

Blaxland Road, Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue, Eastwood

Intersection improvements

Community Consultation Report

Roads and Maritime Services | January 2018

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the community and stakeholder consultation carried out by Roads and Maritime Services on proposed intersection improvements on Blaxland Road at Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue, Eastwood.

The NSW Government is funding this proposal as part of its \$300 million Urban Roads Pinch Point Program, which aims to reduce congestion and improve travel times on Sydney's busiest road corridors, particularly during weekday peak periods.

Benefits of the proposal include:

- reduced queue lengths for motorists turning right from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road
- reduced queue lengths for motorists traveling north on Blaxland Road
- improved safety at the intersection for motorists turning right into Balaclava from Blaxland Road
- reduced traffic delays due to a better traffic flow for motorists travelling northbound.

Proposed intersection improvements include:

- changing the current lane configuration to provide an additional right turn lane from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road
- widening on the eastern side of Blaxland Road to accommodate the additional right turn lane
- installing a new raised median in the centre of Blaxland Road
- upgrading traffic lights.

Roads and Maritime distributed 5,700 letters to the local community and key stakeholders, inviting feedback on the proposed improvements in August and September 2017. Feedback was received from 20 community members, and one local council (21 responses in total).

Key areas of interest for community members regarding the proposal included:

- project justification and cost
- changes to traffic lights
- changes to Balaclava Road to help support the proposed changes
- potential impacts to local roads
- pedestrian and cyclist safety
- noise and traffic impacts to local residents.

We have directly responded to all community members and stakeholders who provided feedback.

The decision

After considering all responses we have decided to proceed with the proposed intersection improvements on Blaxland Road at Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue, Eastwood, subject to the following change to the original design proposal: placing a continuous line to prevent vehicles from turning left onto Vimiera Road from the outer lane.

Roads and Maritime would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who reviewed the proposal and provided feedback. We will continue to keep the community and stakeholders informed as the project progresses.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Blaxland Road corridor is a key arterial link for local traffic movements in the suburb of Eastwood in north-west Sydney. The corridor forms the main north-south connection between the northern suburbs and the arterial routes A3 and A40.

The intersection at Blaxland Road, Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue has been identified as a key pinch point on Blaxland Road. There is a high volume of traffic passing through the intersection, especially during morning and afternoon peak periods. At peak times, a high number of road users turning from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road creates congestion at the intersection, causing northbound traffic to be blocked.

The NSW Government is funding this proposal as part of its \$300 million Urban Roads Pinch Point Program, which aims to reduce congestion and improve travel times on Sydney's busiest road corridors, particularly during weekday peak periods.

Benefits of the proposal include:

- reduced queue lengths for motorists turning right from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road
- reduced queue lengths for motorists traveling north on Blaxland Road
- improved safety at the intersection for motorists turning right into Balaclava from Blaxland Road
- reduced traffic delays due to a better traffic flow for motorists travelling northbound.

1.2. The proposal

Roads and Maritime proposes to improve travel time for motorists on Blaxland Road by reducing the congestion and traffic queues at the Blaxland Road, Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue intersection.

Key features of the proposal include:

- changing the current lane configuration to provide an additional right turn lane from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road
- widening on the eastern side of Blaxland Road to accommodate the additional right turn lane
- installing a new raised median in the centre of Blaxland Road
- upgrading traffic lights
- relocating drainage pits and underground pipes
- reconstructing the footpath
- upgraded linemarking.

2. Consultation approach

2.1. Consultation objectives

We consulted with the community and key stakeholders on the proposal to:

- seek comment, feedback, ideas, and suggestions for us to consider when making a decision
- build a database of interested and concerned community members we can continue to engage during the proposal's development and delivery.

2.2. How consultation was done

Community feedback on the proposal was sought between August and September 2017. Community members and stakeholders were encouraged to provide their feedback and make comments via email, mail or phone contact with the project team. We contacted people using a range of tools.

Table 1 outlines the communication tools used to inform the community about the proposal.

Table 1 – Communication tools

Tools	Method
Community letter 'Have Your Say' community update – August 2017 (refer Appendix A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributed to 5,700 local resident and businesses in Eastwood area (refer Appendix B for distribution area)• Copies of letter sent to key stakeholders, including local council.
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of the proposal uploaded on the Roads and Maritime website www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-north/blaxland-road-eastwood.

Letters distributed to local residents and businesses inviting feedback on the Blaxland Road, Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue intersection proposal were also invited to provide feedback on an additional proposal at the intersection of Blaxland Road and First Avenue, Eastwood. The consultation report for this intersection can be found at: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-north/blaxland-road-eastwood.

3. Consultation summary

3.1. Overview

We received 20 responses from community members and one response from a local council (21 responses in total). A summary of the responses received is provided in Table 2.

Key areas of interest for community members with respect to the proposal included:

- project justification and cost
- changes to traffic lights
- changes to Balaclava Road to help support the proposed changes
- potential impacts to local roads
- pedestrian and cyclist safety
- noise and traffic impacts to local residents.

3.2. Feedback and Roads and Maritime response

Roads and Maritime has provided responses to all feedback received on this proposal, as detailed in Table 2 of this report. The responses have been provided directly to the person who commented, as well as in this report, which will be made available to the public through our website www.rms.nsw.gov.au.

All comments have been considered to help Roads and Maritime make decisions on this proposal.

Table 2 - Feedback and Roads and Maritime's responses

Category	Matter raised	Roads and Maritime response
<p>Proposal justification</p>	<p>What is the cost benefit of this proposal given there is acquisition of residential properties?</p>	<p>A Pinch Point is a traffic congestion point, intersection or short length of road at which a traffic bottleneck exists, slowing down the broader network. They cause a build-up of traffic and travel delays at these spots and on the wider road network.</p> <p>Currently, delays are caused by the large number of cars turning from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road. At peak hours, queues build from the intersection causing the northbound traffic to be blocked.</p> <p>The project will provide considerable benefits for the Blaxland Road and Balaclava Road intersection.</p> <p>Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more efficient movement of traffic and pedestrians • improved safety at the intersection for motorists turning right into Balaclava Road from Blaxland Road • reduced queue lengths for motorists traveling north on Blaxland Road • reduced congestion and reduced emissions through smoother traffic flow • reduced traffic delays due to a better flow of traffic for motorists travelling northbound. <p>Traffic modelling demonstrated that the positive improvements to traffic volume and flow, and improved safety for road users at this intersection, outweighed property acquisition costs.</p> <p>The traffic modelling carried out for this proposal accounted for future growth over the next 10 years. The design targets queuing from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road, as well as queuing on Balaclava Road. Traffic modelling indicates that the benefits of this project outweigh the costs.</p> <p>Further information on this proposal can be found here -</p>
	<p>The proposal involves spending too much money for not much of an improvement.</p>	

Category	Matter raised	Roads and Maritime response
	<p>There should be two right turn lanes from Blaxland Road onto Balaclava Road plus two through lanes for through traffic.</p>	<p>www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-north/blaxland-road-eastwood.</p> <p>Our models show that the positive travel and safety benefits of the proposed changes outweighs property acquisition costs, but does not support further acquisition to create a fourth lane.</p> <p>The proposal will provide an additional right turn lane from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road, which will ease congestion for northbound traffic.</p>
Road widening	<p>The widening of Blaxland Road should be extended further along to May Street.</p> <p>Why has the eastern side of Blaxland Road been chosen for widening instead of the western side? Properties on the western side are set back and would not be impacted as much if widening occurred out the front.</p>	<p>The traffic and cost benefit study determined that an extension to May Street was not warranted under this project.</p> <p>Widening of the western side of Blaxland Road was discussed during the strategic design phase. At this stage it was determined that widening of the western side of Blaxland Road was not suitable or cost effective. This was due to the greater difference in ground levels between the road and properties on the Western side of Blaxland Road.</p>
Environmental assessment	<p>The proposal will increase the amount of noise and traffic out the front of the residential properties being acquired.</p>	<p>Pinch Point Projects are usually subject to assessment and determination under Part 5 of the EPA&A Act. Before a Pinch Point project is installed, a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is prepared, which documents the assessment of environmental impacts resulting from the introduction of the project.</p> <p>The project has been assessed using the EPA Road Noise Policy and Roads and Maritime Noise Criteria Guidelines.</p> <p>The results of the acoustic modelling and noise assessment undertaken, demonstrated that the implementation of the project will not cause any significant changes in noise levels for local residents.</p>
Traffic lights	<p>The traffic lights should have a disappearing red arrow to allow more cars to turn right as often traffic heading east on Blaxland Road is not heavy.</p> <p>The congestion issue will be solved by providing more time in the traffic light phasing for traffic turning right from Blaxland Road</p>	<p>Roads and Maritime use The Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System (SCATS) which operates in real time, adjusting signal timings in response to variation in traffic demands. It measures traffic volumes and flows; this data is then used to automatically adapt the operations of traffic signals on an area wide basis.</p> <p>Traffic modelling was carried out and demonstrates the proposed additional right turn lane will ease traffic congestion and improve</p>

Category	Matter raised	Roads and Maritime response
	<p>into Balaclava Road. Currently through traffic gets more green time, which causes traffic wanting to turn right to bank up. Adjusting the phasing would be more cost effective.</p>	<p>travel times and safety for road users along Blaxland and Balaclava, especially during peak periods.</p> <p>The new intersection improvements and upgraded traffic signals will balance the competing needs of traffic.</p>
	<p>The timing of the traffic lights at Blaxland Road and Epping Road is a major problem. In the morning peak the turning arrow is available twice in one cycle, whereas in the afternoon it is only available once per cycle causing traffic to bank up sometimes all the way to Doomben Avenue. If the lights could stay green for a little longer or more frequently it would benefit traffic flow.</p>	
	<p>The traffic light phasing between the Blaxland Road intersection with Balaclava Road and May Street need to be changed. Often the lights at these two intersections become coordinated to favour traffic entering from May Street.</p>	
	<p>There should be a left turn phase from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road.</p>	<p>The current left turn phase from Blaxland onto Balaclava will remain.</p>
Medians	<p>The proposed wide median on Blaxland Road will make the right turn from Balaclava Road difficult.</p>	<p>The geometric design of the intersection has been completed to Road and Maritime and Austroads standards to ensure all movements through the intersection operate safely.</p>
	<p>Why is the new median strip on Blaxland Road required?</p>	<p>The intersection design has been completed to Roads and Maritime and Austroads standards to ensure all movements through the intersection operate safely.</p> <p>Due to the shift in the carriageway, a median island has been included to provide a solid separation of opposing movements.</p> <p>The median also prevents vehicles storing in the new right turn lane to access private properties on the east. Without the median, right turning vehicles could be blocked and cause queuing, which negates the proposed improvements.</p>

Category	Matter raised	Roads and Maritime response
Balaclava Road	The proposal does not address the narrowing of Balaclava Road just up from Blaxland Road. Buses often park here, turning it into a one lane road. Queuing will occur once vehicles have turned right off Blaxland Road.	Thank you for providing comments and feedback about this issue. Bus use along Blaxland Road was not investigated as part of this project. While your suggestions are not included as part of this proposal they have been noted for any future upgrades in the area.
	Buses often stop on Balaclava Road next to the park. If buses continue to park here with the addition of a second feeder lane a bottle neck will be created.	
	The bus stop on Balaclava Road just past Vimiera Road should be moved further up Balaclava Road so that it doesn't block traffic. Currently it is too close to the intersection. This bus stop is used for buses when they swap drivers, which means they often stop for a few minutes at a time	
	There should be parking restrictions on the northern side of Balaclava Road to accommodate the additional turning lane from Blaxland Road. This will minimise the safety risk of drivers cutting into the right lane due to parked cars.	This project has no plans to introduce further parking restrictions on Balaclava Road.
	Consideration should be given to making the section of Balaclava Road adjacent to Moore Park an AM clearway for at least the length of the park (about 200m). This will give a reasonable length of 2 way lane road to allow the 2 right hand turning lanes from Blaxland to merge	
	There should be a solid line separating the two lanes on Balaclava Road so that when motorists turn right from Blaxland into Balaclava on the inside lane they don't try and make a quick merge once in Balaclava to	We have considered your suggestion of placing a continuous line to prevent vehicles from turning left onto Vimiera Road from the outer lane. Roads and Maritime Services Delineation have agreed that placing a continuous line to prevent vehicles from turning left onto Vimiera

Category	Matter raised	Roads and Maritime response
	turn left into Vimiera Road.	Road from the outer lane is a good proposal. We have updated our design based on your suggestion.
	Will motorists still be able to travel straight through from Balaclava Road onto Ball Avenue?	Traffic movements will be able to travel straight through from Balaclava Road onto Ball Avenue.
	Something needs to be done about the congestion on Balaclava Road heading up to Epping Road.	Thank you for providing comments and feedback regarding other areas on the state road network. While your suggestions are not included as part of this proposal they have been noted for any future upgrades in the area.
Cyclists and pedestrians	There is nothing in the proposal to help improve cyclist and pedestrian safety.	In order to minimise the impacts to property owners and avoid acquisition of private property, further widening of the intersection for bike lanes is not proposed.
	The bicycle share path on Blaxland Road stops at Seven Eleven forcing cyclists onto the road, which is dangerous. The share path should be extended to Eastwood and along Balaclava Road.	The NSW Government is committed to working with councils to make walking and cycling safer, more convenient and enjoyable transport options that benefit everyone. By better targeting investment to improve walking and cycling in areas where most short trips occur, the NSW Government aims to support more accessible, liveable and productive towns, cities and centres and free up capacity on our roads and public transport system for those customers that need to travel further. Funding for provision of facilities such as shared paths and dedicated bicycle lanes is available to Council's through NSW Government Active Transport Program. Roads and Maritime has referred your comment on to Ryde City Council for their consideration.
	There should be a pedestrian refuge installed on Vimiera Road.	Vimiera Road is a local road and is managed by Council. Your comments have been forwarded onto Ryde City Council for their consideration.
Local Road impacts	The corner of Vimiera Road should be adjusted. Currently it is a difficult turn and motorists have to stop before turning causing traffic to build up.	

Category	Matter raised	Roads and Maritime response
	Traffic problems on Blaxland Road are pushing traffic onto side streets.	This proposal targets a reduction in the need to use side streets by alleviating congestion on Blaxland Road between Balaclava Road and First Ave.
	Use of residential streets as short cuts to avoid Balaclava Road traffic needs to be addressed.	
	An access from Ball Avenue to Blaxland Road would allow traffic to be redirected and distributed better.	
	There should be pre and post traffic counts for the surrounding back streets to determine whether the improvements have reduced the number of vehicles speeding along local roads.	
Safety	The proposed dual right hand turn will create an unsafe situation where motorists will try and merge out of the right lanes to avoid getting stuck behind turning traffic when they want to travel straight through.	Traffic modelling was carried out and demonstrates that increased capacity being provided through this proposal will ease congestion. In addition to the reduction of queues and delays through the intersection, the introduction of the dual right turn from Blaxland Road to Balaclava Road removes the signalised right turn filter which will provide additional safety benefits at the intersection.
Alternative suggestions	There should also be dedicated right turn lanes from Blaxland Road into May Street.	May Street is a direct route for traffic to access Eastwood Station. This intersection was assessed during the corridor study and the dedicated right turn lane was not warranted.
	The proposal does not address the right turn from Blaxland Road into May Street. This should be made 'No Right Turn' as it brings Blaxland Road down to one lane when a car is waiting to turn.	
	Buses coming from Eastwood Station who need to turn onto Balaclava Road should be diverted onto Ball Avenue to reduce congestion at May Street.	

4. Changes to proposal/decision

After considering all community responses, council and other stakeholder feedback we have decided to proceed with the proposed intersection improvements on Blaxland Road at Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue, Eastwood, subject to the following change to the original design proposal:

- placing a continuous line to prevent vehicles from turning left onto Vimiera Road from the outer lane.

Roads and Maritime would like to thank everyone who took the time to consider our proposal and provide feedback.

5. Next steps

We have considered all submissions and will ensure our team is aware of concerns raised by the community. We will also ensure that issues highlighted by stakeholders and the community are appropriately addressed throughout the delivery of the project.

Further communications will be provided to the community and stakeholders as the project progresses.

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix A – ‘Have your Say’ letter August 2017



Intersection of Blaxland Road and First Avenue

HAVE YOUR SAY

Proposed intersection improvements on Blaxland Road, Eastwood

August 2017

The NSW Government is funding two proposals at two intersections on Blaxland Road, Eastwood, to reduce congestion and improve travel times for road users.

Roads and Maritime Services invites your feedback by **Sunday 3 September** on these proposals at the intersections of Blaxland Road and First Avenue, and Blaxland Road, Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue, Eastwood.

We propose to improve traffic flow through these intersections by widening sections of the road and turning lanes and providing new footpaths. These changes will improve travel times for motorists by reducing the congestion and traffic queues at these intersections. Delays are caused by the large number of cars turning from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road and from Blaxland Road into First Avenue during peak periods.

Proposed intersection improvements on Blaxland Road at Balaclava Road and Ball Avenue, Eastwood

The NSW Government is funding a proposal as part of its \$300 million Urban Roads Pinch Point Program, which aims to reduce congestion and improve travel times on Sydney's busiest corridors.

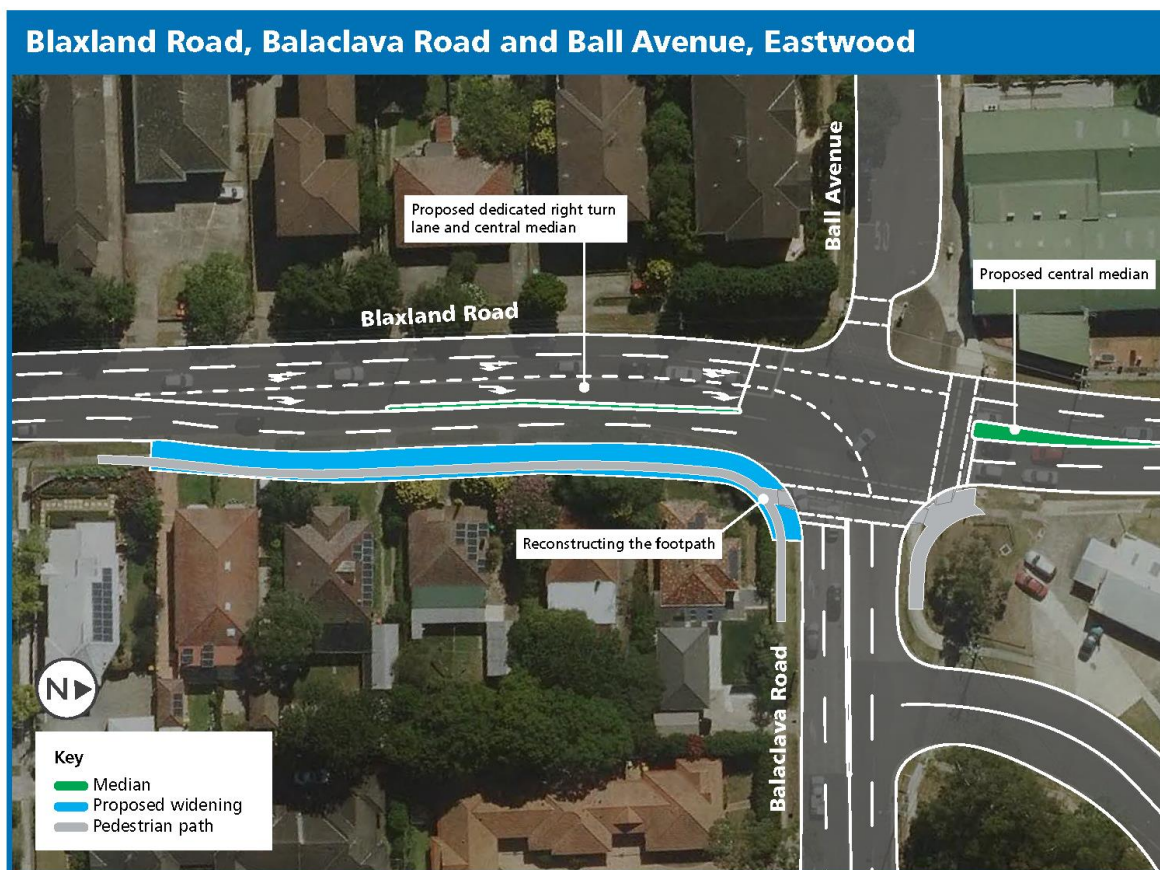
Currently, there is a high volume of road users turning right from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road. At peak times queues build from the intersection causing the northbound traffic to be blocked.

Benefits would include:

- reduced queue lengths for motorists turning right from Blaxland Road onto Balaclava Road
- reduced queue lengths for motorists travelling north on Blaxland Road
- improved safety at the intersection for motorists turning right into Balaclava Road from Blaxland Road
- reduced traffic delays due to a better flow of traffic for motorists travelling northbound.

The proposal includes:

- changing the current lane configuration to provide an additional right turn lane from Blaxland Road into Balaclava Road
- widening on the eastern side of Blaxland Road to accommodate the additional right turn lane
- installing a new raised median in the centre of Blaxland Road
- upgrading traffic lights
- relocating drainage pits and underground pipes
- reconstructing the footpath
- line marking.



Proposed intersection improvements on Blaxland Road at First Avenue, Eastwood

The NSW Government is funding a proposal as part of its \$225 million Pinch Point Program, which aims to reduce traffic delays, manage congestion and improve travel times on Sydney's major roads.

Currently, there is a high volume of road users turning right from Blaxland Road into First Avenue. At peak times queues build from the intersection causing the southbound traffic to be blocked.

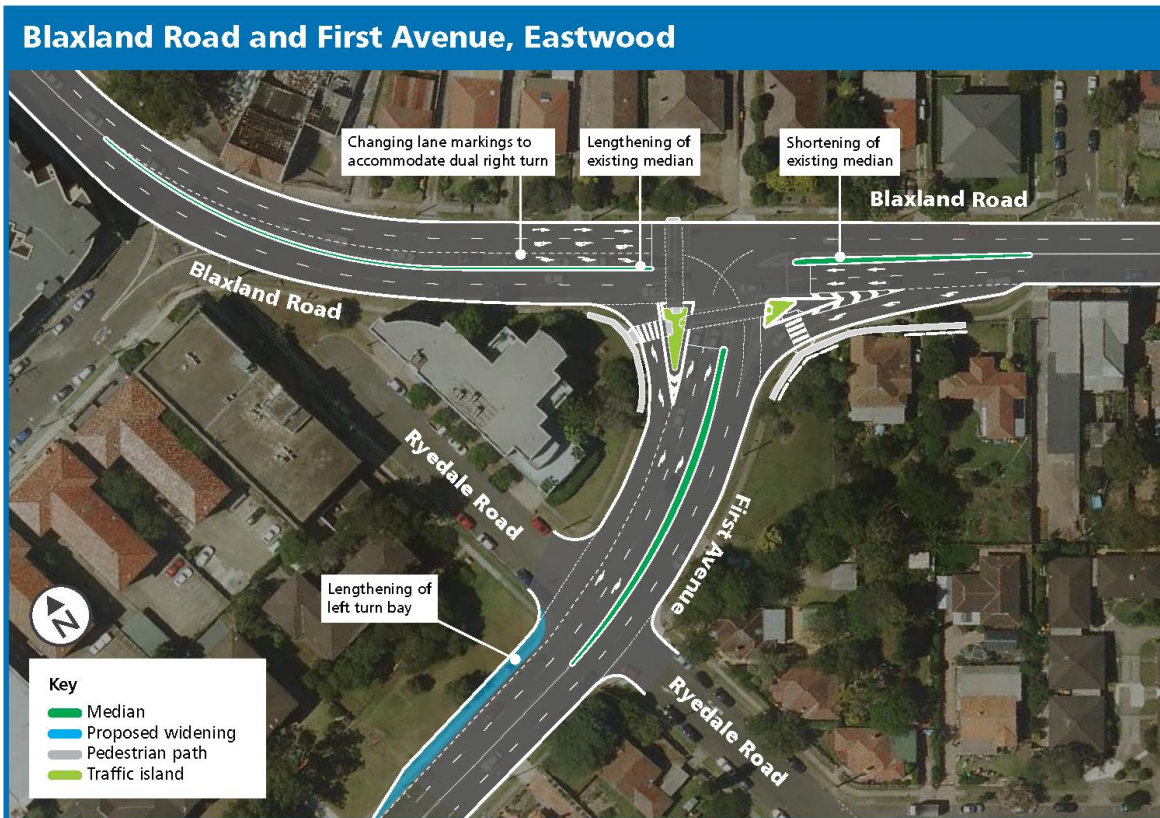
Benefits would include:

- reduced queue lengths for motorists turning right from Blaxland Road into First Avenue
- reduced queue lengths for motorists traveling north on First Avenue
- improved safety at the intersection, with a reduction in the number of rear end crashes and crashes involving motorists changing lanes
- reduced traffic delays due to a better flow of traffic for motorists at all points of the intersection.

The current left in left out access to Ryedale Road at the intersection with First Avenue, and Rowe Street at the intersection with Blaxland Road, will remain as existing under this proposal.

The proposal includes:

- changing the current lane configuration on Blaxland Road to accommodate a dual right turn lane
- extending the left turn lane from First Avenue onto Blaxland Road by 100 metres, which would accommodate about 14 extra cars
- extending the centre median by 50 metres on the northbound approach of Blaxland Road
- modifying the existing central raised medians on Blaxland Road and on First Avenue, to accommodate the dual right turn lanes from First Avenue
- upgrading traffic lights
- reconstructing the footpath and traffic islands
- line marking.



Next steps

We will carefully consider all feedback received before deciding to proceed with each proposal.

Two separate community consultation reports will be prepared summarising the matters raised and will be made available on our website.

We will keep you updated as each proposal progresses.

Have your say

We invite your feedback on the proposal by **Sunday 3 September**. You can provide your comments by:

 1800 572 004 during business hours

 pinchpoint@rms.nsw.gov.au

 Pinch Points Program project team,
Roads and Maritime Services,
PO Box 973, Parramatta NSW 2124

 rms.nsw.gov.au/pinchpoints



Translating and Interpreting Service

If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **131 450** and ask them to telephone Roads and Maritime Services on **1800 572 004**.

Arabic

إذا كنتم بحاجة إلى مترجم، الرجاء الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الخطبة والشفهية (TIS National) على الرقم **131 450**، والطلب منهم الاتصال بوكالتكم على الرقم **1800 572 004**.

Cantonese

若你需要口譯員，請致電 **131 450** 聯絡翻譯和口譯服務署 (TIS National)，要求他們致電 **1800 572 004** 聯絡 Roads and Maritime Services。

Mandarin

如果你需要口译员，请致电 **131 450** 联系翻译和口译服务署 (TIS National)，要求他们致电 **1800 572 004** 联系 Roads and Maritime Services。

Greek

Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα, παρακαλείστε να τηλεφωνήσετε στην Υπηρεσία Μετάφρασης και Διερμηνείας (Εθνική Υπηρεσία TIS) στο **131 450** και ζητήστε να τηλεφωνήσουν Roads and Maritime Services στο **1800 572 004**.

Italian

Se desiderate l'assistenza di un interprete, prego telefonare al Servizio Interpreti e Traduttori (TIS National) al **131 450** chiedendo di contattare Roads and Maritime Services al **1800 572 004**.

Korean

통역사가 필요하시면 번역통역서비스 (TIS National)에 **131 450**으로 연락하여 아들에게 **1800 572 004** 번으로 Roads and Maritime Services 에 전화하도록 요청하십시오.

Vietnamese

Nếu cần thông ngôn viên, xin quý vị gọi cho Dịch Vụ Thông Phiên Dịch (TIS Toàn Quốc) qua số **131 450** và nhờ họ gọi cho Roads and Maritime Services qua số **1800 572 004**.

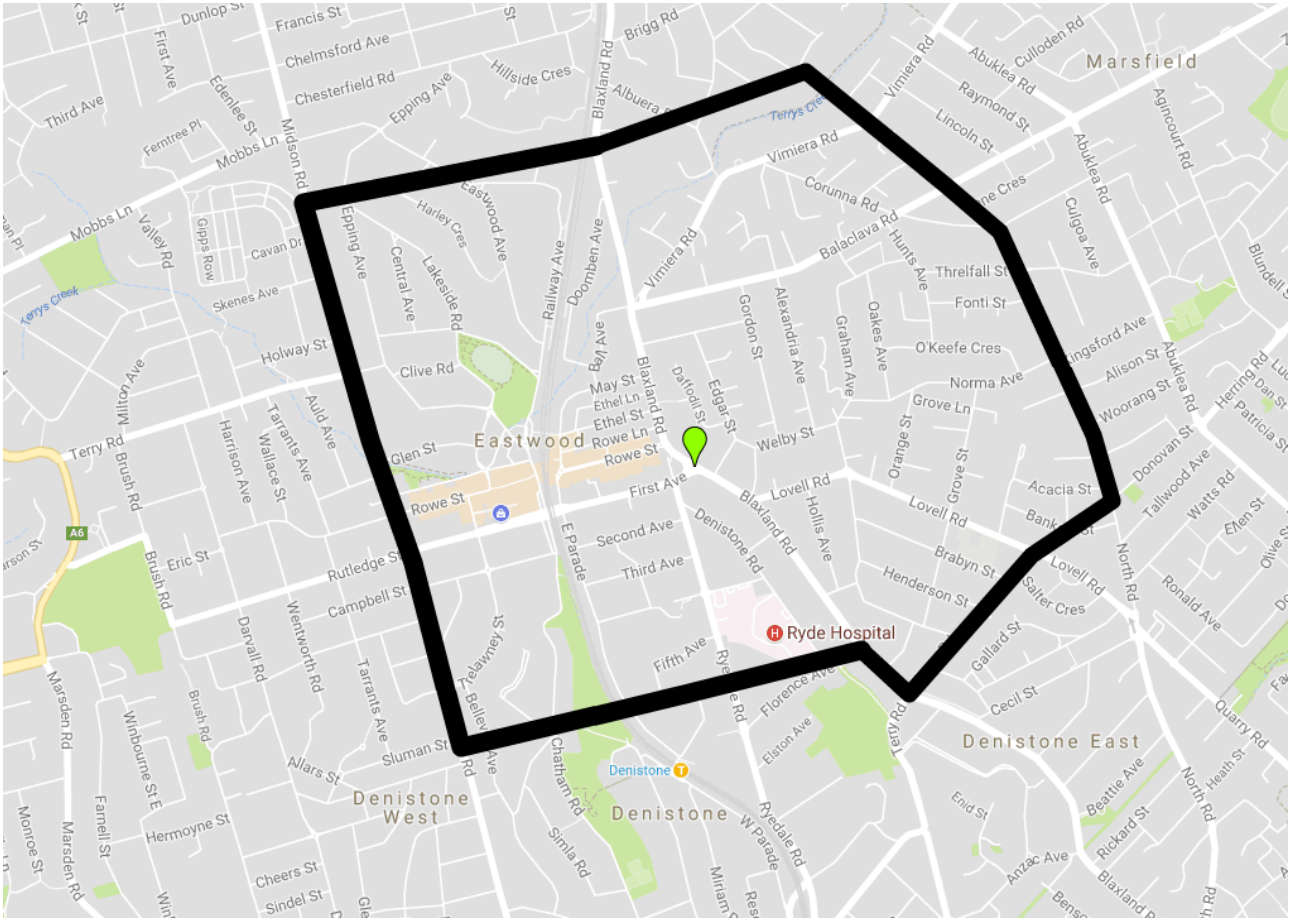


August 2017
RMS 17.375



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6.2 Appendix B – Distribution map





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1800 572 004



Customer feedback
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January 2018
RMS 17.663
ISBN: 978-1-925737-44-8