

Responses to the Wolgan Valley Association Questions from the 29th January 2026 Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) Key Messages

The Wolgan Valley Association (WVA) provided feedback on 11th February 2026 regarding the 29th January 2026 Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) Key Messages.

EOC responses as follow. Note that the first statement is the referenced statement from the EOC Key Messages, the second the WVA feedback and the third in *blue italics* is the EOC's response

Questions

1. Lithgow City Council, supported by specialist consultants, is progressing planning and design for interim works to manage the reopening of the existing Wolgan Road.
 - a. Apart from GHD, who are the specialist consultants?
 - i. In addition to GHD, the current specialist team comprises: Quantity surveying (North Projects), Risk (Metropolis Advisory), Environmental, planning approvals & communication (bd Infrastructure), Constructability (Bellwether Consulting Services), Aboriginal cultural values and heritage (Artefact Heritage Services) and Project management (Wassabi Group). This list reflects engagements at the time of writing and may be updated as scope is refined.*
2. Key points agreed by the EOC include:
 - Interim access will be limited to residents and business operations in the Wolgan Valley, excluding the general public.
 - a. Can we understand the reasoning for this? Some businesses depend on public access and all require trade and supplier access. Will these all require escorts?
 - i. Interim access settings are designed to manage residual geotechnical risk while restoring essential movement. In practice this means:
 1. *Prioritising residents and Bonafide business operations (including escorted customer, supplier and trade access arranged by those businesses as currently applies for the Donkey Steps);*
 2. *Limiting vehicle types to what the interim works are designed to safely accommodate (most 2wd vehicles and up to 12.5m trucks); and*
 3. *Operating under a Trigger-Action-Response Plan (TARP) with inspections and condition monitoring. These works mitigate risk to ALARP (As Low As Reasonably Practicable) levels – balancing safety, feasibility, cost, time and environment constraints – but they do not eliminate overarching slope hazards required for long-term unrestricted use. Accordingly, managing traffic volumes and vehicle mix is necessary to keep community**

exposure to an acceptable level. Access settings will be reviewed through EOC oversight as data and conditions evolve.

3. Subject to final approvals, finalisation of a procurement strategy and engagement of a delivery contractor by April 2026, the earliest anticipated timeframe for interim reopening is Q3 2026. Once delivery strategies are finalised, a high-level program will be shared with the community.
 - a. How will the existing use of the Gap Road be affected by the interim works? It is currently an essential means of access for heavy vehicles.
 - i. *Construction will require staged closures of the currently closed sections of Wolgan Road to maintain worker and public safety. A delivery contractor will be required to prepare a Traffic Management Plan that, where safe and practicable, includes managed 'access windows' for heavy vehicles using Gap Road. While access windows cannot be guaranteed, the project team will aim to:*
 1. *Provide early notice of planned restrictions;*
 2. *Communicate expected duration and timing; and*
 3. *Work with affected operators to coordinate movements where it can be done safely and without materially delaying the program or driving significant cost.*

Unplanned closures may still occur in response to weather or geotechnical triggers under the TARP.

4. While interim reopening efforts are underway, long-term permanent solutions are being planned simultaneously. Key points from the EOC include:
 - Multiple options will be evaluated through a structured independent evidence-based process considering safety, resilience, cost, constructability and environmental factors.
 - a. Are timing, community resilience, and economic cost to the community considered important factors in determining options?
 - i. *Yes. The multi-criteria assessment (MCA) will assess options against a balanced set of criteria that, in addition to safety, include time to restore reliable access, impacts on community resilience and economic activity, environmental effects, constructability, affordability and whole-of-life value. Draft criteria and proposed weightings will be published for community feedback before the MCA is finalised, with the endorsed criteria then applied consistently across options.*
5. While interim reopening efforts are underway, long-term permanent solutions are being planned simultaneously. Key points from the EOC include:
 - A formal multi-criteria assessment (MCA), mutually agreed by the EOC, will compare options before a preferred solution is confirmed.
 - a. What standards or guidelines will be used for the MCA? What input will the community have into the MCA? Will all records of the assessment be available to the community?
 - i. *The MCA will use a documented methodology consistent with NSW Government investment and assurance practices and contemporary engineering best practice. Community input will be sought on the draft criteria and indicative weightings; a plain-English summary of options and constraints will be provided to support that input. Following completion of the MCA, we will publish a non-technical summary of the process and results - including criteria, scoring bands and option*

rankings - while redacting any confidential or commercially sensitive material.

6. While interim reopening efforts are underway, long-term permanent solutions are being planned simultaneously. Key points from the EOC include:
 - Community input will remain crucial as options are refined and assessed.
 - a. How will that input be collected and applied?
 - i. Input will be collected through a mix of methods - for example, an online feedback portal on the draft MCA criteria and weightings, targeted stakeholder meetings, and technical workshops at key milestones. A summary report will explain how submissions influenced the criteria, weightings and option refinements, and where suggestions could not be adopted, we will outline the reasons.*
7. Why not move directly to an alliance-type delivery model for restoring the existing road?
 - a. Was there a report to the EOC? Who prepared it and what did it advise?
 - i. Delivery model options - including alliance-style arrangements - were considered by the EOC as part of standard meeting materials compiled by Lithgow City Council with input from the NSW Reconstruction Authority and Transport for NSW. The EOC noted that no single model should be ruled out at this stage and requested further advice once the preferred technical solution, risk profile, approvals pathway and funding arrangements are clearer.*
8. We understand that GHD is doing the strategic design. Who is doing the other assessments?
 - i. In addition to GHD's strategic design, inputs are being provided by the specialist disciplines listed above (quantity surveying, risk, environment/approvals/communications, constructability, Aboriginal cultural heritage and project management). As the project progresses into environmental assessment, specialist biodiversity and Aboriginal heritage studies will inform the overall environment approvals process, and independent technical review will be commissioned at appropriate decision gates.*
9. Why not convene a facilitated forum of geotechnical experts and contractors to discuss solutions?
 - a. Given that the first two years were wasted with contrived or seriously erroneous reports, why is RA and Council resistant to this approach where it is a well recognised and expeditious method of testing expert advice? Isn't it especially relevant where there has been such a disparity of opinion between WSP and all of the other experts?
 - i. Multiple permanent solution options along the existing alignment are being explored and will be assessed against many criteria including safety, resilience, cost, constructability and environmental factors before any preferred option is confirmed. Extensive expert input has already informed this work, including specialist investigations and independent technical experts. The current sequencing is intended to ensure options are clearly defined and supported by up to date evidence. This approach aims to minimise duplication, reduce the risk of any delays, and ensure resources are focused on options that are technically sound, compliant and deliverable.*

10. Why not convene a facilitated forum of geotechnical experts and contractors to discuss solutions?

a. Thank you but wouldn't it also make sense to do one now so as to minimise any more false starts or wasted resources. The Minister promised Parliament that all options would be considered. This is a simple step that respects that commitment.

- i. The project is already supported by multiple specialist geotechnical, risk and engineering consultants engaged through standard government procurement processes, along with independent technical reviewers at key milestones. These experts have provided the evidence base on which the EOC is progressing interim works and the structured options assessment for the permanent solution.*
- ii. The EOC's focus is ensuring that all advice informing decisions is technically sound, contemporary and independently verified where appropriate. Any further expert engagement will be commissioned through established technical review pathways rather than through an open forum format, which would risk duplicating existing work without improving the quality of evidence.*

11. Why not hold urgent meetings with approval bodies or seek intervention by the Minister for Reconstruction?

a. Who has been consulted, what has been the advice and what pathways are being followed?

- i. Regulators are already engaged. For interim works, minor maintenance activities within the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area are proceeding under Transport and Infrastructure SEPP provisions for exempt development, with a NPWS Conservation Risk Assessment to document controls. Other minor works outside the SCA are being progressed through an exempt-development checklist. Works such as L-blocks and embankment reconstruction are proposed to proceed without development consent under the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP and will be assessed via a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 - including specialist biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments - with Council as the determining authority. For areas within the declared Maiyingu Marragu Aboriginal Place, the need for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 is being confirmed in consultation with Aboriginal knowledge holders and NSW Environment and Heritage.*
- ii. Regarding Ministerial powers: the Minister for Recovery's role is to coordinate and support recovery and reconstruction. Those powers do not displace statutory obligations under the EP&A Act, the National Parks and Wildlife Act or other applicable legislation; agencies must still undertake the required assessments and make decisions according to law. The EOC will continue direct engagement with approval bodies to resolve issues promptly and will escalate matters for Ministerial support where coordination is required - not to bypass legal decision-making tests.*