

What is the current status of the project?

Stage 1 is in early design stage, and we are working in consultation with Transport for NSW and the ACT and Commonwealth governments. The early design stage involves working out the exact alignment of the road and the connection points with Environs Drive and Monaro Highway.

In the long term, Dunns Creek Road will connect to an upgraded intersection at Isabella Drive. We are working with the ACT Government to find an interim solution for the connection into the ACT as it will be some time before that intersection can be upgraded.

Stage 2 is the connection from Old Cooma Road to Stage 1. We are now seeking feedback from the community on several options to make this connection.

What has Council spent so far on Dunns Creek Road?

We have spent approximately \$3.7m of the \$27m provided by the NSW Government for road design and land acquisition.

The Australian Government announced \$65m in 2022 for construction of the project. This will go towards Stage 1, the connection between Tralee and the ACT.

What is the difference between Dunns Creek Road Stage 1 and Stage 2?

Stage 1 is the connection between Tralee and the ACT at, or near, the Isabella Drive intersection. Our traffic modelling shows that Tomsitt Drive will become a pinch point as Tralee and the South Jerrabomberra Regional Jobs Precinct grows by 2031. Stage 1 helps to reduce this problem by providing a second connection from Tralee into the ACT.

Council is currently working with Transport for NSW, and in consultation with the ACT and Commonwealth governments, to progress the design for building Stage 1. \$65m from the Australian Government will go towards construction of this section.

Stage 2 is the connection from Old Cooma Road to Stage 1. We are now seeking feedback from the community on several options to make this connection

Are all options genuinely under consideration? Is there already a preferred route?

The report on options does not commit Council to proceed with any option. It provides an evidence-based assessment to help understand the trade-offs between different options and to support informed decision-making for Council and community. A detailed analysis of each of the options was conducted to determine the benefit cost ratio (BCR).

Stantec have done a technical review of the options, but the report does not formally represent the position of Council. Council will decide on whether to proceed, and if yes, a preferred route following community feedback.

What are the different options?

The latest report assessed both the previous preferred alignments and new routes that have been prepared in response to environmental constraints. These routes start from different places along Old Cooma Road before connecting to Stage 1 (Stage 1 is the ACT and Tralee connection).

The routes are summarised as follows:

- Do Nothing – Do Minimum – a base case involving not building Dunns Creek Road. Delivery of upgrades at other key intersections.
- Option 1B – new road connecting to Old Cooma Rd north of Googong Rd, this route runs through biodiversity stewardship sites.
- Option 5 - new road connecting to Old Cooma Rd at Googong Rd, this route runs through biodiversity stewardship sites. This was the preferred route in 2015.
- Option 8 – a modified version of 1B, connecting to Old Cooma Rd north of Googong Rd, this route runs through biodiversity stewardship sites.
- Option 2A - New road located along the northern edge of Fernleigh Park, connecting to Old Cooma Rd between Wellsvale Dr and Fernleigh Dr.
- Option 2B - New road located along the southern edge of Fernleigh Park, connecting to Old Cooma Rd at Wells Pl.
- Option 2C - New road along the western edge of Fernleigh Park and Mt Campbell Estate, connecting to Old Cooma Rd at Cooke Dr.

The report also considered alternatives that do not involve the construction of a new road corridor – northern upgrade options which focus on Old Cooma Road, Edwin Land Parkway and key intersections in Jerrabomberra, and a southern upgrade option that focused on safety improvements on Old Cooma Road heading towards Monaro Highway south of Googong. These are summarised as follows:

- NDCR North (Approach Signals) - No Dunns Creek Rd option focusing on widening and upgrading road network to the north of Googong including new signals on western approach to Jerrabomberra Circle
- NDCR North (Full Signals) - No Dunns Creek Rd option focusing on widening and upgrading road network to the north of Googong including full signalisation of Jerrabomberra Circle
- NDCR North (Overpass) - No Dunns Creek Rd option focusing on widening and upgrading road network to the north of Googong including overpass of Jerrabomberra Circle
- NDCR South - No Dunns Creek Rd option focusing on safety improvements to road network to the south of Googong including upgrade of Old Cooma Rd and Monaro Hwy intersection

How has Council considered the environmental values of properties along the routes?

The options review has considered environmental values, but only via a desktop review. More detailed considerations and in-depth reports including fieldwork will need to be done if a preferred route is selected.

What are the steps/stages/timeline for Dunns Creek Road Stage 2?

The steps to get the road on the map, gazetted in planning instruments and to prevent further development impacting the alignment are as follows:

1. Community consultation and release of information – current stage.
2. Council decision on whether to proceed, and if proceeding then deciding on a preferred route/s for further community feedback.
3. Seek community feedback on the preferred route.
4. Council adopt a preferred route and endorse proceeding to planning proposal to formalise the preferred route.
5. Council undertake a planning proposal:
 - a. As part of the Planning Proposal, it would require a Council report, high-level studies and other matters required by the Department of Planning, Housing and infrastructure. This is likely to take a couple of years.
 - b. The Planning Proposal would create a Land Reservation Acquisition (LRA) map and clause in the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Local Environment Plan (QPRLEP).
6. This would then allow gazettal of the road corridor. The LRA would put a note on title deeds for properties along the route. While Council may choose to purchase properties once the route is established, Council would only need to purchase property as it becomes available, or if required at time of construction.

The steps required to construct the road include:

7. Seek funding for detailed design, further studies, further land acquisitions and construction.
8. Prepare detailed design and obtain project approvals – this would require significant environmental, heritage, noise assessments and other studies. This is expected to take a couple of years.
9. Council decision to proceed to tender for construction.
10. Purchase any land required for the route that Council has not already purchased
11. Construct the route. This is expected to take three years.

If the route goes through a property, what does that mean for property owners?

If Council decides on a preferred route, before the road is constructed Council will need to purchase the property. We understand that this can be a distressing process for some property owners.

It is worth noting that the valuation for any property that Council needs to purchase would be calculated as if the road is not there. This ensures the property owners are properly compensated for the land. Council will only purchase property if it is required for the preferred route.

Each landowner affected by an acquisition is entitled to be compensated 'on just terms' in accordance with the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation Act) Act 1991* (the Act). The Act contains a guarantee that the compensation will not be less than the market value of the land assessed in accordance with the Act and unaffected by the proposal for acquisition.

We have reached out to the property owners on the various route options to ensure they are provided with information about the project.

What is a BCR (Benefit Cost Ratio)?

A Benefit Cost Ratio is an economic tool to determine the net economic worth of infrastructure projects. It is one indicator that can be used to decide if projects should go ahead and how to prioritise projects.

What is the offset decision and why wasn't it gazetted as a route?

While a preferred route was identified in 2015, this route was not gazetted as a road via a Planning Proposal. In 2017 and 2018, land along this route was registered as Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement sites.

Is it possible for the road to go through the land that has been set aside for environmental offsets?

The NSW Government has provided advice that Council would need to justify why the impact to the Biodiversity Stewardship area cannot be avoided by using an alternative route. There are criteria established that we would have to meet, if a route through a Biodiversity Stewardship site was chosen as the preferred route.

We sought formal advice from the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Heritage about whether we could establish an alternative environmental offset for this land. We received a response from the department that the Biodiversity Conservation Trust would not support development that affects the biodiversity stewardship site.

The letter provided several criteria that Council would need to achieve should Council wish to pursue a route through the biodiversity stewardship site. These criteria would need to be considered in detail if one of those routes was chosen.

What are the criteria for going through the offsets?

A written notice of the proposed development would need to be provided to the Biodiversity Conservation Trust. This notice must be accompanied by a certified biodiversity assessment development report prepared by an accredited assessor that includes:

- Justification for why the proposed impact to the Biodiversity Stewardship site cannot be avoided through selecting an alternative route
- How the proposed development will affect biodiversity values on the site, including any future improvements achieved by ongoing management actions, as well as the landholder's ability to carry out management actions required by the active Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement.
- Impacts of the proposal on plant community types and threatened species for which species credits were issued, including indirect impacts on habitat connectivity and species mobility.
- The number and type of biodiversity credits that will need to be retired to replace the credits that have been transferred or retired from the original BSA. This determination must be based on the impact of the proposed development on the BSA site, and the landowner's ability to continue to implement the management plan.
- The number and type of biodiversity credits that will need to be retired to offset the impacts of the road development proposal.
- Consideration of the impacts on the predator proof infrastructure and AWC reintroduction program

What is the process to get a new offset somewhere else?

To date, there has not been a process conducted in NSW to find new offsets for an existing Biodiversity Stewardship site. If possible, Council will work closely with the NSW Government on a transparent process to identify "offsets to offsets" if these are required.

Are all the biodiversity offsets sold?

Council understands that sufficient credits have been sold for the existing biodiversity stewardship sites to be considered under active management.

Will Council be reporting the biodiversity offset issue to ICAC?

We are not aware of any evidence of fraud or corruption that we can report to ICAC. The issue is that at the time of identifying the preferred route in 2015, the work was not undertaken to get this route gazetted as a road reserve and prevent this route from being used for anything else.

When will we know if the biodiversity offset can be offset?

Not all options for the proposed Dunns Creek Road Stage 2 will impact on the biodiversity offset sites. Council will first need to determine the preferred route for the road. If the route selected will impact the biodiversity sites, we would work with the NSW Government to determine the process. It will likely be more than a year until we will know if the "offset to an offset" process can proceed.

Was Stantec or Council aware there is already a plan to take power lines from Googong to Tralee over the Biodiversity Stewardship Sites? Is there an easement for these power lines that could be used for DCR 2?

Council is aware that there have been talks about power lines in the past.

Current easements over the Biodiversity Stewardship Sites allow for low-voltage power lines suitable for providing power to semi-rural properties to the west of Old Cooma Road. The easements would not permit high voltage lines capable of carrying sufficient power for Googong.

How will we know when reports are going to Council about Dunns Creek Road?

Anyone who makes a submission or comment on the plans via Your Voice at <https://yourvoice.qprc.nsw.gov.au> or via email will be notified when the project is reported to Council again. We are also issuing letters to those affected to notify them that the options report is open for comment.

Can we organise Councillors to visit the land which is potentially impacted by any of the preferred options?

Most of the impacted land is privately owned. Landowners or members of the public are free to contact elected Councillors with any concerns about Dunns Creek Rd Stage 2. Access to impacted sites would require permission from landholders.

Would there be opportunities to subdivide if the road runs behind or adjacent to properties? What are the upsides to this road going through existing private properties?

A wide range of factors are considered when Council decides on whether a property can be subdivided. If the construction of Dunns Creek Road goes ahead that will be an important factor in considering land use and lot sizes along the route. Other factors will also be important, including environmental considerations, noise impacts from Canberra Airport, and the serviceability and access of the site.

How can people give feedback after it is published on 13 August?

The report and map are published on our Your Voice website at <https://yourvoice.qprc.nsw.gov.au>. You can ask questions and provide feedback on the options.

How do we give feedback after Council decide if they are proceeding and the preferred route option?

If Council decides to proceed, the preferred route will be put on public exhibition via our Your Voice website – <https://yourvoice.qprc.nsw.gov.au>. You will be able to provide feedback on that website, and the page will also list other ways of providing feedback, such as via email.

Can we attend the Council meetings when this is being discussed?

Yes. Council meetings are open to the public.

Can we make a presentation to Council on this?

Yes. Members of the public can make a representation about matters on the agenda. When the Dunns Creek Road matter comes to a Council meeting, anyone can register to present.

Does the report include the legal costs, compensation or acquisition?

Costs for property and offset acquisition are included in the cost estimates, both of which are market driven. They do not include further costs of offsetting an offset, or other legal costs.

Does Council know about the Crown Road north of Wellsvale Drive?

Yes, this was considered by Stantec in their review of options.

What about people who aren't on the route but will be affected by a new road?

Council acknowledges that a wide variety of people will be affected by the construction of a new road. If a preferred route is chosen, detailed investigations into the impacts of the road including noise, traffic, and social impact will need to be conducted.

Will report document time savings for each option?

While the time savings is considered in the benefits of the economic appraisal of each option, this is not explicitly provided in the report.

Why was the Planning Proposal identified in 2015 not progressed and the original Dunns Creek Road corridor not protected?

On the western side, Tralee was being developed at the time, it was very important that arterial roads through the Tralee area were sited in such a way that options for future links into the ACT at the south of Hume could be preserved. Planning proposals for these connections were progressed.

However, on the eastern side, the focus was on other road improvements that were required sooner, including the duplication of Old Cooma Road and the extension of Ellerton Drive. Until the funding was received in 2020, work on the Dunns Creek Road route was not progressed.

A wide range of factors have been important to determining both the need for, and the final route of, Dunns Creek Road. These include the demand for travel, the total population of Googong, Tralee and Jerrabomberra, biodiversity conservation and the impact of landowners along the various route options.

Council has continued to monitor demand for travel, listen to the concerns of impacted residents and businesses and consider the range of options for meeting future travel needs in the area.

Was funding allocated for land acquisition intended to secure that corridor and, if so, why this did not occur?

Council received \$27m from the NSW Government in 2020 for road design and land acquisition. By this time, biodiversity stewardships sites along the preferred route from 2015 were in place. It was only when this money became available that in-depth investigation and work to prepare for the project took place.

When did Council first become aware that the original corridor was at risk because of the Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement?

While Council had been aware in late 2016 that a stewardship site was proposed, our awareness was of a smaller site. Council became aware that the route would be affected by the biodiversity stewardship agreement in 2020 when Stantec began the investigation into the road corridor. Council received funding from NSW Government and engaged Stantec to progress with the original preferred route. After the realisation that these sites were within the preferred road corridor, Stantec was asked to investigate more options for potential routes, which is the report that is now open for comment.

Why is Dunns Creek Road even being considered?

Dunns Creek Road has been considered a part of the future road network for many years. Based on projected traffic volumes of proposed development, modelling suggests that Old Cooma Road is expected to operate at a level of service E (LOS E) in both directions during the morning and afternoon peak in 2041. LOS E for roads such as Old Cooma Road means that speed is between 30% and 40% of the base free-flow speed, with substantial delays.