

# Key messages from the initial project Executive Steering Committee (ESC)

Senior officers from the NSW Reconstruction Authority, Transport for NSW and Lithgow City Council met last week to establish an Executive Steering Committee for the Wolgan Road restoration project. The ESC will provide senior-level governance, direction and oversight, ensuring decisions relating to the project are timely, defensible and compliant with the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

## Key Priorities

**Restoring access:** Progressing interim works to enable reopening of the existing Wolgan Road under controlled conditions as soon as possible.

**Safety first:** Ensuring the reopening of the existing Wolgan Road provides adequate protections for the safety of the community and other road users.

**Open communications:** To ensure that the Wolgan Valley community is kept informed of the deliberations of the ESC and throughout the progress of the interim reopening of Wolgan Road and the decision making process for overall project.

## Interim Reopening of Wolgan Road

Lithgow City Council has engaged the services of GHD to develop the technical assessment and design for the interim opening. The ESC reaffirmed its support for this scope which is scheduled for completion in early 2026. Planning and investigations for interim works to reopen the existing Wolgan Road are well advanced, with geotechnical investigations now complete and design development progressing.

Interim works will focus on what can be delivered safely in the short term, while managing risk, through a Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP). This will determine monitoring thresholds, inspection frequencies, escalation protocols and responses to maintain tolerable risk.

Interim works are an important step, but they are not the final solution for Wolgan Road.

A target timeframe for reopening is being determined by the ESC. The ESC is focussed on accelerating delivery and all parties are working closely to identify opportunities to accelerate delivery wherever feasible. The ESC will be looking to finalise the delivery approach and timeframe for the interim solution when it meets again in late January and will communicate this to the community once agreed.

## Long Term Solution

**Long-term resilience:** Planning for a permanent solution to the restoration of access for the community that can better withstand future events continues at the same time as the interim reopening works. Along with the proposal for the construction of Wolgan Road along a new alignment, multiple options are being considered for the existing Wolgan Road alignment which include:

1. Restoring the damaged sections along the existing alignment within the provisions of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and the NSW Essential Public Assets Restoration Disaster Grant Program Guidelines (ie scope of works eligible to be fully funded by the DRFA).

2. An upgrade of Wolgan Road along the existing alignment to meet modern standards (ie establishing the cost of upgrading the full length of the road for comparison to the alternate alignment proposal).
3. A hybrid option that combines elements of both approaches aimed at finding a value for money solution that balances funding availability with safety and resilience improvements (ie best value for money outcome that can be delivered through available DRFA and Council funding).

The ESC is working with Lithgow City Council to review a proposal requested from GHD to undertake this additional scope as a matter of priority.

The permanent solution options will include strategic design drawings, a constructability assessment, a cost estimate (based on program, quantities and including risk allowance, contingencies and ancillary costs).

This scope of work to assess options for the existing Wolgan Road alignment will progress in parallel with the works underway to progress the design and investigation and environmental assessments for the proposed alternate alignment.

No final decision has been made on the long-term solution, and further community engagement will be undertaken as the process progresses.

## What the Community Can Expect Next

Continued technical assessment and design work for both interim and permanent solutions.

Appreciating the rigour required in selecting a preferred long-term option for Wolgan Road, to ensure a robust, objective and independent multi-criteria assessment (MCA) is carried out to select a preferred option.

Further updates once key milestones are reached, including confirmation of interim works and reopening arrangements.

Ongoing engagement with the Wolgan Valley community as the project progresses.

Updates will continue to be provided through Council's website and other official channels.

Community feedback remains important and will inform decision-making where possible.

## Governance

The Project is governed by a Project Control Group (PCG) and an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) comprising senior representatives from Lithgow City Council, NSW RA and Transport.

Council will provide an update to the Community via the website soon after each ESC meeting.

## Closing Message

Council and the NSW Government recognise the prolonged impact that the closure of Wolgan Road has had on the community and we are working together to resolve the way forward to minimise future impacts.

While the process is complex, the focus remains on delivering a safe, sustainable and community supported outcome in the shortest possible timeframe.

Thank you for your patience and ongoing engagement as work continues.