

# Great Western Highway upgrade

LEN ASHWORTH  
19 Jul, 2012 04:00 AM

AFTER years of deliberation and intense debate work on the upgrading of the Great Western Highway from Hartley to South Bowenfels is finally to get under way next year.

And while locking in the route outlined in what was termed the 'orange option' in the earlier discussions it will not, for now, include the hugely costly grandiose schemes previously considered — a combination of tunnels and massive viaduct from Mt Victoria into the valley.

These, however, remain in the concept plan as a longer term option for the future.

Minister for Roads and Ports Duncan Gay accompanied Member for Bathurst Paul Toole, Member for Blue Mountains Roza Sage, and departmental representatives to a media conference beside the highway at Forty Bends to announce the plan.

But the announcement was upstaged by another semi trailer smash a few kilometers away at Hartley while the Minister was outlining the safety upgrade details.

Mr Gay said the upgrade would involve an expenditure of \$250 million, a major proportion of which will be spent on safety upgrades on the Forty Bends section at South Bowenfels.

He said \$120 million has been allocated for the Forty Bends, \$80 million for the upgrade through the Hartley Valley, and the remainder for safety works between Mt Victoria and Katoomba.

The NSW and Federal Governments will share the costs of the project on a 20-80 basis.

The announcement follows the release this week of a consultants' report commissioned by the NSW Government.

Speaking against a background din from passing semi trailers — and occasional emergency vehicles — the Minister said public comment will now be invited on the revised concept design.



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\$250million? They'll decide that figure is too much, and to cut costs, reduce the speed limit between South Bowenfels & Victoria Pass to 60 kph. Much cheaper to maintain a road to that speed than a higher/faster one.

Meanwhile, the NSW Central West gets left further & further behind, due to it taking longer today than it did 20 years ago to drive between Sydney & Lithgow.

How about giving the area the GOOD road surfaces like the Upper Blue Mtns gets? The surface between Mt Vic & Blackheath is over 4 years old & still good-the one at Hartley hasn't even lasted 4 months.

Posted by **Seriously?**, 19/07/2012 6:59:49 PM, on Lithgow Mercury

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ROADSIDE MEDIA CALL: Top, Minister for Roads and Ports Duncan Gay, left, and Member for Bathurst Paul Toole called a chilly roadside press conference to announce the latest highway proposal for the Mt Victoria to South Bowenfels section. The Forty Bends has been given the top priority.

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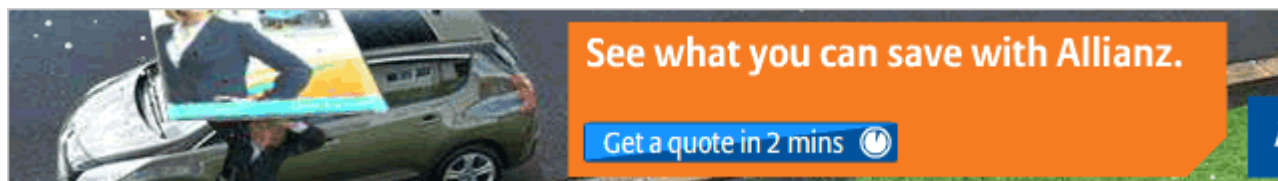


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