

This document looks at the 'Environmental Impact Statement' which appears to be an overview of the technical documents. Highlighted in blue are extracts from the document related to the Pokolbin Mountains Rd. Highlighted in red are questions/comments related to the document.

Environmental Impact Statement

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Table 4.9 Proposed upgrades at existing public roads Local government area Road

Pokolbin Mountains Road Local (Cessnock Council) Various sections between McDonalds Road and Broken Back Road in Pokolbin Widening for one lane movement for 19 m heavy vehicles with traffic control required

Broken Back Road Forestry Various sections between Pokolbin Mountains Road and Broken Back Trail in Cedar Creek Widening for one lane movement for 19 m heavy vehicles with traffic control required

Nothing to indicate what sections of the road will be widened, is it only the passing bays as outlined in the '**Technical report 4 Traffic and transport impact assessment**'?

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6.5.11 Local government

Table 6.11 Summary of council feedback

Concerns about Pokolbin Mountains Road and Mount Baker Road maintenance

- The project would rely on the use of existing public roads during construction and operation of the project. **Upgrades are proposed to Mount Baker Road and Pokolbin Mountain Road**
- Road pre construction assessment surveys and routine inspections will be completed prior to construction and during construction along all nominated construction routes on local roads and existing access tracks to ensure that routes are maintained to safe standard during construction
- Where rectification works are required due to project impacts, consultation with the appropriate road authority will be undertaken to confirm the scope of the work required Chapter 4 (Project description) Chapter 11 (Traffic and transport) Technical Report 4 – Traffic and transport impact assessment

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11.2.1 Road network and performance

The existing road network across the study area consists of a combination of National, State, regional, local and forest roads. These roads are shown on Figure 4.10 in Chapter 4 (Project description).

The key National and State roads within the study area include New England Highway, Golden Highway, Hunter Expressway, Pacific Highway, Denman Road, John Renshaw Drive, Mandalong Road, Freemans Drive, Wine Country Drive and the Pacific Motorway. These roads are sealed, bidirectional 2 lane roads mostly with a 100 kilometre per hour speed limit which reduces near urban areas. The Pacific Motorway is a dual carriageway National road which consists of 2 lanes in each direction through the study area.

Regional roads within the study area include Broke Road, Cessnock Road and Wollombi Road. These roads are sealed, bidirectional 2-lane roads with posted speed limits between 80 and 100 kilometres per hour outside of urban areas, reducing to 60 kilometres per hour within townships such as Cessnock, Bellbird and Broke.

There are 35 local roads within the study area that would be used by construction vehicles for the project. **Most are sealed except** for Cedar Creek Road, Hayes Road, Martinsville Hill Road, MF1 Road, Mount Baker Road, Mount View Road, **Pokolbin Mountains Road**, Heaton Road, Mount Faulk Road, Alton Road and Hawke Mount Road. These roads are generally bidirectional 2 lane roads (one lane in each direction), although Mount Baker Road, Hayes Road, Mount Faulk Road, Hawke Mount Road and **Pokolbin Mountains Road are single lane roads. The posted speed limit of local roads varies between 50 and 100 kilometres per hour**, with the exception of Archerfield Road (40 kilometres per hour) and an unnamed road to Bayswater Power Station (20 kilometres per hour). The study area also covers extensive parts of New South Wales (NSW) State forests and conservation areas, with the roads within these areas providing access for forestry activities and to recreational areas. These roads are typically bidirectional unsealed roads with a posted speed limit of 60 kilometres per hour (with some small sections with a posted speed limit of 40 kilometres per hour). Drivers are expected to drive to conditions of the road. Based on the outcomes of mid-block surveys, almost all roads in the study area currently operate at LoS A during a typical peak hour under existing traffic conditions. The only exceptions are: • New England Highway (west of Lemington Road in Ravensworth), which operates at LoS D in the AM peak and LoS B in the PM peak in the westbound direction, and LoS C in the PM peak in the eastbound direction • Golden Highway (east of Gouldsville Road in Gouldsville), which operates at LoS B in the westbound direction in the AM peak • Broke Road (east of McDonalds Road in Pokolbin), which operates at LoS B in the eastbound direction in the PM peak • Freemans Drive (south of Martinsville Road in Martinsville), which operates at LoS C in the AM peak in both directions, and LoS C in the northbound direction and LoS D in the southbound direction in the PM peak.

Concern about speed limit of 60km/h, needs to be changed and sign posted with also instructions to stay left at all times.

Property access

Property access The project is expected to have some impact to property accesses during construction particularly on roads only wide enough for one heavy vehicle to pass. These are typically unsealed roads in the Pokolbin, Mount View and Millfield areas, as well as the State forest roads in Corrabare and Olney. These roads often provide access to rural residential properties as well as to recreational areas in the State forests. Not all construction routes would be used for the entire construction period. As such, impacts to property access would only occur while each construction route with affected properties is in use. **Notwithstanding, measures would be implemented to minimise disruptions to residents on construction routes. This would include traffic management, including passing bays, which are proposed to manage safety risks and impacts on users of these roads. This will require traffic controllers to be present at passing bays during work hours to ensure the roads are only operating under one-way conditions to prevent mid-block passing.** In addition, residents with driveway access between the 2 passing bays would be provided with a contact number to inform traffic controllers when exiting their properties to minimise the risk of mid-block passing.

Traffic and access

- Concerns for the suitability of the road network in the region to handle construction traffic. Numerous participants raised concerns about existing safety issues along Pokolbin Mountains Road
- Views that roads require upgrades before construction starts and are expected to be left in the same or a better state after construction is complete. Local government emphasised that they are not able to fund road improvements
- Concerns that traffic volume, congestion and delays could negatively impact the tourism trade in the Hunter Valley winery region (e.g. Pokolbin area)

Nothing to indicate what upgrades are planned for Pokolbin Mountains Rd.

Transport and connectivity

- At the regional scale, transport infrastructure supports broader economic activities including the Pacific Motorway, Golden Highway, New England Highway, and Hunter Valley Coal Rail Network
- Public transport options are limited, restricting mobility for youth and elderly residents, particularly within the corridor social locality
- **Community concerns highlight poor road conditions, safety issues on Pokolbin Mountains Road and Broke Road, and the need for better road maintenance to support regional growth**

Table 14.8 Potential social impacts during construction

Livelihoods Impacts on tourism operation and visitor economy Construction activities in high-tourism areas such as the Hunter wine region may affect the visitor experience due to increased traffic and visual impacts in certain areas. Increased construction noise, visual disturbances, road detours and increased traffic volumes on construction routes may also deter visitors from engaging in wine tourism, ecotourism and cultural heritage experiences. **Roads that traverse Pokolbin wine country that would be used for construction include Wine Country Drive, Broke Road, McDonalds Road and the lower portion of Pokolbin Mountains Road.** Upgrades and minor works would also be required for some of these roads. Related social impacts including reduced access to short-term accommodation and changed access to recreational infrastructure (see above), are considered in the context of the project's potential effects on tourism operations and the visitor economy

There is also tourist accommodations at the upper end of Pokolbin Mountains Rd.

Table 25.1 Community views and how they have been addressed

Traffic and transport, including need for upgrades to local roads, including Pokolbin Mountains Road and Mount Baker Road. Also impacts of increased traffic and large vehicles on roads in surrounding communities There is the potential for traffic and transport impacts associated with the movement of construction vehicles plant and equipment, materials delivery and workers moving between work sites and construction support sites. A traffic and transport assessment determined that the road network would continue to perform at acceptable levels of service and intersection performance would not be impacted at most locations. Improvement and upgrades are proposed in several locations to better accommodate the construction requirements of the project (see Chapter 4 (Project description), Chapter 11 (Traffic and transport) and Technical Report 4 – Traffic and transport impact assessment).

Not sure how concerns have been addressed in the stated documents. They just appear to be general outlines without the detail. Unless the only upgrade is to put in 2 passing bays neither of which are on the dangerous parts of Pokolbin Mountains Rd.