



Blackheath_highway
ACTION GROUP

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A joint initiative of the Blackheath Chamber of Commerce & Community Inc. and the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre
C/- 28 Rodriguez Avenue, Blackheath NSW 2785
Telephone 0423 596 240 Email michaelpaag@bigpond.com.au

6 June 2009

Mr J Surprain
Project Manager
RTA
PO Box 973
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear James,

Re: Submission - Proposed RTA works at Leichhardt Street intersection, Blackheath

I am writing to you on behalf of the Blackheath_highway Action Group ('BAG') in relation to the RTA's proposed works at the Leichhardt Street intersection, Blackheath. BAG is a subcommittee of the Blackheath & District Chamber of Commerce & Community Inc. and a joint initiative with the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre. BAG has approximately 160 fully paid members and includes representatives from the Blackheath Public School Council, the Blackheath Streetscape Group and the Blackheath Mt Victoria RSL Sub-branch.

On behalf of the Blackheath community we thank the RTA for holding an additional community information session on Saturday 27 June 2009 between 12.30pm and 4.30pm.

BAG Submission

BAG formally:

- i) Endorses Option 2 because it delivers the Blackheath community a safer pedestrian crossing on the Great Western Highway,
- ii) Does not support Option 1 on the basis that this proposal will result in more traffic utilising Leichhardt Street thereby increasing the risk to children who use the existing wombat crossing to cross Leichhardt Street repeatedly as part of their normal school day,
- iii) Calls on the RTA to develop and implement in conjunction with the local community a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan and

- iv) Requests that the RTA formally consider, as part of the Govetts Leap Road intersection and Level Crossing upgrade, a right turn traffic signal into Govetts Leap Road and a right turn lane for vehicles turning right into Govetts Leap Road from the Great Western Highway.

Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan

The Blackheath community unanimously called on the RTA at the public meeting held on 22 December 2008 to develop and implement in conjunction with the local community a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan. The idea of a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan was first raised by Councilor Terri Hamilton, Ward 1 Councilor, Blue Mountains City Council back in 2005. In September 2005 Blue Mountains City Council endorsed Councilor Hamilton's motion calling on the RTA to develop and implement such a plan.

Representatives from BAG again called on the RTA to develop and implement a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan at the RTA Community Consultation Meeting held on Wednesday 18 March 2009.

Representatives from BAG again raised the issue of the Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan with representatives from the RTA at a meeting held on Thursday 16 April 2009. I also met with Diana Loges and Geoff Cahill on Friday 12 June 2009 to discuss the concept of a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan.

The Blackheath Highway Safety Management plan is an attempt by the local community to stop the ad hoc approach to dealing with highway safety and traffic issues through the town precinct. The community's interrelationship with the highway has major significance for local business, tourism, the school and residents. Whilst we acknowledge that accident rates have historically been low through the town precinct there are issues that, if left unaddressed may result in higher accident rates and unnecessary community concern. Sadly a pedestrian lost her life late last year, an unfortunate accident involving a large truck that occurred along the Great Western Highway in the town precinct.

The basis of the Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan is to take a 'whole of town' approach when addressing traffic and intersection management issues through the town precinct, i.e. from Evans Lookout Road to west of Hat Hill Road. This is because of the unique geography of the town and the way businesses, tourists and residents move to and from the highway to access the town.

As I mentioned to you on Saturday 27 June 2009 there are high levels of community concern brought about by the current difficulties westbound traffic experiences in accessing the town from the highway via both the Govetts Leap Road and Hat Hill Road intersections. There are also concerns about excessive speed through the town precinct, especially by large trucks. Noise from compression braking of large trucks is negatively impacting on residents and tourist establishments in and around the Hill 33 area. Local residents are also concerned about the danger posed to traffic turning right from the highway into Prince George Street.

The Blackheath community wants to work constructively with the RTA and Blue Mountains City Council to address these issues for the benefit of local residents and highway users.

BAG is willing to assist the RTA in relation to the community consultation process for the development of a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan.

BAG calls on the RTA to begin work on the following projects as part of the development and implementation of a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan:

- i) Installation of "Reduce Noise – Please Limit Compression Braking" signs on the Great Western Highway at the eastern and western approaches to Blackheath,
- ii) Installation of "No Standing" signs along the Great Western Highway adjacent to the Hat Hill Road intersection,
- iii) Installation of speed cameras in the town precinct to reduce incidence of speeding and minimise risk in a high pedestrian zone,
- iv) Improved right turn access into Govetts Leap Road,
- v) Safety modifications for Sutton Lane, Gardiner Crescent and Prince George intersections with the Great Western Highway, and
- vi) Improvements to the Level Crossing to stop traffic queuing across the railway tracks and restricting traffic flows between Bundarra and Station Streets as well as traffic turning right into the Level Crossing from the Great Western Highway.

The above suggested projects have come about as a result of consultation between BAG and its members, local residents and community organizations following the 22 December 2008 RTA public meeting. These projects form the initial stage of a highway safety management plan which we envisage would be developed by the RTA, Blue Mountains City Council and the local community as a comprehensive short to long term strategy to deal with increased traffic flows and future growth in the Blackheath community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further explanations or additional information in relation to this submission.

We look forward to your favourable response.

Yours sincerely,
Blackheath_highway Action Group



Michael Paag
Convener

- cc. Office of Phil Koperberg MP, Member for Blue Mountains
Councillor Terri Hamilton, Ward 1 Councillor, Blue Mountains City Council
Councillor El Gibbs, Ward 1 Councillor, Blue Mountains City Council
Councillor Janet Mays, Ward 1 Councillor, Blue Mountains City Council