

FAQ Responses to Questions from Community Information Session 17 August 2021

The first session was said to be recorded and put online, along with answers to the many questions which were left unanswered. Has this occurred and can the link be provided?

Some technical difficulties were experienced during the first session so it was not able to be recorded. The LHFC team apologies for any concern this has caused. The second on 17 August 2021 has been record and can be viewed [here](#)

The department is to be commended on its approach to indigenous heritage but it appears to have ignored non-indigenous heritage, especially in the West Wallsend area of the route.

Section 7.11 of the [Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment \(DSEA\)](#) provides a strategic review of the potential future infrastructures impact on non-Aboriginal heritage. The recommended corridor passes to the north of the West Wallsend Colliery No.1 heritage site, which has been identified for future opportunities for renewal and to contain informal walking and cycling opportunities (Lake Macquarie City Council, 2020). The mining heritage park has been recognised through the constraint identification process and efforts have been made to minimise impacts on this significant area. Potential indirect impacts on nearby heritage items would depend on future rail infrastructure which will be considered during the next phase of design development

Why is the freight proposed to go through existing communities resulting in the division of these communities? What research has been completed in regards to community impact and noise levels

A strategic noise study was performed as part of the project and this is summarised in section 7.5 of [Draft SEA](#). This study identified that mitigations against noise impacts to existing community could be implemented which supports the protection of the corridor. Another detailed noise assessment will be undertaken when the project is in the development application / assessment phase. This phase will commence when the rail infrastructure is needed in 10 – 20 years. Transport for NSW will be required to prepare a State Significant Infrastructure Application which will be subject to community consultation and will be assessed by the Department of Planning Industry and Environment. Through this process, it must be demonstrated that operational impacts (such as noise) can be suitably mitigated or managed to required noise standards at the time of delivery.

Please explain how you intend to not cut off Killingworth from the East. looks like there will be 2 rail crossings

The design of the future rail infrastructure will not be undertaken for sometime, however when it is required in 10-20 years it will be grade separated at this crossing. Grade separation of existing road infrastructure (such as The Broadway) will be achieved with either bridges over, or under crossings of the existing road.

The land between Killingworth and Holmesville is used for recreation - horse riding, running, bush walking, mountain biking, dog walking, motorbike riding. How will this project impact this land?

We acknowledge that the ecology of the local area is important to the residents and have sought to minimise the impact to this by appropriate selection of a corridor which has the least impact to the ecology of the local area. In the development of the future infrastructure, 10 - 20 years in the

future, important considerations for community use will be designed to enable the community to continue to enjoy the use of the area such as undercrossings at grade separated crossings of existing roads. The detailed designs for the future rail infrastructure will be subject to a further environmental assessment and approval process.

What steps follow this consultation? Will a submissions report be prepared, with all community concerns adequately addressed prior to any formal action being taken to rezone land?

Following the public consultation process, the recommended corridor and amendment to the Major Infrastructure Corridors (MIC) SEPP may be refined as a response to this consultation. All submissions will be reviewed and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) report and MIC SEPP amendment will be finalised to respond to key issues raised during the consultation period. A submissions report will be prepared and released to the public from Transport. DPIE will review the finalised [Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#) to determine whether the protection of the corridor under the MIC SEPP should be supported. The SEA and proposed amendment to the MIC SEPP will be presented to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for consideration.

What were the specific reasons why the dark blue option on the western side of Killingworth was ruled out on Figure B.2, Page B-15? As Burkes Creek floods at least once a year

An options assessment and multi-criteria assessment (MCA) was carried out to identify the recommended corridor option. Central connections were explored to determine this preferred option. Details can be found in section B1.6 of the [Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment \(DSEA\)](#). The Killingworth option was ruled out due to poor performance in the MCA in comparison to other options, with primary concerns around the engineering performance and community impacts. The criteria included freight movement, economic growth, community impacts, environmental impacts, integrated land use and transport and future proofing.

A strategic hydrology and flood modelling has been conducted as part of the Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (DSEA) study. The future rail line design will consider the detailed flood and hydrology modelling as part of the next phase of design development. This will ensure that no adverse impacts result to existing land uses and will be supported by a future environmental assessment and approval process.

Transport welcomes alternate views from the community.

Concern about the impact of the corridor protection on land management. For example the former West Wallsend No.1 Colliery site has been identified for use as a neighbourhood park and mining heritage

The recommended corridor passes to the north of the West Wallsend Colliery No.1 heritage site, which has been identified for future opportunities for renewal and to contain informal walking and cycling opportunities (Lake Macquarie City Council, 2020) The mining heritage park has been recognised through the constraint identification process and efforts have been made to minimise impacts on this significant area. The proposed protection mechanisms for the corridor would not disrupt current land ownership or management arrangements. Land uses that are currently permissible would continue to be permissible, subject to consideration of the compatibility of the proposed use and the timing of the infrastructure delivery. Transport will be responsible for managing the land.

Are all questions and concerns raised here today being answered or only selected ones that are favourable to the project?

All questions raised at the consultation are being addressed and considered in the development of the project.

Will the corridor interfere with the plans for the Richmond Vale rail trail?

This project, within the vicinity of the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor, is assumed to be constructed and operational before the construction of any future rail freight infrastructure. The Richmond Rail Vale Trail (RVRT) is a project lead by Newcastle City Council. Transport will work with Newcastle City Council to ensure that the Lower Hunter Freight rail infrastructure project design minimises impacts on the future bicycle trail project. The elevation difference between the proposed level of the future rail line and the level of the Richmond Vale Rail Trail at this location ensures that there will be no impact. The future design and construction of the freight line infrastructure will address the operation of the rail trail at Lenaghan and Tarro where the two infrastructure projects cross to ensure continued operation of the cycleway.

As my property is within 200 metres of the planned line, what compensation do I and the people in Bendigo street get out of this?

The proposed corridor is currently out for community consultation alongside DPIE's Explanation of Intended Effects. Subject to the gazettal of the corridor, for properties that have been rezoned and where impacted owners experience hardship and are unable to sell, owners have the opportunity under the hardship provisions of the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 to apply for early acquisition. This relates to the direct rezoning of land. Separate development approval is required prior to the delivery of the infrastructure. Before approval is granted, it must be demonstrated that the proposed operational impacts of the freight rail on surrounding properties and land uses will be appropriately mitigated and managed to the standards of the day.

If that area is developed, we will have light pollution, ie. street lights and industrial lighting in that area that can affect fauna of those areas

Mitigation measures such as fauna underpasses would be required to maintain connectivity for terrestrial fauna species as part of future potential rail infrastructure in the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor. Detailed design measures outlining mitigations to protect to fauna resident in the areas which the LHFC cross will be detailed when the future rail infrastructure is required in 10 - 20 years. The detailed designs for the future rail infrastructure will be subject to a further environmental assessment and approval process.

Please explain grade separation of roads?

Grade separation of roads refers to the placement of roads at a different grade or elevation using tunnels, ramps, bridges and intersection. Grade separation design is used to improve traffic flow without stopping or slowing where roads, rails or paths cross.

What supporting infrastructure have you got planned for the line? I.E bunting yard etc

The proposed corridor is 60m in width to accommodate a double track rail bypass of Newcastle's congested urban area. There are no proposed for shunting yards within this corridor. The strategic design and operational requirements of the infrastructure considered for this corridor are outlined in Chapter 3 of the [Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment](#).

Why not build bridges over existing congested areas?

The construction of bridges over congested areas would result in significant and direct property impacts e.g. property acquisition and loss of residential properties and would not resolve the long term growth requirements of the shared passenger/freight rail network. The recommended

corridor is a bypass of Newcastle's congested shared rail network and seeks to avoid residential lands and identified future residential growth areas to the greatest extent possible.

Could you please repeat again if there is going to be a Rail Crossing in Killingworth, and whereabouts?

The recommended corridor avoids the township of Killingworth. The location of the corridor relative to the nearest residential dwelling in Killingworth is approximately 800 m.

Isn't this project just to remove both noise and tangible air pollution away from the developed areas within Newcastle, that have existed for well over 100 odd years?

The key objective for the future rail infrastructure is to provide a dedicated freight rail line between Fassifern and Hexham, bypassing Newcastle urban area. Separating rail freight from the passenger rail line is a NSW Government initiative to reduce network congestion on the rail network across Newcastle, and improve travel times and reliability for both rail freight and passenger rail service. The project objectives and benefits are outlined in sections 1.3-1.4 of the [Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment \(DSEA\)](#).

What about noise assessments I doubt a proper one was done for the M1 the bush screen does not suffice as a noise a barrier

The noise mitigation along the M1 will be reviewed where the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor is in close proximity. Noise mitigation options will be further explored according to the standards at the time, when the project is needed in 10 - 20 years from now. At this time, further detailed design will be undertaken and as part of these detailed designs, project mitigations against noise will be developed to ensure that the project meets its obligations. The detailed designs for the future rail infrastructure will be subject to a further environmental assessment and approval process.

Why should the residents of Killingworth, Barnsley, West Wallsend, Holmesville, Seahampton, Blackhill be affected by this project? While also 'possibly' diminishing property value of those areas?

The corridor has sought to minimise impacts to urban areas and identified growth areas to the greatest extent possible. When the rail infrastructure is required in 10 - 20 years, the detailed designs for the future rail infrastructure will be subject to a further environmental assessment and approval process.

If reserving the corridor why is there not several corridor options submitted as once it goes to the next stage it seems like it maybe too late to object to the proposed corridor once approved.

An options assessment and multi-criteria assessment (MCA) was carried out to identify corridor options. The long list of options were reviewed by the project team and other subject matter experts to identify suitable end-to-end options. The performance outcomes for each short-listed corridor can be found in section B1.12 of the [Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment \(DSEA\)](#). Transports welcomes the communities views on alternate corridors to the recommended corridor.

Why should people of those areas have their livelihoods changed, especially when at the time they bought their properties the train existed

The corridor has sought to minimise impacts to urban areas and identified growth areas to the greatest extent possible. When the rail infrastructure is required in 10 - 20 years, the detailed

designs for the future rail infrastructure will be subject to a further environmental assessment and approval process.

Why can't the corridors run along side the existing freeway instead of creating a noise bubble for the people of Killingworth

The constraints analysis suggested options located further west of the existing M1 Pacific Motorway corridor are generally less feasible. This can be found in section B1.3 of the Draft SEA. The project team welcomes the communities submissions on alternate corridor options and will review the constraints again for any options proposed.

The corridor clearly needs to be adjusted to close to homes

The corridor has sought to minimise impacts to urban areas and identified growth areas to the greatest extent possible. Transport welcomes alternate corridor options proposed by community as part of this consultation.

Are you wanting to lock in land so that there is a dedicated fast passenger railway line?

The objectives of the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor are to protect a corridor of land needed for future freight rail infrastructure and provide certainty over the future Lower Hunter Freight Corridor location to assist with the strategic and land use planning of the surrounding area.

The current very fast train route (and a station) hard to see how there would be enough room to squeeze in the freight line as well?

The NSW Government is currently investigating fast rail connections between Sydney and Newcastle. Details of any future route are yet to be released. An indicate route for high speed rail has been nominally located to the east of the M1 Pacific Motorway. Given the current stage of investigations into fast or faster rail, the potential cumulative impacts cannot be identified at this stage. The progression of this project to the next stage of planning would need to consider interaction with the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor.

If the rail goes ahead the only road into the area will be cut. What safety measures are in place in regard to this and a bushfire occurring?

We acknowledge that the ecology of the local area is important to the residents and the recommended LHFC option has sought to minimise the impact to this by appropriate selection of a corridor which has the least impact to the ecology of the local area. In the development of the future infrastructure, 10 - 20 years in the future, important considerations for community use will be designed to enable the community to continue to enjoy the use of the area such as undercrossings at grade separated crossings of existing roads. The design of the future rail infrastructure will not be undertaken for sometime, however when it is required in 10-20 years, crossing of existing roads such as the The Broadway, Wakefield Road, and Killingworth Road will be grade separated at these crossings.

Extending the study area further south may allow options that significantly minimise the serious impacts to communities of Killingworth, Barnsley, Holmesville, and West Wallsend.

An options assessment and multi-criteria assessment (MCA) was carried out to identify corridor options. Southern connections were explored to determine the preferred option through this area. Due to mining and land use issues there is only one feasible option. These can be found in section B1.6 of the [Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment \(DSEA\)](#).

Will we be compensated in the imminent 'possibly or likely' devaluing of the properties in those areas and who will be paying our said compensation?

The corridor has sought to minimise impacts to urban areas and identified growth areas to the greatest extent possible. When the rail infrastructure is required in 10 - 20 years, the detailed designs for the future rail infrastructure will be subject to a further environmental assessment and approval process.

None of the options address the "pinch point" issue behind Wilson street West Wallsend - this is a very narrow area.

The recommended corridor transects the northern portion of the West Wallsend Colliery which lies off Wilson Street. The constraints analysis suggested options located closet to the existing M1 Pacific Motorway corridor are generally less feasible. This can be found in section B1.3 of the [Draft SEA](#). The project team welcomes the communities submissions on alternate corridor options and will review the constraints again for any options proposed.

Why not build bridges or infrastructure around what exists to improve upon it and also cost far less than this project?

The construction of bridges over congested areas would result in significant and direct property impacts e.g. property acquisition and loss of residential properties and would not resolve the long term growth requirements of the shared passenger/freight rail network. The recommended corridor is a bypass of Newcastle's congested shared rail network and seeks to avoid residential lands and identified future residential growth areas to the greatest extent possible.

Has any quantitative noise assessment been undertaken to give residents an understanding of how far the noise is expected to travel.

A strategic noise study was performed as part of the project and this is summarised in section 7.5 of [Draft SEA](#). This study identified that mitigations against noise impacts to existing community could be implemented which supports the protection of the corridor. Another detailed noise assessment will be undertaken when the project is in the development application / assessment phase. This phase will commence when the rail infrastructure is needed in 10 – 20 years. Transport will be required to prepare a State Significant Infrastructure Application which will be subject to community consultation and will be assessed by the Department of Planning Industry and Environment. Through this process, it must be demonstrated that operational impacts (such as noise) can be suitably mitigated or managed to meet the standards of the day.