

# Temporary traffic changes on Waterfall Way from August to the end December 2022

## Project update

August 2022

[nswroads.work/waterfallway](https://nswroads.work/waterfallway)



Bellingen area

## The Australian and NSW governments are funding work to improve safety and resilience on Waterfall Way.

Waterfall Way provides a 170 kilometre east – west connection between the Pacific Highway at Raleigh and the New England Highway at Armidale. It connects rural communities to the urban centres of Coffs Harbour and Armidale.

In August 2021, we asked for your comments on the proposed program of work for Waterfall Way. Thank you to everyone who took time to review the program and provide feedback. Your input has been considered in finalising this program of work, which will be carried out at multiple locations on Waterfall Way during the next four years.

An estimated 42,377 people live in the vicinity of Waterfall Way, with about 33,000 of this number in the major regional towns and centres including Bellingen (6,168), Dorrigo (3,250) and Armidale (23,967) (2021 ABS census). The region encompasses the traditional lands of the Gumbaynggirr, Nganyaywana and Dunghutti people.

Traffic volumes along the Waterfall Way vary in the rural sections from about 750 vehicles per day, between Dorrigo and Ebor, to more than 6,700 vehicles per day between the Pacific Highway and Bellingen.





## Why are we doing this work?

Waterfall Way has long been recognised as an essential road corridor for communities, tourism and agriculture. We understand that frequent and ongoing disruption due to natural disasters prevents access to jobs, education, leisure and essential services.

We are working to:

- improve road safety
- investigate opportunities for greater resilience of the road network, which enables us to respond better to events that can't be avoided or predicted
- restore and maintain road infrastructure including pavement, bridges, retaining walls, slopes and drainage

While we cannot eliminate disruption, such as the March 2021 and 2022 wet weather events which caused major damage and land slips between Bellingen and Dorrigo, we can improve the resilience of customer journeys, build redundancy into our networks, and keep our customers safe and informed.

### Redundancy

From an engineering perspective redundancy means – ‘including extra components which are not strictly necessary to function in case of failure in other components’ – for the road network this may include an upgrade or increased maintenance of alternative routes.



## What work are we doing?

Work along Waterfall Way generally falls into four categories:

- safety
- disaster recovery
- journey resilience
- maintenance

We are currently focused on delivering safety and disaster recovery work, which involves:

- widening the road
- installing or upgrading safety barriers
- intersection and road safety improvements
- installing slow vehicle passing lanes
- implementing temporary and permanent engineering solutions at land slip sites such as Myers Bluff and Thora



## The PRRR of journey resilience

Resilience can be considered as the ability to withstand, adapt to and recover quickly from anticipated or unexpected shocks and stresses – now and in the future.

Improving journey resilience includes four key principles:

- **Plan** to prevent future journey impacts – identify and prioritise targeted maintenance activities such as improvements to drainage
- **Respond** and manage disruption when it occurs – use technology such as variable message signs to enhance warning systems and communicate with customers in real time
- **Recover** and return the network to ‘normal’ operating conditions as quickly as possible to enable customers to access the road as they would on a normal day
- **Reflect**, review and redefine approaches – seek continuous improvement through feedback and engagement with internal and external stakeholders

### Completed

- Upgrading of safety barriers
- Dorrigo roundabout
- Pavement work at Sandy Creek to Wakefield Road
- Slope repair work near Sherrard Falls
- Intersection improvement work, Dome Road and Waterfall Way
- Intersection improvement work Little North Arm Road and Waterfall Way
- Work to improve Waterfall Way at Metz near Armidale

### Current

- Ongoing work to widen and improve Waterfall Way between Pump Station and Fernridge Lane
- Safety improvement work at Bakers Creek
- Road widening work between Rabbit eradication fence and Ebor Tip
- Ongoing work on slow vehicle passing lanes and culvert replacement between Thora and Dorrigo
- Pavement work from Appledale to Scotsburn\*
- Heavy patching at various locations

### Future

- Permanent repair work to Myers Bluff and Thora land slips
- NSW Safer Roads Funding, Deer Vale
- NSW Safer Road Funding, Fernbrook

\*Project name not geographic location



Grader at work, Pump Station to Fernridge Lane

## Pothole problems

Severe wet weather continues to cause potholes and damage to roads across NSW.

When it rains and water accumulates on a road surface, vehicle tyres push the water into the sealed surface, the repeated process of pushing on the road surface eventually causes the seal to crack.

As water passes through any cracks it spreads under the sealed surface and weakens the pavement. When vehicles pass over weakened pavement the cracked seal and pavement material may lift out, forming a pothole.

During periods of rain, water enters the hole and continues to weaken the pavement, which increases the depth and size of the hole.

Ongoing wet weather has made it difficult to complete lasting repairs. The material used for repairs needs to bind to a dry base. The frequent rain means road bases have not had the opportunity to dry, delaying repairs.



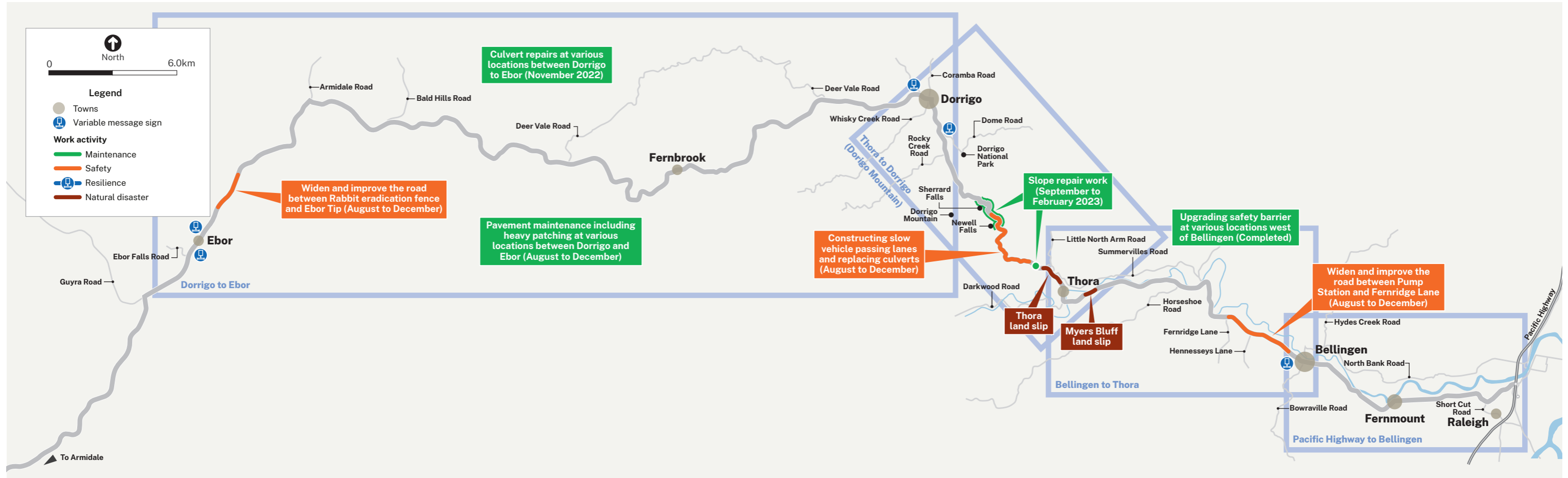
Example of variable message sign to be installed

## Variable Message Signs

Mini variable message signs (VMS) will be installed at six permanent sites between Bellingen and Armidale. These signs are being installed to provide our customers with information about road conditions during natural disaster events and construction.

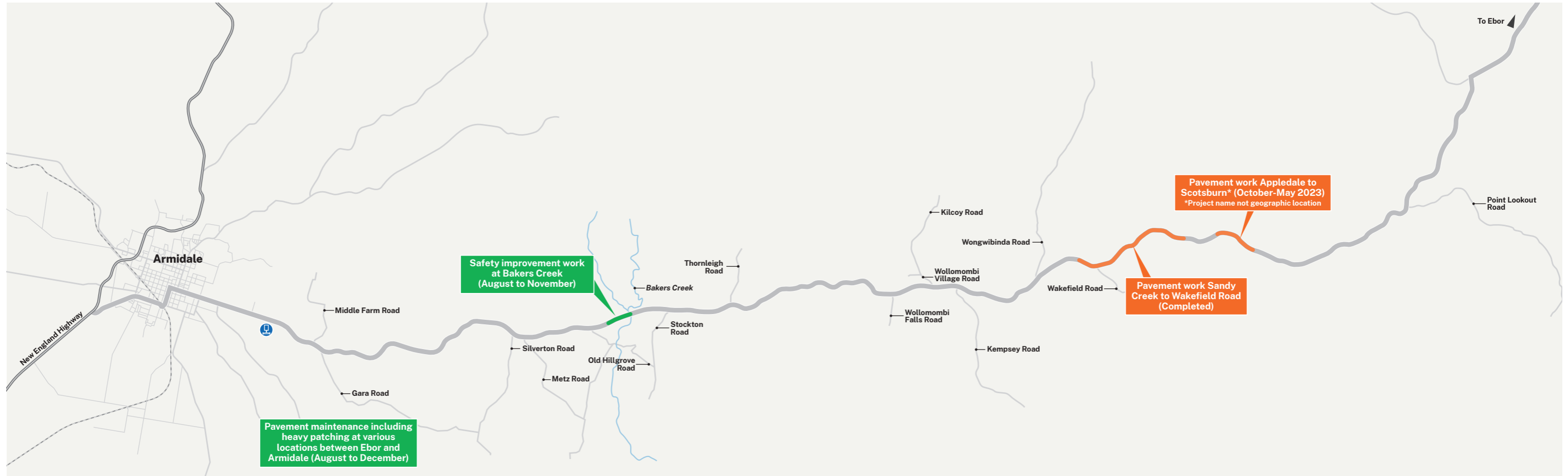
The six VMS locations were selected as they are key intersections for journey planning and have access to power supply.

# Location of work sites



See below for continuation of map

Map continues from above





**Pacific Highway to Bellingen**

From Raleigh, about 25 kilometres south of Coffs Harbour, motorists begin their 13 kilometre journey west along Waterfall Way towards Bellingen.

This picturesque drive follows the Bellinger River. It has rich alluvial farmlands and is the perfect introduction to what lies ahead.

**Fun fact**

In the Bellingen LGA there is an average number of 1.9 vehicles per dwelling.

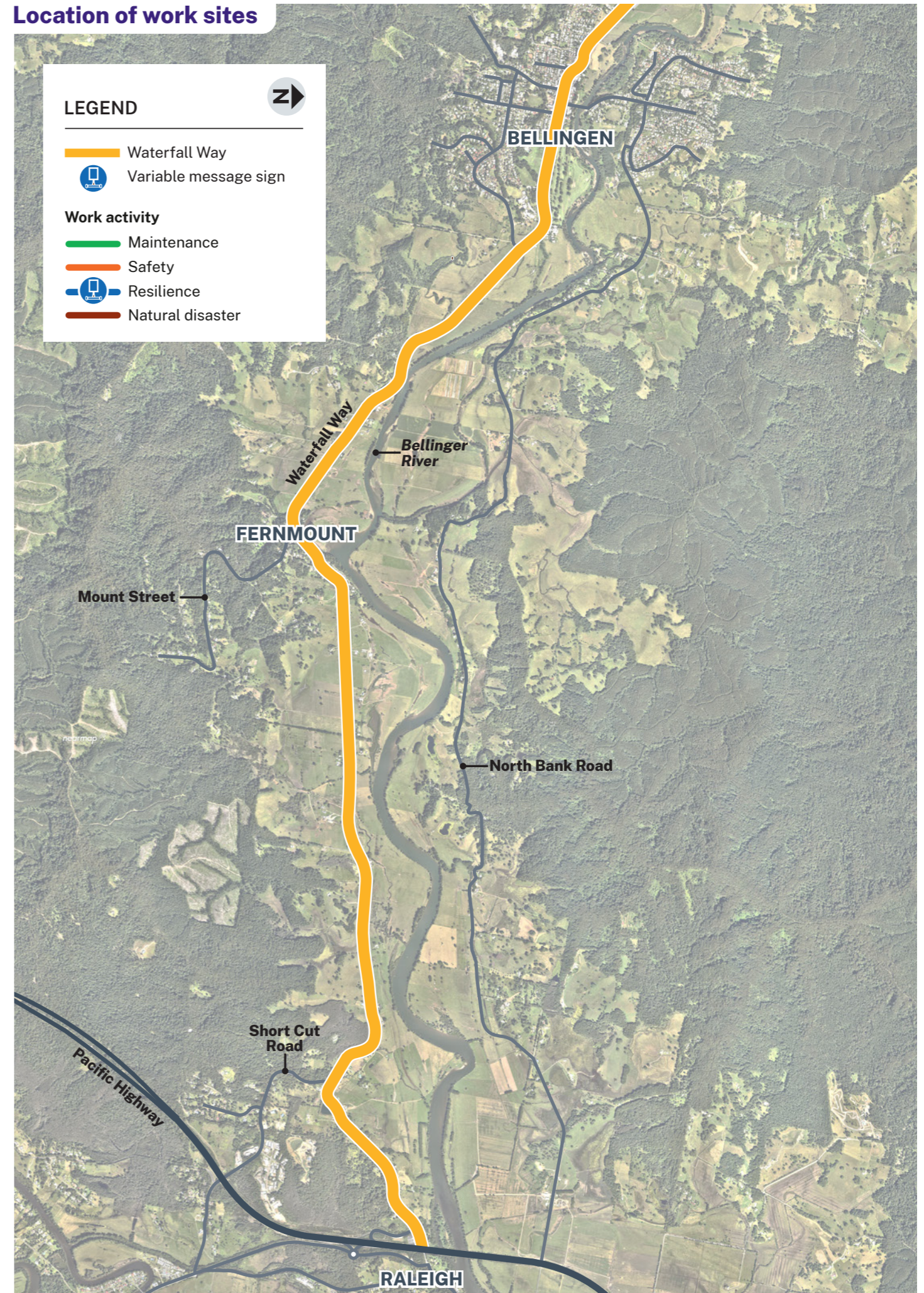


Aerial view of Waterfall Way and Bellingen



Hyde Street, Bellingen

**Location of work sites**





## Bellingen to Thora

The journey from the tranquil surrounds and heritage feel of Bellingen to the small locality of Thora is about 14 kilometres.

The landscape that creates the unique beauty in this area also makes it susceptible to the impact of heavy rainfall which can result in land slips.

### Program activities

**Pump Station and Fernridge Lane:** road widening and pavement work, including installing safety barriers.

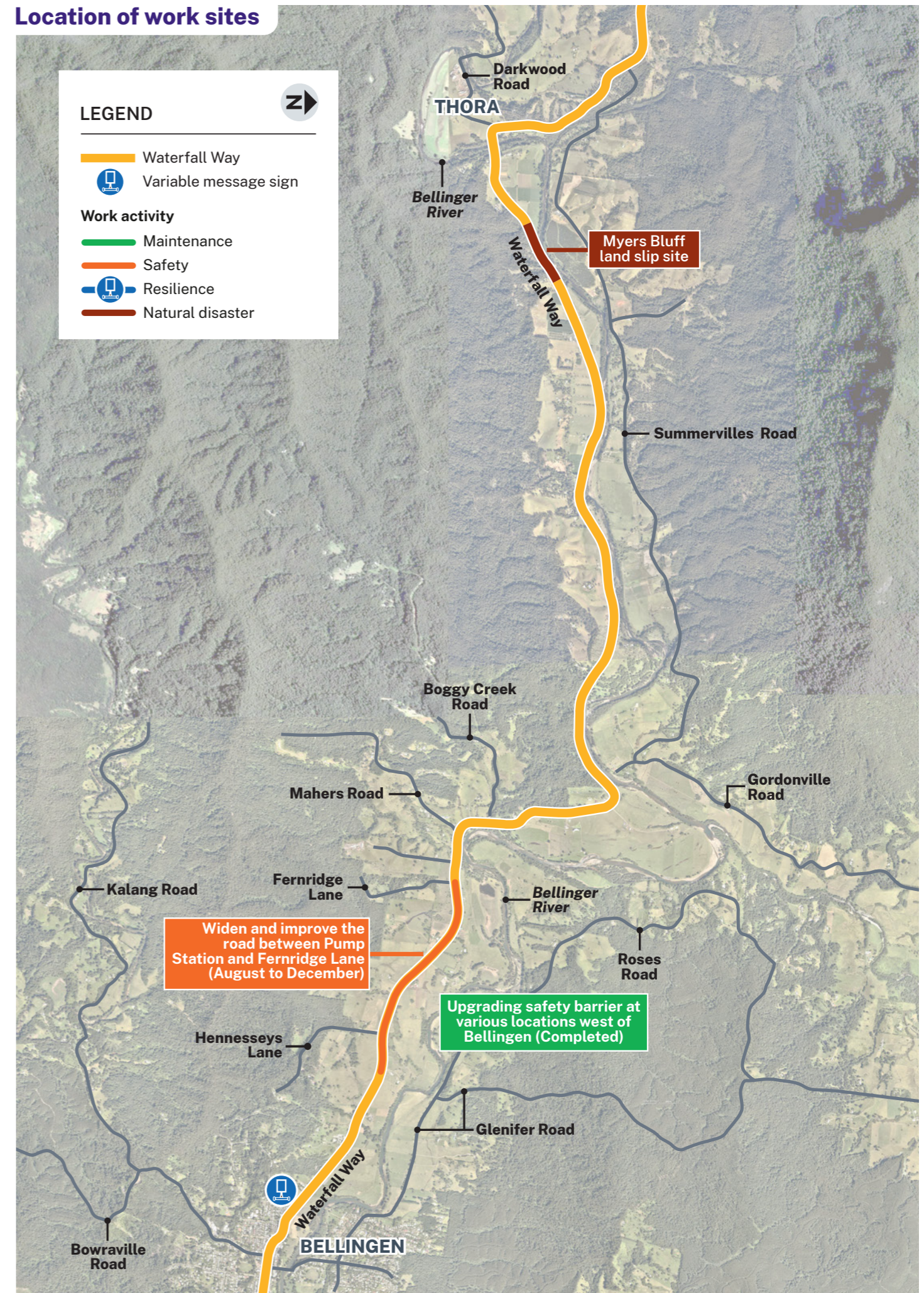
**Myers Bluff:** land slip repair work, March 2021 wet weather event.

**Variable message sign:** to be installed west of Bellingen, to better inform our customers of changing road conditions.



Myers Bluff along Waterfall Way, beside the Bellinger River

## Location of work sites





## Thora to Dorrigo (Dorrigo Mountain)

This section of Waterfall Way is about 15 kilometres. It includes steep grades, sections with single travel lanes and additional challenges such as slope stability and lack of overtaking facilities.

### Fun fact

As at the 2021 Census, Dorrigo Mountain is home to 88 people.



Thora General Store



Dorrigo Mountain

## Program activities

Four slow vehicle passing lanes and replacement culverts are being installed.

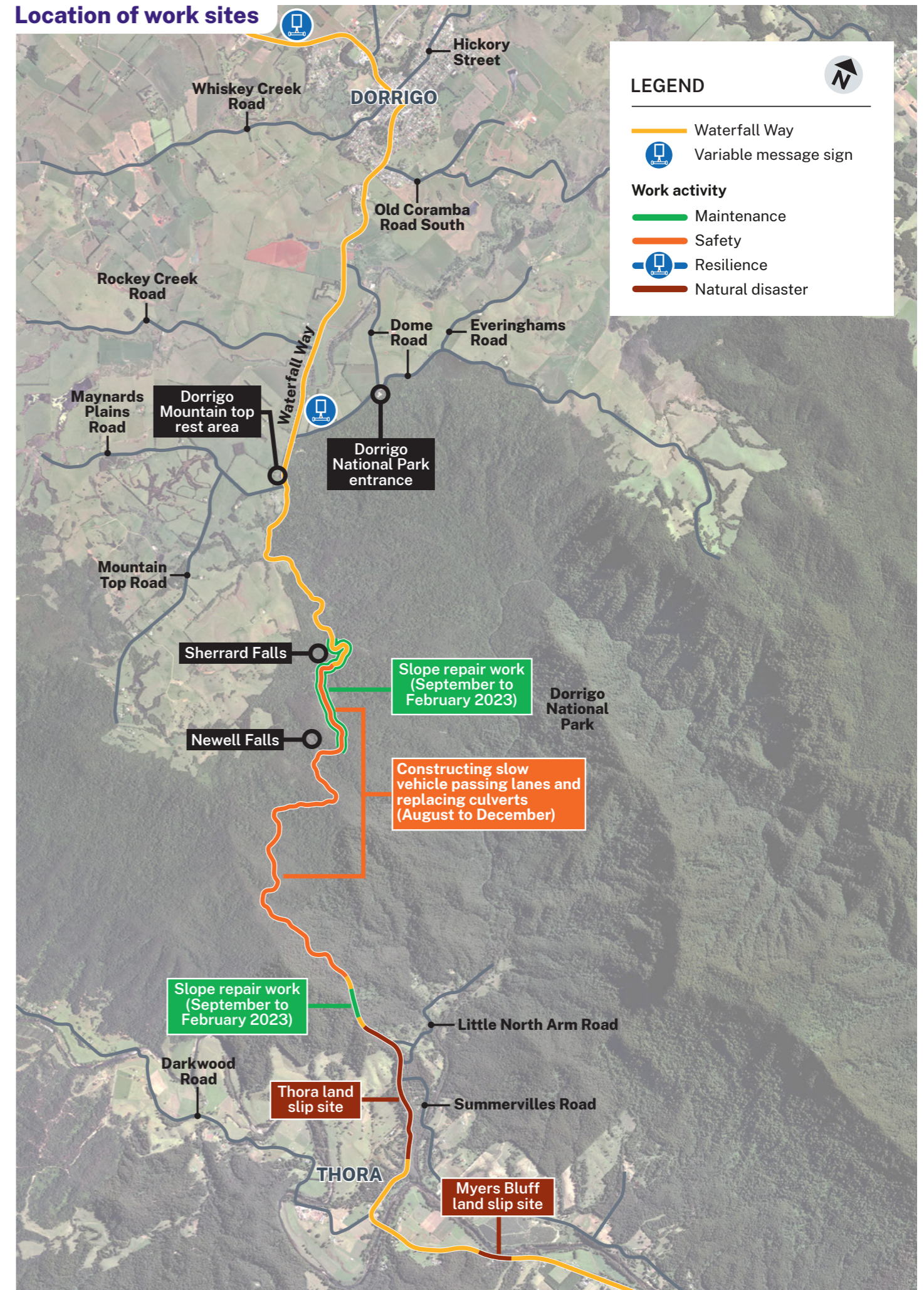
**Thora land slip (west):** investigation and planning to inform land slip repair, March 2022 wet weather event.

**Slope repair work:** slope stabilisation work at multiple locations between September and February 2023.

**Dorrigo Mountain top rest stop:** removal of the temporary toilet facilities late August. The rest stop will be retained to allow travellers to manage fatigue.

**Variable message sign:** to be installed east of Dorrigo, to better inform our customers of changing road conditions.

## Location of work sites





## Dorrigo to Ebor

Located on the Dorrigo Plateau above the Bellinger Valley, the quiet rural town of Dorrigo is surrounded by rich farmland, breathtaking waterfalls and bushwalks.

The winding road to Ebor, about 50 kilometres west of Dorrigo, takes you through the centre of Waterfall Way, providing access to amazing waterfalls and wildlife.

### Fun fact

Did you know that a major upgrade to the Dorrigo National Park has recently been proposed, including a rainforest centre hub and a multi-day walking track spanning 46 kilometres.

## Program activities

**Rabbit eradication fence to Ebor Tip:** road widening and pavement work, expected to start August 2022, weather permitting.

**Culvert repairs:** at various locations are scheduled to commence in November 2022 weather permitting.

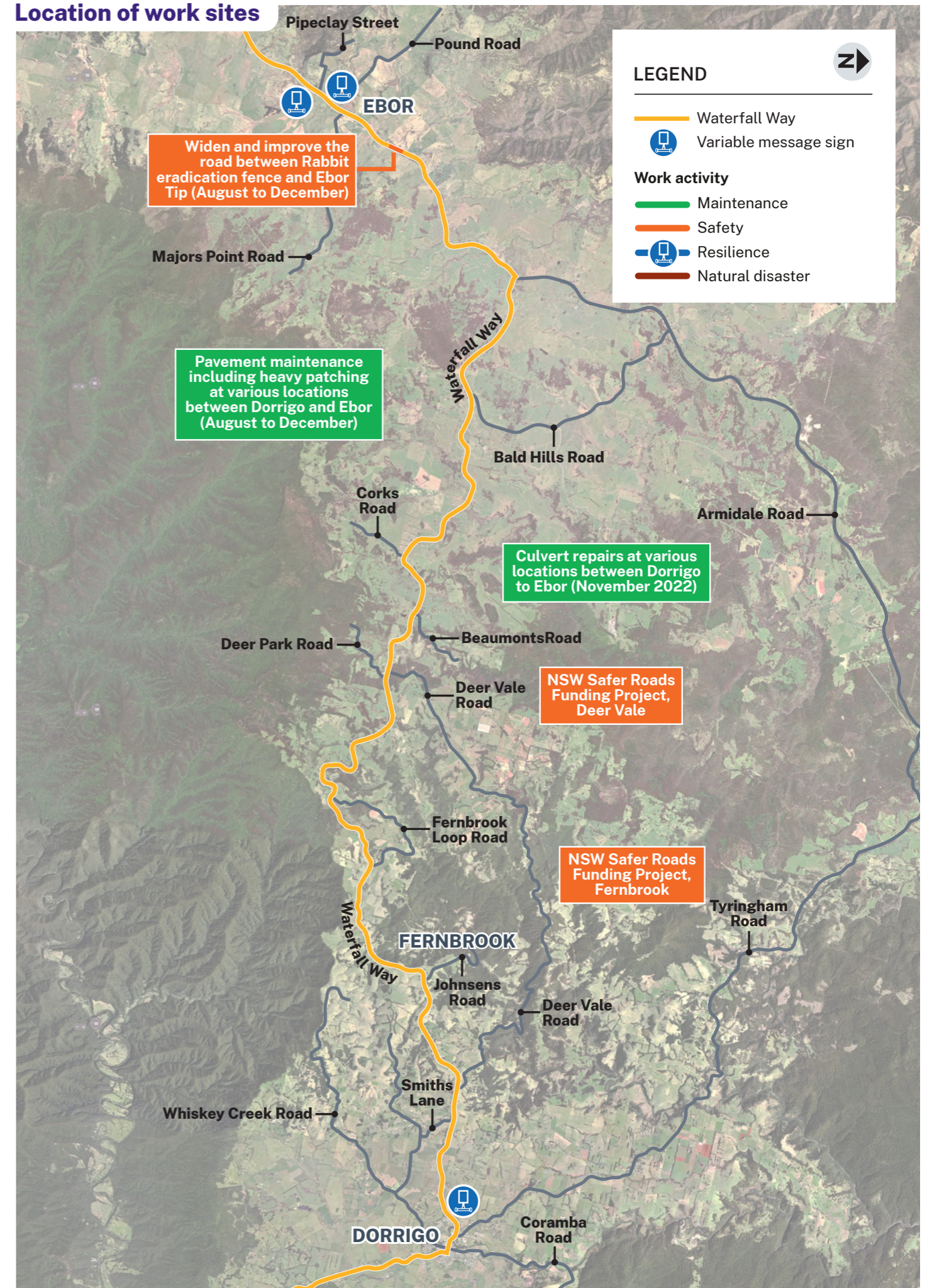
**Heavy patching and general maintenance:** at various locations between Dorrigo to Ebor, between August and December.

**Variable message signs:** to be installed west of Dorrigo and east of Ebor, to better inform our customers of changing road conditions.



Waterfall way signage

## Location of work sites





## Ebor to Armidale

This part of the Waterfall Way journey is about 80 kilometres. Travelling through this section of the Northern Tablelands you can experience the World Heritage listed New England National Park with its panoramic views back to the Bellinger Valley.

### Fun fact

Armidale is one of Australia's highest cities with an elevation of 980 metres above sea level.

## Program activities

**Appledale to Scotsburn\***: tree clearing and drainage work, expected to start in October 2022, weather permitting.

**Bakers Creek**: safety improvement and rehabilitation work.

**Ongoing heavy patching and pavement resealing**: at various locations between Ebor and Armidale.

**Variable message signs**: to be installed west of Ebor and east of Armidale to better inform our customers of changing road conditions.

\* Project name not geographic location

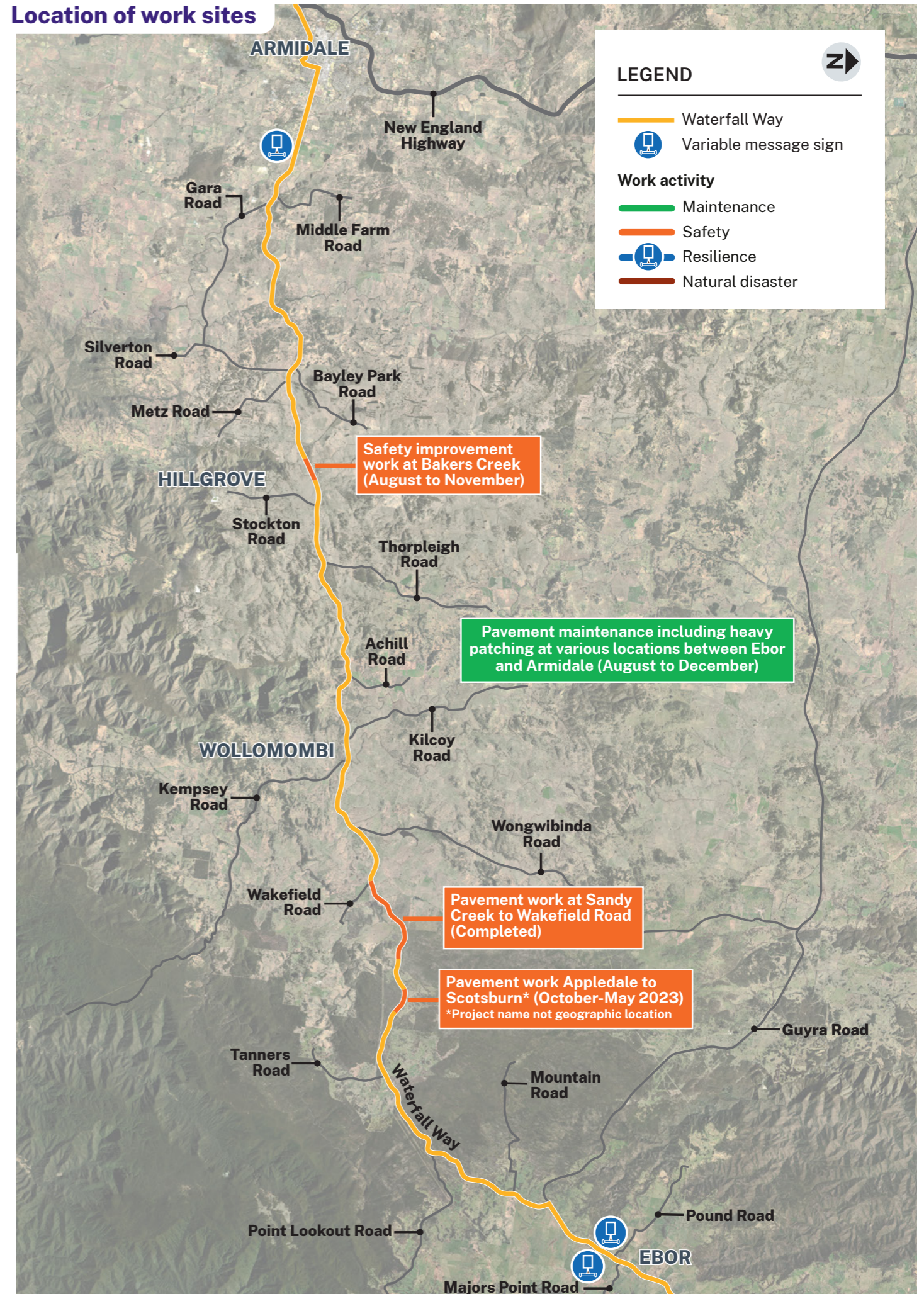


Safety improvement work to start at Bakers Creek



Work completed at Sandy Creek to Wakefield Road

## Location of work sites





## Work hours

Work hours will be between 7am and 5pm, Monday to Friday and Saturdays between 7am and 1pm. We will notify residents adjacent to work if there is a need to work outside these hours.

The project team will plan activities to minimise the impact of this work where possible and monitor any potential impacts so we can adjust our work as required.



## Plan your journey

To manage safety there will be temporary traffic changes including reduced speed limits and lane closures, which may affect travel times.

You will need to plan for up to 5-minute delays at each location as they will be controlled with traffic signals. Whenever possible, priority will be given to emergency vehicles and school buses.

Please keep to speed limits and follow the direction of traffic controllers and signs. For the latest traffic updates, you can call 132 701, visit [livetraffic.com](http://livetraffic.com) or download the Live Traffic NSW App.



Plan for intermittent stoppages when travelling on Waterfall Way

## Contact

If you would like to provide feedback, or have any questions and require more information about work activities, please contact our project team on:

☎ 1800 653 092 (toll free)

@ [region.north@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:region.north@transport.nsw.gov.au)

🌐 [nswroads.work/waterfallway](http://nswroads.work/waterfallway)

We apologise for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience during this important work.



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