



Project Fact Sheet and FAQs

Tenterfield Sunnyside Bridge Project - Heritage Interpretation

June 2025



Transport for NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and pays respect to Elders past, present, and emerging.

The Sunnyside Bridge in Tenterfield holds cultural and historical significance for the community and surrounds. To help capture the values, stories and themes associated with the bridge and identify possible interpretation options, Transport is consulting community and stakeholders.

About the project

The Sunnyside Bridge (bridge) is a non-operational, state heritage-listed railway viaduct which crosses Tenterfield Creek. Exposure to environmental elements over time has led to the deterioration of the timber bridge components.

In December 2024, Transport for NSW (Transport) became aware of a partial collapse of the Sunnyside Bridge. Safety measures have since been implemented to ensure public safety.

Transport is now undertaking further assessments and working closely with Heritage NSW and the NSW Environment Protection Authority to determine next steps.

While no decision has been made on the future of Sunnyside Bridge, Transport will develop a heritage interpretation strategy which accurately reflects community sentiment and significance of the bridge.

To develop this strategy, Transport will consult the community and stakeholders to help us identify and capture heritage significance,

community aspirations, values and opportunities for the asset.

When will consultation take place?

Community consultation will begin from **Tuesday, 3 June 2025** until **Wednesday, 2 July 2025**.

Purpose

The purpose of the consultation is to:

- Understand the historical, cultural and social values and how these values can be best interpreted.
- Determine how to represent significance and community sentiment, that is going to be valued by the community.
- Undertake best-practice consultation consistent with NSW government and Transport guidelines.
- Develop a strategy to inform our consultation with Heritage Council of NSW.

Project benefits

- Opportunity for community and stakeholders to have their say and shape future options.
- Deliver greater community value by leveraging local knowledge and understanding community vision for the asset.
- Enhance understanding and enjoyment of heritage items by appealing to different audiences, different levels of experience, knowledge and learning styles.
- Strengthen and sustain the relationship between the community and its heritage so that it may provide benefits for the community.

Project scope

In scope

- Capture community values and historical significance associated with the bridge.
- Identify suitable and possible historical interpretation options, independent of the future of the asset.
- Develop a heritage interpretation strategy to guide any future heritage interpretation plan, which is required as part of our consultation with the Heritage Council of NSW.

Not in scope

- This consultation will not focus on identifying future management strategies for the bridge or make recommendations on the future of the asset.
- The heritage interpretation strategy will also not determine the future asset management strategy.

Limitations

- The site is listed on the State Heritage Register and cannot be modified without Heritage Council approval.
- Any major works to this site will require Heritage Council of NSW approval.
- Any interpretation will need to be approved by the Heritage Council of NSW.
- Finite resources and ecological impacts pose limitations on the implementation of some heritage interpretation options.
- Location and proximity of the bridge to the New England Highway may limit feasibility of some heritage interpretation options.
- There is currently no approved budget, so this will need to be considered.

Have your say

To complete the survey, please scan the QR code or visit **bit.ly/sunnyside-HYS**



Consultation

We are continuing to build our knowledge of the Sunnyside Bridge at Tenterfield. Community and stakeholder input is vital to help us achieve this.

What does consultation look like?

We are speaking with and listening to internal subject matter experts, Tenterfield Regional Council, key community interest groups, landowners and the wider community.

The consultation approach is outlined below.

- Internal consultation: online workshop
- Government consultation: online workshop with Tenterfield Regional Council
- Interest groups consultation: face-to-face workshop
- Community consultation: online survey and two drop-in sessions

We have developed an online survey and invite the community and stakeholders to share their thoughts so we may understand all the ways this bridge contributes to the community.

Survey dates

The survey is open from **Tuesday, 3 June 2025** until **Wednesday, 2 July 2025**.

What do we want to know

We want to know what the Sunnyside Bridge in Tenterfield means to you so that we can better understand the key values, issues and aspirations associated with the bridge.

How will the information be used

The information from the survey will be collated and used to identify themes and trends which Transport will consider when developing the Heritage Interpretation Strategy for this bridge.

Supporting information

We have developed some FAQs on the next page which provides additional information on the project.

Frequently asked questions

Where is the Site located?

The Site is located at 1166 New England Highway, Tenterfield NSW. It is on the Country Regional Network (CRN).

What is the history of the asset?

Sunnyside Bridge was designed by John Whitton and built in 1888. It was a part of the former Main Northern railway line, a significant infrastructure development for the community, which boosted the economy and tourism to Tenterfield.

The last passenger services occurred in October 1989, and the bridge has been non-operational since this time.

In 1999 the bridge was listed on the State Heritage Register.

About heritage interpretation

What is heritage interpretation?

Heritage interpretation is about communicating information about the meanings and values of important places.

What information is communicated and how it is presented, is important.

Although the significance of some heritage items is easy to understand; the values may not be obvious and require interpretation.

What is a heritage item, its significance and values?

Heritage looks at landscape, places and objects that are a valued part of Australian culture and history. They are a part of the NSW and communities' identity and can be linked to culture, tradition, environment and community life.

Why are we doing this?

Heritage interpretation seeks to identify and highlight the values of heritage landscapes, places and objects, individually and collectively, so that the community and visitors can continue to appreciate, experience and learn from them and about them. Interpreting our heritage places is considered a part of worldwide best practise.

How can we best interpret?

Heritage interpretation is a means of sharing history and culture with other communities, new citizens, visitors, and people overseas. It is also a means of passing on this knowledge to new generations.

To help us understand the 'what', 'why' and 'how' for this bridge, in this consultation we ask the community and stakeholders to consider:

- heritage significance by identifying historical, cultural and social values
- issues, challenges and opportunities
- themes, stories and audiences, and
- interpretation media, placement, and options.

What is the heritage interpretation process?

Our heritage interpretation process for this project will involve:

1. Consult community and stakeholders to inform planning
2. Research
3. Identify and prioritise preferred options
4. Develop heritage interpretation strategy
5. Consult on strategy
6. Develop heritage interpretation plan
7. Obtain funding and approval
8. Submit plan to Heritage NSW
9. Implement plan.

About the consultation and next steps

How will you carry out the consultation?

Our approach to the consultation will provide an opportunity for the community and stakeholders to engage with Transport across a range of mediums including written, online and face-to-face.

We will do this using a variety of communication channels such as email, hard and soft copy community updates, social media, project webpage, online survey, workshops, briefings and possibly a community drop-in session based on community interest.

What happens after the consultation?

Once consultation is complete, Transport will:

- Assess all feedback to determine feasible options.
- Develop and publish a consultation report summarising consultation approach and feedback received.
- Develop a heritage interpretation strategy.
- Place the heritage interpretation strategy on public exhibition for 28 days and obtain feedback from the community.
- Consider feedback from public exhibition to develop the heritage interpretation strategy.
- Identify a preferred option and submit to the Heritage Council of NSW for approval.
- Obtain approval to proceed with preferred option.
- Inform community and stakeholders of the preferred option.
- Develop a concept design and submit for approval.
- Develop a detailed design – if required based on preferred option.
- Implement the preferred option.

When will the consultation report be circulated?

The consultation report will be made publicly available in Q3 2025. We will post this on our website and email the report to those on our mailing list.

When will heritage interpretation be delivered?

The timeframe for delivery has not yet been determined. Any heritage interpretation options for the bridge need to be approved by the Heritage Council of NSW before implementation.

Survey questions guide

To help you answer the survey question heritage interpretation, please see refer to FAQs below.

What are the issues and challenges with heritage interpretation for this bridge?

1. All works and interpretation will require support and/or approval from Heritage Council of NSW.
 - a. Contributing factor: the site is listed on the State Heritage Register and cannot be modified without Heritage Council approval.
2. Cannot adopt a historical interpretation option which will require ongoing management by Transport.
 - a. Contributing factor: this is a non-operational asset and therefore a lower priority for resourcing.
3. Funding for interpretation has not been approved.
 - a. Contributing factor: a plan is required in order to seek funding from Transport Asset Manager.

How do you identify themes, stories, and audiences?

When looking to identify themes and stories for interpretation, we need to consider:

- characteristics of the item history, people, its context, and especially its 'people stories'; and
- opportunities to link the place with other places, objects, and to cultural and natural values.

When considering audience, it's important to consider:

- to whom the significance of the item is to be conveyed; and

- the people who might be likely to visit or want to learn about it.

Possible themes include:

- Rail history
- Early colonial expansion
- Aboriginal history and people
- Local stories/characters

Possible audiences include:

- Local historical community
- Aboriginal community
- Rail enthusiasts

How do you translate values, themes and stories into feasible interpretation options?

Interpretation captures all the possible ways significance and meaning of an item can be presented.

Interpretation can occur in a variety of ways using a variety of interpretative media such as events, activities, signs and publications, public art and more. We have listed some examples of tools, techniques and technologies to interpret the bridge below.

Interpretative media can be placed:

- At the bridge or elsewhere: retention of physical items of the fabric, signage...
- In the setting (the area around the bridge): signs and viewing places, public artworks...
- Publications / publicity /souvenirs: Posters, pamphlets, books; internet web sites; souvenir items...
- Events and activities away from the item: oral histories, video recordings, commemorative and celebratory events...

It's important to note that the media chosen should match the needs and character of the audience. The media that suit one item and its audience might not be suitable for another item.

What are some possible historical interpretation options?

While not exhaustive or prescriptive, the following list might inspire possible or feasible options for Sunnyside Bridge. Please note that

these concepts are exploratory in nature and have not yet received formal approval or funding.

Transport welcomes any other ideas or examples the community would like considered for this project.

IDEAS/EXAMPLES:

1. Online presence of 3D photogrammetry of Sunnyside bridge.



Example: photogrammetry of Sunnyside Bridge.

2. Interpretative signage.
3. Retention of the piers only.



Example: Remnant pylons from Hawkesbury River bridge.

4. Reconstruction of 1-2 spans in timber reclaimed from the bridge with or without viewing platform.
5. Reconstruction of 1-2 spans in steel to replicate the queen truss form with or without viewing platform.
6. Reconstruction of 1 full span off site using either reclaimed timber or new timber.



Example: Warren truss bridge, Ohio. Rebuilt in public park.

7. Retention of material for reuse or movable heritage collections.
8. An online historic archive
9. A Photographic archival recording.
10. Self-guided walk.
11. Sound trail.
12. Audio art installation.

13. Scale model of bridge.
14. One off event.
15. Public artwork using elements of the bridge.



Example: Interloop artwork created from demolition of timer escalators at Wynyard.

Transport is open to other ideas from the community and stakeholders which will be considered following the consultation.

Contact us



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bit.ly/sunnysidebridge



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