Planning approval for penultimate stage of Hume upgrade

Planning approval has been granted for the Woomargama Bypass south of Holbrook, bringing the Hume Highway upgrade just one step from completion.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said the decision means only one section of the entire Hume Highway upgrade program – the Holbrook Bypass – was yet to receive planning approval, but that project is currently being assessed by the Department of Planning.

"Once finalised, those bypasses will complete a safe and continuous four-lane divided carriageway from Sydney to Melbourne," the Minister said.

“The Hume Highway carries around a fifth of all Sydney-Melbourne passenger travel as well as more than 20 million tonnes of road freight every year.”

The Woomargama bypass includes approximately nine kilometres of dual carriageway highway, commencing three kilometres west of the Woomargama village and reconnecting to the former highway 7.5 kilometres north of the village.

Acting Minister for Transport and Roads, David Borger, said work is expected to start on the bypass next month.

"It will significantly improve road safety, deliver enhanced efficiency for freight transport and reduce traffic and noise levels within Woomargama itself,” Mr Borger said.

The approval was subject to 54 conditions, a number of which will minimise impacts on native vegetation and Aboriginal heritage.

They include:

- A comprehensive range of management measures for indigenous heritage sites, developed in consultation with local Aboriginal groups;
- A number of measures to reduce operational noise including low noise pavements and roadside barriers;
- The offsetting of any vegetation losses; and
- Fauna highway crossing measures.

The effectiveness of these measures will be reviewed within six months of construction commencing and again a year after the road is opened to traffic.

The announcement of the Woomargama bypass follows NSW Government approval of the Tarcutta Bypass earlier this week. Both bypasses are fully funded by the Federal Government.