

**What you've
said**

**Western Freeway
Upgrade between Melton
and Caroline Springs**



MARCH 2024

**Community Consultation
Summary**

bigbuild.vic.gov.au/roads

WESTERN FREEWAY UPGRADE

We're progressing planning for a potential upgrade to the Western Freeway between Melton and Caroline Springs.

Potential options being explored to upgrade the freeway between Harkness Road and Christies Road include:



Additional road lanes



New interchanges and overpasses



Upgrades to existing interchanges



Upgrades to walking and cycling paths



Traffic signal and street lighting improvements



Public transport facilities

Consultation

From 11 November to 10 December 2023, we asked for community feedback to help inform our planning and shape the development of project options for a potential upgrade of the Western Freeway between Melton and Caroline Springs.

2748 SURVEYS COMPLETED

1612 MAP PINS PLACED ON THE INTERACTIVE MAP

268,889 REACHED VIA SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING



Thank you to everyone who took the time to provide feedback.

16,665 UNIQUE VISITORS TO THE ENGAGE VICTORIA WEBPAGE

671 COMMUNITY POP UP ATTENDEES

What we heard

Feedback has provided important local insights that has helped us to understand community views on safety, traffic flow and what we should consider in our planning.



THE ROAD AND INFRASTRUCTURE IS INSUFFICIENT, AN UPGRADE IS A PRIORITY AND NECESSARY.”



Needs a diamond Interchange at Mt Cottrell Road [to] connect the people living in these new estates straight to the Western Freeway, save time and no more congestion at Ferris Road.”



Christies Road eastbound entry needs to be extended. Westbound exit ramp needs a longer queue area, constantly stuck in emergency lane, extremely dangerous.”



Ferris Road needs to have a second bridge over the freeway. A new exit point needs to be constructed at Bulmans or Harkness roads. This could save a lot of traffic coming off at Coburns Road.”



The peak traffic is terrible each way, with only two lanes in each direction, every off ramp and on ramp causes issues as well as an accident can halt traffic altogether.”



Bumper to bumper traffic from 6am to 9am and from 3.30pm to 6.30pm in a zone which is 80 to 110km/h.”



Please consider nothing less than two extra lanes in both directions.”



Provide high quality cycling links across the freeway to allow access to railway stations and local shops.”

Feedback highlights

- strong support for additional road lanes
- upgrades to some existing interchanges
- suggested locations for several new interchanges.



Community survey

99% of survey respondents report experiencing traffic congestion on the Western Freeway between Melton and Caroline Springs with the most reported wait time being delays of more than 30 minutes.

When asked to rank, in order of priority what new interchanges should be built, 40% of survey respondents said Mt Cottrell Road, 32% said Harkness Road and 28% said Bulmans Road.

66% of survey respondents rated the existing walking and cycling facilities in the area as poor or very poor, 26% said fair and 8% said good or very good.

When asked to rank, in order of priority what we should consider in our planning, 23% of survey respondents said additional road lanes, followed by new interchanges overpasses (18%), and upgraded interchanges (17%), traffic light improvements (12%), improved street lighting (12%), public transport priority facilities (8%) and walking and cycling path improvements (7%).

67% of survey respondents reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe when travelling on the Western Freeway between Melton and Caroline Springs, 25% said neither safe or unsafe and 8% said safe or very safe.

When asked to rank, in order of priority what interchanges we should upgrade, 21% of survey respondents said Leakes Road, followed by Ferris Road (17%), Christies Road (16%), Coburns Road (16%), Hopkins Road (15%) and Ballarat Road (15%).

When asked what contributes to delays when travelling to and on the Western Freeway between Melton and Caroline Springs, 38% of respondents said travelling on the Western Freeway between Melton and Caroline Springs, 34% said getting on and off the Western Freeway via interchanges and access points, and 28% said travelling on local roads to access the Western Freeway.

99% OF RESPONDENTS ARE SUPPORTIVE OF A POTENTIAL UPGRADE TO THE WESTERN FREEWAY BETWEEN MELTON AND CAROLINE SPRINGS





Planning timeline



October 2022

The Australian Government committed \$10 million in funding in the 2022/23 Federal Budget to complete a business case



November 2022

The Victorian Government committed \$10 million in funding in the 2022/23 State Budget to complete a business case



Early 2023 to late 2024

Business case planning and development



June 2023

Technical investigations and environmental surveys commenced



11 November to 10 December 2023

Community and business engagement

Interactive map and social media feedback

- Strong support for the potential upgrade due to the current pressure on the road network resulting from high population growth and new developments.
- Strong support for changes including consistent speed limits, walking and cycling paths to train stations (including Cobblebank Station), and interchanges with longer entry and exit ramps.
- Strong support for additional lanes to be added along the freeway between Melton and Caroline Springs.
- Priority areas of focus in our planning should include upgrading the existing Leakes Road and Ferris Road interchanges, building a new interchange at Mt Cottrell Road and Bulmans Road or Harkness Road, and improvements from Leakes Road to Christies Road.



If you increase the flow on the Western Freeway the Ferris Road exit will not cope. It's not coping now because of the single lane bridge."



[The] housing estates are booming out there at the moment. The Western Freeway needs to be four lanes each way."

Next steps

Feedback received is being used to inform our planning and the development of a business case. We will continue to provide the community with updates and information as our planning progresses.

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