



DANGEROUS: The Little Sydney Harbour Bridge over Hillas Creek looks pleasant, but it was the scene of serious crashes over the years.
Pictures: Keith Wheeler

BLACK SPOT: There was no room for escape at Sylvia's Gap on the Hume Highway.

Hume's deadly history

LITTLE Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sylvia's Gap, Snowball Creek, Aeroplane Hill, Daisy Bed Creek.

These place names on the Hume Highway all have a harmless, if not quaint, ring about them.

But they have been the scene of some of the region's worst road crashes over the decades.

Many were high-speed head-on collisions.

Police, ambulance officers, Rural Fire Service volunteers, Volunteer Rescue Association members and, yes, reporters and photographers came to dread these names.

Thankfully, by the end of the year all will

have faded into history, although not forgotten by anyone who has had the misfortune to attend a tragedy on the Hume or lost a loved one in one of the countless crashes.

Bob Drummond is a former truck driver and ambulance officer who has seen the worst side of the Hume Highway.

"I got seven fatalities in two weeks at Sylvia's Gap in 1981," Mr Drummond said.

"It was one of the scariest sections of road in Australia.

"There was pure rock face on either side of the road.

"There was absolutely no escape for anyone."

The Little Sydney Harbour Bridge over

Hillas Creek can still be seen from the duplicated section of the Hume Highway near the Tumut turnoff.

It's quaint look masks a deadly history.

Most semi-trailer drivers would pull over if they saw another truck coming in the other direction as they approached the bridge, but often trucks would flash past each other on the narrow bridge in the dead of the night.

There was no room for error.

But, sometimes, weary drivers made tragic mistakes and fatal head-on collisions resulted.

Mr Drummond once had a narrow escape on the bridge.

"I used to drive trucks in the 1970s and

one time when I went across the bridge I lost a side mirror, and so did the other truck," Mr Drummond recalled.

Mr Drummond welcomes the duplication of the Hume Highway, but in his opinion it is a decade overdue.

Ever-aware of dangers of the road, he fears the increased safety and smoother surface will lure some drivers into pushing themselves too hard.

"It has cut hours off the trip between Sydney and Melbourne," Mr Drummond said.

"The only problem I see with that is that people will attempt to drive all the way after work because the road is so good."