



Transport for NSW

Great Western Highway Upgrade Program

Community Update | Preferred tunnel option
Blackheath Consultation Summary Report | April 2021



Aerial view of Blackheath town centre

The NSW Government has determined that the long tunnel is the preferred option for the Great Western Highway upgrade at Blackheath, using the entry portal south of Evans Lookout Road.

Advances in tunnel technology have also prompted the Government to progress investigation into a longer tunnel from Blackheath to Little Hartley.

The recommendation to proceed with the tunnel portal to the south of Evans Lookout Road in a section of National Park is included in the Blackheath Route Options Community Consultation Summary Report, and reflects strong community feedback on their preferred option.

The Consultation Summary Report, capturing and responding to consultation held in October and November 2020, is now available on the project webpage at nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway.

The Sutton Park southern portal is no longer being considered.

Blackheath Route Options

From 12 October to 28 November 2020, Transport for NSW consulted with the community on tunnel options for Blackheath, presenting two potential tunnel entry/exit points to the south of Blackheath, near Evans Lookout Rd or near Sutton Park, and one northern option near the existing Mount Boyce Heavy Vehicle Safety Station.

During the consultation period, we received 2486 submissions.

2486
submissions
from members
of the community

798 online
feedback forms

146 pinned comments
on the online map

47 email submissions

33 postal submissions

6205 unique visitors

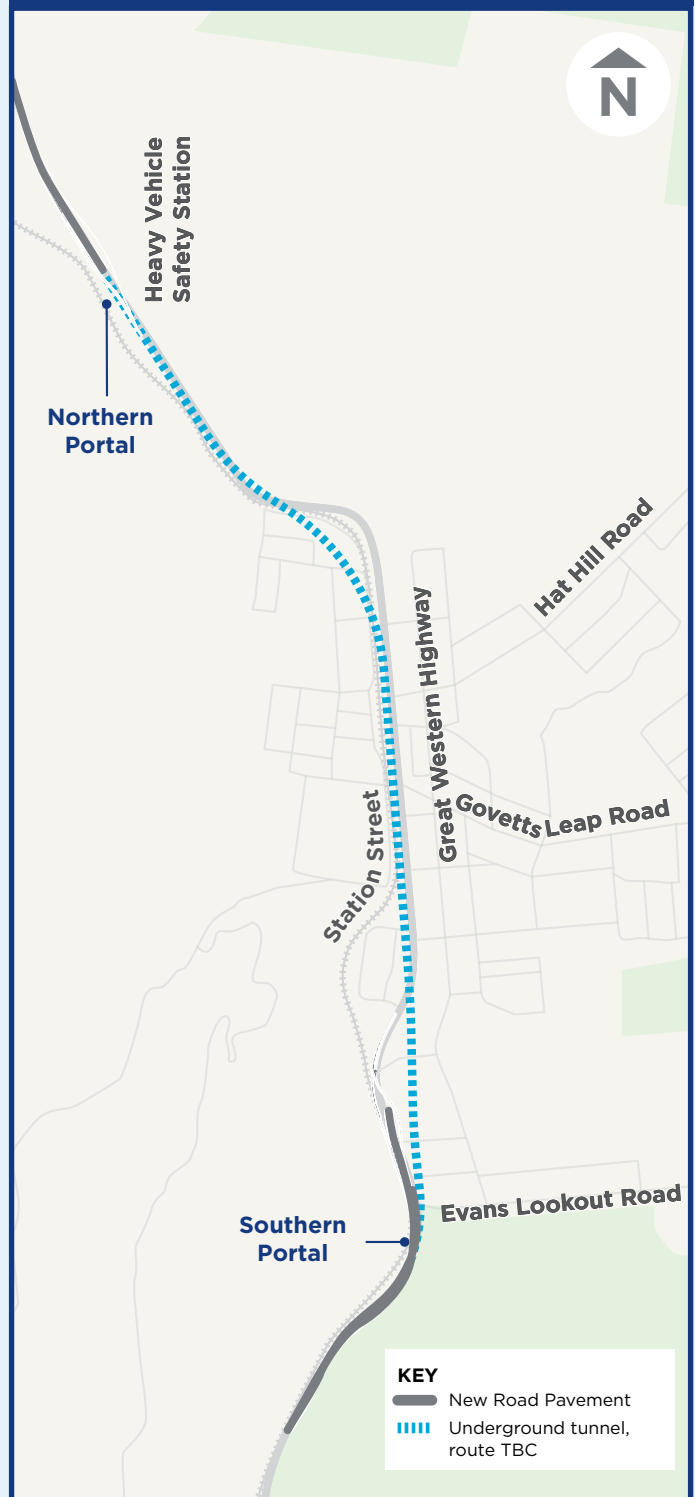


The majority of submissions were in support of a longer Blackheath bypass, with a portal in the area south of Evans Lookout Road.

Many issues regarding the impacts of the proposed Sutton Park portal were raised, including lack of access for locals and the many thousands of tourists who visit the area surrounding Evans Lookout Road, concern regarding property impacts, and the importance to the community of the park as a recreational space and rest stop.

Our early engineering investigations also support the location of the portal in the area south of Evans Lookout Road, and the design and impact of this portal will now undergo further investigation. The option to locate a shorter tunnel portal at Sutton Park has now been removed from further consideration.

Blackheath preferred tunnel route



What you said

“Long tunnel...please!! It has been so refreshing to witness and participate in genuine community engagement around political decisions that affect our daily lives. Please continue this mature representation by listening to the overwhelming sentiments of our town and opt for the long tunnel option to ensure the least impact on residents.”

“The 12 homes and the preservation of ALL BLACKHEATH are MUCH more important to me than a couple of hectares of National Parks land for the Long Tunnel portal.”



In addition to many submissions regarding the portal locations, we also received valuable feedback and suggestions from you about a range of issues.



You wanted to know more about the environmental impacts there will be from the construction of a tunnel, including noise, air quality, water systems, catchments and aquifers, national park, flora and fauna.

The environmental assessment of all stages of the project will be prepared in accordance with all relevant Commonwealth, State and Local environmental plans and legislation.

The assessment will include investigations into the built and natural environments like heritage, biodiversity and water quality, and potential impacts to amenity such as visual impacts and access. It will seek to identify, mitigate and manage any potential impacts associated with the proposal.

Consultation with the community and all tiers of government will be essential during the development of the environmental assessment. The aim of this consultation is to help us identify and assess all environmental issues.



You asked about the construction methods and impacts of tunnel building, including noise, spoil removal and structural issues. A range of further investigations and technical studies are required to determine many of the construction methods, their impacts and mitigations required.

We will be in contact with residents throughout the planning process and there will be many opportunities for you to learn more and provide input as the project progresses, including during the environmental assessment phase.



You wanted to raise other route options, such as longer tunnels, and make other suggestions for the focus of the project.

TfNSW investigated the needs of all road users across the corridor, to find the best upgrade solution that serves all transport needs in the Mountains, including and addressing local and through traffic. Other options progressing for further investigation and consultation provide safety and amenity improvements along the existing Highway, while making responsible use of the available funding.

We are now investigating a longer tunnel connection between Blackheath and Little Hartley.



You wanted to know how we would protect the sensitive water balance of the Mountains.

Detailed hydrology studies and monitoring will form part of our environmental assessment, which will help us to ensure the safety of the environment and ecology in the area.

We are consulting with Water NSW to ensure that safeguards are built into the design of the Upgrade to ensure water quality is maintained or improved.



You suggested improvements for the existing Great Western Highway route in Blackheath, including intersection treatments, an underpass at Shipley Road and access to and from side streets. We thank the Blackheath community for all suggestions and comments and they may be considered during the next phase of the concept design process.



The consultation summary report provides responses to feedback submitted. You can find the Report at nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway.

Next steps

The Blackheath to Little Hartley section of the Great Western Highway upgrade design will now progress with investigations into one long tunnel.

If investigations confirm this tunnel is feasible, it would replace the previous Mount Victoria bypass of tunnels and bridges designed almost a decade ago.

Between now and the middle of 2022, detailed investigations will take place along the highway to progress this design for a more direct tunnel from Blackheath to Little Hartley.

These include geotechnical, hydrogeological and biodiversity investigations, air quality monitoring, traffic and noise studies, Aboriginal and Cultural heritage studies, and land surveys.

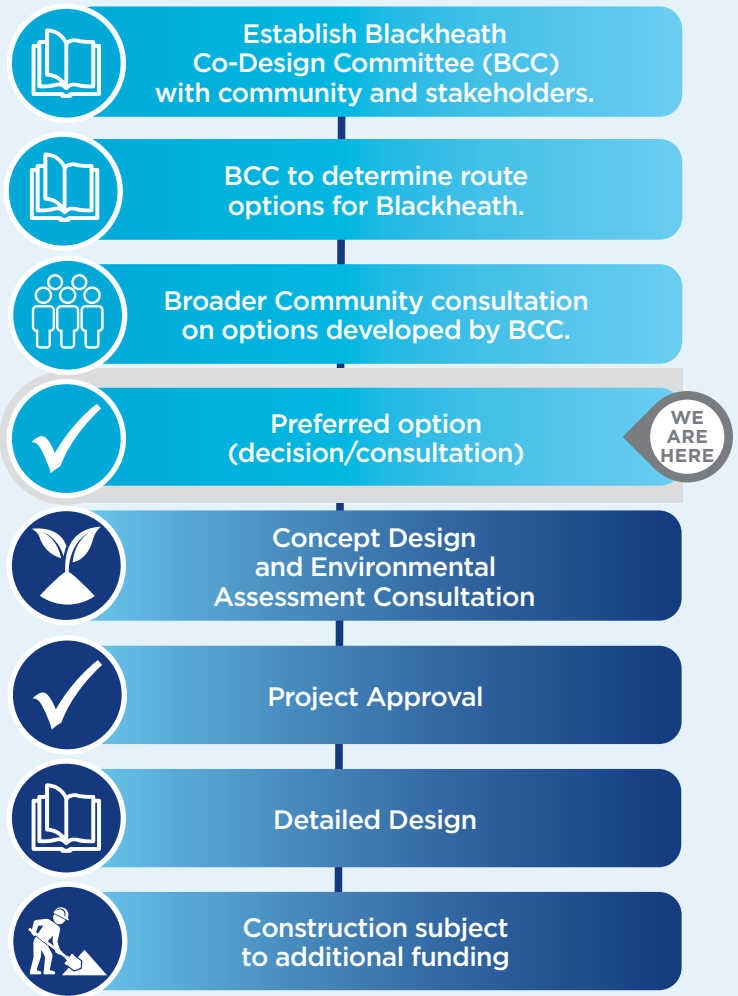
These investigations will help us to understand all the environmental, engineering, traffic, heritage and safety factors involved.

The information we gather will help us to develop a strategic – or high level – design for the Blackheath to Little Hartley tunnel.

We anticipate that consultation on the strategic design, including the Blackheath and Little Hartley portals, will take place in October 2021.

We will then use the feedback from the consultation, along with ongoing investigations, to further develop the concept design for the upgrade, which will proceed to environmental assessment in 2022. If our investigations should determine that the long tunnel is not a valid bypass option, we will revert to planning for the tunnel underneath Blackheath, with portals south of Evans Lookout Road and near the existing Mount Boyce Heavy Vehicle Safety Station.

Blackheath



Contact the Great Western Highway Upgrade team

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nswroads.work/greatwesternhighway



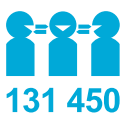
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