

Escalating safety concerns prompt full closure of western end of Dunns Road

Wagga Wagga City Council has taken the decisive step to fully block all access to the Olympic Highway end of Dunns Road in response to safety concerns surrounding the Dunns Road Upgrade project.

Dunns Road, between Kunzea Place and Olympic Highway, was closed to all through traffic when construction work began in June, but local residents still had access from both the eastern and western ends.

However, Council Directory Strategy & Projects Phil McMurray says a hard closure has now been put in place at the western end as a direct response to motorists blatantly disregarding road closure signs and driving through the road works site.

“The construction site has evolved into a high-risk zone due to the presence of heavy machinery and large trucks operating within close proximity,” Mr McMurray said.

“This kind of self-entitled behaviour by these motorists jeopardises not only their own safety but that of the construction crew.”

Contractor Excell Gray Bruni Area Manager Justin Porganyi noted an alarming spike in motorists ignoring road closures and “recklessly speeding” along Dunns Road in recent weeks.

“This is clearly dangerous behaviour with heavy machinery and workers on the road,” Mr Porganyi said.

“While road closures might be inconvenient; they are essential safety measures to protect the lives of both our dedicated construction workers and the public,” Mr Porganyi said.

“Remember, every member of our team is someone's parent, sibling, spouse, or child – their safety matters, and we all have a role to play in ensuring they return home safely each day.”

Mr McMurray urges motorists to obey road closures, which are in place for a reason.

“Aside from putting lives at risk, people should know that ignoring road closure signs is a serious traffic offence,” Mr McMurray said.

“Motorists who disregard road closure signs face potential traffic infringement penalties,” Mr McMurray said.

“It may also impact a vehicle's insurance claim.”

The upgrade project is progressing well due to the run of good weather in recent months.

“With around 400 B-double truckloads of road base delivered and applied across the three-kilometre section of unsealed road, the process of sealing will soon start,” Mr McMurray said.

Council and the contractor are working with Transport for NSW to finalise arrangements for the next stage of the project which will be to create the new Dunns Road and Olympic Highway intersection.

The project is funded by the Australian Government (\$5.8 million) and Wagga Wagga City Council (\$2.5 million).

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MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

What: Council, police and the project contractor to brief community about dangers and risks posed to crew working on the Dunns Road Upgrade by motorists failing to comply with the road closed status, as well as the potential to receive traffic infringement penalties and legal implication for insurance if the driver has an accident.

In response to poor behaviour of motorists, Council has completely blocked all access to the Olympic Highway end of Dunns Road.

Who: Wagga Wagga City Council Director Strategy & Projects Phil McMurray, Supervisor - Riverina Highway Patrol – Wagga Wagga Sergeant Hannah Bloomfield, and Exell Gray Bruni Area Manager Justin Porganyi.

When: Wednesday 23 August 2023 at 9.30am.

Where: Western end of Dunns Road at intersection with Olympic Highway.

* Attending media must wear hi-visibility vests and fully enclosed shoes, i.e. boots to be allowed on site.

**** Please Note: this is a construction site with heavy vehicles and machinery being used on site and travelling in and out of the site. Media are to follow the direction of Council staff and the construction contractors at all times with regards to access to the site and safety.**

Contact 6926 9190 or media@wagga.nsw.gov.au

About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of more than \$236M.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as 'the City of Good Sports'.

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