

Andrew Stoner MP

Leader of The Nationals - NSW | Shadow Minister for Roads | Shadow Minister for State and Regional Development
Shadow Minister for Ports | Member for Oxley

22nd February 2011

Association of Concerned Mid Mountains Residents
Bell Action Group Against the Highway
Blackheath Highway Action Group
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Blue Mountains Commuter and Transport Users Association
Blue Mountains Sustainable Transport Alliance
Bullaburra Township Committee
Hartley Highway Action Group
Katoomba Chamber of Commerce & Community
Mt Victoria Highway Bypass Action Group (Mt Victoria Community Association)

C/- Michael Paag
Via email: michaelpaag@bigpond.com

Dear Michael

Thank you for your email.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals understand the need for a better road transport corridor across the Blue Mountains.

However, the Keneally Labor Government's current proposal to upgrade the Great Western Highway is sub-optimal.

In particular, the proposed Mt Victoria to Lithgow upgrade and the bypass of River Lett Hill may be unnecessary, especially given the potential for safety upgrades to be made to the Bells Line of Road corridor.

In addition, the planned upgrades to the Great Western Highway may also have a significant impact on the environmental, cultural, social and economic life of the communities they traverse.

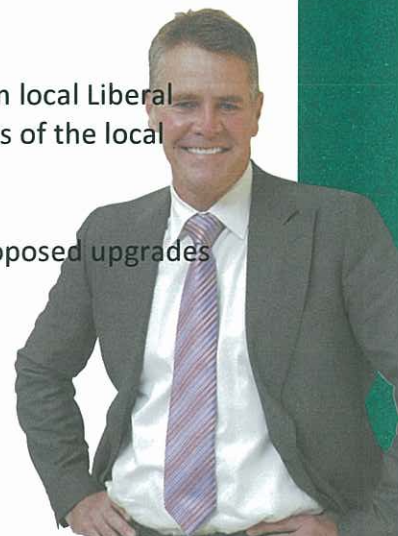
These concerns have been made clear to me thanks to representations from local Liberal Candidate Roza Sage, Bathurst Nationals candidate Paul Toole and members of the local community.

Given these concerns, I have committed to reviewing the Government's proposed upgrades of the Great Western Highway west of Katoomba if elected on March 26.

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This review will focus on the cost-effectiveness of the projects, their impact on the local communities and the potential for re-directing allocated funds towards safety upgrades on the Bells Line of Road.

I also understand there are serious concerns over the movement of freight across the Blue Mountains. Rest assured, we have no plans to allow B Double longer than 19 metres through the Blue Mountains.

I also look forward to working with the local community on this issue in the future. After 16 years of Labor, a lot of residents feel they have been left out of the decision-making process. The NSW Liberals & Nationals want to change this, and will start by granting more power to local communities over the decisions that affect them.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Stoner', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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NSW Leader of the Nationals
Shadow Minister for Roads