

Safer driving on Gap Road

Narrow roads and soft edges can spell disaster for motorists, so an innovative machine designed to quickly and efficiently fix the problem will be a welcome sight on Browns Gap Road over the next fortnight.

The shoulder widening project, along about four kilometres of Browns Gap Road, was initiated by Lithgow City Council and funded through the RTA's Blackspot Program.

The work is expected to take less than two weeks, with minimal disruption to commuters and nearby residents.

"Lithgow Council is delighted to be working with the civil contracting and road maintenance company, Sharpe Bros, in providing much needed safety improvements to this road," Operations Manager at Lithgow City Council, Stephen Darlington, said.

Sharpe Bros has designed a range of award winning equipment, including the "Sidewinder" road edging machine, which will enable the project to be completed in a fraction of the time normally taken.

Joint Managing Director of Sharpe Bros, Michael Sharpe, said the family

company had spent millions of dollars to develop a series of technologies to repair and widen roads, without extensive reconstruction and traffic delays.

"A job that would normally take at least a week can be completed in a day at a much lower cost," Mr Sharpe said.

"The usual way of repairing broken edges or widening a road is to dig up a substantial amount of the road before resurfacing, which takes a long time, causes major traffic disruption and is very costly.

"The Sidewinder process, which extends the life of the road and reduces traffic disruption, uses one purpose-built machine to dig a neat trench along the side of the road, and another to fill the excavated trench with hotmix asphalt or even recycled road gravels."

Mr Sharpe said more Councils were using the Sidewinder to fix road edges due to the environmental, safety, quality and cost benefits the process provided.

According to the Australian College of Road Safety, the sealing of crumbling road edges can reduce the number of run-off and head-on crashes by 60 per cent.