



# The Western Link

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### **What is The Western Link?**

The Western Link is an initiative, led by a group of small businesses across The Central West Region who are in support of a quicker, safer and more reliable route from the Central West to Western Sydney. The Western Link Campaign - The way to a connected future; aims to build awareness of the positive outcomes a better route could bring such as productivity, connectivity and affordability.

### **Why did we start The Western Link?**

As individuals and owner/operators of businesses in the Central West, NSW, we saw the promise in an improved connection between Western Sydney and Lithgow and how it would help our community systems long into the future; through improved connectivity, productivity and affordability.

### **Who is involved in the Western Link?**

We are a group of small businesses located in cities of The Central West, NSW. Please see our website 'Our Supporters' section for more information.

### **So you support the GWH Duplication, the road?**

**We are mode agnostic**, meaning we are not advocating for any one specific route, instead we are using this campaign to drive awareness of the need for a solution and drive the urgency for one to be delivered that is aligned with the promise the GWH Upgrade Program will deliver, the promise we support...*"This upgrade will reduce congestion and provide safer, more efficient and reliable journeys in, around and through the Blue Mountains."*

### **What is 'mode-agnostic'**

We are in support of modes of transportation that are more effective and better coordinated which will result in an improved connection across the mountains. We are not advocating for one specific route, and understand that not all solutions will tick all boxes, however a solution needs to be delivered.

### **What are we campaigning for?**

**A quicker**, safer and more reliable route across the mountains which will deliver improved productivity, connectivity and affordability to both The Central West Region and Western Sydney.

### **Why are we campaigning for this promise?**

In bringing the communities of the Central Western NSW close to Sydney, we will increase

the economic capacity of the regions west of the Blue Mountains, expedite opportunities for people in Western Sydney, improve congestion and road safety, better connect and help our communities build greater, more meaningful and more fulfilling lives for decades to come.

### **What are your objectives?**

To deliver improved connection/s that would help our community systems long into the future through the positive outcomes of improved productivity, connectivity and affordability for The Central West; ensuring a strong and vibrant future for the region. This campaign aims to drive awareness and urgency for our communities to ensure the momentum of delivering a solution for improved connection/s does not come to a complete halt.

### **Why should we sign the petition?**

Every effort, big or small, will make a huge difference to the success of this campaign. Together we can;

- Create jobs in the region
- Make goods more affordable
- Increase agricultural and small business productivity
- Revitalise Central West communities.
- Ease access between Western Sydney and the Central West
- Improve road safety
- Reduce travel time
- Preserve the natural environment
- Better freight connectivity
- Build more meaningful lifestyles.

### **How can we support The Western Link?**

The proposed strategic corridor is just the start to unlocking greater prospects that lie beyond the Great Dividing Range. This is a project the people of NSW deserve and so together, with other Western Link Supporters, we encourage you to:

- **Provide a statement of support** for the project for us to share across our platforms and website.
- **Provide us with your logo** which we can display in 'Our Supporters section'
- **Make your opinions in support of better connections from the Central West to Western Sydney known**, through letters to press outlets; Councils, your own local communities.
- **Share and drive petition** signatures across your network.

### **Why is The Western Link the way to a connected future?**

The Western Link is a campaign in support of the OUTCOMES improved connections from the Central West to Western Sydney will deliver. We believe in a quicker, safer and more reliable route across the Mountains that, when complete, will deliver diversity, hope and inclusion through bringing closer the communities of The Central West and Western Sydney. In bringing the communities of the Central Western NSW close to Sydney, we aim to increase the economic capacity of the regions west of the Blue Mountains, expedite opportunities for people in Western Sydney to enjoy the wide open spaces of the Central West, improve congestion and road safety, better connect and help our communities build greater, more meaningful and more fulfilling lives for decades to come.

## **How do better connections deliver Diversity, Hope and Inclusion?**

We believe that better connections between the two regions will deliver Diversity through connectivity and accessibility, making it easier for people with diversity of thought, diversity in business and more, to move between major centres to regional areas; Hope through affordability including the potential for people to move to the Central West and actually own a home with a backyard, impacting the future prosperity of the region; and Inclusion through improved productivity enabling businesses to be more competitive through lower input costs, helping local businesses to capitalise on existing infrastructure commitments, namely the Western Sydney Airport and Inland Rail projects (opening up greater access to jobs for those in the Central West!).

### **Why is this campaign important to:**

#### Small Business?

- Diversification in business, thought leadership and innovation.
- Lower input costs enabling businesses to be more competitive.
- A more affordable lifestyle for small business owners wishing to relocate to the Central West from Sydney, bringing jobs to the region.

#### Transport?

- Safer roads.
- Improved travel time and significant cost savings.
- Ease of congestion.

#### Tourism?

- The Central West is a land of wide open spaces, abundant resources and beautiful places that need to be made more easily accessible.
- Potential for significant agri-tourism boost from the Western Sydney Airport.

#### Communities?

- Improving the link between Western Sydney and the Central West and beyond will drive growth in both regions and take the pressure off Sydney's west, in terms of congestion, cost of living and housing choice.
- This increased connectivity will benefit Western Sydney's people and drive improved social outcomes by addressing population growth pressure and the liveability of our suburbs; which in turn will boost regional towns economically.
- Greater connectivity will also unleash the tourism potential west of the mountains

#### Agriculture?

According to the NSW Farmers' Association, the benefits to building a Food Economy by linking the Central West to Western Sydney, include:

- addressing Western Sydney's 200,000 jobs deficit (Deloitte 2015);
- securing Sydney's access to affordable fresh food (Institute of Sustainable Futures 2016);
- increasing the productivity and value-add capabilities of the agricultural sector; and

- the effective decentralisation and revitalisation of regional centres, such as Orange and Bathurst.

#### Trade?

- Significant opportunity for industry diversification due to increased demand from Sydney and new export opportunities with the new Western Sydney Airport, which requires 'load'
- Business opportunities for industries to support and supply the new Western Sydney Airport precinct

#### **This Campaign vs. Time of project build.**

It will be a process that's for sure! And that's why we're building awareness around the positive outcomes improved connections will bring, when completed. Large scale projects are a catalyst to drive improved local infrastructure and we understand infrastructure such as the GWH upgrade is being developed alongside long term rail options.

#### **How are you funded?**

All the work we have produced to date to help drive momentum for a project that delivers a solution to a more connected future; a quicker route across the mountains; a safer and more reliable route; and a route that will benefit local communities and businesses both East and West, has been undertaken by combined and internal resources via the companies outlined on our website.

#### **Are you in support of The GWH Upgrade bulldozing our homes!**

No. The Western Link are sensitive to the concerns of the Blackheath Community and others that are greatly affected and understand that a co-design process for Blackheath is underway as the route options through that village are more complex with no preferred routes for the village being endorsed at this time. The Western Link understands that there is a long way to go to ensure community alignment. Positive outcomes further down the mountain have been achieved for local communities when improvements were made so we're sure the same can be achieved for Blackheath and Medlow Bath. This Project is an initiative that is in support of a solution to a more connected future; through improved connections (across multiple modes), road safety, quicker and more reliable route across the mountains, increased livability and overall a vibrant and thriving future for cities of The Central West Region; whatever that solution may be. The Great Western Highway Upgrade program is just the start to unlocking greater prospects for the West.

#### **Are you in support of The GWH Upgrade Program destroying communities?**

No. The Western Link are sensitive to the concerns of those communities between Katoomba to Lithgow that are greatly affected and understand that a co-design process for Blackheath and Medlow Bath is underway as the route options through those villages are more complex with no preferred routes for the village being endorsed at this time. We hope for a solution that aligns with Community Preference to avoid impacts to the township/s and environment. Positive outcomes further down the mountain have been achieved for local communities when improvements were made so we're sure the same can be achieved for Katoomba to Lithgow! It is important that local communities achieve a positive outcome to boost each local economy and improve local road safety.

***This is a working document and The Western Link Committee will continue to add FAQs to this document over time.***