, created by local school students and artist Steven Campbell.

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SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT

Summary of engagement

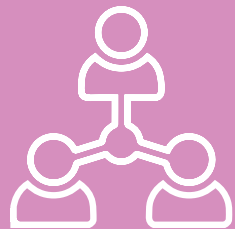
A range of engagement methods were used to raise awareness and seek input into the Wollombi Road upgrade Review of Environmental Factors & Design Options report. These included:



3,500+
visits to the
webpage



723,331+
total reach of media coverage



4 face to face
sessions



32,100
social media reach from 5 posts



articles in eNews and
WRUP community
newsletter



1 Facebook live
Q&A session



1 Project
notification

ENGAGEMENT DETAILS

Engagement background

Council placed the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the Wollombi Road Upgrade – Stage 1 on public exhibition from 14 March to 3 May 2024.

The REF assessed and evaluated the environmental impacts of the preferred Wollombi Road Upgrade design and included a Design Options Report that considered both Stage 1 and Stage 2.

A multi-channel community engagement campaign to

support the support community awareness and feedback was undertaken during the REF exhibition period.

Engagement methods

- Together Cessnock – digital engagement webpage with FAQs
- x4 face-to-face community engagement sessions.
- Facebook Live Q&A session.
- Printed copies of the REF were available at the Administration building, Cessnock and Kurri Kurri libraries.



ENGAGEMENT

F2F

Face to Face Engagement

Cessnock – Cessnock Library

5.00 – 7.00pm

Wednesday, 27 March

Attended by 12 community members

Cessnock – Cessnock Leagues Club

6.00 – 8.00pm

Wednesday, 3 April

Attended by 12 community members

Paxton – Paxton Pub

5.00 – 7.00pm

Monday, 8 April

Attended by 8 community members

Bellbird – Bellbird Hotel

10.00am – 12.00pm

Saturday, 13 April

Attended by 15 community members

There were additional conversations regarding the Wollombi Road Upgrade REF with several other face-to-face meetings including school principals and Department of Education representatives, as well as other community sessions and pop-ups for other Council projects.

Estimated total face-to-face conversations regarding the REF during the engagement period: 55 approx.



TOGETHER CESSNOCK WEBPAGE DATA

Together Cessnock

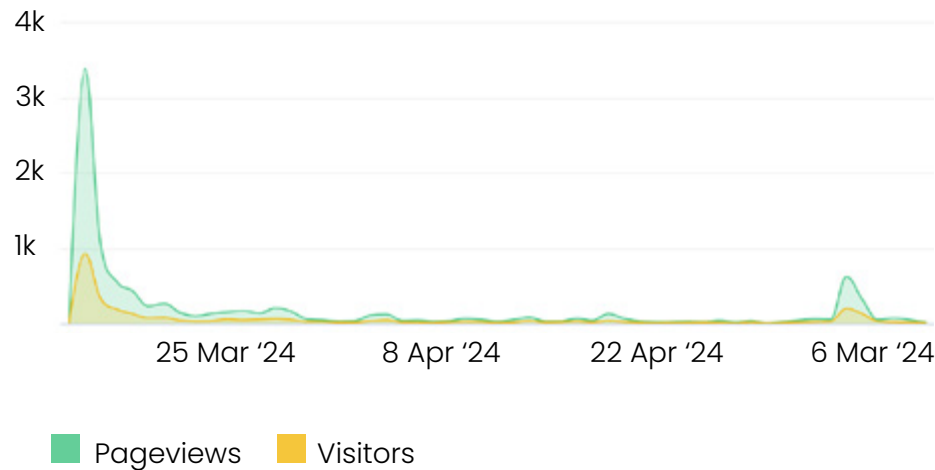
Engagement webpage data

A digital engagement webpage was developed on Council’s Together Cessnock microsite to support engagement and awareness and facilitate online submissions.

The webpage received a total of 3.5k visits over the exhibition period, and generated 137 online submissions via the portal, plus a further 132 written submissions.

Visitors Summary

Together Cessnock from 14 March 2024 to 07 May 2024



REFERRAL WEBSITE	TOTAL VISITS
facebook.com	1894
www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au	562
www.google.com	70
www.bing.com	52
mhvnews.com.au	37
android-app	10
au.search.yahoo.com	2
www.miragenews.com	1
www.ecosia.org	1
duckduckgo.com	1
mail.google.com	1

Total webpage visits: 3.5K

Document Downloads: 2.43K

Total submissions: 269

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

Advertising and Promotion

Getting the word out there

The Community Engagement team collaborated with the Media and Communications team to design and execute an integrated communication plan to raise awareness that the Wollombi Road Upgrade Project REF was on public exhibition and to encourage submissions.

The integrated communications plan incorporated promotion through traditional media, social media, and articles in eDMs and a printed newsletter distributed to the project area of 3,634 residences. The total reach of digital, print and broadcast media exceeded 720k. Social media reach exceeded 32k, including 4,000 views of a forty-minute Facebook Live Q&A.

FACEBOOK ACTIVITY						
Date	Post	Reach	Engagements	Reactions	Comments	Shares
15/3/24	Stage 1 REF and Design Options Report now on Public Exhibition	13,532	236	34	39	12
3/4/24	Cessnock Leagues club Drop in session promotion	4,357	38	11	22	4
12/4/24	Bellbird Hotel Drop in session promotion	3,880	49	4	14	4
14/4/24	Digital Town Hall promotion	5,624	49	5	0	9
17/4/24	Facebook Live – post	4,684	176	21	54	9
Total		32,077	548	75	129	38

PRINT & DIGITAL MEDIA

Date	Publication	Reach
15/3/24	Mirage News	685K
16/3/24	Newcastle Weekly	37.6K
12/4/24	Hunter River Times	731
Total		723.3K





KEY THEMES & RESPONSES

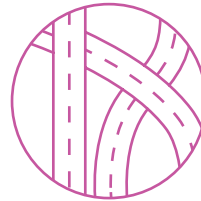


Key themes & responses

Council received **269** submissions during the public exhibition period for the Review of Environmental Factors. The summary table below is based on the comments provided by the community and have been categorised according to theme.



1. Need for four lanes



2. Bypass roads



3. Staging of the works



4. Traffic lights and traffic flow



5. Prioritising over other roadworks in the LGA



6. Cost of the Project



7. Parking



8. Impact during construction



9. Road widths



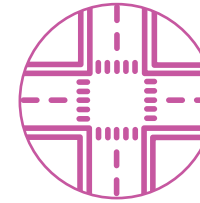
10. Footpaths and cycleways



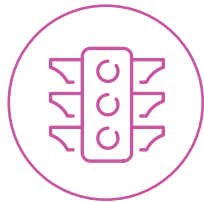
11. Pedestrian Safety



12. Bus stops and Public Transport



13. Intersections and turning restrictions



14. Roundabouts vs traffic lights



15. Operation and timing of clearways



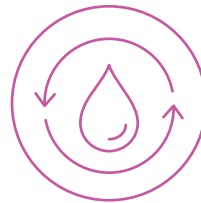
16. Raised concrete medians and access to properties



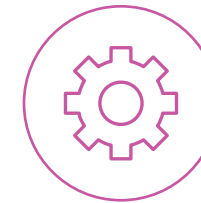
17. Adjacent roads and intersections



18. Environment and Heritage



19. Stormwater and Utilities



20. Other



Theme 1. Need for four lanes

120 mentions from 269 responses

"Whilst I do agree the Wollombi road does need upgrades, i feel it's unnecessary to this scale."

"Wollombi Road now, in peak times can be congested, especially around the public school. This will only get worse as Bellbird grows."

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
<p>There are many comments objecting to the implementation of four lanes of traffic, and comments that this will not ease congestion with current traffic volumes.</p>	<p>The Cessnock Local Government Area is growing quickly. The upgrade of Wollombi Road is needed to manage traffic growth and reduce congestion on our roads.</p> <p>Council have completed traffic modelling and strategic investigations since 2009 when the Bellbird North Urban Release Area (URA) was rezoned for residential purposes. These studies confirm the need for upgrades and the works are included in the Cessnock Traffic and Transport Strategy 2023.</p> <p>The need for additional travel lanes is linked to several development application approvals within the Bellbird North URA. Council is required to meet these obligations.</p> <p>To minimise impact to the community, Council will keep parking along Wollombi Road until traffic demand reaches a level that requires clearways at peaks times.</p>
<p>In questioning the design, several submissions asked whether other alternative design options were investigated.</p>	<p>Noting the response above, Council undertook an options analysis as part of the preliminary engineering process. This is included in the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) documentation.</p>
<p>There are several comments indicating that road congestion is limited to school drop off and pick-up times.</p>	<p>The project seeks to meet the growing traffic demand now and well into the future.</p> <p>The proposal to use clearways when needed will allow flexibility to adjust the road capacity to suit the demand where and when needed.</p>



Theme 2. Bypass roads

84 mentions from 269 responses

"The bypass needs to be done first. The problem is not here it is down at the schools. So that should be addressed first."

"A bypass to Mt View and one to South Cessnock is the most effective choice. When they open up Francis St to the new Bellbird development, the back streets will become the preferred route to town. Bypasses will address this problem as well when it arrives."

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
<p>A large volume of submissions indicated a preference for a ring road or a bypass instead of a road upgrade or that a bypass should be completed before the proposed Wollombi Road upgrade with traffic lights.</p> <p>Comments included that Council identified a road bypass for Cessnock many years ago and has allowed nearby residential development to occur without ever implementing the alternative route.</p> <p>Comments included that a bypass is needed as residents do not always want to travel via town to travel to Ellalong, Paxton, Millfield. With further comments saying that if these vehicles are removed from Wollombi Road via a bypass there is no requirement for four lanes of traffic in this area.</p>	<p>Council has accepted the need for alternate routes, and these are included in the Cessnock Traffic and Transport Strategy 2023.</p> <p>However, even with these alternate routes in place, the Wollombi Road upgrade is still needed as part of the broader network to meet the forecasted traffic demand.</p> <p>The northern connection is progressing as part of the Bellbird North development. The northern connection requires the Wollombi Road works to be complete in Stage 1 as a condition of the development consent.</p> <p>The southern connection route has been defined but detailed investigation and land acquisition are needed before this can proceed.</p>



Theme 3. Staging of the works

71 mentions from 269 responses

"Stage 2 should be the area of an upgrade this area is congested during most of the day."

"4 lanes back to 2 at a main intersection that is already congested... will only make it worse"

COMMON THEME/VALUE

Some submissions suggest that a traffic bottleneck will be created where Stage 1 works end at West Avenue.

Others proposed that Stage 2 should be the priority and questioned when the funding would be available to do these works.

COUNCIL RESPONSE

The progression of the Bellbird North development and the northern alternate connection requires the Wollombi Road works to be complete in Stage 1, as a condition of the development consent (as mentioned in Theme 2). Stage 1 work is required to provide the additional travel lane capacity between Abbotsford St and West Ave and the two intersection upgrades that service the Bellbird URA.

Council is aware of the importance of completing Stage 2 of the project, from West Ave to the CBD, and is actively seeking funding to allow this to be completed as soon as possible.

The Preliminary Engineering work undertaken has included Stage 2 so we are ready to progress to detailed design when the funding becomes available.



Theme 4. Traffic lights and traffic flow

134 mentions from 269 responses

"If the six set of traffic lights and two sets of pedestrian lights are added, how much longer will this trip take?"

"How do traffic lights improve traffic flow?"

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
There is some support for traffic lights in locations near highly trafficked areas and school areas in particular.	Traffic lights offer the safest way to access Wollombi Road for pedestrians and vehicles.
The submissions included many comments about the number of traffic lights proposed.	The number of traffic lights is based on traffic modelling and strategic investigations that support the Cessnock Traffic and Transport Strategy 2023 and previous traffic and transport strategies for the LGA.
Specific reference was made to include more traffic lights between Lochinvar and Abbotsford St as the closest signalised right hand turn into town for Bellbird Heights is Francis Street.	More signalised intersections, between Lochinvar and Abbotsford Streets, were not supported by the traffic modelling including forecasting out to 2041. Additional signalised intersections can be revisited in the future if needed.
When questioning the inclusion of traffic lights in the design, several submissions questioned how traffic lights improve traffic flow.	Traffic signals will be coordinated to optimise entry onto Wollombi Road from side streets and to prioritise and regulate traffic flow along Wollombi Road. The increased capacity provided by the additional travel lanes allow more vehicles to move through a given intersection.



Theme 5. Prioritising over other roadworks in the LGA

43 mentions from 269 responses

[Council is] "...taking from other areas & then they won't get their work done."

"There are far too many CURRENT roads requiring attention. Fix them first"

COMMON THEME/VALUE

Some submissions noted that other roads need repair too, suggesting that the money would be better spread across the LGA.

COUNCIL RESPONSE

Council has a program of maintenance and upgrades for existing roads as outlined in Council's Operational Plan 2023/24 and Draft Operational Plan 2024/25. The Wollombi Road upgrade is a major project and has received substantial grant funding and developer contributions that allow the upgrade to be undertaken in addition to Council's normal works program.



Theme 6. Cost of the Project

60 mentions from 269 responses

"Besides the State Government grant, Council will need to use the funding from other developments to fund Wollombi Rd until they receive contributions from the Bellbird developers, when those blocks are sold. How long will that will take?"

"I question where the Council funds are coming from to pay for this upgrade."

COMMON THEME/VALUE

Several submissions raise concerns over project cost and the risk of cost increases. Some indicated that they would like to understand how the project is being funded.

COUNCIL RESPONSE

Stage 1 of the project is funded by a grant from the Department of Planning, developer contributions, Hunter Water Corporation and a voluntary planning agreement. There is no cost to Council included in the current funding arrangement.

Major road upgrades require a significant financial investment. The project costs are comparable to other major infrastructure projects.

The funding recieved has given Cessnock City Council the opportunity to build essential infrastructure when it is needed to ensure the continued economic growth of the area.



Theme 7. Parking

100 mentions from 269 responses

"Please don't lose the parking for the small businesses along Wollombi Road. At the very least make sure it's a clearway for only the busiest times of day."

"I'm 93 years old. I use the doctor and the chemist on Wollombi Rd. Parking is a big concern for me to be able to access both of these"

COMMON THEME/VALUE

There are comments supporting the retention of parking along Wollombi Road, with specific parking concerns raised in relation to the front of businesses including the chemist, post office and GP office.

How the loss of parking out the front of businesses and changes to access will affect business was raised by business owners and residents.

COUNCIL RESPONSE

Parking impacts were an important part of the options assessment.

On-street parking has been included east-bound from Lochinvar Street where possible, including in front of the Chemist and Post Office. The westbound lane will be kept as parking until actual traffic demand requires a time limited clearway to be implemented to manage peak traffic flow.

Parking west of Lochinvar Street will be kept in both directions as noted in the options assessment. A clearway for a few hours a day will only be implemented when the traffic volumes require them.

As noted above parking has been considered and provided where possible within the constraints of the project.

As part of a broader strategy and separate to the project, Council's Infrastructure team will consider side street parking options at locations such as Percy Street, Chidgey Street/Michael Street, Campbell Street, Hutton Street. Side street parking options will add to the parking and access options following the Wollombi Road upgrade.



Theme 8. Impact during construction

64 mentions from 269 responses

"Excessive disruption during construction and traffic noise after completion of this proposal"

"Noise will be unbearable for residents and pedestrians not only during construction"

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
Several submissions raised concerns over noise and traffic impacts to residents, businesses, and school students during construction.	<p>The management of traffic throughout the construction phase is a critical part of the project.</p> <p>Council will work closely with the community, stakeholders, and the construction contractor to ensure suitable measures are in place to minimise impacts during construction.</p> <p>The contractor will prepare a detailed construction management plan that covers critical issues including traffic management, staging, noise, and communications. The plan will look to limit detours and keep a travel lane in each direction throughout the construction period as far as possible.</p> <p>Council will continue to provide project information and updates to the community as well as liaising with key stakeholders such as schools, bus companies, and emergency services.</p>
In citing concerns about how the project will affect businesses along Wollombi Road due changes in the streetscape and access for foot traffic, several submissions raised the question of compensation for business owners during construction and operation.	<p>Council plan to create a business activation strategy in consultation with local business to support ongoing operations throughout the construction period.</p>



Theme 9. Road widths

34 mentions from 269 responses

"Are the parking lanes width of 2.5 m adequate or safe?"

"In most areas the road widths remain the same, just resealing, line marking and new guttering."

COMMON THEME/VALUE

Several submissions questioned the proposed design road widths.

One noted "If four lanes with appropriate width are to be included in this project, significant groundwork will be needed to address uneven surfaces and camber along Wollombi Rd."

There has been specific mention of this issue in Segment 3 (Hoskins Place to Hickey Street).

Concerns expressed that 2.5metres is not wide enough for parking on the road when clearways are not in place. Concerns raised that disabled drivers will be unable to open car doors without stepping out into traffic.

COUNCIL RESPONSE

Council has engaged professional engineering consultants to survey the road and ensure the design follows all relevant Australian standards. Some sections will require realignment and reconstruction of the roadway levels. Other sections are suitable to remain as is. Roadway levels will be further considered in the detailed design phase.

The preliminary road designs for Wollombi Road are compliant with roadway and parking lane widths required under the applicable standards in NSW.

Council has looked to provide parking where road widths allow to help residents and business.



Theme 10. Footpaths and cycleways

37 mentions from 269 responses

"No cycleways, makes it dangerous to ride from bellbird into town & further."

"Where are the cycleways going to be located?"

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
Several submissions cited the removal of active transport lanes.	An alternative cycleway is being investigated separate to this project as part of a broader active transport strategy for the LGA. The strategy considers using adjacent streets and developing a shared path further to the south connecting into town. Further details will be provided as this develops. As noted in the options assessment, a shared path was considered within the road corridor but is not viable.
There were some submissions that raised safety concerns for those using mobility scooters to access businesses.	Those using mobility scooters are typically considered to be pedestrians in traffic terms. Footpaths will be kept or improved and other facilities such as signalised pedestrian crossings will be added, improving access overall.



Theme 11. Pedestrian Safety

51 mentions from 269 responses

"I am writing to express my concern over the lack of pedestrian crossings along Wollombi Rd in Bellbird Heights and Bellbird."

"With our suburb quickly growing and 4 lanes of traffic planned, something extra needs to be done for pedestrians."

COMMON THEME/VALUE

The challenge of pedestrians crossing four lanes of traffic was raised in several submissions.

Specific reference was made suggesting more traffic lights were needed to provide pedestrian crossings between Lochinvar Street and Abbotsford Street.

Some submissions proposed additional zebra crossings with flashing lights at certain times.

COUNCIL RESPONSE

Signalised pedestrian crossings are the safest way for people to cross the road. The upgraded intersections will improve the safety and ability for people to cross the road as the volumes of traffic increase.

Signalise pedestrian crossings are included at the Abbotsford and new Bellbird Nth intersections. The current pedestrian and traffic data suggests that further lights are not needed and would have a negative impact on traffic flow. The need for more lights and impacts on traffic flow can continue to be checked into the future.

Zebra crossings are not permitted for more than 2 travel lanes under NSW Traffic guidelines.



Theme 12.

Bus stops and Public Transport

12 mentions from 269 responses

"Every day I see children and young people trying to navigate their way safely to, and from bus stops, often dodging traffic and running across roads."

"An extra pedestrian crossing should be installed along Wollombi Rd in Bellbird/Bellbird Heights so students catching the bus have a safe place to cross the 4 lanes."

COMMON THEME/VALUE

A few submissions raised concerns about the bus stops, including stops not being close enough to safe pedestrian crossings. Comments included concerns about children accessing schools by crossing four lanes of traffic, and whether school bus stops should be re-routed.

COUNCIL RESPONSE

There are no plans to change or modify bus stops as part of this project. The locations shown on the schematic plans in the REF are the current bus stop locations.

Bus routes and planned bus stops are controlled by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) along with the bus companies. Council will work with these organisations to see if any adjustments are needed due to the proposed works during and after construction.

Signalised pedestrian crossings will continue to be the safest way for all pedestrians to cross Wollombi Road.



Theme 13. Intersections and turning restrictions

76 mentions from 269 responses

"I support the left in/left out options as this will encourage traffic flows especially in peak period which will continue to increase over time and with population growth to our Local Government Area."

"The upgrade of intersections to include turning lanes and some traffic lights would be adequate to assist the flow of traffic."

COMMON THEME/VALUE

Several submissions comment on a preference for dedicated turning lanes from Wollombi Road onto James Street and Ivan Street.

Submissions included limited support for left in and left outs at key intersections onto Wollombi Road.

Several submissions expressed a desire to have U-turn lanes at traffic lights to accommodate access to businesses and private property.

COUNCIL RESPONSE

The design team investigated dedicated right turn lanes in this location. The road width, alignment and levels in this location (including the proximity of existing building structures), limit the ability to create a turning lane. The limited length available before the Alexander Street intersection means even if a turn lane could be provided, the length would be inadequate to avoid congestion.

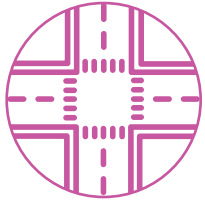
The investigation therefore concluded the intersection would fail and could not be approved by TfNSW. The arrangement included in the preferred design is based on the detailed traffic modelling.

Council will consider the timing of implementing the left in and left out restrictions at key intersections to best accommodate traffic flow on Wollombi Road.

However, the purpose of the restrictions is to ensure the traffic flow along Wollombi Road is not affected and can be coordinated through the signalised intersections.

U-turns will continue to be investigated in the detailed design however U-turns are not generally supported by TfNSW at intersections with traffic lights.

Where U-turns are allowed, there needs to be enough width for vehicle turn paths. Wollombi Road is constricted by existing property boundaries, particularly at the new Bellbird North intersection.



Theme 14. Roundabouts vs traffic lights

52 mentions from 269 responses

"A roundabout at the intersection of Wollombi Rd, Hickey St and Francis St would help with the congestion"

"Traffic lights should remain at Abbotsford Street, Bellbird North New Development entry, West Avenue and Mt View Road, with the Roundabout remaining at Darwin Street intersection."

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
There are a mixture of comments supporting roundabouts with turning lanes instead of traffic lights.	<p>Roundabouts of a suitable size to meet the traffic demand do not fit within the Wollombi Road corridor without Council acquiring more land at the intersections.</p> <p>Land purchases increases cost and affects private properties.</p> <p>Traffic lights have advantages over roundabouts in controlling traffic flow. They can prioritise movements across multiple intersections and optimise the timing of entry onto main thoroughfares from side streets.</p> <p>Roundabouts do not provide the safe crossing point for pedestrians.</p>



Theme 15. Operation and timing of clearways

26 mentions from 269 responses

"I believe the council has balanced the need for the upgrade with the wishes of local residents and businesses by retaining parking where possible as well as the allowance for parking in one of the new lanes pending the introduction of clearways for peak hour travel."

"Clearways are common in many communities, and it's encouraging to see forward-thinking with identified areas for future clearways"

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
<p>There are some comments around the operation of clearways and how residents will be able to enter properties when clearways are in place.</p> <p>There were a small number of submissions seeking clarification on how taxis pick up and drop passengers along Wollombi Road.</p>	<p>Parking will be kept until the traffic levels require a clearway to be in place. The timing of the clearways will be subject to further detailed investigation and approval.</p> <p>When clearways are activated, normal traffic conditions will be in place and drivers will need to drive to conditions. This will not restrict access to properties.</p> <p>Taxis will need to follow the road rules of NSW as they currently do. There are several options for pick up including driveways, the permanent parking spaces or nearby side streets.</p>



Theme 16. Raised concrete medians and access to properties

41 mentions from 269 responses

"For those of us on the southside getting deliveries and having services attend will be extremely difficult due to the proposed median strip."

"Residents making right hand turns into their driveways will have travel extra distances with a split level pavement or a median strip."

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
Concerns over split level pavement and concrete median in Segment 2 and Segment 3 were raised citing safety risks when entering properties and businesses.	<p>The design team considered alternatives to the split-level design. The critical design requirements that led to this proposed design include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The need to capture and control stormwater.• Parking on the northern side of the road is not possible without a split median.• Impacts to the verge and existing utilities is reduced.• The requirement for reconstruction of driveways within private property is significantly reduced. <p>The extent of this median will be confirmed during detailed design. All relevant road design standards will continue to be used through detailed design to ensure the safest possible outcome for road users and residents.</p>
Comments indicate that impeding access to property through the installation of median strips would inconvenience residents but also pose potential safety hazards, particularly during emergencies when swift access is crucial.	<p>The location of concrete medians and chevron line marking will be finalised in the detailed design. The extent of this will be limited to essential locations to follow with safety requirements and TfNSW standards on approach to intersections.</p>
Comments include that the proposed median strip disregards the established patterns of traffic flow and fail to offer suitable alternatives for maintaining accessibility while ensuring road safety.	<p>Council appreciates that the proposed upgrade will require some change to the way people access their property. The proposed design has looked to minimise this change while achieving the overall project objectives for increasing the capacity of a critical main arterial road.</p> <p>Council will continue to work with residents and businesses within the project area to address specific property impacts during detailed design phase.</p>



Theme 16. cont.

Raised concrete medians and access to properties

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
Concerns over entering and exiting properties safely along Wollombi Road when four lanes are operational was raised in a number of submissions.	<p>Wollombi Road is one of several main arterial roads within the road network serving the Cessnock LGA. The traffic demand on this road will continue to increase. The proposed measures including the additional lanes and lights are expected to provide the best opportunity to manage the traffic volumes.</p> <p>Access to and from existing properties will be kept.</p>



Theme 17. Adjacent roads and intersections

27 mentions from 269 responses

"The introduction of traffic lights at major intersections with dedicated turning lanes as well as reducing the number of intersections that can enter or block lanes for turning will improve traffic flow."

"Back streets are not equipped for the extra traffic."

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
Several submissions raised concerns over congestion at Alfred Street near Cessnock West Public School.	Council considered the Wollombi Rd upgrade in the context of the complete Cessnock LGA road network as outlined in the Traffic and Transport Strategy. Any identified localised issue will be addressed by Council's Infrastructure team in parallel with the Wollombi Road upgrade. The Alfred Street intersection has been noted for further review.
Comments included that back streets, such as Catherine Street and Mathieson Street will be changed through extra traffic and more cars parking in the street.	As noted above the Wollombi Road upgrade considers the broader traffic network. Catherine Street and Mathieson Street are intended to capture local traffic only. It is not expected that parking demand would change on these streets. Council will continue to check and prioritise road maintenance in the streets next to Wollombi Road.



Theme 18. Environment and Heritage

37 mentions from 269 responses

"Wollombi Rd has a lot of historic areas, significant to area history, the trees planted as well as areas of sandstone and bush rock guttering"

"Removal of any crepe Myrtle trees along Wollombi Road would be a detriment to our town."

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
Traffic noise increases once the road is operational was raised in several submissions.	Council does not expect there to be a significant increase in traffic noise stemming from the upgrades. The REF noise report says less than 1.1dBA impact which is very minimal and requires no intervention.
A preference for using recycled materials during construction was raised.	Council will work with their construction contractor to implement smart engineering choices that will include the use of recycled material where possible.
Several submissions showed a preference for the retention of the crepe myrtle trees along Wollombi Road.	<p>The project will prioritise retention of street trees where possible. Clashes with utilities, kerb adjustments and drainage may require the removal of some trees. Any trees that are affected by the works will be replaced with suitable trees, consistent with Council's Tree Strategy.</p> <p>Research through the Cessnock Library Local Studies section suggest the crepe myrtle trees were most likely planted in the early 1950's as part of Arbor Day. There was no evidence about war memorials or Bellbird Mine plantings in this location.</p>
<p>Several submissions highlighted that Cessnock is rich with history and cited a preference for protecting heritage items along the alignment.</p> <p>Comments referred to the need to protect the historical convict sandstone in several locations.</p>	<p>A Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI) was prepared and included in the REF.</p> <p>The project will look to minimise the impact on heritage kerbs. Our intention is to document the heritage items and keep or reposition the kerbs where possible, in line with advice from a heritage consultant.</p>



Theme 18. cont.

Environment and Heritage

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
<p>Some suggested air pollution would be increased with the introduction of traffic lights.</p>	<p>Air quality impacts were assessed by the environmental consultant as part of the REF. There is not expected to be any operational air quality impacts associated with the upgrade.</p>



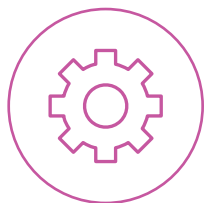
Theme 19. Stormwater and Utilities

12 mentions from 269 responses

"How will storm water drains be improved? With recent prolonged wet weather We have noticed increased minor road flooding."

"No where have you stated about the changes to utilities."

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
There are a few submissions raising concerns about the location of power poles and asking whether power infrastructure will remain above ground.	Details for the relocation of power poles will be confirmed in the detailed design. Power poles will only be moved when needed for changes in road geometry and services. It is not intended to underground the power as part of this project.
One submission raised concern that any changes to the road profile and drainage will affect low lying businesses and homes in major flooding events	A flooding model has been developed during preliminary design and will be carried through into detailed design to confirm that no adverse flooding risk is added by the project works.
One submission was concerned about cost to households for reconnecting utility services such as power and water.	Residents will not be charged for changes to household connections. There may be some inconvenience as these changes are made during construction. Council will work closely with the residents, contract and service providers to ensure the impacts are minimised.



Theme 20.

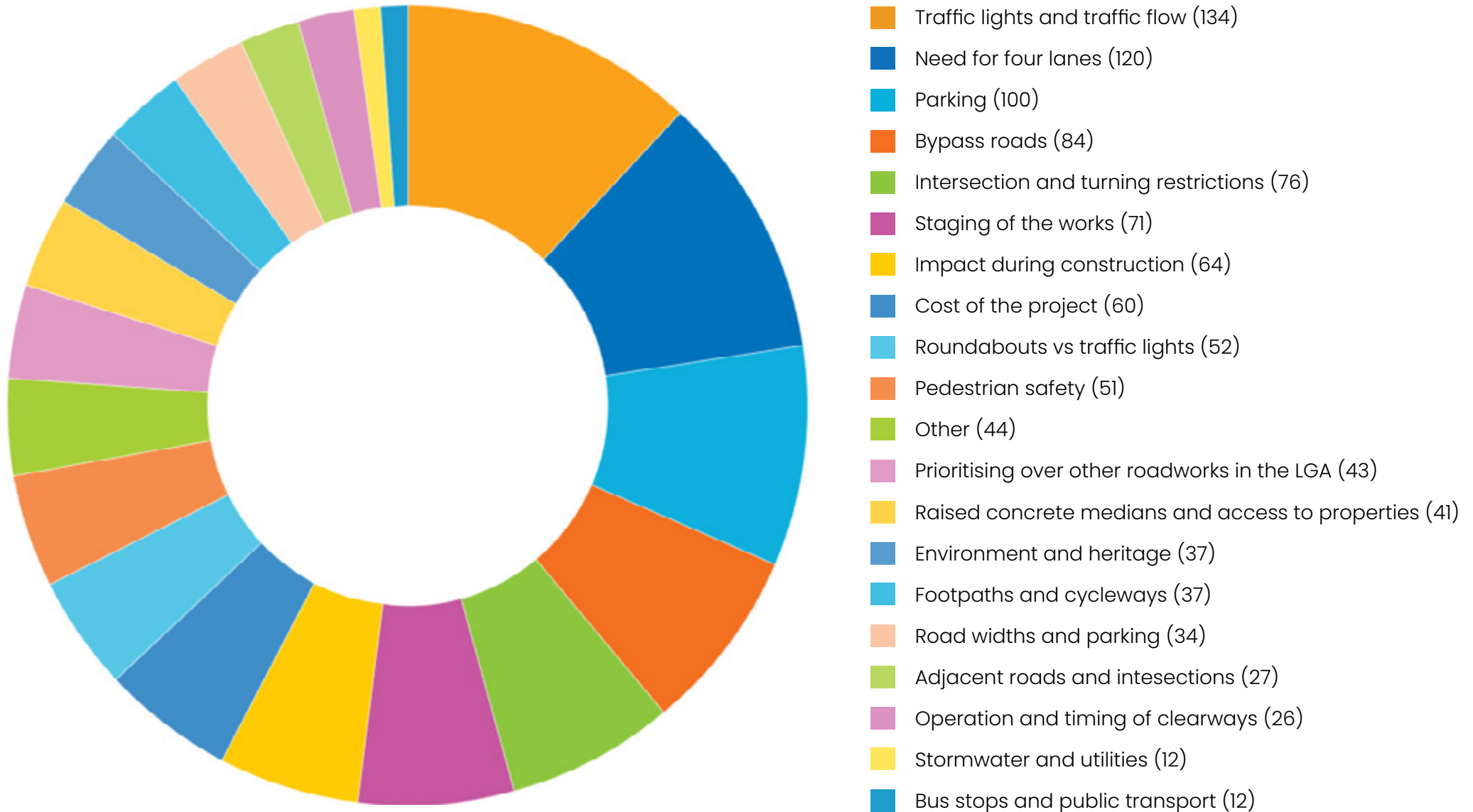
Other

44 mentions from 269 responses

COMMON THEME/VALUE	COUNCIL RESPONSE
Concern over residential property values was the focus of several residents who live on Wollombi Road.	<p>Improving transport infrastructure is a critical component in the economic growth of Cessnock, and upgrades to main roads are to be expected in a growth region.</p> <p>Council is responsible for maintaining and upgrading roads to benefit the whole community, and will continue to make infrastructure and planning decisions based on what will benefit the whole LGA.</p>
Many submissions suggested council was not asking for feedback on Segment 7 or Segment 8 (West Ave to Allandale Rd) and were concerned they may not get a chance to comment on these.	<p>This engagement was open to feedback on any segment and Council did not place any limits on what the community could comment on. The options assessment included information on all segments.</p> <p>It is noted however that the REF document covers Stage 1 (Segments 1 to 6 - Abbotsford St to West Ave). Stage 2 (West Ave to Allandale Rd) will have a separate REF that will go on public display when the funding is confirmed.</p>
Some suggested the consultation for the project had been too limited.	<p>Council has run an extensive engagement program for this project and the Traffic and transport strategy, in line with best practice.</p> <p>The project email address and direct contact phone number will continue to be available to the community. Phone: 1800 290 991 Email: wollombiroadupgrade@cessnock.nsw.gov.au Website: www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/wollombiroadupgrade</p>

Key themes – mention count

Council received **269** submissions during the public exhibition period for the Review of Environmental Factors. The graph below represents the number of submissions that mention each theme.





FURTHER ACTIONS

Further actions

Your voice has an impact

Community consultation has led to a number of actions for the project team, along with changes and improvements to the preliminary design. Stakeholder involvement and contributions will now play a key role and help to inform the next phase as

the project advances to detailed design. The team will continue to collaborate with stakeholders and community members to ensure the project delivers positive outcomes.

ACTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS FOLLOWING FEEDBACK – PROJECT TEAM	
Segment 1 (Abbotsford Rd to Lochinvar) changed to option 0 – minimal work to achieve outcome.	Strategy for recycling/reuse excess spoil.
Concrete median reduced in length in Segment 2. Other medians to be painted unless required by TfNSW at intersections.	Further engagement with directly affected residents and businesses on detailed design.
Work with Hunter Water to minimise impact of water mains on the verge and trees.	Public release of Engagement Report.
Propose delaying the implementation of right hand turn restrictions from side streets.	
ACTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS FOLLOWING FEEDBACK – WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE	
Review active transport strategy.	Pursue funding for Stage 2 works.
Review and prioritise need for works to adjacent streets.	Continue to progress Link roads (Bypasses).
Side street parking options.	



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