

Blackheath Joint Submission

Mr Chris Barnett
Project Manager
Katoomba to Mount Victoria
RMS
PO Box 334
PARKES NSW 2870

Dear Chris,

**Submission: Great Western Highway highway safety improvements project
Katoomba to Mount Victoria**

We the undersigned set out the following submission in relation to the Great Western Highway safety improvements project between Katoomba and Mount Victoria. This submission represents the position of all of the major stakeholder groups in Blackheath. Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to comment and contribute to this very important project.

We warmly welcome the announcement by the Australian and NSW Governments on 17 July 2012 setting out the allocation of funding for highway safety improvements between Katoomba and Mount Victoria.

Safety is a critical issue for local residents and business owners who are located between Katoomba and Mount Victoria. The Blackheath Highway Action Group ('BAG') has, along with the Blackheath community and the organisations named below, lobbied the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority ('RTA') for safety improvements to the highway between Katoomba and Mt Boyce, particularly through Blackheath. These efforts have been publicly supported by the Blue Mountains City Council.

We believe the priority for the Australian and NSW Governments in relation to the Great Western Highway west of Katoomba is to make the highway safer for local residents and the many tourists who visit the Blue Mountains, as well as other motorists who use the Great Western Highway to travel further afield.

Tourism is the economic base of Blackheath. Blackheath is also a key tourist destination on the Blue Mountains Grand Circular Tourist Drive. Highway safety is critical because a large proportion of visitors travel to Blackheath by car or tourist coach.

1. Background

The Blackheath community unanimously called on the NSW Government at the RTA convened public meeting held on 22 December 2008 to develop and implement, in conjunction with the local community, a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan. The Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan is a comprehensive approach to making the highway safer through Blackheath. The concept of the plan is to stop the previous ad hoc approach to addressing highway safety through Blackheath. The idea of a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan was first raised by Councilor Terri Hamilton, former Ward 1 Councilor, Blue Mountains City Council 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 local community organisations including 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.

Community representatives again raised the issue of the Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan with representatives from the RTA at another RTA Community Consultation Meeting held on Thursday, 16 April 2009. Michael Paag, Chair of BAG, also met with Diana Loges and Geoff Cahill from the RTA on Friday, 12 June 2009 to discuss the concept of a Blackheath Highway Safety Management Plan and the need for highway safety improvements through Blackheath.

A copy of the BAG submission to the RTA dated 6 June 2009 is also attached for your information.

Our community's interrelationship with the Great Western Highway has major significance for local business, tourism, the public school and local residents.

As was mentioned to James Surprain from the RTA on Saturday, 27 June 2009, there are high levels of community concern regarding the current difficulties westbound traffic experiences in accessing the town from the highway via both the Govetts Leap Road and the Hat Hill Road intersections.

The community also has strong concerns about excessive speed through the town precinct, especially by large trucks and the high levels of truck noise.

Local residents are also concerned about travelling around the town which is intersected by a highway, in particular moving from east to west and vice versa, and gaining access to and from the highway, particularly at intersections such as Abbott Street.

The Blackheath community warmly welcomes the opportunity to work constructively with RMS and Blue Mountains City Council to positively address these issues for the benefit of both local residents and highway users.

2 Highway Safety Initiatives through Blackheath

As noted at the RMS Blackheath stakeholder meeting held on Thursday 24 January 2013, which was attended by representatives from the Blackheath Highway Action Group, Blackheath

Chamber of Commerce, Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre, Blackheath Public School Council, Blackheath Mt Victoria RSL Sub branch, Friends of Blackheath Pool & Memorial Park and the Blackheath Community Centre Committee, there is a general community view that any safety highway improvements undertaken by the RMS should meet the following criteria:

- We don't need four lanes between Katoomba and Mt Boyce, and particularly through Blackheath, to address the safety concerns of the local community.
- Protect the corridor of trees along the highway, which have historical and social significance for Blackheath.
- Any proposed works including hardscaping need to be sympathetic to the village amenity of Blackheath.
- Focus on improving highway access for local residents and tourists for both the eastern and western sides of Blackheath including for pedestrians and cyclists.

We call on the RMS to include the following initiatives as part of the highway safety improvements project between Katoomba and Mount Victoria:

- i) Reduce the speed limit through the Blackheath town precinct from 60km to 50km.
- ii) Reduce the speed limit between the Mt Boyce Truck Checking Station and Ridgewell Road from 80km to 60km.
- iii) Install Safety cameras at the two signalised pedestrian crossings on the highway in Blackheath, and install a Safety camera at the traffic signals at the Govetts Leap Road highway intersection.
- iv) Improve right turn access into Govetts Leap Road from the Great Western Highway including the installation of a right turn green traffic signal.
- v) Improve access for traffic turning right into Bundarra Street from the Great Western Highway, and implement steps to stop traffic queuing across the Railway Level Crossing. These queues cause traffic congestion at the Bundarra and Station Streets intersection.
- vi) Install "No Standing" signs along the railway side of the Great Western Highway opposite the Hat Hill Road intersection and improve the highway at this location by providing a right turn lane and upgrade road surface on the shoulder to facilitate safer right turn access into Hat Hill Road from the Great Western Highway,
- vii) Implement speed calming measures on the highway between Evans Lookout Road and Abbott Street (Hill 33) to reduce the incidence of excessive speeding along the westbound overtaking lane to improve safety for local traffic and pedestrians at the Abbott Street highway intersection,
- viii) Implement safety modifications for highway intersections at Sutton Lane, Gardiner Crescent and Abbott Street to improve access for local residents,

- ix) Implement left turn in, left turn out (i.e. no right turn in or right turn out) at the following highway intersections;
 - a. Hargraves Street
 - b. Jellicoe Street
 - c. Prince George Street
 - d. Whitley Park
- x) Provision of footpaths/cycle paths along the highway;
 - a. Between Ridgewell Road and Radiance Streets
 - b. Between Whitley Park and Sutton Park
- xi) Block direct highway access to the northern end of the slip road outside St Mounts Guesthouse so that the slip road is only accessible via Abbott Street, and
- xii) Implement safety modifications at the Station Street rail overpass including but not limited to:
 - a. Allow enough room for buses and larger vehicles to turn right from the highway onto the overpass. Currently there is not enough room for buses to use the right turn lane to turn right onto the overpass from the highway without blocking eastbound highway traffic.
 - b. Implement measures to stop traffic congestion at the intersection of the rail overpass and Station Street.

We reject the proposal by the Caltex Working Group to develop a truck rest area on the highway opposite Weber's Nursery at Mt Boyce.

The above suggested initiatives have come about as a result of consultation between BAG and its supporters, local community organisations noted below, and local residents.

3 Highway Safety Initiatives between Medlow Bath and Evans Lookout Road, Blackheath

Accidents on the Great Western Highway between Medlow Bath and Evans Lookout Road cause major disruption to the local community, Blue Mountains tourism and emergency services because there are no alternative routes or vehicle access points between Medlow Bath and Blackheath.

Accordingly, we call on the RMS to implement the following safety initiatives as part of the highway safety improvements project between Katoomba and Mount Victoria:

- i) Straighten the three sharp bends on the highway near Medlow Bath and improve the camber and alignment of the highway at this section.
- ii) Complete the process to improve signage, road surface and drainage along the highway between Medlow Bath and Evans Lookout Road.

- iii) Realign the start of the two eastbound lanes on the highway east of Evans Lookout Road to improve driver certainty.
- iv) Implement proactive speed control measures along the highway.
- v) Install electronic warning signs at Katoomba and Mount Victoria to alert motorists if there is a major incident on the highway between Katoomba and Blackheath, these signs should be sympathetic to the surrounding locations.
- vi) Develop an alternative local road between Medlow Bath and Blackheath along the western side of the railway line for emergency use only.
- vii) Provide a right turn lane at the intersection of the Great Western Highway and Bellevue Crescent.

4 Next Step in the Consultation Process for the Great Western Highway highway safety improvements project between Katoomba and Mount Victoria

As noted at the RMS Blackheath stakeholder meeting held on Thursday 24 January 2013 and in subsequent discussions between Michael Paag and yourself, we would be pleased to meet with you and your team to review and discuss the RMS recommendations and design proposals for the Great Western Highway highway safety improvements project between Katoomba and Mount Victoria.

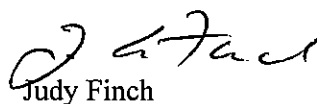
We believe it is critical that further consultation be undertaken in relation to the project's recommendations and proposals so that the local community, through the Blackheath stakeholders, i.e. the community organisations noted below, have the opportunity to provide feedback and input into the finalisation of the design before any works are undertaken.

Please do not hesitate to contact Michael Paag, Chair, Blackheath Highway Action Group on (m) 0423 596 240 or by email, blackheathhighwayaction@gmail.com if you require further explanations and or additional information in relation to our submission.

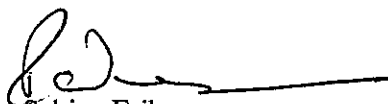
Yours sincerely,



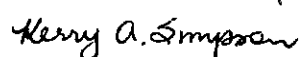
Bob Weaver
President
Blackheath Chamber of Commerce



Judy Finch
Manager /Community Development Worker
Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre



Sabine Erika
President Treasurer
Blackheath Rhododendron Festival Committee



Kerry Simpson
Hon Secretary
Blackheath Mt Victoria RSL Sub Branch



Michael Paag
Chair
Blackheath Highway Action Group



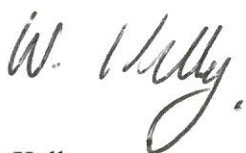
Adele Colman
Convener
Blackheath Streetscape Group



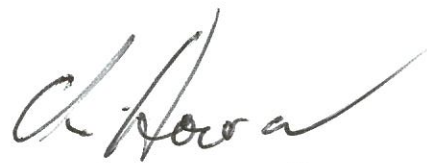
per Simon Hare
Convener
Friends of Blackheath Pool & Memorial Park



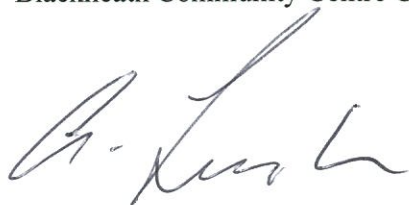
Mina Howard
President
Blackheath Rotary



Wayne Kelly
Chair
Blackheath Community Centre Committee



LARRY HOWARD
CAPTAIN
BLACKHEATH/MT VICTORIA RFS



Alan Lush
Secretary
Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society



Russell Brown
Group Manager
Blackheath Scouts



Jackie Turner
Committee Member
Blackheath & District Horticultural Society



Linda McLaughlin
Director
Blackheath Choir Festival
President
Blackheath Phoenix Choir



Michael Brogan
President

Blackheath ~~Public School Council~~
AREA MEN'S SHED

- cc. Office of Roza Sage MP, State Member for Blue Mountains
Office of Louise Markus MP, Federal Member for Macquarie
Councillor Robert Stock, Ward 1 Councilor, Blue Mountains City Council
Councillor Michael Begg, Ward 1 Councilor, Blue Mountains City Council
Councillor Don McGregor, Ward 1 Councilor, Blue Mountains City Council
Councillor Daniel Myles, Mayor, Blue Mountains City Council
Blue Mountains Tourism Ltd
NPWS Blue Mountains Heritage Centre

