



## Frequently asked questions

SEPTEMBER 2021

### Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road intersection upgrade at Tumut

#### What's happening?

Transport for NSW is currently in the planning stages to build a roundabout at the Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road intersection.

#### When will work start?

Early planning is already under way. This includes concept design, early investigations and business case.

Transport for NSW is fast-tracking the intersection upgrade and hopes to progress quickly through all stages of planning to start building on site by early 2022.

The roundabout is expected to take 12 months to be completed, weather and project approvals permitting.

#### Why have the construction dates changed recently?

The Tumut intersection upgrade has involved a large amount of planning, targeted consultation and utility investigations. Due to the number of services and utilities located within the project footprint, Transport has worked collaboratively with external agencies and key stakeholders to prioritise and coordinate activities. This additional work on public utilities as well as the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) has caused some delays to the original program. Transport is now expecting the Tumut intersection upgrade project to start early 2022 and be completed in December 2022, weather permitting.

#### What's an REF?

Taking care of our environmental and cultural heritage is an important part of a project's development.

To ensure we are recognising and minimising all impacts to the environment from this proposed project, Transport for NSW has created a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) report.

An REF is an environmental assessment used to determine all risks and possible mitigation measures on proposed projects. If risks cannot be appropriately managed, the proposal will not proceed.

### **When can the community give feedback?**

The REF is on display for comment from Monday 27 September to midnight Sunday 17 October 2021.

### **How can the community give feedback?**

The community is invited to review the REF online at [nswroads.work/tiu](https://nswroads.work/tiu) or at Snowy Valleys Council's Tumut office.

All comments, concerns or feedback can then be sent to Transport for NSW by

- emailing [southprojects@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:southprojects@transport.nsw.gov.au)
- calling 0407 064 157
- writing to Tumut intersection project, PO Box 484, Wagga Wagga NSW.

Submissions close at midnight on Sunday 17 October 2021.

### **What kind of feedback are you looking for?**

The community can comment on anything included in the REF, or the project in general. This may include but is not limited to project justification, design, construction and access issues, and impacts to biodiversity and cultural heritage.

### **What about all the work that has already been done at the intersection?**

Transport for NSW began safety improvements at the intersection of Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road at Tumut in April 2020 to improve safety and efficiency for all road users.

Work included installing vehicle-activated signs to improve safety, warning road users to slow down and providing advanced notice of conditions ahead, formalising the traffic arrangement, vegetation removal, upgrading line marking and signage and installing medians, kerbs and safety barrier.

The speed limit on Snowy Mountains Highway has also been reduced recently to increase safety.

These improvements, combined with installation of a roundabout, will assist in reducing the number of crashes, improving safety for the people of Tumut.

### **Why can't we put traffic lights at the intersection instead?**

A: We investigated the option to put traffic lights in at the Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road intersection back in 2019 but traffic lights were not considered a suitable treatment at this location. A subsequent review by the Centre for Road Safety found traffic lights would not reduce conflict points, impact speeds or impact angles, and would not address the immediate community concerns about safety at the intersection because of the need for further funding, property acquisition, road widening, surface improvements and environmental mitigations. Instead, the safety review recommended a roundabout as the preferred option as it was rated the highest in safety performance of all options considered, best addressing the community's safety concerns. This is why a roundabout has been chosen as the preferred option.

### **Why wasn't the intersection upgraded at the same time as the safety improvements in 2020?**

A: Transport for NSW's aim at this time was to address the immediate safety concerns at the intersection. The work to install vehicle-activated signs, formalise the traffic arrangement, remove

vegetation, upgrade line marking and signage and install medians, kerbs and safety barrier was carried out in April 2020 and was followed by a speed limit reduction on Snowy Mountains Highway. Completing these immediate short-term actions allowed Transport to plan for a more permanent safety solution to improve safety for the people of Tumut. These safety improvements, combined with installation of a roundabout, will assist in reducing the number of crashes at this important intersection.

### **Is there funding for this project?**

In October 2020, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole flagged the construction of a roundabout at the Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road intersection as a NSW Government priority.

This project is funded under the NSW Federal Stimulus Road Safety Program.

### **What are the crash stats?**

The last five years of crash statistics at the Snowy Mountains Highway intersection with Gocup Road (2015-2020) show 19 crashes, resulting in two deaths, five serious injuries, 13 moderate injuries, four minor injuries and one uncategorised.

Transport for NSW believes there may also be a number of unreported crashes at this intersection, which are not captured in the crash data.

### **What about the traffic lights that were announced in 2019?**

Transport for NSW investigated the installation of traffic lights at the Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road intersection in 2019. At the time, the installation of traffic lights required increased funding, property acquisition, road widening, surface improvements and environmental mitigations.

A review of possible safety improvements at the intersection was carried out by the Centre for Road Safety in mid-2020 and found traffic lights would not minimise conflict points, impact speeds or impact angles, however, this option would address the existing crash history.

A roundabout was rated highest in safety performance of all options considered, best addressing the community's safety concerns, and has therefore been chosen as the preferred option.

### **Was the community's petition responsible for the current project?**

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole called for the Centre for Road Safety to review the Snowy Mountains Highway intersection with Gocup Road for possible safety improvements in May 2020.

Minister Toole subsequently visited the site in July 2020 to see the location first-hand and further identify priority needs for the intersection.

Member for Wagga Wagga Dr Joe McGirr MP tabled a petition calling for safety improvements in August, reinforcing the NSW Government's previous commitment and demonstrating the depth of the community's safety concerns at this intersection.

The preferred option was announced in October 2020, with the installation of a roundabout fast-tracked as a NSW Government priority.

### **What other options were investigated during the Centre for Road Safety review?**

Options investigated as part of the review were traffic lights, roundabout, closing Capper Street, raising the intersection, closing Gocup Road and moving the intersection.

### **Why aren't traffic lights the best option?**

Traffic lights would not minimise conflict points, impact speeds or impact angles at the Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road intersection. While traffic lights would address the existing crash history, a roundabout was rated highest in safety performance of all options considered.

A large scale roundabout is also a better option for heavy vehicles, as they can better manage speeds and can avoid coming to a complete stop if traffic flow allows.

### **Why isn't moving the intersection considered the best option?**

There is support within some sections of the community for moving the intersection to bypass the current location.

This was one of the options considered by the Centre for Road Safety during their review in May 2020.

Moving the intersection and closing the existing Gocup Road connection would create new safety issues and collision points at each of the new intersection locations.

A new intersection in addition to a T-intersection treatment on the current intersection would increase the number of collision points with a reduced safety outcome compared to the proposed roundabout at the Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road intersection.

As safety is the key driver for this project, a roundabout at the current location is preferred as it had the highest safety performance of all options considered during the Centre for Road Safety's review.

An alternate intersection location is also expected to take longer to build with property acquisition, complex environmental requirements and possible changes to the highway.

### **Why was a roundabout chosen over Capper Street being closed?**

While closing Capper Street would reduce the number of collision points, it would not minimise impact speeds or angles. It also doesn't address the crash history associated with turning movements from Gocup Road.

### **Why was a roundabout chosen over a raised intersection?**

The Centre for Road Safety review concluded building a raised intersection would not simplify road user decisions or minimise conflict points or impact angles. While this option would address some of the location's crash history by reducing severity of crashes due to the slower approach speeds to the intersection, a roundabout was rated higher in safety performance.

### **What are the benefits of a roundabout?**

Roundabouts help make intersections safer by:

- reducing vehicle speeds, making it easier to choose a safe gap in traffic
- minimising the impact angles of approach, leading to lower severity crashes, have significantly fewer collision points and direct motorists in one direction
- reducing the risk of being seriously injured by up to 85 per cent.

Studies have shown roundabouts are safer than traffic lights, improve traffic flow and are more efficient for heavy vehicles.

**What role does council play in this project?**

The Snowy Mountains Highway intersection with Gocup Road is the responsibility of Transport for NSW.

Transport for NSW has shared its long-term vision for the Snowy Mountains Highway intersection with Gocup Road with Snowy Valleys Council and will continue to discuss the project with council as the project progresses.

Transport for NSW values council as a major stakeholder and community advocate.