



Frequently asked questions

DECEMBER 2020

Safety improvements at Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road intersection at Tumut

What's happening?

Transport for NSW is currently in the early 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 late 2021.

The roundabout is expected to take 10 months to be completed, weather and project approvals permitting.

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.

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.

The project currently has funding to progress planning. Application for construction funding is part of early planning work and is not expected to hold-up planning or the delivery of the intersection upgrade.

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 unclassified. 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?

A petition calling for improvements to the Snowy Mountains Highway intersection with Gocup Road was tabled in parliament by Member for Wagga Wagga Dr Joe McGirr MP in August 2020.

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole responded to the petition, visiting the location, flagging the intersection as a NSW Government priority and requesting the Centre for Road Safety's review of possible safety improvements.

Transport for NSW considered this petition a clear demonstration of the depth of the community's safety concerns at this intersection, and is now fast-tracking the installation of a roundabout.

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 earlier this year.

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.

Will you be asking for the community's feedback?

Transport for NSW is expecting to contact the community early in 2021 as planning work progresses. The community's feedback will help guide planning around pedestrian accesses and requirements.

Transport for NSW will keep the community updated through traditional and social media channels, letters to residents and local newspaper advertising.

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.