

## NEWELL HIGHWAY TASK FORCE MEETING

### **Minutes of the Newell Highway Task Force (NHTF) Meeting held at the Narrabri Shire Council Depot RFS Operations Meeting Room on Tuesday 31 October 2017**

The NHTF meeting commenced at 10:00am

#### **1. Welcome, Attendees, Apologies**

The Chair Cr Ken Keith OAM welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Narrabri Shire Council for hosting the meeting.

Darren Raeck the Director of Infrastructure from Narrabri Shire Council welcomed the Newell Highway Task Force (NHTF) Committee members to Narrabri and acknowledged the apology from Cr Cathy Redding the Mayor of Narrabri Shire Council. Darren mentioned that the Newell and Kamilaroi Highways are important arterial links and that Narrabri Shire Council undertook \$14 million of capital road works last financial year and have \$11.2 million planned for this financial year in the Narrabri Shire. The airport is showing increasing patronage with 500 passengers a month flying to Brisbane and 250 a month to Sydney. Narrabri Shire Council is also undertaking water and waste water projects and is preparing a business case for an intermodal hub.



L-R: Cr Craig Davies Narramine Shire Council; Lila Fisher Moree Plains Shire Council; Cr Doug Batten Gilgandra Shire Council; Cr Ken Keith OAM Mayor Parkes Shire Council; Phil Standen RMS Western Region; Kevin Tighe Warrumbungle Shire Council; Cr Denis Todd Warrumbungle Shire Council; Luke McDermott Narrabri Shire Council; Darren Raeck Narrabri Shire Council and missing from the photo are Carla Campbell and Mick Savage

**Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Jeff Stien	Bland Shire Council
Lila Fisher	Moree Plains Shire Council
Cr Doug Batten	Gilgandra Shire Council
Darren Raeck	Director Infrastructure Delivery Narrabri Shire Council
Cr Denis Todd	Warrumbungle Shire Council
Kevin Tighe	Warrumbungle Shire Council
Mick Savage	Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia
Cr Ken Keith OAM	Parkes Shire Council
Phil Standen	RMS
Carla Campbell	EO Kevin Humphries MP
Cr Craig Davies	Narromine Shire Council
Luke McDermott	Narrabri Shire Council

**Apologies:**

Cr Tony Lord	Bland Shire Council
Cr Graeme Miller	Forbes Shire Council
John Zannes	Forbes Shire Council
John Morris	Regional NSW High Productivity Road Transport Alliance
Cr Neville Kschenka	Narrandera Shire Council
Cr Kevin Morris	Narrandera Shire Council
Julian Geddes	Narrandera Shire Council
Cr Ben Shields	Dubbo Regional Council
Chris Devitt	Dubbo Regional Council
Cr Cathy Redding	Narrabri Shire Council
Kevin Humphries MP	Member for Barwon
Philip Donato MP	Member for Orange

**Resolution**

That the apologies be confirmed

**Moved: Cr Doug Batten**

**Seconded: Cr Craig Davies**

**All in favour**

**Carried**

## **2. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting held in West Wyalong on Thursday 28 August 2017**

**Resolution**

That the Minutes of the NHTF Committee meeting held in West Wyalong at the Bland Shire Council Chambers on Thursday 28 August 2017 which were distributed to members of the Task Force be confirmed.

**Moved: Cr Doug Batten**

**Seconded: Cr Denis Todd**

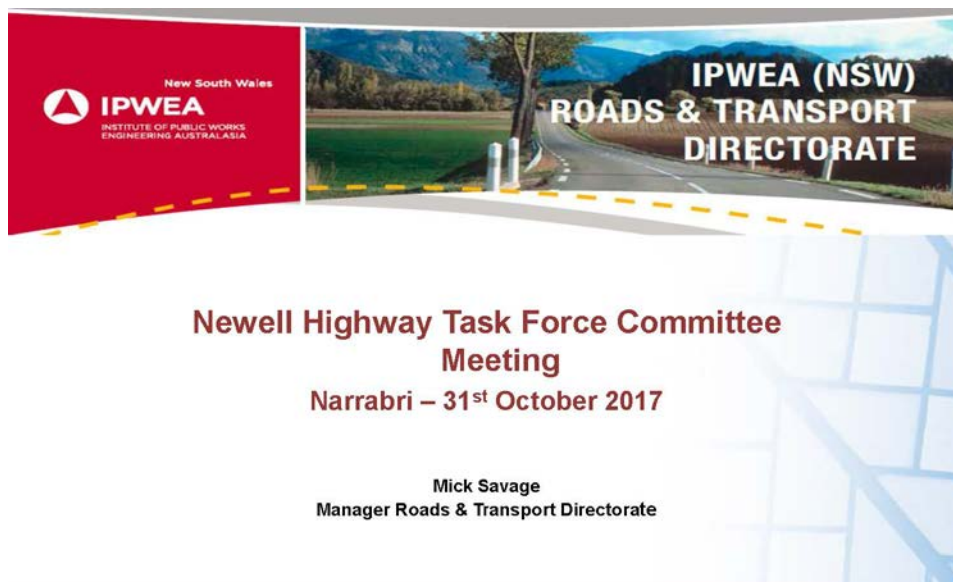
**All in favour**

**Carried**

### 3. Mick Savage – Roads and Transport Directorate Manager IPWEA NSW

At the West Wyalong NHTF Committee meeting it was resolved to lobby the State and Federal Governments to obtain funding to prepare the necessary reports to flood proof / flood mitigate the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes. In discussions with Mick Savage who is the Roads and Transport Directorate Manager at the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) he agreed to work with the NHTF Committee and Mick provided the following presentation:

Slide 1



Slide 2

#### Some Context

Type of road	Length of road (km)	Proportion of total length (%)
Roads & Maritime Services		
Sealed	18,000	9.73
Unincorporated area	3,000	1.62
Total	21,000	11.35
Local Government		
Sealed	81,000	43.79
Unsealed	83,000	44.86
Total	164,000	88.65
GRAND TOTAL	185,000	100.00

**Estimated Replacement Cost: \$65.7 billion**





## Some Dimensions

- Estimated Replacement Cost - \$65.7 billion

- Annual Asset Consumption - \$907million



- Funding Gap \$447million



## Considerations

- Survey requirements – how big is the (study area) catchment
- Hydrology study
- Hydraulic study
- Traffic requirements including
  - ✓ freight
  - ✓ school bus
  - ✓ community connectivity (also future demand projections)
- Utility service considerations (phone, water, sewer etc)
- Performance of bridges
- Alternate routes to be used or developed
- Climate change projections
- Emergency Management Considerations
- Standard conditions of contract



## Problem Definition

What is the problem to be addressed?

- Freight access only
- Community isolation
- Emergency response
- Maintaining communications
- Access to school and work
- Community safety

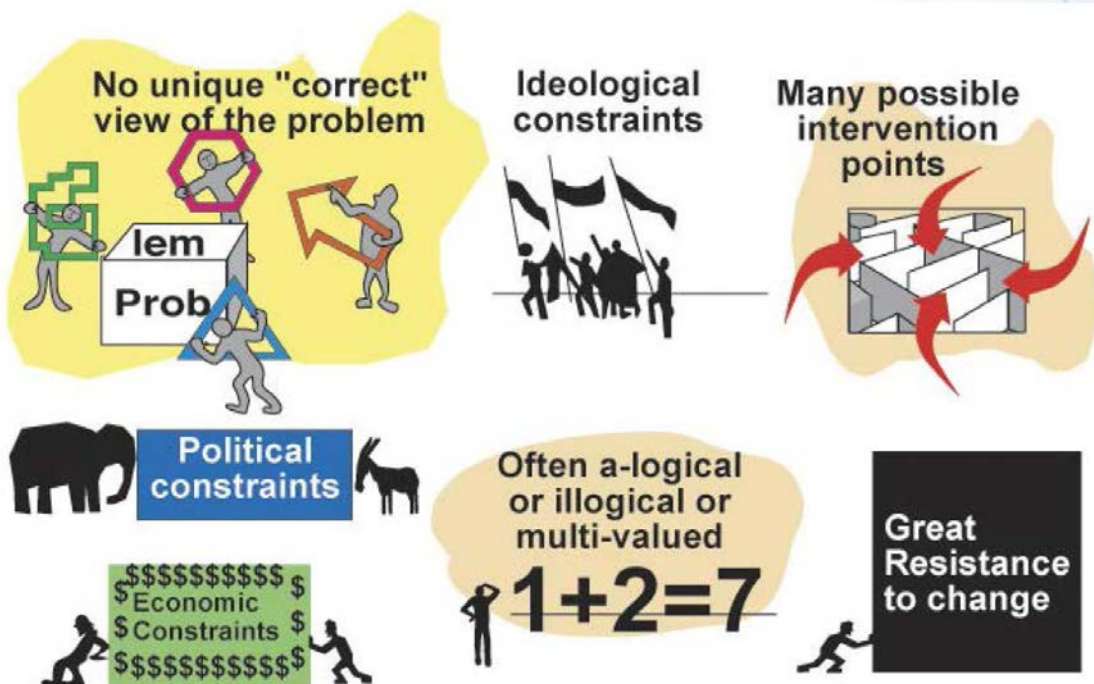
All of the above?



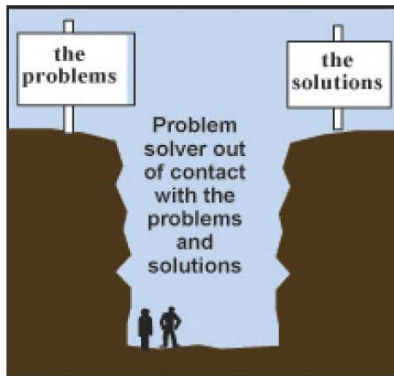
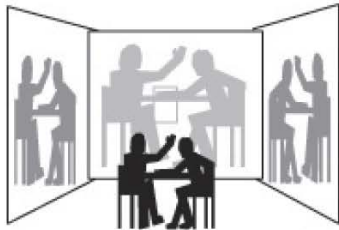
## More than a Balancing Act



## A Wicked Problem



Different views of problem and solutions are contradictory



Most problems are interconnected to other problems



Multiple value conflicts



Risk difficult or impossible to calculate



Considerable Uncertainty

Ambiguous



Consequences difficult to imagine



Data are often uncertain or missing

?	?	?	?
?	?	?	?
?	?	?	?
?	?	?	?



IPWEA (NSW)  
Roads & Transport  
Directorate



New South Wales

**IPWEA**  
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS  
ENGINEERING AUSTRALASIA

## Summary

- ▲ Problem definition is critical
- ▲ Full range of solutions to be considered
- ▲ Coordination of data sources required
- ▲ Not just an engineering problem
- ▲ Clear definition of expected outcomes required



New South Wales

**IPWEA**  
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS  
ENGINEERING AUSTRALASIA



### Roads & Transport Directorate

- ▲ A resource to assist in developing the project scope
- ▲ A resource for councils in the future
- ▲ Could provide training for the future



A discussion followed Mick's presentation and the Secretary mentioned that in conversations with the State and Federal Governments, a report would need to be prepared on the options that may be available to find a solution of the flooding of the Newell Highway between West Wyalong and Forbes. The Secretary also mentioned that the RMS had provided a copy of the October 2000 Newell Highway Flood Study on a memory stick as the file size is 20.3 MB which is too large to email. The size of the Bland Creek catchment is extremely large and Secretary has attached a schematic that shows the size of the Bland Creek catchment.

The Secretary will work with the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia and Forbes Shire Council to develop the terms of reference / scope of works for the report and may include:

- Survey Requirements
- Update the October 2000 Newell Highway Flood Study including the silting up of water courses
- Hydraulic Study
- Traffic Requirements including Freight, School Bus and Community Connectivity
- Utility Service Considerations
- Alternate Routes to be used or Developed
- Climate Change Projections
- Impact of Increasing the Height of Wyangala Dam etc

Phil mentioned that \$1 million was allocated for the flood study between Forbes and Parkes at Tichborne and the tender has been awarded to undertake the report.

The Chair thanked Mick for attending and presenting to the meeting and his offer to assist the NHTF.

#### 4. Correspondence

The secretary has distributed copies of all correspondence to the Newell Highway Task Force committee members.

**Moved: Cr Doug Batten**  
**All in favour**  
**Carried**

**Seconded: Cr Denis Todd**



## 5. Roads and Maritime Services Update

Phil Standen provided the following RMS update:

### **Projects Recently Completed**

- **Overtaking Lanes**  
Since 2011, 18 overtaking lanes have been completed at a total cost of \$40.3 million.
- **Blackbutt Road intersection**  
\$3 million upgrade to the Newell Highway/Blackbutt Road intersection south of Dubbo, completed in July 2017.
- **West Wyalong Heavy Vehicle Alternative Route**  
\$2 million railway realignment at Showground and Compton Roads completed June 2017.

### **Projects Underway**

- **X-Line Overtaking Lane**  
A \$7.2 million project with two new overtaking lanes between Narrabri and Coonabarabran. Work started in mid-August and is expected to be completed in March 2018.
- **Realignment at Trewilga**  
A \$36 million upgrade north of Parkes with completion due in early 2018.
- **Realignment at Grong Grong**  
An \$18 million project at Grong Grong building a new two-lane 2.7km section of highway. Work started in December 2016 with completion due in February 2018. The new realignment is now open to traffic.

### **Projects in Planning**

- **West Wyalong Heavy Vehicle Alternative Route Final Stage**  
The final stage has been allocated \$4.5 million and will involve upgrading the intersections at either end of the alternative route. Work will commence in November 2017 and the project is expected to be completed in 2018.
- **Pavement upgrades from Mungle Back Creek to Boggabilla**  
The \$90 million project to upgrade up to 28 km of the Newell Highway including construction of two new overtaking lanes. Tenders will be called in November 2017 and work to commence in mid 2018. Joint Federal (just over \$60M) and State funding (just under \$30M).
- **Parkes Bypass**  
The preferred option has been announced with REF and concept design to be completed in mid 2018.
- **Dubbo Bridge**  
The preferred option for the bridge was announced in June 2017 with the contract to develop the REF and concept design to be awarded in early 2018. Announced cost is \$140 million.

- **Newell Highway/ Mitchell Highway Intersection**  
Progressing detailed investigations to inform design. Planning for completion of early works (property acquisitions and public utility adjustments) in 2018 with major construction stage commencing early 2019. Anticipated cost \$20 million.
- **Pilliga 3 Southbound Overtaking Lane (46km north of Coonabarabran)**  
A \$3.5 million overtaking lane and widening project with expected start date of February 2018 and completion in July 2018.
- **Willows Road Southbound Overtaking Lane (25km north of Finely)**  
Expected to commence in Feb 2018 with completion by June 2018.
- **Bundure Overtaking Lanes N/B & S/B (40km north of Jerilderie)**  
2018/19 Financial Year
- **Wallaroy Overtaking Lanes N/B & S/B (33km north of Gilgandra)**  
2018/19 Financial Year
- **Dustys Creek Overtaking Lanes N/B & S/B (10km north of Gilgandra)**  
2018/19 Financial Year
- **Improvements at Boggabilla**  
Early planning. Preliminary Environment Investigation and strategic design has commenced and are due for completion in Dec 2017 (PEI) and March 2018 (strategic design).
- **Improvements at Coonabarabran**  
Early planning and discussions with Council. Preliminary Environmental Investigation and strategic design has commenced and are due for completion in January 2018 (PEI) and April 2018 (strategic design).
- **Pavement Upgrades north of Narrabri and Moree**  
Early planning is underway for major pavement upgrades north of Narrabri and North of Moree.
- **Tocumwal De-Coupling Bay**  
Strategic Assessment underway and interaction with Victoria.

#### **2017/18 State Maintenance Program (Western Region only)**

- Pavement Upgrade at Mogriguy 13 – 15km north of Dubbo (\$2.2M)
- Pavement Upgrade at North Gurley 71 -73km north of Narrabri (\$2.7M)
- Pavement Upgrade at Gurley town area 67 – 66km north of Narrabri (\$0.9M)

#### **Contact Name and Number**

Phil Standen, Director, Western Region T: (02) 6861 1450 M: 0418 469 488

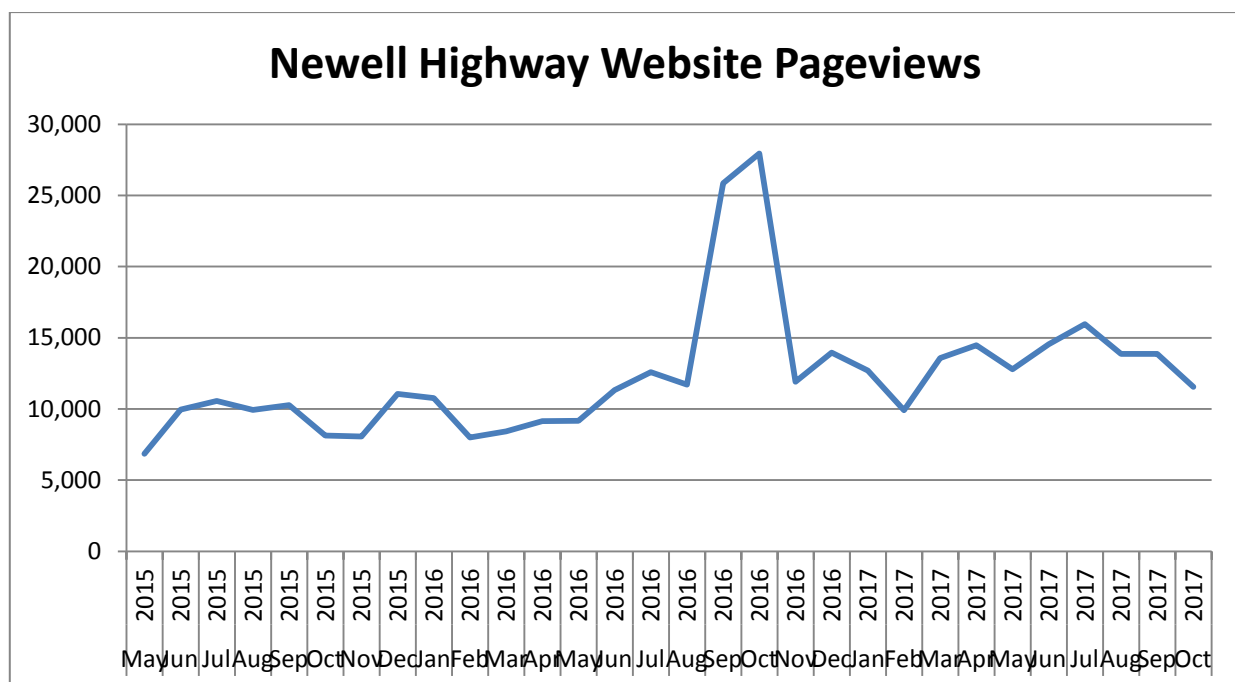
Cr Davies mentioned that heavy vehicles are using alternative roads around Dubbo including the Tomingley and Eumungerie Roads and travelling through Narromine creating increases in traffic and affecting the condition of the roads.

Other areas that have seen an increase in traffic include Coonamble to Wee Waa and Tullamore and when a road is sealed it is usually followed by an increase in traffic movements.

## 6. Newell Highway Promotions Committee Update

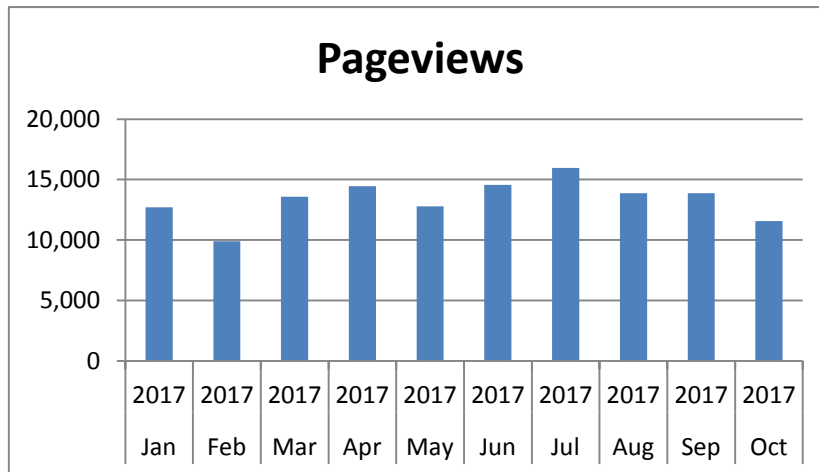
The Chair of the Newell Highway Promotions Committee (NHPC) provided an update on the activities of the NHPC and mentioned that the new Newell Highway brochure advertising prospectus has been sent out and the NHPC is working on the new brochure. The Chair thanked all of the Councils and organisations for providing financial assistance in the production of the brochure which is marketed at the majority of the Visitor Information Centres on the Eastern Seaboard, Caravan and Camping Shows, direct mail outs and through the NHPC Website: <http://www.newellhighway.org.au/route39/>.

The Chair mentioned that the NHPC website is tracking quite well as per the following graphs and the NHPC has been receiving an increased interest from overseas visitor wishing to travel on Australia's and NSW's premier inland touring route instead of travelling through the congested cities coastal routes.



Newell Highway website analytics:

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017	2017
<b>Pageviews</b>	12,710	9,904	13,570	14,467	12,789	14,554	15,959	13,872	13,869	11,559
<b>Visits</b>	5,157	3,998	5,842	5,775	5,088	5,748	6,274	5,141	5,151	4,419
<b>Visitors</b>	4,046	3,228	4,687	4,581	4,016	4,491	4,923	4,260	4,269	3,552
<b>Desktop</b>	35.3%	39.2%	37.8%	34.7%	36.6%	38.9%	32.8%	33.8%	32.2%	32.6%
<b>Mobile</b>	45.7%	40.7%	42.8%	44.8%	42.6%	40.7%	45.6%	42.0%	45.6%	47.2%
<b>Tablet</b>	18.9%	20.1%	19.4%	20.5%	20.9%	20.4%	21.6%	24.2%	22.2%	20.2%



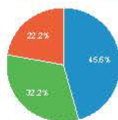
### Newell Highway Analytics Report

Sep 1, 2017 - Sep 30, 2017

 All Users  
 100.00% Sessions

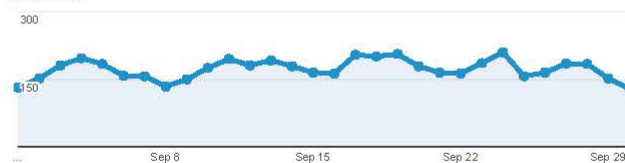
#### Sessions by Device Category

mobile desktop tablet



#### Visits (Sessions)

Sessions



#### Pageviews

**13,869**

% of Total: 100.00% (13,869)

#### Visits

**5,151**

% of Total: 100.00% (5,151)

#### Visitors

**4,269**

% of Total: 100.00% (4,269)

#### Users by Country

Country	Users
Australia	4,135
United States	54
New Zealand	13
Canada	9
United Kingdom	8

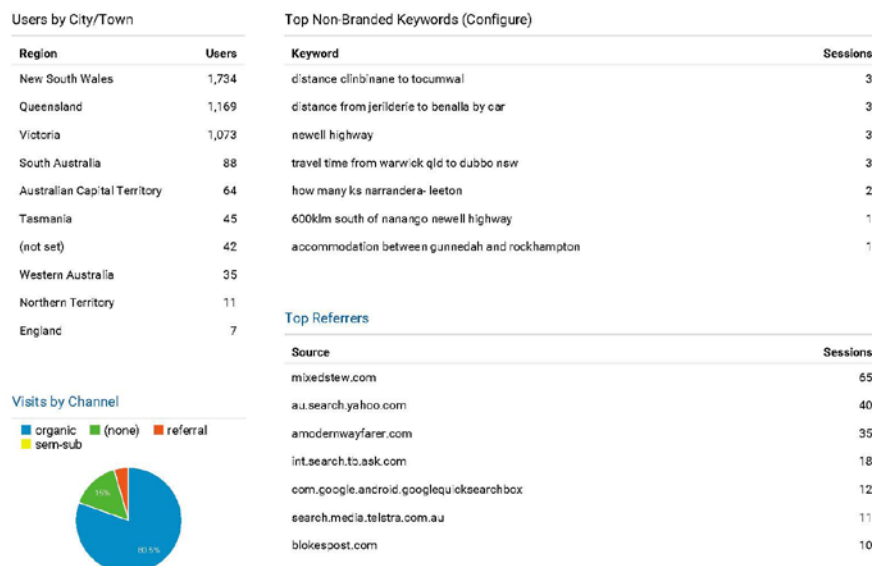
#### Top Landing Pages

Landing Page	Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page
/route39/distances/	6,882	00:00:42
/route39/	3,456	00:01:32
/time_distance_calculator_route39.php	1,191	00:00:56
/route39/towns/	1,024	00:00:58
/route39/newell-highway-brochure/	268	00:01:48
/route39/newell-highway-map/	235	00:01:08
/route39/live-traffic/	192	00:01:51
/route39/about/	101	00:02:39
/route39/tour/tamora/	43	00:00:15
/route39/tour/fossickers-way/	39	00:01:09

#### Unique Pageviews by Page

Page	Unique Pageviews
/time_distance_calculator_route39.php	3,130
/route39/distances/	2,852
/route39/	1,498
/route39/towns/	431
/route39/newell-highway-brochure/	349
/route39/newell-highway-map/	164
/route39/live-traffic/	155
/route39/about/	143
/route39/towns/page/2/	126
/route39/tour/goondiwindi/	88





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The NHPC has been working with the Caravan Industry Association of Australia to develop and implement the Caravan and Camping Visitor Smart Tracker pilot project. This endeavour aims to collect, measure and analyse demographic, vehicle and behavioural patterns of recreational vehicle users as they travel along the Newell Highway Corridor.

An application for fifty percent of the funding for this project has been submitted to the Federal Governments Smart Cities program. The remaining fifty percent will be sourced from Federal, State and Local Governments and Departments and industry organisations and associations. The funding application has progressed to the second round and the NHPC is expecting to hear in the very near future if the application has been successful.

## Future Transport 2056 Draft Tourism and Transport Plan

The Future Transport 2056 Draft Tourism and Transport Plan – Supporting the Visitor Economy October 2017 (The Plan) has been released for comment and the NHPC are disappointed that the Newell Highway is not mentioned in The Plan. The NHPC will be making a submission to Transport NSW in relation to The Plan and The Plan appears to be focused on transport and tourism east of the great divide yet The Plan mentions that:

*Regional NSW is equally important to the visitor economy in NSW. Domestic and international visitors to NSW destinations outside Sydney generated 84.3 million nights of accommodation NSW and \$15 billion in visitor (overnight and day trip) expenditure in 2016. 'Holiday' (47%) was the largest purpose of visit for visitors to regional NSW, followed by 'visiting friends and relatives' (35%) and 'business' (13%).*

The Chair also mentioned that the Tourism Minister Adam Marshal had formed a new and independent Visitor Economy Taskforce that will undertake a review of the NSW Government's Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan. The Taskforce would take a long-term look at the NSW visitor economy, consider opportunities for growth and additional methods to measure success into the future.

## **7. General Business**

Lila mentioned that the Australian Rural Roads Group has engaged UNE's Centre for Agribusiness headed by Derek Baker and supported by David Hadley and David Anderson to undertake a research project on rural roads cost benefit analysis.

The project is to research other parameters that could be used by decision makers in determine which roads to upgrade. Rural roads don't have the population base and the usage that trigger the normal Benefits/Costs. The research is to examine the use of alternative variable that could bring alternative benefits to the road upgrades, including social isolation, access to medical and/or educational facilities and land productivity. Project funding was provided by Agrifuture (formally Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation) with data collected from Both Moree and Gwydir Shires. The report should be out soon.

Lila mentioned that Moree Plains Shire Council is working closely with the RMs to establish solutions to the recent audit of State Highway Intersections with Local roads that identified that 36m long road trains cannot make safe turns from the State Road in to and out of the Council Road network. Council has undertaken field trials on a few of the roads with more trials to occur after the Wheat Harvest. The approach that is being taken by both Council and the RMS is a risk based approach, with those that have the higher probability of incident being prioritised to receive upgrades first. Council will be requesting funds in the near future, from the RMS to undertake the works, with Council contribute towards the designs and consultation.

Teleconferencing - The Secretary mentioned that he had received requests from NHTF Committee members to be able to dial into future meetings. It was agreed that by attending the NHTF Committee meetings in person it offered the NHTF Committee members the chance to travel the Newell Highway and to have a better understanding on the work that is being undertaken and the general condition of the Newell Highway. In organising the meetings the Secretary will enquire if there are teleconferencing facilities at the meeting venue and let the NHTF Committee members know.

### **Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan**

The Chair Cr Ken Keith OAM mentioned that he attended a Transport for NSW information session on the Future Transport 2056, Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan in Parkes on Monday. The Chair was disappointed with the Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan and that it appeared to be mainly focused on transport issues east of the great divide and the larger regional centres and the important Bells Line of Road was not mentioned in the Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan. The Chair mentioned that Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan was not visionary and had not factored in the secondary and multiplier benefits that the Inland Rail would bring to regional NSW. The Chair mentioned that the Golden Highway is just one Highway that links inland NSW and the coastal areas and that the other important Highways and Roads should be included in the Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan. The NHTF will be preparing a submission to the Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan.

## **8. Next meeting date and venue**

The next meeting will be the AGM and will be held in Gilgandra on Wednesday 7 February 2018.

Meeting Closed 12:00 noon

Legend

Bland\_Creek\_Lake\_Cowal\_Boundary

Towns

Highways\_BLC

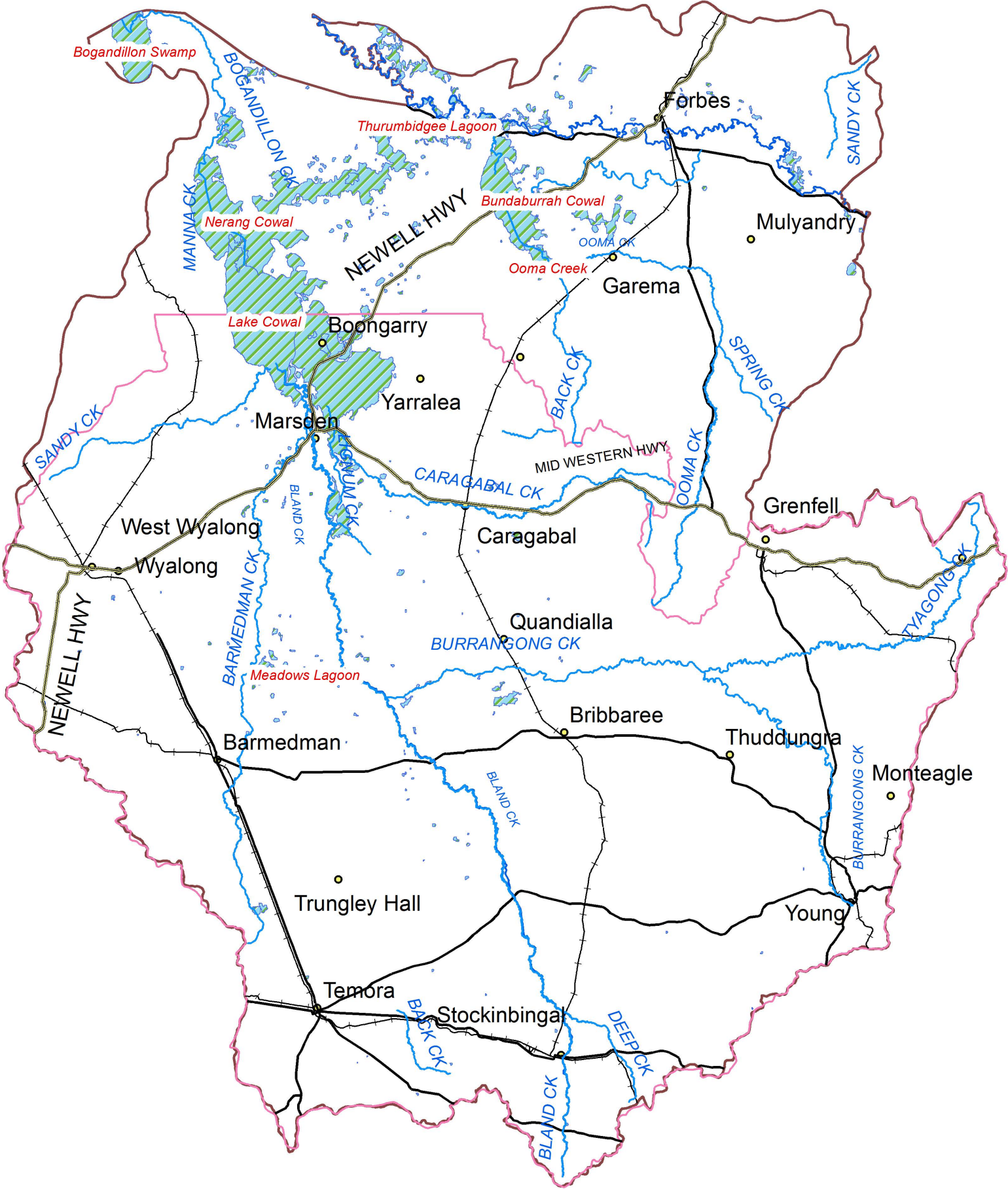
Railway

Railway

BlandCreekCatchment

Wetlands

Creeks\_BLC



Bland Creek and Lake Cowal region



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