

MINUTES

Great Western Highway Upgrade: Blackheath Co-Design Committee

Date	19 August 2020	
Time	6.00pm – 9.30pm	
Venue	Webex Webinar	
Chairperson	Alistair Lunn – TfNSW	
Committee members	Kirstin Fischer Kate Walsh Iain MacLeod Fire & Rescue NSW – Katoomba Peter Chudek Ally Drinkwater Ross Ingram Damien Mah Gary Moore Juliet Bourke Sally Hollis Adele Colman George Vergotis Gary McCue Mick Beltran Greg Nankervis	TfNSW TfNSW TfNSW NSW Fire & Rescue Blue Mountains City Council Blackheath Public School P&C Blue Mountains Historical Society Blue Mountains Cycling Safety Forum Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre Save Centennial Glen Save Station Street Blackheath Streetscape Group Blackheath Chamber of Commerce Blackheath Highway Action Group Community Representative Community Representative
Additional attendees	Paul Peters Tricia Wunsch (Facilitator) Veronica Kooyman Caroline Boyd Adam Hillard (Design) Jonathan Blizzard (Environment)	TfNSW KJA KJA TfNSW TfNSW TfNSW
Apologies:	Glenn Sherlock NSW Police – Springwood NSW Ambulance – Katoomba	Blue Mountains City Council NSW Police NSW Ambulance

1.	Meeting agenda – Tricia Wunsch (Facilitator)
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanked everyone for joining, noting this is the fifth and final meeting of the BCC where we will discuss and complete the final assessment of the six options agreed at Meeting 4 would be assessed, and decide which will be the BCC recommended option or options. • Acknowledgement of Country • Approximately half of the score sheets and assessments have been submitted so far. There will be an opportunity to submit any outstanding scoresheets during the meeting, as well as submitting any revisions to scoring already received. Any outstanding assessment tables need to be submitted by Monday 24 August. • Agenda for the evening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction from Alistair ○ Refresher of assessment criteria, an update about how the information from the BCC will be used and inform the next steps from Kirstin Fischer ○ The committee to review each option individually to discuss them against the criteria ○ There will be time for score sheets to be finalised, sent through and then a break while the results are being tallied ○ The committee to review the scores together and discuss final recommendations
2.	Welcome and introduction – Alistair Lunn (Chair)
2.1	Welcomed the committee and performed acknowledgment of country
2.2	<p>Thank you to the Committee for the fantastic way everyone has entered into the process. It has been long process with the challenges Covid has brought to it. The site visits and walk throughs were particularly enlightening and a great step forward.</p> <p>By the end of today we will have a BCC recommended option or alignment to move forward.</p> <p>KJA will be producing a report about the process and outcomes of this committee before we return to the community for further consultation. Between now and the further community consultation we ask that you continue to respect the confidentiality of the process. The report will be made public during the community consultation period.</p> <p>TfNSW offered a walk through with Council, which was attended by six councillors. We all found it very beneficial. We will be briefing the councillors again following this meeting.</p> <p>We recognise the significant effort and time contributed by the committee, and that through this process we are moving to a solution that will be better for the community.</p>
2.3	<p>Why wasn't the very long tunnel option (from Lapstone to Hartley) considered? Would it ever be considered by the Government, even just for rail, in the future?</p> <p>TfNSW: It was not considered because it is not practical for a tunnel that length in Australia at this time. It also doesn't address the safety and congestion concerns from tourism and local traffic in the Blue Mountains. We have been clear from the start of this process that the scope of the committee and this project is to find a route through Blackheath. At the moment it is not on the table or feasible, but things could change over a longer term.</p>

3.	Next steps in the process and assessment criteria refresher – Kirstin Fischer
3.1	<p>Thank you to the committee for their time this evening.</p> <p>Through the first consultation in late 2019 and the subsequent BCC process TfNSW has clearly heard what is important to the community. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The character of the village • Property business and local economy • Heritage and history of the town • Community facilities • Ability to get around • Recreation and tourism facilities • Safety concerns
3.2	<p>This is an indication of how we will use feedback from the committee for the options assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help us with the options identification – to help us think about other options we may not have considered, design refinements such as portal locations, impacts of the level crossing • Impact management – the feedback we have received, especially during the site visit, has been informative and helped us to understand the impacts of different options on connectivity, the local businesses, the environment, residencies and heritage. • Strategic business case – the feedback we have received helps TfNSW to inform our ‘fatal flaw’ assessment which takes into account a range of inputs, including community and stakeholder feedback, to inform which options get taken forward. • The program objectives are important for any project to understand what we are trying to achieve. The objectives are based on a service needs of all our customers, which includes the roads users of greater NSW as well as the local road users. This has helped to inform the assessment criteria established for the options assessment. • An economic appraisal - the BCR is one metric the NSW Government uses in order to measure the benefits of any particular investment. A standard one in this case would be travel time and economic return. <p>We have been clear that this is a holistic and lengthy process and that no single criteria or assessment part will be the single determining factor. You are the community and our customers, your feedback is a really important part of the overall process.</p> <p>Stakeholder and community feedback is heavily factored into options development and informs the outcomes of what is ultimately chosen as an option.</p> <p>The process does not finish here. The social and business impacts are all taken into account during the Environmental Assessment process, during which there are more opportunities for submissions from the community.</p> <p>The BCC is part of a continuum of working with you since the end of last year to really hear what you are saying and make sure we are building that into our assessment process. There will also be opportunities to continue to provide feedback as we progress.</p>

3.3	<p>The assessment criteria address the service needs across all stakeholders served by this project. It is aimed at who could benefit, or not, and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Environment (both built and natural) • Liveability • Resilience (ability for emergency services to continue to provide services in this area, future proof safety) • Congestion and travel time reliability <p>You have each had an opportunity to determine what you feel is the right allocation of weighting out of 100 for each of these criteria. Then you will use a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a negative result and 5 as the top score, to assess the criteria. We have provided, through various pre-reading papers, suggestions on what to consider and how you can apply these criteria when making your assessment.</p>
3.4	<p>Regarding the criteria, we agreed at meeting 2 that these would be neutral, e.g. ‘safety’ - is not ‘improve safety’. Apart from resilience, they are all positively framed. A score of 1 does not mean we agree it has improved safety, we just don’t have the chance to say this will be a detriment to safety. They should all be framed neutrally.</p> <p>TfNSW: Using the example of safety, the indicative rating as written up in the paper and the way the report will be written will show that a score of 1 is a decrease. For example:</p> <p>Score of 1 decrease in safety Score of 2 no improvement Score of 3 some improvement Score of 4 good improvement Score of 5 substantial improvement</p> <p>This scoring system is the same for each criteria. It is a fair point that they should be framed neutrally.</p>
3.5	<p>There is nothing in the resilience criterion about future proofing. We ended up scoring against a narrow definition of resilience.</p> <p>TfNSW: The assessment criteria are aligned with the program objectives, which are written with future proofing underpinning them. Resilience does include future proofing. When you submit your assessment table and commentary, please include your feedback into that document.</p>
3.6	<p>KJA will produce a report that will outline the process and reflect the discussions that have been had through the BCC meetings. These have also been captured in the minutes.</p> <p>We have received several requests tonight for the committee to review the report. There is a very tight timeframe to develop the report, receive Ministerial approval and be back in the community for consultation by October.</p> <p>The report will include the outcomes of the BCC and preferred route option(s), but will not include detailed information about the alignment. This will be reflected in collateral produced by TfNSW.</p>

3.7	<p>The committee should be given the opportunity to review the report and say they are happy with the report, in the spirit of co-design. It should also be released publicly before you go back to the community for further consultation.</p> <p>TfNSW: Yes, we have entered this process in a very collaborative spirit. The BCC will have the opportunity to review the report as a final draft, noting that there may be some minor changes to wording still to come at that stage, though it wouldn't change in how it reflects the views of the BCC.</p> <p>It will be made public when TfNSW return to the community for further consultation in October.</p>
3.8	<p>As a reminder, there were six options taken forward at the end of the last meeting for assessment.</p> <p>If a tunnel is the preferred route, it is important for you to consider the portal locations. The alignment of the tunnel will change many times through the design process.</p> <p>We have been clear throughout that this process is about identifying a strategic alignment, and that will be optimised by the many design iterations to ensure the best grade and alignment.</p> <p>Following the last meeting we have realised that the suggested option of a long tunnel with an eastern alignment will take the route outside the strategic corridor identified last year. It may be something you want to consider, as the community will not be expecting the route to be outside of the area identified.</p>
3.9	<p>To recap, KJA will finalise the report to outline the process followed by the BCC, which will be shared with you. We will endeavour to take in all comments where possible, unless there are conflicting comments. We will then take this report to the Minister with a proposed way forward, along with collateral or series of ways we will communicate with the community about the options.</p> <p>We will be taking forward the preferred BCC option, but there may be other alignments that the Government also chooses to pursue at the strategic level, while we work through those as a concept. Your option will be carried forward into this process.</p> <p>We anticipate being out in the community around mid-October, bearing in mind we don't want to consult during school holidays and we do not want to be consulting in the weeks up to Christmas. We were too close the Christmas last year.</p> <p>The consultation will be for a four week period.</p> <p>At the last meeting we had a question about the committee members being involved in the consultation.</p> <p>We don't yet know how the consultation will occur, considering the changing Covid situation. We have moved to more online consultation with the Medlow Bath process recently. We will be out with plenty of opportunities for people to provide comment and feedback, we just don't know yet in what form that will be.</p>
3.10	<p>You suggested the report could go up to the Minister and he could come up with something that has not been one of the options canvased. Is that correct?</p> <p>TfNSW: No, not a new option. The Minister may ask for one of the options that has been presented already to also move through for further consultation, alongside the preference of the BCC. I am just pre-empting that there may be more than one option that we bring to the community for consultation.</p>

	<p>Clarification point: Please see section 4.5 for commentary about the process for determining an underground alignment for tunnel options. It was noted that tunnel alignments would need to be determined by experts when further investigations were carried out, therefore portal locations should be the priority of the Committee rather than the tunnel alignment.</p>
3.11	<p>When we review the assessment tonight and the final scores, I would like to move a series of caveats or protections around that development in the meeting that goes into the report, and to seek people’s support for those. Do we have time to discuss those at that part of the meeting?</p> <p>TfNSW: Yes, we have half an hour to review the scores and discuss the final assessment. We can have that discussion then.</p>
3.12	<p>Is it too late to indicate some minor alterations to improve the traffic flow from the west to the east? Trying to get across the level crossing is difficult and at times dangerous. For about 10 years we have been asking for an underpass to the existing Highway, as suggested at Shipley Road. If a tunnel was selected, would it still be possible to model it so that an underpass could also be added, or have it constructed at the same time?</p> <p>TfNSW: We understand the need, and we have done some modelling around this. Looking at the grades and depths of the tunnel options, we can certainly look at making sure we don’t prohibit an underpass in the future. We will be talking to Council about the future of the Great Western Highway beyond this project as well.</p> <p>As it currently stands, an underpass would be a Council project. However, the State Government funds a large proportion of council road projects, especially when the works assist the flow of the State road network.</p>
4.	<p>Plenary discussion about each option A reference image of the route for each option was shown onscreen during the discussion for clarity. Discussion was then held as a group about how each option performed against each criterion.</p> <p>It should be noted that, except where otherwise noted, the comments captured below are the opinions and thoughts of voting members of the BCC and were articulated during the plenary session. They do not reflect the opinions of TfNSW.</p>
4.1	<p>Outer Western option</p> <p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative effect on safety due to extremely high winds, black ice, risk in relation to fire (cigarettes flicked from cars). • If there were extreme weather events and long traffic jams due to blockages on the Great Western Highway, the bypass would be fairly inaccessible and people will be stuck in bridges and tunnels, unable to access amenities or get away if they are in a dangerous situation. <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative impacts for built and natural environment. • For the residences in the area – light, fumes, impacts to views and road/traffic noise. • There is significant destruction of houses for this option as well as loss of value to others nearby.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are negative impacts to the natural environment – hanging swamps, wildlife, and aquifers. This is a flight path for numerous birds including the Regent Honey Eaters over Shipley Road and Helvetia Street – this option would destroy their migration. Over summer this area became a sanctuary, particularly for birds that had lost their homes on the east side of Blackheath. • Recreation – this is a spot to which people like to come – climbers and walkers, even more so during Covid. <p>Liveability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area has deep cultural value, and is home to some of the oldest walks in the area (1880s), songlines (Fort Rock) and other Aboriginal areas. • There has been a significant change in the Blackheath population, with the popularity of the rock climbing areas, which this option would impact. This would also impact on the town’s renown as a holiday destination and have a negative impact on the Vipassana Meditation Centre. Removing these tourist demographics would have a big financial impact on the town. <p>Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While it initially appears to offer resilience, being a separate second route, it could be a secondary risk to resilience. If there was a car accident on the bypass it could have a multiple effect on the environment below. For example if a truck/tanker does roll and ends up in the valley below it will be very difficult to remove. There was a fire in 1985 that was deliberately lit. It was impossible to access the area and it had to burn out. <p>Congestion and travel time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low positive impact on congestion as people could avoid the Highway. • The proposed right hand turnoff the Highway into Blackheath will have a negative impact on congestion for locals, transferring the congestion from one group of users to another. • It is only 4km of a notoriously difficult stretch that reaches to Glenbrook – not much travel time improvement overall. <p>Additional comment:</p> <p>What does this do well or better than the current road? Nothing other than save a little bit of time.</p> <p>This option, the Inner Western bypass option, the short tunnel option, and even widening the existing road at the southern end have impacts on existing recreational areas. They may well have property impacts for construction.</p>
4.2	<p>Inner western bypass option</p> <p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A four lane highway through one of the most densely populated areas of all of Blackheath would have negative impacts. Apart from the cut and cover section, the Highway is exposed to all houses. • This option would lead to reduced pedestrian access to cross the Highway other than at Bundarra Street • The proposed right hand turn into town requires crossing four lanes of traffic, with the right hand lane exposed to fast through traffic. • In times of mass evacuation of the Shipley Plateau and Megalong Valley, this route will cut off multiple routes to access the other side of town, funnelling all

traffic up the original part of Station Street. This will become a choke point and put lives in danger.

- Locals use Kubya Street for daily access to the level crossing. Removing the use of this street will cause significant safety impacts.

Environment

- Extreme environmental impacts. Station Street is the greenbelt of the edge of our town. Most houses are on large blocks with copious trees and gardens to their back doors, creating a sense of nature to the doorstep of town. Some Station Street trees are listed on a register of significant trees, with more to be included.
- This option would impact on bird flight path that have been established for generations. After the fires, the fire-damaged birds and wallabies barely made it to our backyards and we nursed them through to recovery.
- This option also includes an uncovered section of road between Shipley and Bundarra Streets – the Kubya Street valley – which will almost certainly amplify highway noise and reduce dispersion of vehicle pollutants.
- Also noted on the conceptual map is the mass clearing of native bushland, due to the fire risk zone of Kubya Street valley. This would result in significant clearing and loss of trees.
- Many of the houses on Station Street may not be heritage listed, but are examples of well built, architecturally solid Blue Mountains homes from last century.

Liveability

- Forced resettlement for any one family is considerable. For maybe 150 – 200 families it would be horrific. We couldn't resettle in Blackheath as there aren't enough houses or blocks of land on the ridge line. This would impact the school, cause losses to the local economy, and loss of local jobs. Losing that many houses in a tiny town is a very large proportionate loss for Blackheath.
- This option destroys important local amenities such as Mitre 10 and the timber yard, which are an important part of the fabric of our community, especially during emergencies like the recent fires. Without these businesses, people would travel to Katoomba and Lithgow and then complete other shopping there, which would impact other local businesses. Essential services are also located in this part of town like the Rural Fire Service. The newly built facility for people with disabilities is located close to town for ease and convenience of residents and probably could not be relocated anywhere else in town or replicated anywhere else in the mountains in a comparable location. There are already long waiting lists within the mountains for an NDIS package, and trying to locate this facility anywhere else would be extremely difficult and may not receive the Commonwealth funding needed to relocate it.
- To divert all the through traffic, including an increase in trucks, through the open cut section of the bypass will increase pollution to the town and the residents of the west side. The noise of trucks and tourist buses, particularly due to the rising gradient and deep open cut, would be unacceptable.
- Heritage listed properties would be destroyed, and they are architecturally unique to the mountains.
- The implications of the construction process are enormous. This includes dangerous choke points at the level crossing, a massive impact on the tourism and trade to Megalong Valley and Shipley Plateau, and impacts on the ability to

	<p>move/get around the area. There would be impacts on AirBnBs, as well as mental health issues of people who are displaced as well as those living through the construction site on top of the road. While there is a long construction period for a tunnel, at least that would be mainly underground not on top.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the loss of homes from this option we would lose a lot of businesses too. The base economy would shrink dramatically and some businesses could not be sustained. It is unlikely anyone would make any capital investment in the town. At an economic level this is probably the worst option for the town. <p>Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While it would create some resilience for emergency vehicles, it would not help any locals (including residents of the western side of Blackheath) or tourists evacuating due to fire in the Megalong Valley or Shipley Plateau. <p>Congestion and travel time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving Station Street as the only exit to town for Megalong Valley and Shipley Plateau causes enormous traffic jams at the right hand turn on the level crossing. • Blocking off Kubya Street would cause enormous problems for the locals and the tourist traffic. <p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were some differing views on the underpass at Shipley: The suggestion to build an underpass at Shipley Road seems to be a council project and while it may seem like a great idea it hasn't had any studies completed and needs a lot more work before considering. It was noted that the west side of Blackheath have been talking about this for a very long time. The discussion about an underpass was taken as a comment and can be kept in mind for the design of the broader solution, so that it doesn't impact on the ability to consider this later. • There was a question about how soon these options could be taken off the table and the grey strategic corridor and uncertainty lifted? • TfNSW: The report and route options for consultation will be available during the October community consultation. This will lift the grey strategic corridor and remove the uncertainty. We will be returning to the community with lines on a map of the options that will progress for further concept work. Any routes not included at that point will no longer be considered.
4.3	<p>Widening of the existing Great Western Highway</p> <p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option requires a range of different speeds at the edge and through town, and has the potential to cause a significant decrease in safety. • To include the underpass at Shipley at the required angle it would mean cutting into Hill 33 and people entering Blackheath would be surrounded by concrete within a narrow corridor. • This fails to future proof the road for further safety upgrades in the future. It is hard to understand how this could increase safety, especially with large trucks speeding through the centre of town. <p>Environment</p>

- There would be a significant loss of public space, a loss of trees on the Highway, and an increase in air and noise pollution for residents on both the east and west side of Blackheath.
- This option would lead to the loss of some of the natural environment which is a drawcard to the town. Blackheath is one of the most popular cold climate destinations in the Blue Mountains because of its environment, the village atmosphere and the sense of community, which would be obliterated to accommodate this option.

Liveability

- This option will definitively create a visual and practical division between East and West, which doesn't exist now.
- This option would involve barriers in front of the school, residences and businesses as the road will be close to these properties. It will make it very difficult for students to be able to walk to the public school, as well as making it more difficult for people to move comfortably around on foot or on a bicycle. This is a health concern as the Blue Mountains has an obesity issue and this option will reduce accessibility and decrease the level of well-being enormously in the town. More locals will be required to get in their car to get to work or get their kids to school, creating more traffic issues in the town.
- There will be an impact on businesses in the town, even if some parking remains. It will also cause major impacts on businesses as tourists will be turned off by the four lane highway through the centre of the town
- With an increase in traffic this could cause a rat run along Wentworth Street on the eastern side.
- The option would cause dislocation to the community both during construction and afterwards. The Blue Mountains area reports much higher percentages of mental distress in young people than other parts of the state, and this option removes some park areas and a skate park and decreases the ease of moving about the town safely. This would have a really negative impact on a health issue already identified in the Mountains.

Resilience

- This option does not future proof the road.
- If there were to be an underpass from Shipley, there are still a lot of questions around how this would work safely.

Congestion and travel time

- With the route coming through the centre of town with various speed zones, even with the level crossing closed this seems to offer little improvement to travel time and congestion.

Additional comments

- Most parts of NSW that go through this process would end up with a bypass. This would be one of the few examples of going through the centre of town and it doesn't offer much to the town.
- Would this option be taken forward to the next stage because it is the easiest and cheapest to construct?
TfNSW: It could be taken forward as a base case option but the government has also been clear that a tunnel is an option. There are a number of options in play and we are listening to your feedback on them.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was further discussion around this as a base case and it was noted by many of the committee members that this option was disliked by the committee and that they were under the impression that this was not a favoured option or likely to proceed. • Could this option remain on the table but the route be altered to remove the shops along the Highway? TfNSW: No. It would require a whole new round of consultation if it were to be even considered.
4.4	<p>Short tunnel with portals at Sutton Park and near Sunbeam Avenue</p> <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the southern end portal takes out significant recreation space and has significant environmental issues. • There was concern about damage to aquifers. • This option may require ventilation stacks as the portals are close to residences and the air quality would need to be improved. TfNSW: At this stage it is not a given that where the portals would be located would require ventilation outlets. There is more work to be done to establish whether there is a need for ventilation outlets or not. This is not a tunnel that is equivalent to a large metropolitan Sydney project such as the M4 tunnel or Westconnex, which are located adjacent to properties. • Increase in air and noise pollution close to residential dwellings and recreation spaces. <p>Liveability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns were raised about the depth of the tunnel and the potential impact on residences during the construction phase. • This options would have property impacts at the portal locations. It is a poor design for a lovely town. • Supporting infrastructure for the tunnel would need to be built right at the edge of town, which would either impact on Sutton Park or take out the businesses near the weigh station. • Probable loss of residential properties and public recreation spaces <p>Additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are going to build a tunnel, why wouldn't you build a longer one that has a lesser impact on the town? TfNSW: When we talk to communities about a bypass, and this is an underground bypass, a lot of those communities want the tourist traffic to remain as close as possible to the town to keep business in town. • A short tunnel is qualitatively different to a long tunnel due to destruction of residences and ventilation stacks. There was concern that a short tunnel might be selected for budget reasons without considering the additional implications a short tunnel would bring. • When elected, Paul Toole said (when talking about tunnels) that it was important to keep the heritage and culture of towns. A short tunnel wouldn't do that. We have a little country town and this brings portals to within the town boundaries. We need to preserve Blackheath as something very special, once you destroy it you can't get it back. Tunnels need to be inconspicuous and outside of town so we retain our town.

	TfNSW: Amenity, sense of place and environmental impacts and everything else we have outlined do factor into the decision making process.
4.5	<p>Long tunnel with portals south of Evans Lookout Road and north of the weigh station (both east alignment and west alignment)</p> <p>The committee outlined the differences between east and west alignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While both tunnel options will go under houses, the eastern alignment goes under fewer houses than the western alignment. While we have been told the depth should not have a negative impact on the houses above in terms of subsidence, some of us believe that it is preferable to avoid any risk of subsidence by not going under houses. • The eastern alignment has a higher gradient than the western one, and some committee members prefer the western alignment due to the reduced gradient which means less acceleration and breaking and resultant pollutants coming from the portal. <p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no material difference in safety between the two alignments, though some believe a longer tunnel has some safety impacts because if you get stuck it is harder to get out. • The western alignment is a straighter alignment. • Flammable goods vehicles currently cannot travel through tunnels. It will require policy or regulation changes to allow flammable goods to be transported through either the short or the long tunnel. <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The long tunnel options have limited negative effects on the environment, assuming tunnels are lined and aquifers are not disturbed. <p>Liveability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer tunnels have their portals located outside of town. • Through traffic with no intention to stop is able to get to either end of the town. <p>Travel time and congestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A long tunnel creates some time savings within the tunnel, but transfers the congestion to a different part of the Highway elsewhere. <p>Additional comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tunnel engineers don't yet know where the aquifers and underground impediments are. Will that be the determining factor in the route alignment, or could there even be further variations? If so, does it make much difference if we support the east or west alignment, when the studies underground will really determine the best route? TfNSW: If we do go with a longer tunnel there will be a series of options we will explore as we develop our understanding of the geotechnical issues, hydrogeological issues, and structural issues. From a safety perspective, it is better to have straighter bends and reduced vertical curve. Options always evolve and go through many iterations. • There were further questions about the area shaded by grey as the strategic corridor and how far the eastern alignment sits outside that area. The Committee noted that they do not want to be constrained by this if there is a

	<p>better option. It was also noted that the ramps for the short tunnel option impact on areas outside the grey strategic corridor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of tunnel spoil will impact the town. It could be more than 30,000 truck movements to remove spoil just for the small tunnel and more than 50,000 for the long tunnel. Can we make sure these trucks don't come through the town itself due to the dust and noise from trucks? Can the spoil from the southern end go back down the mountain and spoil coming from the northern end head towards Lithgow? This applies to all tunnel options, and most of the other options too. The committee did note that it would still have to go through other towns and impact them. One committee member noted there is an old sand quarry near Medlow Bath that could be investigated as a potential place for spoil. Other external advice provided to one committee member was that spoil on the Katoomba side would likely be stored somewhere until the tunnel was finished and be brought back through the tunnel or TfNSW could look at options such as using empty coal trains to move the spoil west. <p>TfNSW: At this stage it is too soon to comment on the construction method and removal of spoil. This will be dependent on the practicalities and where the spoil can be re-used. There are certainly environmental controls that are always in place and that takes into account the types of issues discussed here. The best practice is re-using the spoil within the same road construction project, as is likely to be possible in River Lett Hill, where spoil from one section might be used to fill in other project sections. At this stage the Medlow Bath section probably won't require much spoil, but we do look for these sorts of opportunities.</p>
5.	Scoring and tally
5.1	<p>Committee members submitted their assessments for tallying and scoring. These were shared on screen and discussed, with the clear preferences noted. It was noted that options that scored lowly, in their twenties, actually indicated a negative assessment or lack of support. Their scores and preferences will be produced in the final report, due for publication in October.</p>
5.2	<p>Two committee members registered that, while they have scored all options, they do not actually support any option presented as they don't believe these are good for the upper Mountains community. They would prefer nothing was done at all and that no large trucks come through the Mountains.</p> <p>Another committee member noted that everyone who travels on the Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow deserves a decent road, both locals and other road users, stating that: "Between Katoomba and Lithgow we don't have a decent road and until this is resolved there will continue to be more accidents and more deaths. To turn down every option presented is ignoring the issue and shows a poor attitude."</p>
5.3	<p>There was also discussion about including the emergency service representatives' scores. Some committee members felt they should not be included as representative of the local community, but shown separately. TfNSW noted that this is a Blackheath Co-Design Committee of which the emergency service representatives have an important role, and they do provide an important service to the local community. They further noted that everyone on the committee represented different groups and all had an equal voice. The overall outcomes were very similar across the scoring for all committee representatives.</p>

5.4	There was also discussion around caveats or protections around the preferred option/s. There was some disagreement around some caveats moved, those that reached general agreement will be reflected in the report.
6.	Wrap up – Tricia Wunsch
6.1	<p>I appreciate this has been a long process, tonight has shown some really good and considered comments.</p> <p>We will be working on the report, please email through any outstanding assessment commentary to us by Monday 24 August.</p> <p>We will also contact you about some comments from the committee about the process and outcomes.</p> <p>Thank you all, it has been a pleasure working with you all.</p>
7.	Thanks and close – Alistair Lunn
7.1	<p>Thank you all for your time, it has involved a lot of time from you all and it has been a stressful process for some. We understand it is not an easy process but we hope we are giving you the reassurance that we are listening to you. We are committed to trying to find the best solution for Blackheath. We have a role in government to find a solution and we believe that if we deliver the right solution it will be reflected on as a good solution in the long term. We thank you for coming on the journey of good faith with us, we really appreciate that.</p> <p>We will be back in late October to consult with the community, we are conscious of avoiding the school holidays and the run up to Christmas. There is a lot more consultation to come and you will see us out in the community. Following October you will start seeing surveyors around the town to start working out how we can make this happen.</p> <p>Keep safe and warm this weekend.</p> <p>Thank you also to the experts and team for their hard work and time in their evenings for this process.</p>