

Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy Report

July 2004

Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Community Involvement Summary Report Coffs Harbour City Council's Preferred Corridor

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For the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
and the Roads and Traffic Authority

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Work began on the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy (CHHPS) in early 2001. In late 2003, following a series of community forums, Coffs Harbour City Council adopted a position of support for a far-western bypass of Coffs Harbour and Woogoolga.

Council's preferred corridor is located within the Bucca Valley and the coastal range to the west of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga.

In February 2004, Community Update No.4 (Connell Wagner 2004a) was released which contained a number of key announcements including that the RTA had agreed to assess the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor.

The purpose of this Community Involvement Summary Report is to document the overall exhibition process and feedback in the period between the announcement of the findings of the assessment of options within Council's preferred corridor on June 1, 2004, until the close of receipt of submissions on June 25, 2004. Allowance also was made for late deliveries to the Reply Paid PO Box. Submissions and survey forms cleared from the Reply Paid PO Box on June 28, 2004, were included. Despite the relatively short period available for public submissions to be received, there was no request received for an extension of the exhibition period.

The report will provide input to a decision on the Preferred Strategy. It should be noted that the feedback reported in this summary is not necessarily representative of the views of the overall Coffs Harbour community. The outcomes are the result of responses to questions on the 'Have Your Say' survey form as well as written submissions and, statistically, cannot be considered as a valid sample survey of the area. In addition, the activities of interest groups, as outlined in Section 2.5 of this report, are likely to have influenced the submissions received. The extent of this influence is impossible to determine.

Stakeholder Involvement

Since the project launch in September 2001, there has been extensive interaction and involvement of a wide range of community groups and individuals. During the exhibition of the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor, this extensive interaction and involvement has continued. There have also been a number of additional community involvement activities organised by groups who have strong preferences for or against particular options in both the northern and southern sections of the strategy. These activities have included regular updating of a website and a public meeting at Coffs Harbour in June 2004 which ended in a blockade of the Pacific Highway in both directions for almost two hours.

Stakeholder Responses

The stakeholder response to the exhibition of the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor comprised 108 written submissions and 292 survey forms.

Survey forms were provided in a mailout of Community Update No.5 (Connell Wagner 2004c) to stakeholders on the Strategy database. They also were provided to interest groups in bulk, on request through the Project Information Line and at the static displays. Approximately 7600 copies of the community update and survey forms were distributed by the project team.

Most survey form and submission respondents cited similar issues for each of the options to those that have been raised in previous community feedback.

However, despite the issues being common to most respondents, their impacts or effects were seen to be widely disparate for the same option. Some respondents saw an issue as having 'severe', 'maximum', 'most' or 'negative' impact on an option while other respondents saw the impact for the same issue as being 'minimal', 'least' or 'positive'. Such views of 'negative' and 'positive' effects applied to all major issues raised.

The options assessed in Council's preferred corridor were:

- Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route
- Western Bucca Valley / Option A route
- Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River route
- Western Bucca Valley / Sherwood Creek route

Some respondents also chose to list specific impacts and benefits for the Coastal Route Options and for a previously investigated option, a far western bypass.

The issues were assessed and tabled below according to the following benchmarks:

- the issue was considered to be of major importance to the community if it was raised in more than 50 submissions; and
- if the number of respondents who saw the impacts as 'positive' were twice (or more) than the number who saw the impacts as 'negative', then the issue has been tabled as positive. Similarly, if the number of respondents who saw the impacts as 'negative' were twice (or more) than the number who saw the impacts as 'positive', then the issue has been tabled as negative.

Option	Positive	Negative
Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Residential property effects * Agricultural land use effects * Business and tourism effects * Effects on forestry activities * Indigenous heritage effects * Flora and fauna impacts * Community impacts * Travel time and efficiency effects * Waterways quality impacts * Cost of construction * Construction duration/difficulties
Western Bucca Valley / Option A route		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Residential property effects * Agricultural land use effects * Business and tourism effects * Effects on forestry activities * Noise and vibration impacts * Indigenous heritage effects * Flora and fauna impacts * Air quality * Community impacts * Travel time and efficiency effects * Waterways quality impacts * Cost of construction * Construction duration/difficulties

Option	Positive	Negative
Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River route		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Residential property effects * Agricultural land use effects * Business and tourism effects * Effects on forestry activities * Noise and vibration impacts * Indigenous heritage effects * Flora and fauna impacts * Air quality * Community impacts * Access effects * Waterways quality impacts * Cost of construction * Construction duration/difficulties
Western Bucca Valley / Sherwood Creek route		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Residential property effects * Agricultural land use effects * Business and tourism effects * Effects on forestry activities * Noise and vibration impacts * Visual and urban design * Indigenous heritage effects * Geology and soils * Flora and fauna impacts * Community impacts * Waterways quality impacts * Cost of construction * Construction duration/difficulties
Coastal Route Options	* Access effects	
Far Western Bypass		

Many respondents saw the survey forms as an opportunity to record a vote or a 'yes' for each of the options in Council's preferred corridor and for previously investigated options including the Coastal Route Options and a far western bypass. As in previous community feedback, some respondents recorded second preferences. Of the 290 first preference 'votes' received:

- 128 (44.0%) were for Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route
- 19 (6.6%) for Western Bucca Valley / Option A route
- 36 (12.4%) for Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River route
- 18 (6.2%) for Western Bucca Valley / Sherwood Creek route
- 76 (26.3%) for the Coastal Route Options
- 13 (4.5%) for a far western bypass

Submissions – other main issues

While most of the main issues raised in the submissions received were the same as those raised in the survey forms, some submissions raised over-arching issues related to the Pacific Highway in general, both sections of the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy or issues not reflected in the graphic representations presented in Section 3.

These included:

- an increase in heavy vehicle movements, particularly B-doubles, on the Pacific Highway since the opening of the Yelgun-Chinderah bypass
- the longevity of the Coastal Route bypass Options and the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A bypass route
- the importance of socio-economic impacts versus other factors such as biophysical and cost issues
- issues related to the technical investigations and/or information provided in Community Update No.5 (Connell Wagner 2004c)
- impacts on the banana industry in the area.

Interim Submissions

A total of 410 submissions and 31 survey forms were received between close of receipt for submissions for the highway options in the southern (Coffs Harbour) section and the new and revised options in the northern (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) section on March 19, 2004, and the announcement of the assessment of the feasibility of Council's preferred corridor on June 1, 2004.

Most of the interim submissions and survey forms received related to Community Update No.4 (Connell Wagner 2004a) which was released in February 2004.

Of the 410 interim submissions, 379 were pro-forma submissions provided in bulk by members of the Combined Lobby Group after the close of receipt for submissions for the February community update on March 19, 2004. Many of these were distributed at unofficial staffed displays held at a Coffs Harbour shopping centre during the last week of and the two weeks following the February-March exhibition.

Conclusion

A range of views was expressed on the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor in the survey forms and submissions received.

Community comment on the findings of this assessment and previously displayed options will be considered as part of the process to select a preferred option. Other inputs will include various reports produced by the project team, comments received from government agencies, and the outcomes of studies and workshops held to evaluate and assess the various options.

Options will be compared to identify the route that achieves the best balance between social, ecological, functional and value for money factors.

A decision on a preferred route is expected to be announced before the end of the year.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

In early 2001, work commenced on the development of the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy (CHHPS). The Strategy, which addresses the need to upgrade the highway between Sapphire and Woolgoolga while planning for future traffic needs within the Coffs Harbour urban area, covers a study area from Sawtell in the south to Arrawarra in the north.

The Strategy was publicly launched in September 2001 and, in March 2002, Information Sheet No.2 (Connell Wagner, 2002a) containing the following key announcements was released:

- identification of four initial corridor options for the northern section of the strategy area from Sapphire to Woolgoolga
- a decision that the Inner Corridor in the southern section of the strategy area between Sawtell and Sapphire/Moonee was the only potentially feasible bypass option suitable for further consideration
- commencement of work on defining routes within the Inner Corridor and a comparison of these with upgrading the existing highway in the southern section of the strategy area.

Following a decision by Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) to conduct a peer review of the work completed up to March 2002, work in the southern section of the study area between Sawtell and Sapphire was deferred, while work proceeded in the northern section between Sapphire and Woolgoolga. The peer review made a number of recommendations and broadly endorsed the technical findings of the work previously undertaken.

Following Council's receipt of the peer review in October 2002, investigations recommenced in the southern section. In parallel with investigations into the existing highway and inner bypass corridors, a review of a proposal for a western bypass corridor known as the Coastal Ridge Way proposal (CRW) also was undertaken in response to a request from CHCC.

Community Update No.3 (Connell Wagner 2002b), released in December 2002, described five route options – Options A, B1, B2, C and D – for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project and a decision on a preferred route was expected to be announced in mid-2003.

A Value Management Workshop was held in April 2003 to review and evaluate the options for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section. The outcome from the workshop was that options C and D should go forward with some further consideration of socio-economic and environmental issues.

A decision on the preferred option was delayed while the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) investigated additional options for a bypass of Woolgoolga proposed by Council and while Council conducted a series of public forums that further examined strategic options.

Following the series of public forums, CHCC adopted a preferred corridor for a bypass of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga in October 2003. Council's preferred corridor is located within the Bucca Valley and the coastal range to the west of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga.

A Steering Committee, made up of representatives of CHCC, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR), and the RTA, had been established in 2001 to oversee the development of the strategy. Following the decision by Council to select its own preferred corridor, the Steering Committee agreed that it could no longer continue to manage the process to develop the Strategy and agreed to disband.

In February 2004, Community Update No.4 (Connell Wagner 2004a) was released which described highway options in the southern section and identified new and revised options for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project. The community update contained the following key announcements regarding the southern section:

- that the RTA had agreed to assess the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor
- that an upgrade of the existing highway through Coffs Harbour to an urban motorway did not merit further consideration due to its socio-economic impacts on the Coffs Harbour urban area
- that a decision regarding the CRW would be made following the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor
- that the strategy preferred by the RTA and DIPNR for Coffs Harbour was a bypass located generally within the Inner Corridor. The preference for the Inner Bypass would be reviewed following the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor.

The community update also contained the following key announcements regarding the route options for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project:

- Option A was not favoured due to its severe environmental (biophysical) and Aboriginal heritage impacts, poor functional performance, high cost and poor value for money
- Options B1 and B2 did not merit further consideration due to the need to protect valuable agricultural land
- Option D was not an acceptable option due to its social and economic impacts on the township of Woolgoolga
- in response to a request from Council following the route options display, a modified Option C (Option C1) and an additional option that used parts of the initial Options B and C (Option E) had been developed.

In June 2004, a further community update was released which presented the findings of the assessment of options within CHCC's preferred corridor for a highway bypass of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga. The community update contained the following key announcements regarding CHCC's preferred corridor:

- that options through this area present significant engineering challenges as a result of locating the options outside the coastal plain and into the steep and hilly terrain associated with the coastal ridge
- that the options provide poor functional performance
- that the options are high cost and provide poor value for money
- that the options have significant adverse impacts on native flora and fauna
- that the options have significant impact on a landscape of Aboriginal importance
- while the options have the lowest socio-economic impacts, the feasibility assessment has shown that they also have major adverse impacts and are not considered to be viable options for the Highway Planning Strategy.

1.2 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this Community Involvement Summary Report is to document the overall exhibition process and feedback in the period between the announcement of the findings of the assessment of options within Council's preferred corridor on June 1, 2004, until the close of receipt of submissions on June 25, 2004. Allowance also was made for late deliveries to the Reply Paid PO Box. Submissions and survey forms cleared from the Reply Paid PO Box on June 28, 2004, were included. Submissions and survey forms received by Pramax Communications after June 28, 2004, will be included as interim submissions in the next community involvement summary report. It is of interest that despite the relatively short period available for public submissions to be received, there was no request for an extension of the exhibition period.

The report will provide input to a decision on the Preferred Strategy. It should be noted that the feedback reported in this summary is not necessarily representative of the views of the overall Coffs Harbour community. The outcomes are the result of responses to questions on the 'Have Your Say' survey form as well as written submissions and, statistically, cannot be considered as a valid sample survey of the area. There are several reasons for this:

- the survey was designed with the intent of canvassing comments on the various route options rather than to provide quantitative data on preferences for a particular option or options
- this was reflected by the methodology used for data collection, questionnaire design, survey distribution, coverage of the sampling frame and survey management
- the responses were strongly influenced by interest groups with preferences for one or more particular route option
- the activities of these interest groups are likely to have influenced the submissions received. The extent of this influence is impossible to determine.

1.3 Structure of the Report

The Community Involvement Summary Report is structured as follows:

- Section 1 provides an overview of the project and the purpose and structure of the report
- Section 2 summarises the stakeholder involvement interaction and how the stakeholder input has influenced the planning and option development process
- Section 3 sets out the response by stakeholders and provides graphic representations of responses
- Section 4 sets out over-arching issues raised in some submissions
- Section 5 summarises issues raised in interim submissions which were received between close of receipt of submissions for the highway options in the southern section and new and revised options for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project on March 19, 2004, and the latest announcement on June 1, 2004, and provides graphic representations of these responses. Section 5 also tables issues raised in the interim submissions and the project team's response to them
- Section 6 draws conclusions in regard to the community feedback received on the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor
- Appendix A contains responses by the project team to issues raised in representations by the community related to the findings of the assessment of Council's preferred corridor as well as the content of the June community update or the detailed report outlining the assessment, Coffs Harbour City Council Preferred Corridor Feasibility Assessment (Connell Wagner 2004b).
- Appendix B contains responses by the project team to design issues raised in representations by the community

2. Stakeholder Involvement

2.1 Scope of Activities

Since the project launch in September 2001, there has been extensive interaction and involvement of a wide range of community groups and individuals. This has included:

- public notices and media coverage (both print and electronic) informing the community of various stages and reporting on the progress of the project
- formation of and regular meetings with the Community Focus Group (CFG) for the Coffs Harbour section of the Strategy area in addition to the two CFGs in the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section
- advertised open information sessions
- distribution of Information Sheet No.2 (Connell Wagner 2002a) in March 2002, a community update newsletter in September 2002, Community Update No.3 (Connell Wagner 2002b) in December 2002 and Community Update No.4 (Connell Wagner 2004a) in February 2004
- formation of a contact list on which members of the public were able to register to receive community updates
- provision of a Freecall project information line for direct enquiries
- establishment and frequent updating of a project website
- static displays and open house displays attended by the study team
- interviews with individuals, business, property owners and community groups
- calls for written submissions and completion of survey forms by individuals and interest groups
- meetings and presentations with authorities and interest groups (eg Council, Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour Chambers of Commerce, Sikh community, Probus and Rotary groups, Ulitarra Conservation Society, Coffs Harbour and District branch of the Banana Growers Association)

During the exhibition of the RTA's review of the feasibility of options within CHCC's preferred corridor, in June 2004, stakeholder involvement activities included:

- distribution of the community update newsletter to interest groups and individuals inviting submissions and completion of the accompanying survey form
- public notices and media coverage (both print and electronic) informing the community of the findings of the assessment of the feasibility of Council's preferred corridor and inviting written submissions and completion of survey forms by individuals and community groups
- static displays at key locations (Coffs Harbour City Council, Palms Shopping Centre and RTA Motor Registry, Coffs Harbour; Toormina Public Library, Toormina; Woolgoolga Public Library, Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre, and the two Sikh temples at Woolgoolga; Sapphire Service Station, Sapphire; Yarrowarra Cultural Centre and Corindi Beach General Store, Corindi Beach; Shell Service Station, Halfway Creek; Lower Bucca Community Centre, Lower Bucca; RTA Pacific Highway Office, Grafton; Karangi General Store, Karangi; Moonee Beach General Store, Moonee Beach; Emerald Beach General Store, Emerald Beach)
- distribution of technical reports and working papers to members of the CFGs, individuals and authorities.

2.2 Peer Review

On 24 June 2002, CHCC appointed Arup consultants to carry out an independent Peer Review on the adequacy of the decision-making process and the sufficiency of technical assessment undertaken as part of the Strategy to March 2002. CHCC's concern was to ensure the process represented a proper consideration of the issues concerning the local community, and that it met the requirements of sustainable development.

The Peer Review principally addressed the findings presented in the Working Papers accompanying the March 2002 information release as well as the stakeholder involvement process. The Peer Review concluded that 'the Inner Corridor is the preferred of the options for a bypass of Coffs Harbour and that the planning process has provided for the delivery of the best option for the Coffs Harbour local community'. The review also included a series of recommendations to be implemented during the next stage of the Strategy. The following key actions were included in the recommendations:

- production of a strategic environmental constraints map for the southern section of the Strategy area
- communication of key information about development and delivery of the Strategy at all CFG meetings
- review of the CFG Charter to improve the relationship between the project team and CFG
- enhancement of the communication program to ensure accurate updates are provided to the wider community

In November 2002, CHCC convened a workshop with Arup, and CFG members to discuss these findings. The focus of the workshop was on improving the communication process between the Council and the CFG members.

A range of activities has been undertaken in response to the recommendations of the Peer Review and the workshop, including:

- the inclusion of environmental constraints maps in community updates prepared subsequent to the Peer Review,
- inclusion of information regarding future steps in the process for the development and delivery of the Strategy at CFG meetings,
- review of the Charters of the three CFGs, and
- widespread advertising of and distribution of information at key information releases, including staffed displays and the distribution of approximately 10,000 community update brochures

2.3 Community Focus Groups

Two CFGs were formed in November 2001 for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project to assist communication between the project team, stakeholders and the local community. The members of each group represent a wide range of interests within the community.

The CFG for the Sapphire to Moonee section focused on issues associated with the upgrade of the existing highway through this section – including capacity, configuration, intersection locations and layouts and access arrangements.

In the area north of Moonee, a preliminary constraints assessment showed there were many substantial constraints that could influence corridor planning. However, with the wider coastal plain in this area and less intensive existing development, a range of corridor options were identified. The CFG for this section focused on issues associated with the wider range of potential impacts relating to the bypass options as well as the option for a major upgrade for the full length of the existing highway.

Between November 2001 and March 2003, nineteen meetings of the groups were held to exchange information on the strategy planning process, technical details and various issues raised by CFG members. Following the exhibition of the route options, a Value Management (VM) Workshop was held on 31 March and 1 April 2003 and a Value Engineering (VE) Workshop was held on 7 April 2003. The workshops were attended by a range of stakeholders (ACVM, 2003 and ACVM VE, 2003) including representatives of the two CFGs. A combined meeting of both groups in May 2003 discussed the outcomes of the workshops. No meetings were held while CHCC was conducting its series of public forums in mid to late-2003. A second combined meeting of both groups was held at the time of the release of Community Update No.4 (Connell Wagner 2004a) in February 2004.

In response to requests from members of the community in the southern section of the Strategy area, the Coffs Harbour CFG was formed in January 2002. Between January and the end of May 2002, five meetings of the group were held to exchange information on the strategy planning process, technical details and various issues raised by CFG members. Following CHCC's decision to commission a Peer review of the Strategy in May 2002, work on the southern section was deferred. A meeting of the CFG in July 2002 discussed the implications of the peer review on the progress of the Strategy and no further meetings were held until December 2002 when investigations in the southern section recommenced. Two further meetings of the Coffs Harbour CFG were held in February and April 2003. No meetings were then held while CHCC was conducting its series of public forums in mid to late-2003. The next meeting of the CFG was held at the time of the release of Community Update No.4 (Connell Wagner 2004a) in February 2004.

A combined meeting of the three CFGs was held at the time of the release of the findings of the assessment of Council's preferred corridor in Community Update No.5 (Connell Wagner 2004c).

Membership of the three CFGs has fluctuated during this time, with a number of members withdrawing, and some proxy members and replacement members joining the groups. Members of the groups represent a range of interests and localities within the community. Some have been active in developing and promoting a western bypass option now known as the CRW, and/or Option A in the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section.

Notes of each meeting are posted on the website following the meetings and members are active in disseminating information and recording feedback from the particular group/s they represent. The feedback and information from the groups has provided valuable input on issues and community reactions to the Strategy.

Several of the meetings have involved presentations on technical studies by RTA specialists or project team members. Issues and topics covered in CFG meetings have included:

- findings from technical investigations
- strategy planning process
- highway upgrade scenarios
- key issues concerning the community
- Quantum system for route identification
- RTA land acquisition process
- Pacific Highway traffic growth including heavy vehicles
- socio-economic issues

Provision is also made for members of the groups to nominate agenda items for the next CFG meetings.

2.4 Planning Focus Meetings

One of the initial consultation activities following the Strategy launch was a Planning Focus Meeting held in Grafton on 8 February, 2002. The meeting was attended by interested State Government agency representatives as well as officers from Bellingen, Coffs Harbour and Pristine Waters Councils. This meeting was concerned with development of the whole Planning Strategy – including the northern section from Sapphire to Woolgoolga. The purpose of the meeting was to allow exchange of information between the relevant government agencies and the study team to facilitate identification of key issues and constraints that may influence development of the strategy.

Subsequent Planning Focus Meetings have been held for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section.

A further Government agency meeting was held in Coffs Harbour on May 10, 2004. The meeting was attended by interested State Government agency representatives and representatives of the Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council as well as officers from Coffs Harbour City Council, the new amalgamated Clarence Valley Council, and Bellingen Shire Council. The purpose of the meeting was to allow exchange of information between the representatives and council officers and the study team prior to a Value Management Workshop which will assist in the selection of the preferred option for both the southern (Coffs Harbour) and northern (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) sections of the Strategy.

2.5 Interest Group and Other Activities

During the development of the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy, there has been strong lobbying by groups who have strong preferences for or against particular options in both the northern and southern sections of the Strategy area.

In the southern section, a group called the Western Alliance was formed initially from residents' groups in West Boambee, the Orara Valley, the Bucca Valley and inner West Coffs Harbour (PANIC). The Alliance then splintered with the Orara and Bucca Valley groups resigning their membership. In the northern section another group, the Woolgoolga Area Residents (WAR) group, was formed. In the second half of 2002, the WAR group joined forces with the remaining membership of the southern group to form the Combined Lobby Group (CLG). The CLG began a highly visible campaign which included stickers, T-shirts, petitions, media coverage and the establishment of a website.

Regular meetings of the various groups have been held during the development of the Strategy. Three of the largest public meetings have been convened by the PANIC or WAR groups – more than 600 residents attended a meeting at Woolgoolga High School in April 2002, about 450 residents attended a meeting at the Coffs Harbour Catholic Club in October 2002 and more than 500 residents attended a further meeting at Woolgoolga High School in January 2003. Unofficial staffed displays were held by the CLG during a four-week extension to the submission deadline for the route options exhibition at both Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour.

The CRW proposal was presented to Council at its meeting in October 2002. Following a request by Council for a formal review of the CRW proposal, the RTA undertook further refinement and fine-tuning of the alignment in close consultation with the original proponent of the route. As part of this refinement of the proposal, a fully interactive session using the MXRoad software package was held in Coffs Harbour in March 2003 and from that it was agreed to 'lock-in' the horizontal and vertical alignments of the proposal for the purposes of the review, including preparation of a cost estimate.

The peer review workshop in November 2002 focused on improving the communication process between the Council and the CFG members. Members of the Woolgoolga Area and Coffs CFG groups requested the Steering Committee to consider allowing representatives of the CFGs to attend its meetings. In response, Council advised the three CFGs that it would hold a number of forums. Seven of these were organised and conducted by Council between May 20-August 12, 2003.

A residents' group also was formed at Emerald Beach in May 2003 called the United Residents Group of Emerald (URGE). Among the group's varied interests is seeking an investigation of options for improving safety at the intersection of Fiddaman Road and the Pacific Highway.

A Banana Field Day, organised by the Coffs Harbour and District branch of the Banana Growers Association, was held at Woolgoolga in August 2003. Among the issues addressed by the growers were the bypass options for Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga. The field day was attended by a representative of the project team.

A rally organised by the CLG was also held at the Moonee Tavern car park on August 10, 2003. Estimates numbered the crowd between 900-1500.

During the exhibition of the short-listed options, a number of community involvement activities were organised by representatives of the CLG and WAR. About 60 people attended a meeting of the WAR group at Woolgoolga Primary School on March 2, 2004. Smaller meetings also were subsequently held at Korora and Woolgoolga. Further unofficial staffed displays were held by the CLG in Coffs Harbour during the last week of and the two weeks following the official exhibition period.

A Moonee Action Group was formed in April 2004 as a result of a draft Moonee Development Control Plan (DCP) which proposes increasing the current population of Moonee from about 680 to 5500. Among the group's concerns about the draft DCP is the impact the development will have on the village's current access to the Pacific Highway.

During April and May 2004, the WAR group held a number of meetings including one at Woolgoolga Public School on April 20, 2004, and another at Woolgoolga High School on May 11, 2004, to organise a protest rally at Parliament House during June 2004. The group also set up stalls at the local market to distribute flyers and obtain signatures to a protest letter demanding a true bypass of the area and carried out a letterbox drop in May promoting its May 11 meeting and the Sydney protest rally. A public notice was later published by the group advising that, due to insufficient numbers, it was necessary to postpone the Sydney protest rally, originally planned for June 1, 2004.

A further meeting of the WAR group was held at the Woolgoolga Public School on May 25, 2004, to organise a traffic count at the roundabout on the Pacific Highway in Woolgoolga on a night between June 7-June 11, 2004. Publicity following the meeting called on residents to register their support for taking part in the traffic count, particularly aimed at recording heavy vehicle movements. The traffic count was held on June 10, 2004.

On April, 29, 2004, a meeting of about 60 residents was held at Moonee Beach Hall to discuss a report into noise undertaken as part of investigations by the Northern Pacific Highway Noise Taskforce.

Following the information release on the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor, a protest meeting was called by the Combined Lobby Group and held at the Norm Jordan Pavilion in Coffs Harbour on June 16, 2004. About 250 people attended the meeting which ended with a protest by about 150 of them and a blockade of the Pacific Highway in both directions for almost two hours.

3. Stakeholder Responses

The stakeholder response to the exhibition of the assessment of the feasibility of Council's preferred corridor comprised 108 written submissions and 292 survey forms. A small number of survey forms received were unable to be validated because of lack of name, contact details or illegibility.

Survey forms were provided in a mailout of Community Update No.5 (Connell Wagner 2004c) to stakeholders on the Strategy database. They also were provided to interest groups in bulk, on request through the Project Information Line and at the static displays. Approximately 7600 copies of the community update and survey forms were distributed by the project team.

The survey form (shown in Figures 3A and 3B) comprised one question. It asked stakeholders what were their comments on each of the options in Council's preferred corridor. The options were:

- Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route
- Western Bucca Valley / Option A route
- Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River route
- Western Bucca Valley / Sherwood Creek route

The following issues regarding the options in Council's preferred corridor were the most cited by respondents:

- effects on residential property
- effects on agricultural land use
- effects on business and tourism
- effects on forestry activities
- noise and vibration
- visual and urban design
- indigenous heritage
- non-indigenous heritage
- geology and soils
- flora and fauna
- air quality
- community impacts
- access effects
- road safety
- travel time and efficiency
- effects on the quality of waterways
- the cost of construction
- construction duration and related disruptions

Similar issues have been raised in previous community feedback.

However, despite the issues being common to most respondents, their impacts or effects were seen to be widely disparate for the same option. For example, respondents listed effects on travel time and efficiency as an impact for the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route. Some respondents wrote that the gradients and lengths of gradients on the route would not deter heavy vehicles from using it. Instead the route was seen as offering a positive, efficient and 'best way' way of bypassing Coffs Harbour and saving through traffic and heavy vehicles considerable time. Alternatively, other respondents wrote that heavy vehicles would not use the route and instead would continue to use the existing Pacific Highway because of the inefficiencies in travel time and efficiency that they would incur. Some respondents who supported a Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route suggested inducements other than the travel time and efficiency of the route itself would be necessary to ensure heavy vehicles would use the option. Some of the suggestions included imposing a levy on heavy vehicles using the existing Pacific Highway, reducing speed limits on the Coastal Route Options and offering fuel rebates to heavy vehicles that used alternative routes.

Similarly, for the Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River route, some respondents cited 'negative', and 'severe' flora and fauna impacts while others believed that the impacts would be 'minimal' or 'least' compared to other options and, again, some respondents wrote that the total preliminary estimated cost for the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A proposal was 'favourable' and 'positive' while others saw the cost as a negative against the feasibility of the option.

Some respondents also chose to list specific impacts and benefits for the Coastal Route Options and for a previously investigated option, a far western bypass.

Such views of 'negative' and 'positive' effects applied to all major issues raised. The graphic representation of responses to the first question shown in Figures 3C-3H displays the number of 'positive' and 'negative' responses. The net effect of adding the negative and positive responses is shown in Figures 3I-3K.

Many respondents saw the survey forms as an opportunity to record a vote or a 'yes' for each of the options in Council's preferred corridor and for previously investigated options including the Coastal Route Options and a far western bypass. As in previous community feedback, some respondents recorded second preferences. A few respondents also recorded even third and fourth preferences. These were minor. The first preferences and second preferences are set out in Figure 3L.

Most of the main issues raised in the submissions received between the announcement of the assessment of the feasibility of Council's preferred corridor on June 1, 2004, and June 25, 2004, were the same as those raised in the survey forms. Hence, the graphic representations of the survey form feedback also includes the submissions feedback.

Some submissions however raised over-arching issues related to both sections of the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy or issues not reflected in the graphic representations. These are described in Section 4.

No submission was received from Coffs Harbour City Council on the assessment of the feasibility of options within its preferred corridor. This was despite a resolution at its meeting on March 18, 2004, just prior to the close of receipt of submissions for the previous exhibition period, that it would wait to make a submission until after the assessment of the feasibility of options within its preferred corridor.

Figure 3A



Department of
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources



Coffs Harbour Highway Planning

Southern and Northern Sections

COMMUNITY UPDATE NO 5
JUNE 2004

Have your say

This form provides an opportunity for you to comment on the options within Coffs Harbour City Council's preferred corridor identified in this brochure. If you wish to comment, please fill in this form and return it by mail to:

Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy
Reply Paid 478
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450

or Fax to: (02) 6652 7088

Comment forms should be received by 25 June 2004

What are your comments on each of the options within Council's preferred corridor?

Coastal Ridge Way/Option A route

Figure 3C

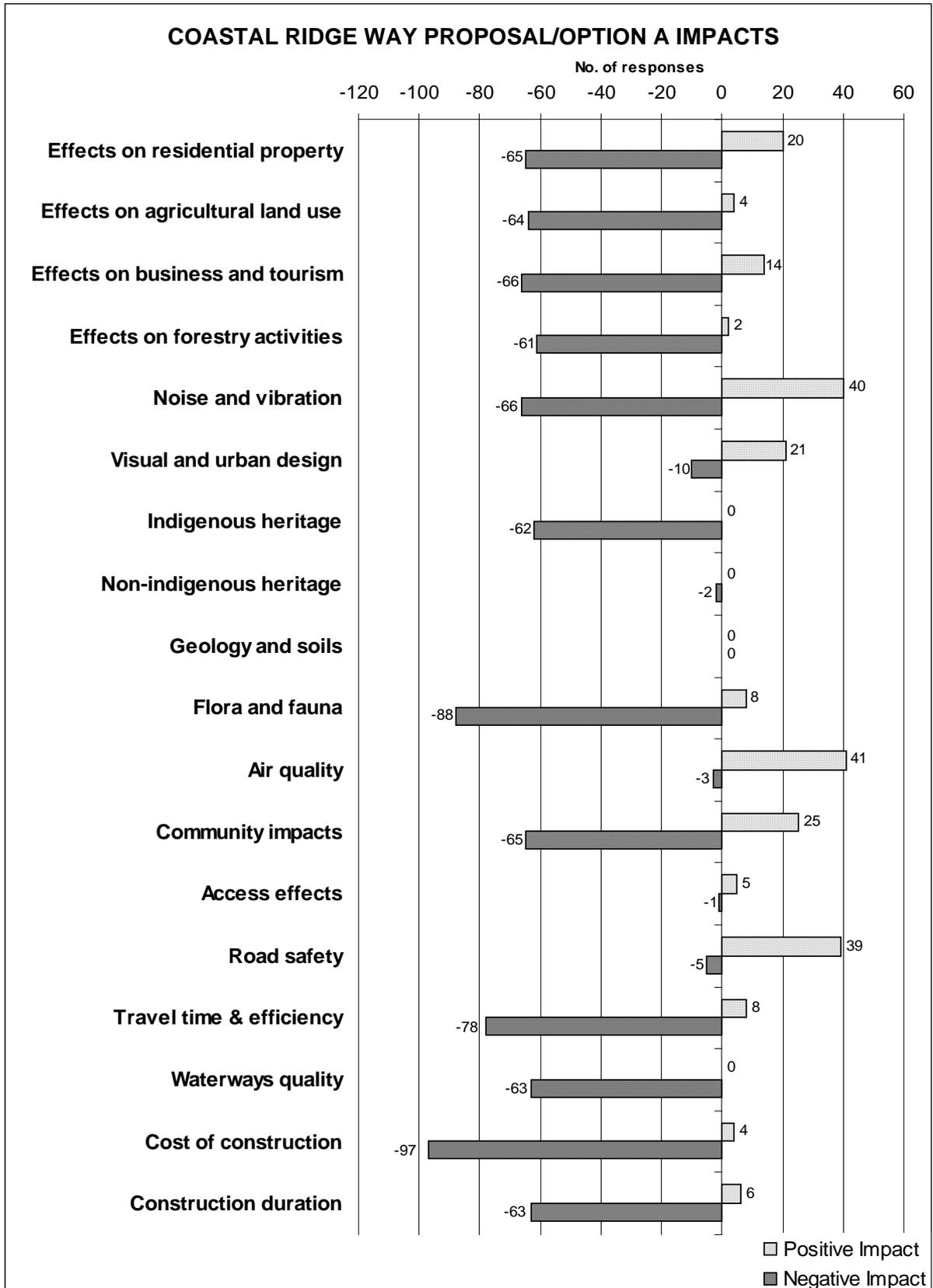


Figure 3D

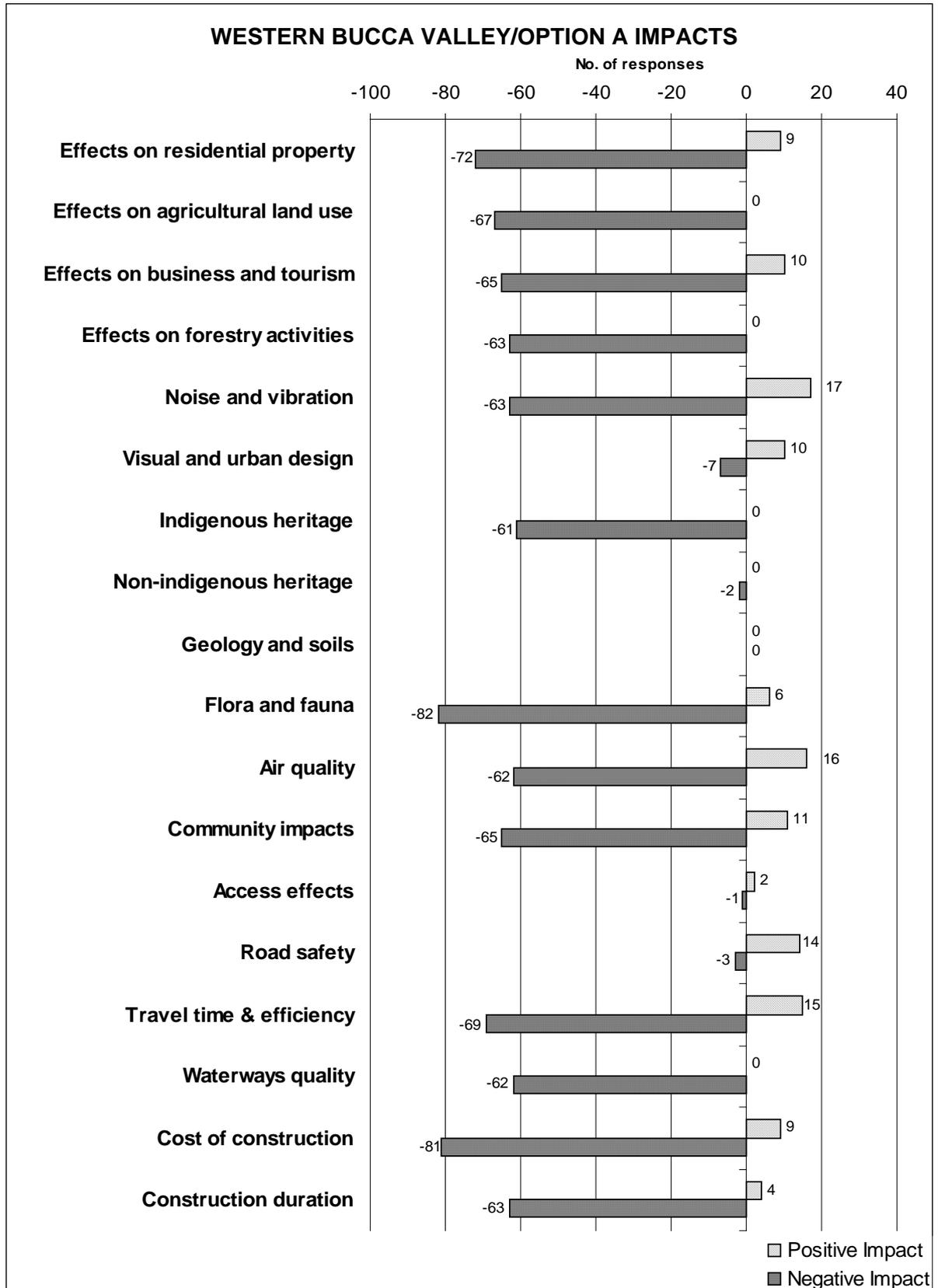


Figure 3E

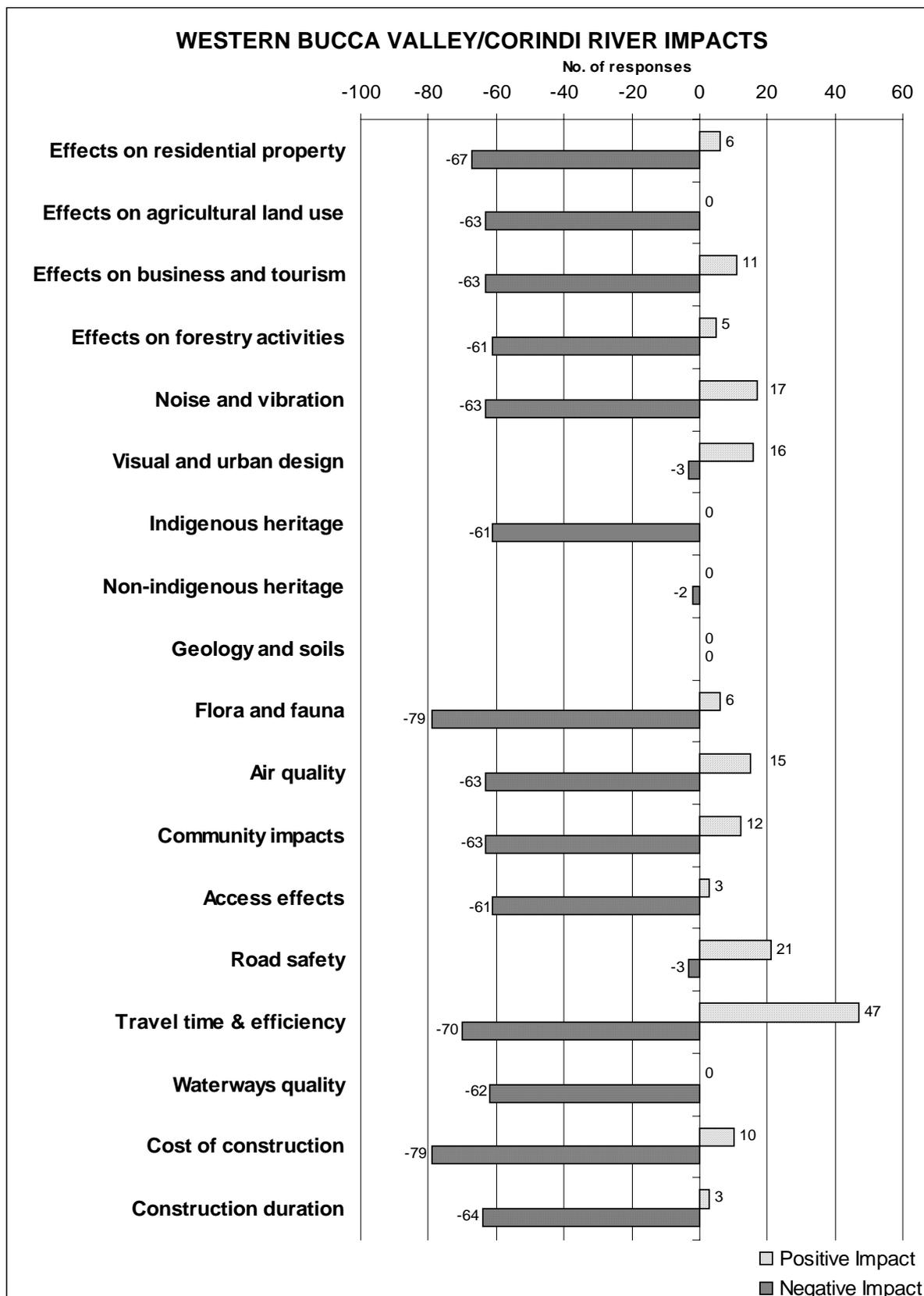


Figure 3F

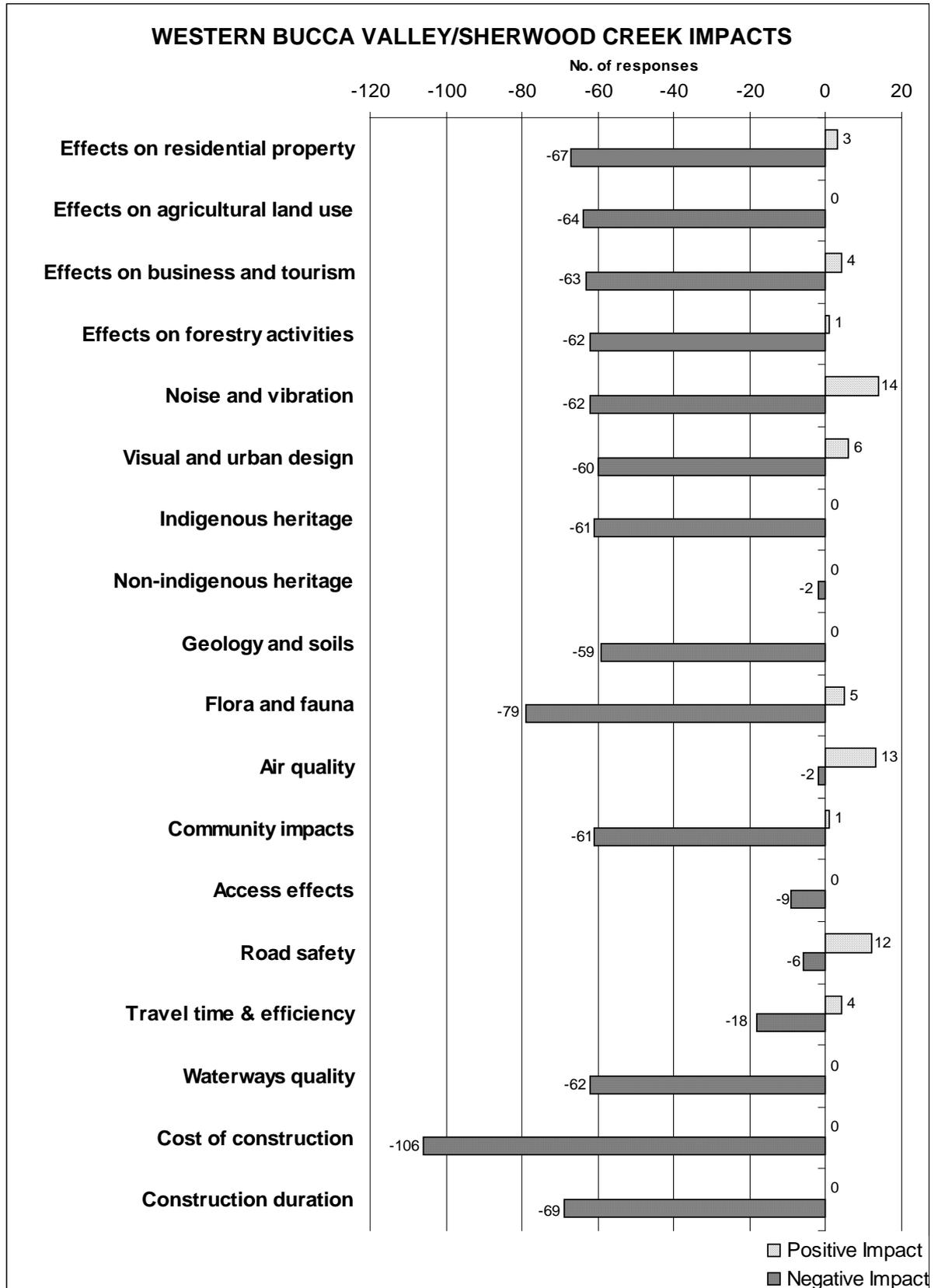


Figure 3G

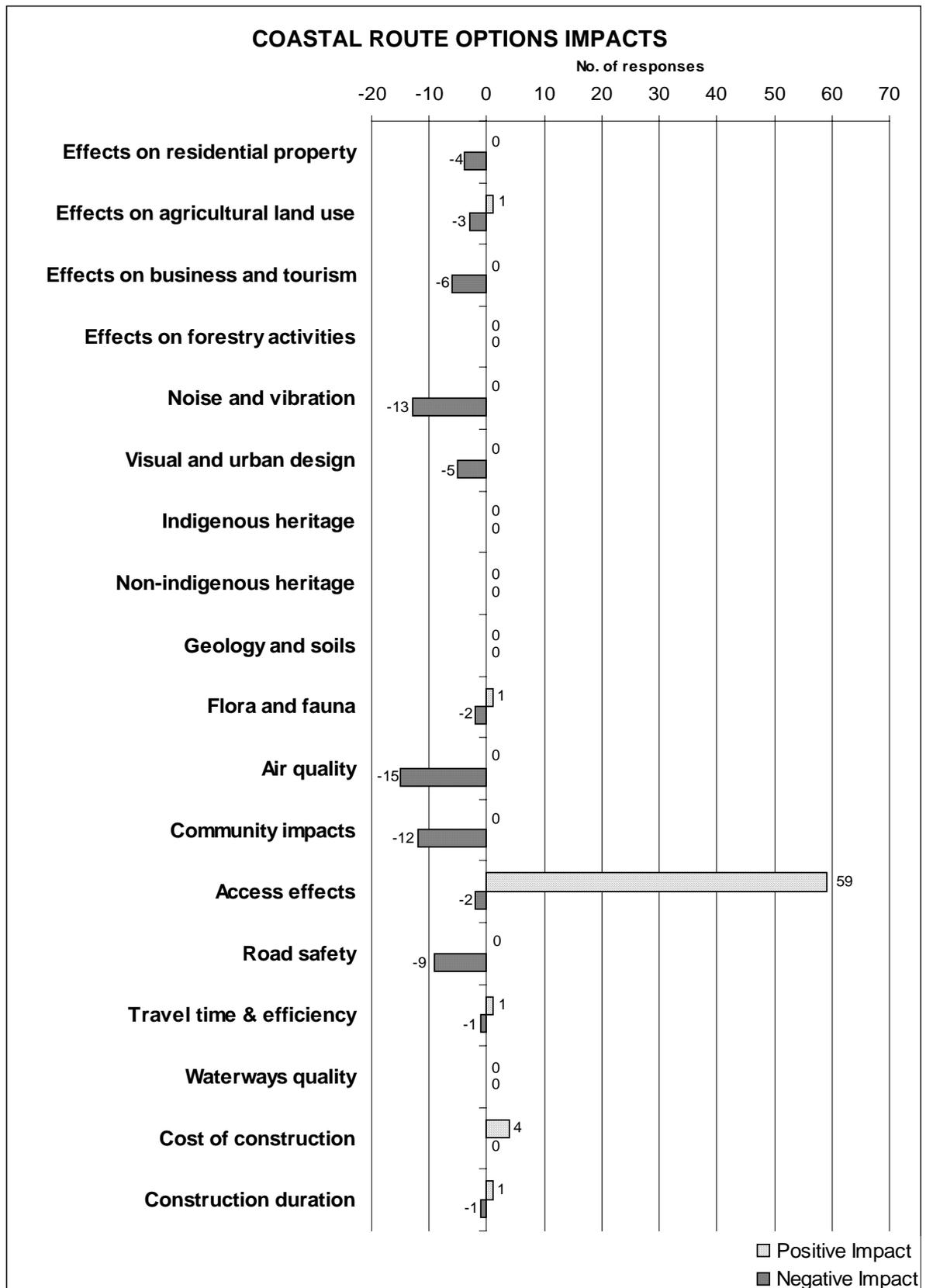


Figure 3H

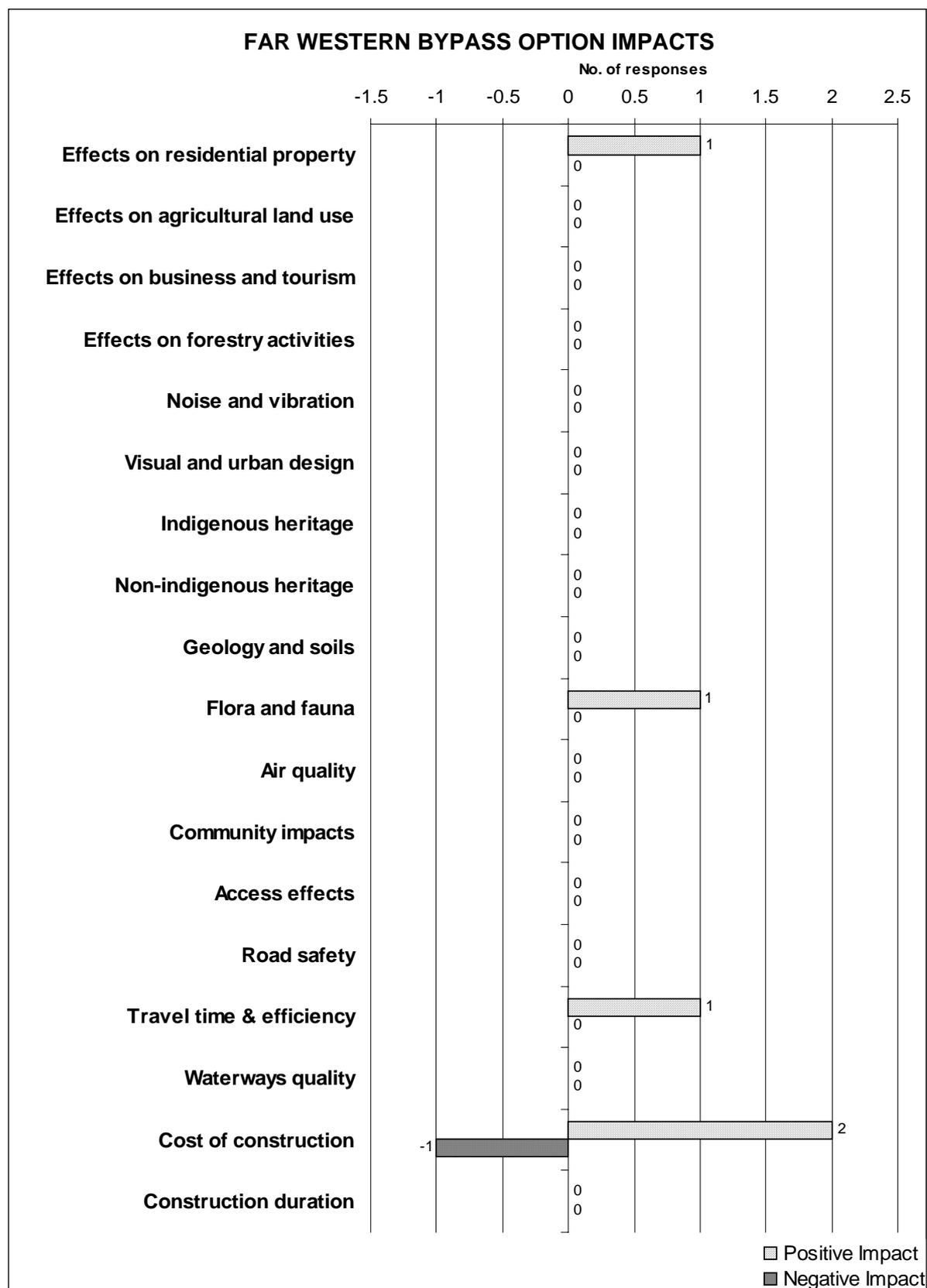


Figure 3I

Net of positive & negative impacts

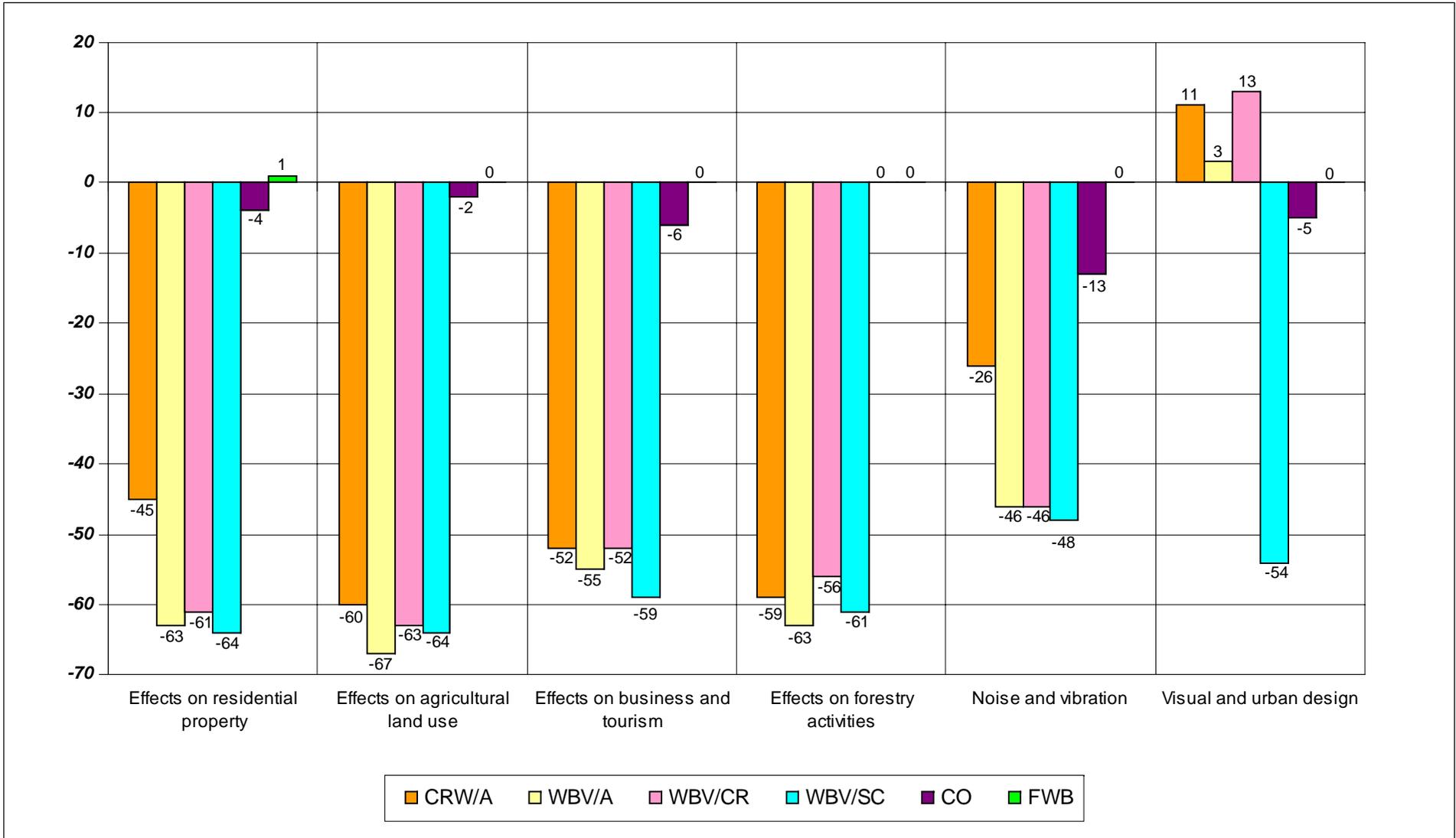


Figure 3J

Net of positive & negative impacts

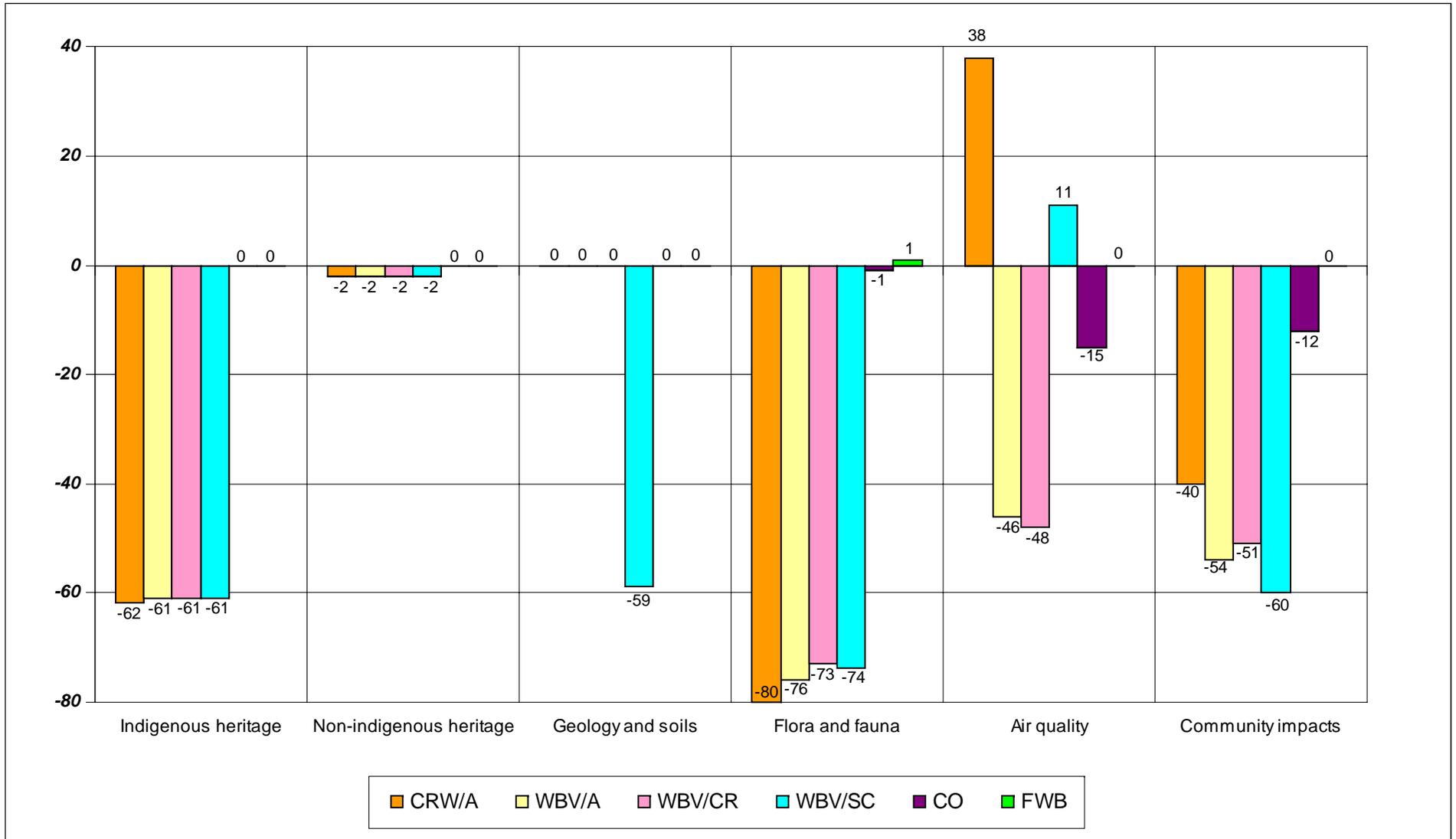


Figure 3K

Net of positive & negative impacts

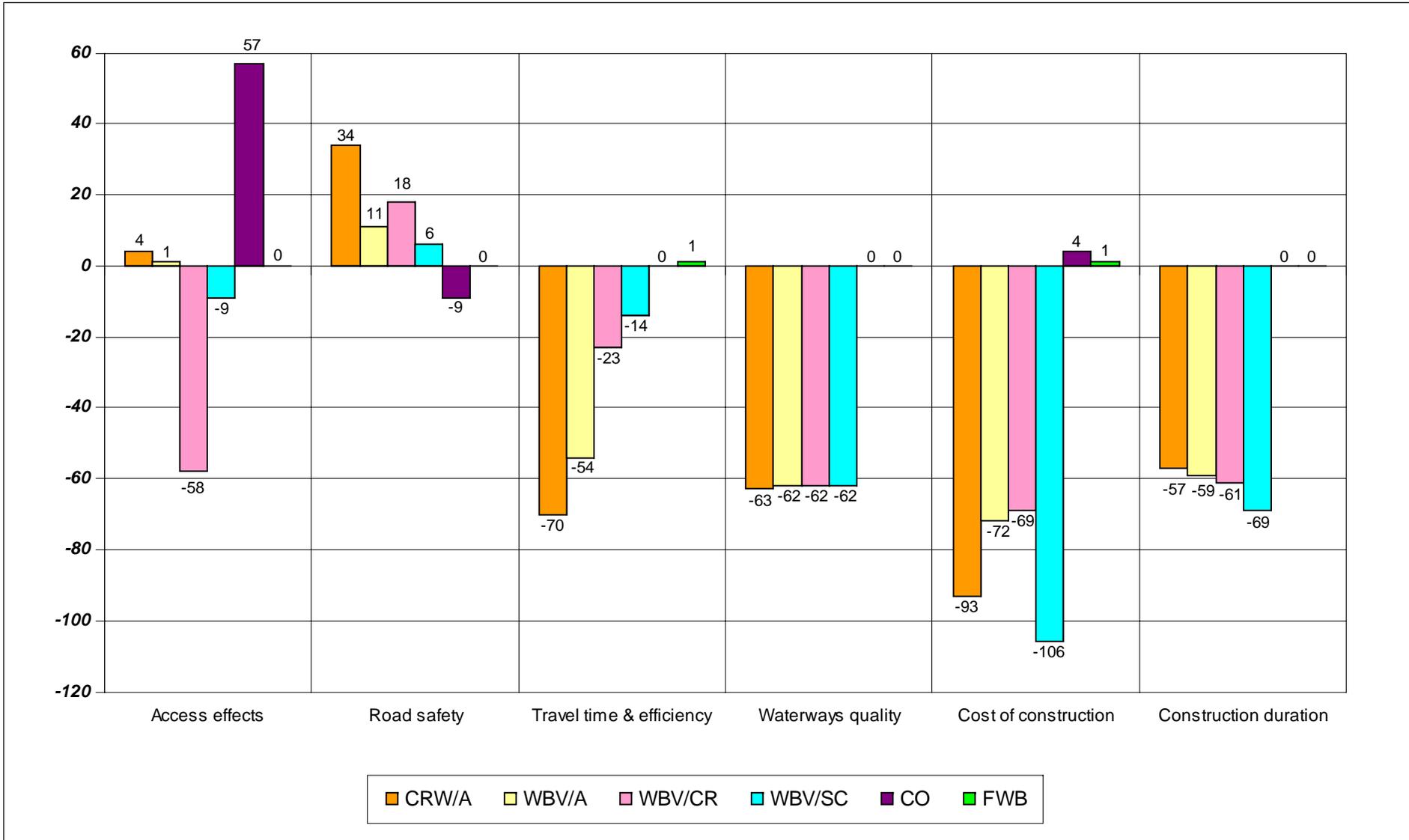
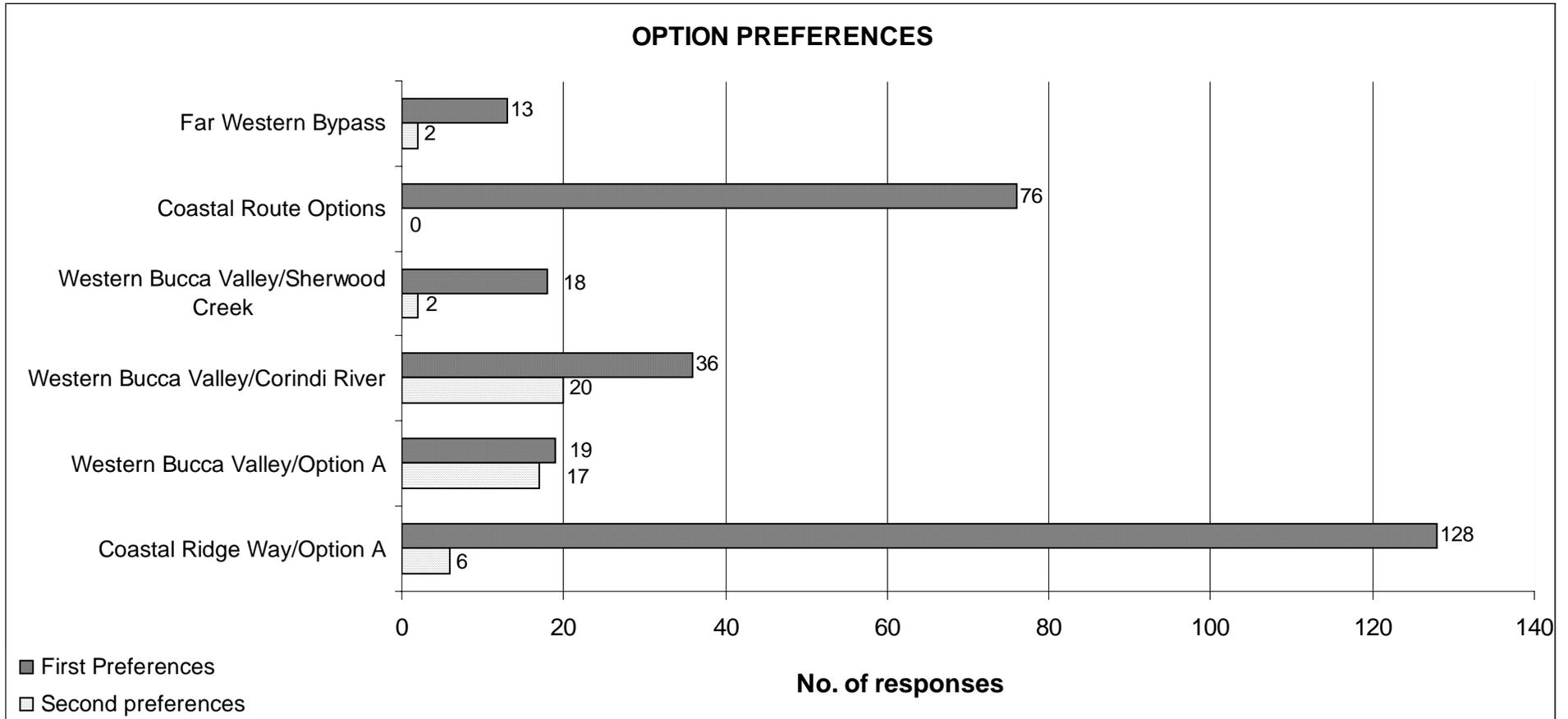


Figure 3L



4. Submissions – other main issues

While most of the main issues raised in the submissions received were the same as those raised in the survey forms, some submissions raised over-arching issues related to both sections of the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy or issues not reflected in the graphic representations presented in Section 3.

The issues and the impacts cited are described below.

4.1 Increase in heavy vehicle movements

As in previous community feedback, many submissions raised issues about an increase in heavy vehicle movements, particularly B-doubles, on the Pacific Highway since the opening of the Yelgun-Chinderah bypass. Some cited personal experiences of being tailgated, forced off the road, forced to take evasive action to avoid an accident or being intimidated by heavy vehicle drivers. Others wrote of concerns that triple-trailer heavy vehicles were soon expected to be using the Pacific Highway.

The main issues raised were:

- need for further traffic counts of heavy vehicles using the Pacific Highway since the opening of the Yelgun-Chinderah bypass
- increased road noise
- decreased air quality and perceived associated health risks
- decreased road safety by mixing local traffic with through traffic
- increased risk of HAZMAT vehicle accidents in urban areas
- heavy vehicles exceeding speed limits

Where specific issues were raised concerning heavy vehicles or heavy vehicle counts, these have been recorded and responded to by the project team in Appendix A.

4.2 Proposed bypasses only short-term

Many submission respondents wrote that the Coastal Route Options were only 'short-term', 'quick fix' or 'bandaid' options. Some believed that the Coastal Route Options favoured by the RTA and DIPNR would 'be redundant' by the time they were built because of an increase in traffic volumes or that they would require another bypass in 5-15 years. Similar feedback has been received in previous submissions and survey forms. However, with some of the options in Council's preferred corridor being further west than previously assessed options, a number of respondents now saw the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route as being too close to the coast to allow for future urban development and producing negative noise and air quality impacts for residents and instead saw this route also as a 'short-term', 'quick fix' or 'bandaid' solution. Even the Western Bucca Valley / Option A route was seen in a similar light. Options further to the west were seen by some as offering a more satisfactory bypass solution that would last for between 50-300 years. Many submission respondents believed that if options further west than the Coastal Route Options were not chosen as the preferred option, they would have to be built in the future anyway when it would prove more costly to do so.

Where specific issues were raised concerning the planning horizons of the options, these have been recorded and responded to by the project team in Appendix A.

4.3 Planning and assessment priorities

A number of respondents took issue with assessments relating to biophysical and cost factors. Many believed that higher priority should be given to socio-economic impacts on present and future residents rather than flora, fauna, indigenous heritage and cost factors. Many submissions were dismissive of the authenticity of the assessments or value of such factors in light of the need to protect 'the threatened homo sapien species'.

Where specific issues were raised concerning planning these issues, these have been recorded and responded to by the project team in Appendix A.

4.4 Project information

A number of submissions raised issues concerning the validity of the consultation process. These respondents believed the RTA and DIPNR had been 'in favour of the cheapest option from the outset' and were now 'moving towards a pre-determined outcome'.

Others raised issues concerning the information provided in the community update and the report detailing the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor.

Some of the issues raised concerning the update related to the amount of detail provided in the summary document which was broadly distributed throughout the community. For example, a criticism was that it did not contain information related to the environmental assessment of some of the Coastal Route Options such as Options C1 and E in the northern section that was provided in previous technical reports.

Still other respondents wrote that instead of further updates and project information, they preferred to see the decision-makers implement the Coastal Route Options and 'get on with some digging'.

Where specific issues were raised relating to the community update and/or the technical investigations of the short-listed options and the content of the technical papers, they have been recorded and responded to by the project team in Appendix A.

The response of the project team to design issues also raised in representations by the community is contained in Appendix B.

4.5 Banana industry

A submission was received from the Banana Growers Association of Coffs Harbour and District Inc. This submission raised a number of issues concerning the viability of the banana industry if the Coastal Route Options were implemented.

These included the effect a 300-metre buffer zone adjacent to the highway would have on the ability of banana growers to carry out normal farming practices, particularly crop spraying; micro-climate impacts caused by cuttings and tunnels; and the possibility the already-marginally viable industry could collapse.

The submission called for a detailed, independent study of microclimate impacts as well as an assessment of which combination of Coastal Route Options would have the least impact on banana lands prior to a final decision on the preferred route being chosen. It also called for continued liaison with the industry to mitigate the impacts of the selected route.

Where specific issues were raised relating to the banana industry, they have been recorded and responded to by the project team in Appendix A.

5. Interim Submissions

A total of 410 submissions and 31 survey forms were received between close of receipt for submissions for the highway options in the southern (Coffs Harbour) section and the new and revised options in the northern (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) section on March 19, 2004, and the announcement of the assessment of the feasibility of Council's preferred corridor on June 1, 2004.

Most of the interim submissions and survey forms received related to Community Update No.4 (Connell Wagner 2004a) which was released in February 2004. In the southern section, the community update had advised:

- that the RTA had agreed to assess the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor
- that an upgrade of the existing highway through Coffs Harbour to an urban motorway did not merit further consideration due to its socio-economic impacts on the Coffs Harbour urban area
- that a decision regarding the CRW would be made following the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor
- that the strategy preferred by the RTA and DIPNR for Coffs Harbour was a bypass located generally within the Inner Corridor. The preference for the Inner Bypass would be reviewed following the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor.

The community update also contained the following key announcements regarding the route options for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project:

- Option A was not favoured due to its severe environmental (biophysical) and Aboriginal heritage impacts, poor functional performance, high cost and poor value for money
- Options B1 and B2 did not merit further consideration due to the need to protect valuable agricultural land
- Option D was not an acceptable option due to its social and economic impacts on the township of Woolgoolga
- in response to a request from Council following the route options display, a modified Option C (Option C1) and an additional option that used parts of the initial Options B and C (Option E) had been developed.

The main issues raised in the 410 submissions received in the interim period were the same as the issues raised in the 31 survey forms received. Hence, the graphic representations of the feedback in Figures 5A-5I includes responses to the survey form as well as that provided in submissions.

Interim submissions sent to the Minister for Roads, other Government Members, the Department of Infrastructure and Planning and the Roads and Traffic Authority have also been included in this assessment.

Many stakeholders saw their responses as an opportunity to record a vote or a 'yes' for each of the short-listed options in both the northern and southern sections and for previously investigated options including the B Options for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade, and a far western bypass. The responses are set out in Figure 5J. Respondents also recorded 'yes' votes for the southern and northern sections of the defined route of the eastern boundary of Council's preferred corridor, either the CRW or Option A or both. Other respondents simply recorded a 'yes' vote for Council's preferred corridor. Hence the graphic responses of these respondents are shown separately as Option A, CRW and Council's preferred corridor. Two separate bars are shown for the existing highway upgrade – Sapphire to south Woolgoolga. This is because while some respondents supported this section as having the highest priority for duplication, others believed this needed to be urgently addressed 'but for local traffic only'. Interestingly however, most of these respondents also wrote about the need for interchanges at most major intersections as well as dual carriageway to address road safety concerns.

As with many submissions and survey forms received before March 19, 2004, a few of the interim submissions and survey forms received also provided responses to design issues related to noise mitigation, and the location and type of interchanges. The responses are set out in Figure 5K.

Of the 410 interim submissions, 379 were pro-forma submissions provided in bulk by members of the CLG after the close of receipt for submissions for the February community update on March 19, 2004. Many of these were distributed at unofficial staffed displays held at a Coffs Harbour shopping centre during the last week of and the two weeks following the February-March exhibition. Most of these respondents did not cite impacts, benefits or improvements to the short-listed options but simply crossed out all options except Council's preferred corridor option and wrote 'This is my preferred option'. Twenty-three of these were photocopies of a pre-filled in pro-forma submission. The Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy also had attracted interest from a wide area with some of the pro-forma submissions being signed by stakeholders from Bonogin and Virginia in Queensland, Irymple in Victoria and Barraba in NSW.

One State Government agency submission also was received in the interim period. The submission, from NSW Agriculture, raised concerns about the direct and indirect impacts of Coffs Harbour bypass options Inner South 1 and 2 and Inner North 1 and 2 and Woolgoolga bypass options C1 and E on banana production and subtropical agriculture. It cited the 300m no-spray buffer zone reported in agricultural assessments as a significant issue which would restrict the application of farm chemicals by aircraft which would have significant repercussions for pest and disease control on plantations, potentially jeopardising the viability of banana farms within the locality of the alignment.

The submission said an upgrade of the existing highway between Sapphire and south Woolgoolga raised few strategic issues for the department and upgrading of this section to dual carriageway was expected to be necessary to meet local traffic demands in any case. The CRW and Council's preferred corridor potentially created least issues for the department as large sections traversed public lands with little or no agricultural potential. However, pockets of better quality agricultural land resources and agricultural enterprises were expected to occur along the CRW route. The actual impacts on agriculture of Council's preferred corridor would be dependent on the routes identified within the broader corridor.

The submission said the banana industry in Coffs Harbour was confronted by a number of issues including poor market prices, increasing costs of production, imports from the Philippines and urban encroachment and any further weakening of the position of the industry could have a serious impact on the future of the industry. The submission encouraged further consultation with the industry to identify route options and measures that might minimise impacts.

A number of interim submissions and survey forms received raised issues in relation to what respondents saw as the inaccuracy or incompleteness of investigations and assessments documented in the February community update or related technical documents including the Strategy Report (Connell Wagner 2004d) and associated working papers, Supplementary Options Report (Connell Wagner 2004e), and Review of the Coastal Ridge Way Proposal (Connell Wagner 2004f). Table 5.1 documents these issues and the project team's response to them. The issues raised have been divided into those concerning Community Update No.4 (Connell Wagner 2004a) or related technical documents or listed under the related sub-heading. They also have been separated into those concerning the southern (Coffs Harbour) section, the northern (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) section or both sections. Table 5.2 documents design issues raised in interim submissions and survey forms and the project team's response to them.

Figure 5A

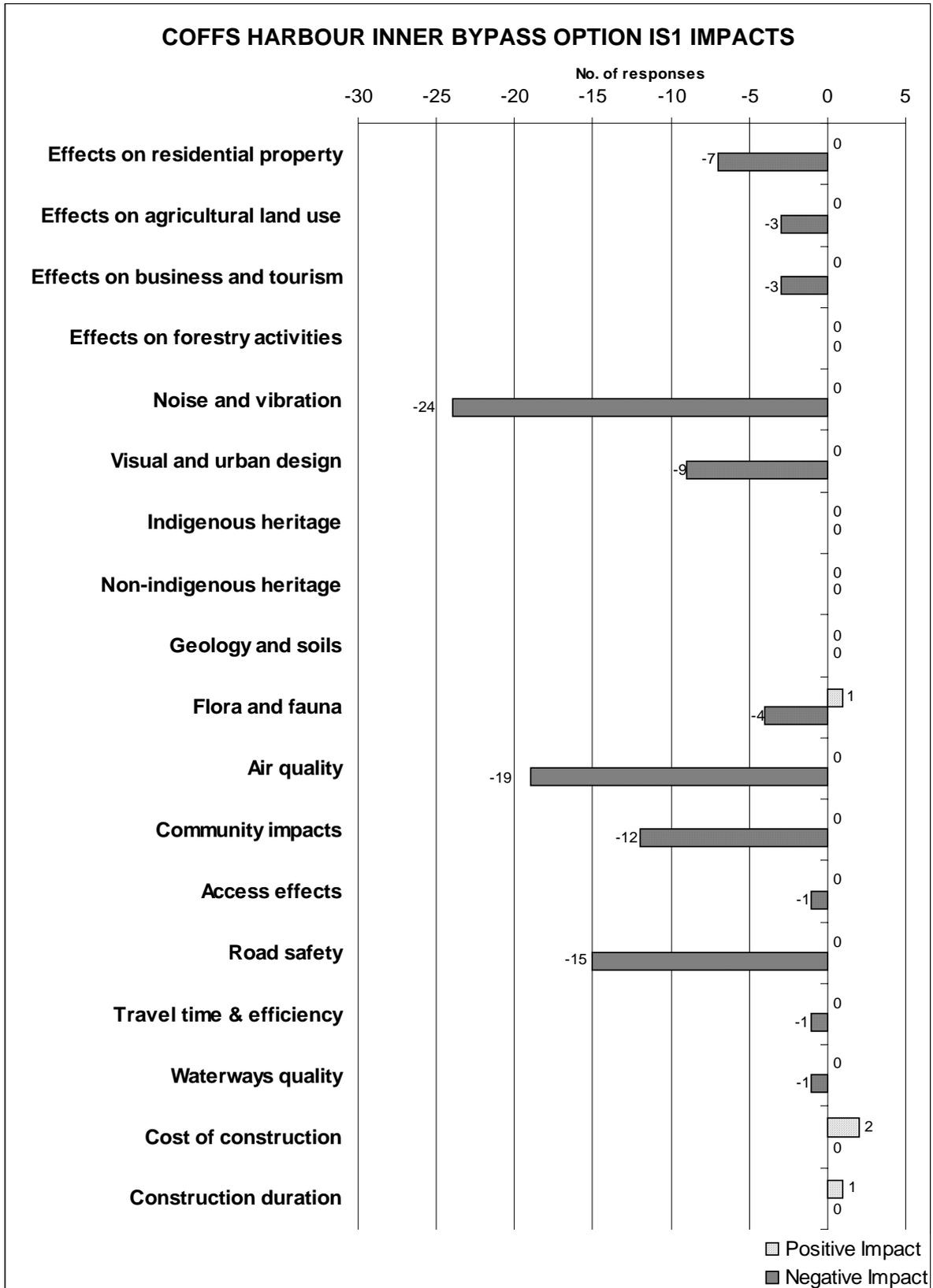


Figure 5B

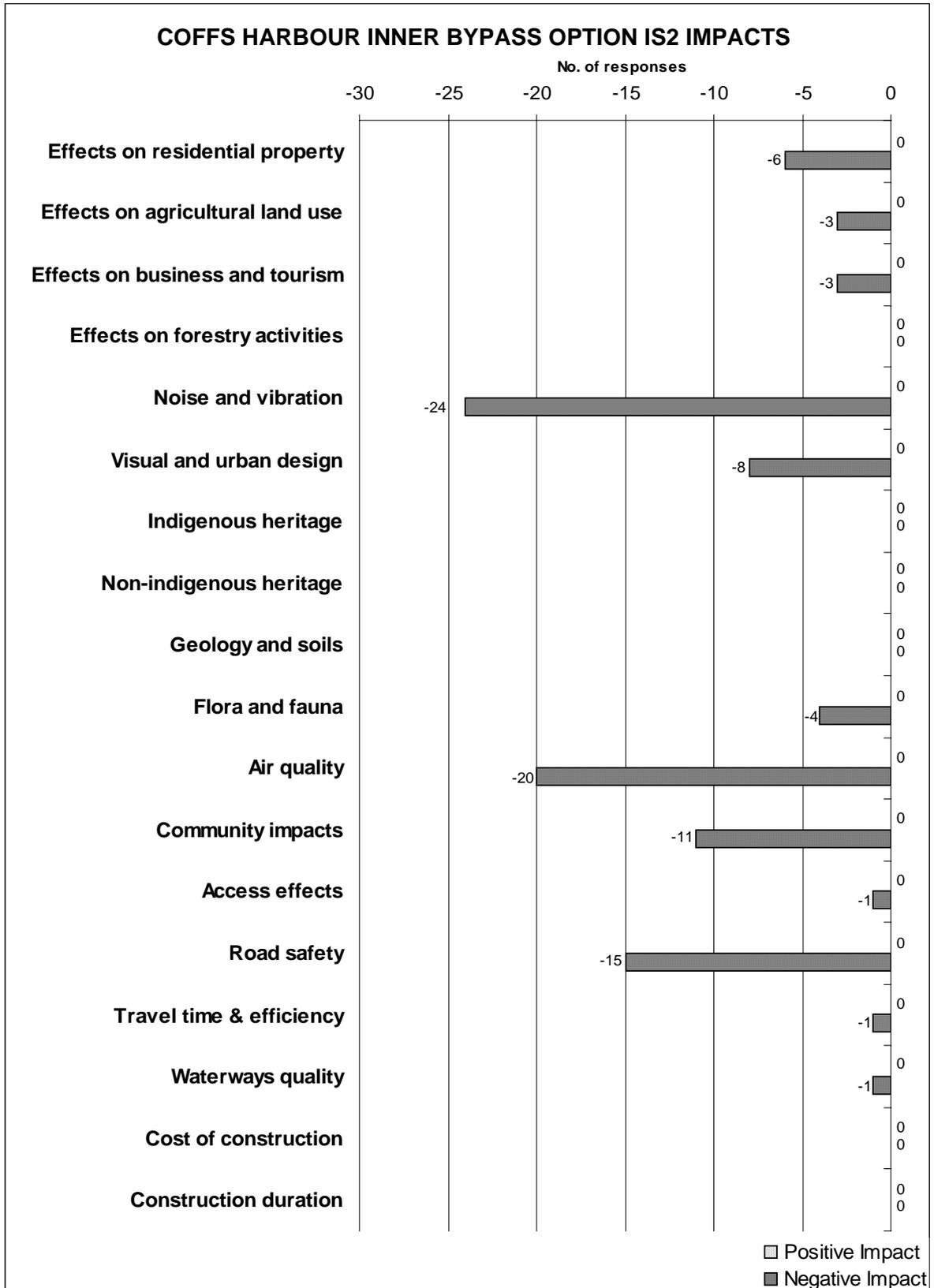


Figure 5C

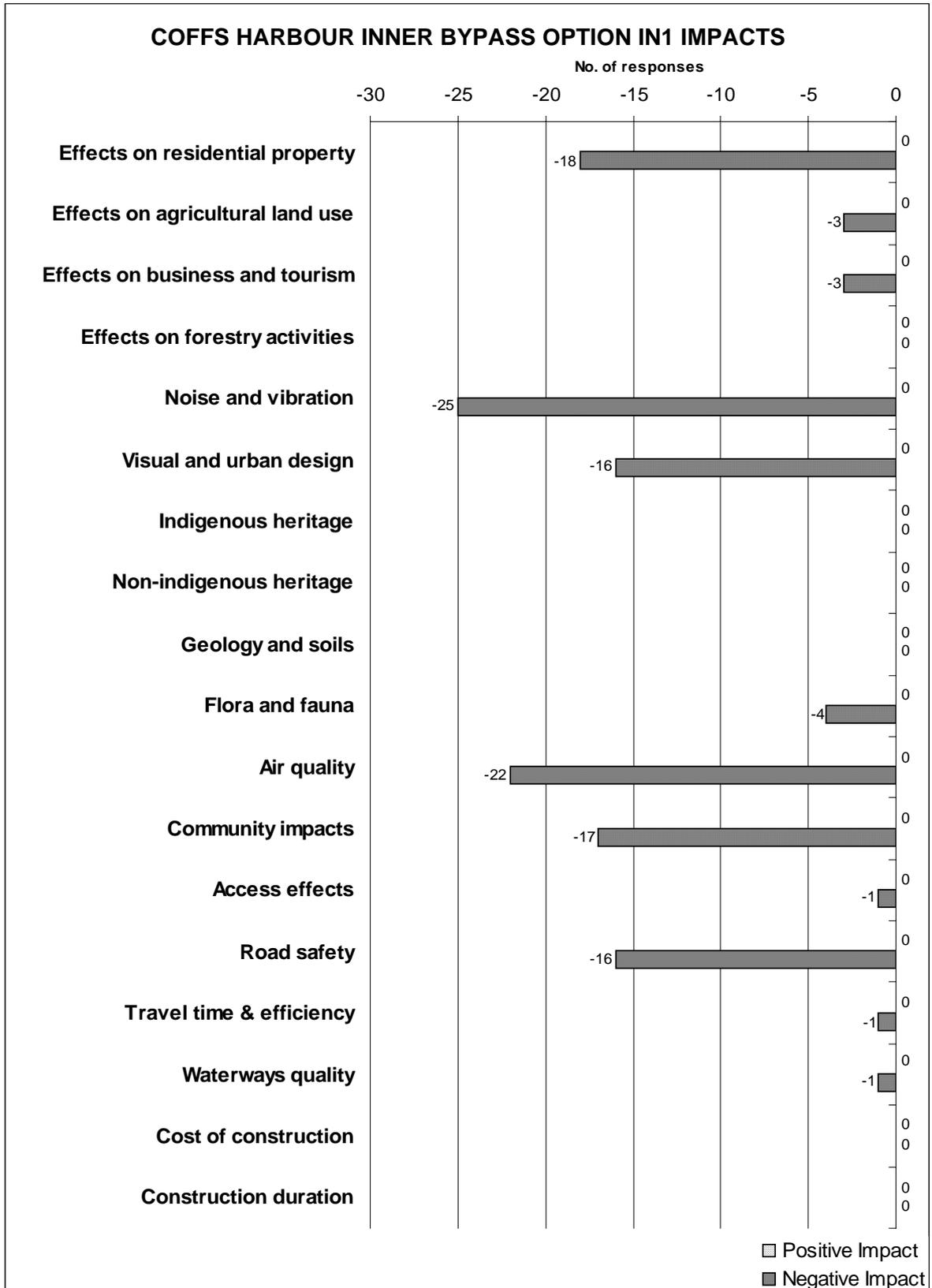


Figure 5D

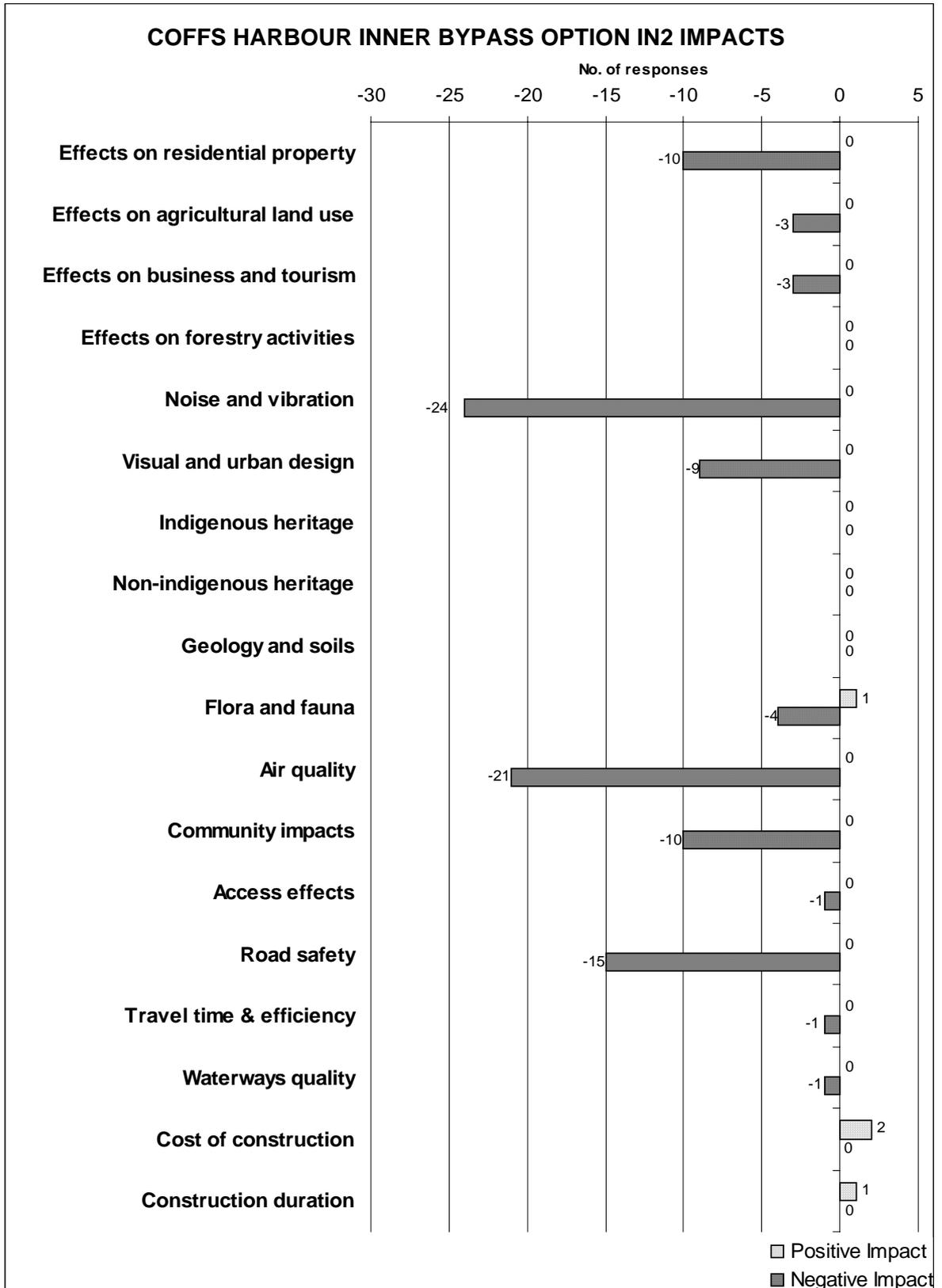


Figure 5E

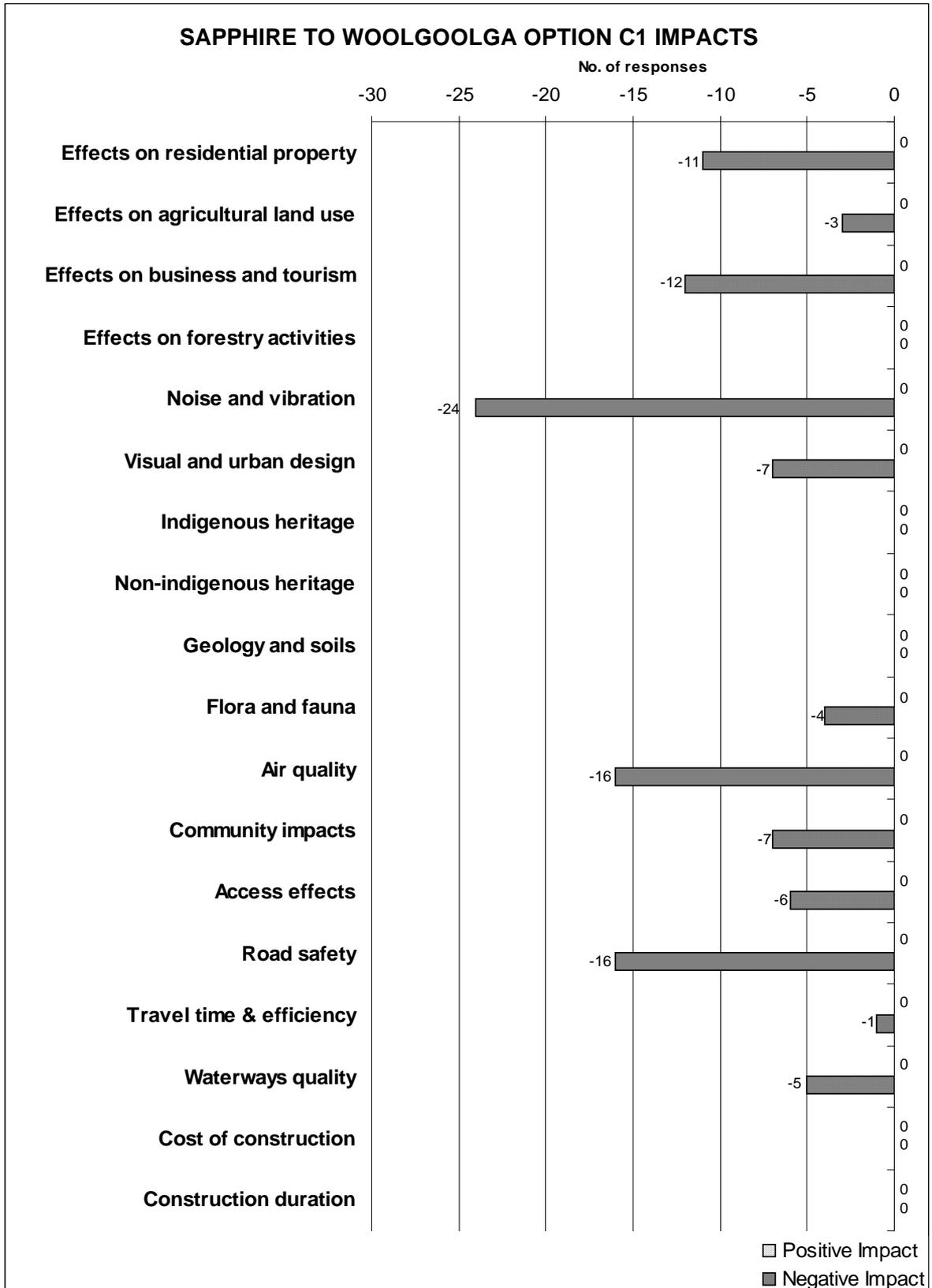


Figure 5F

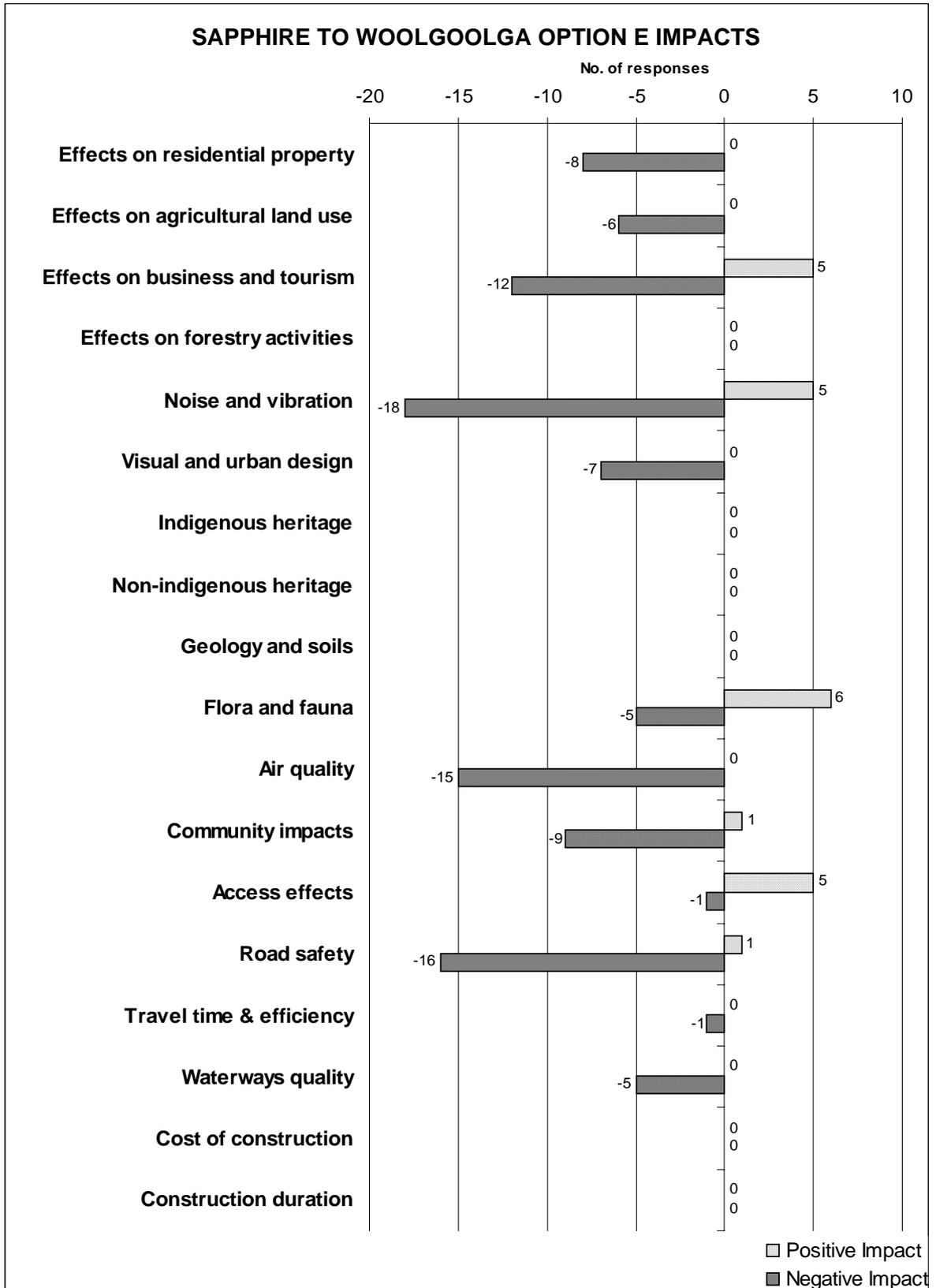


Figure 5G

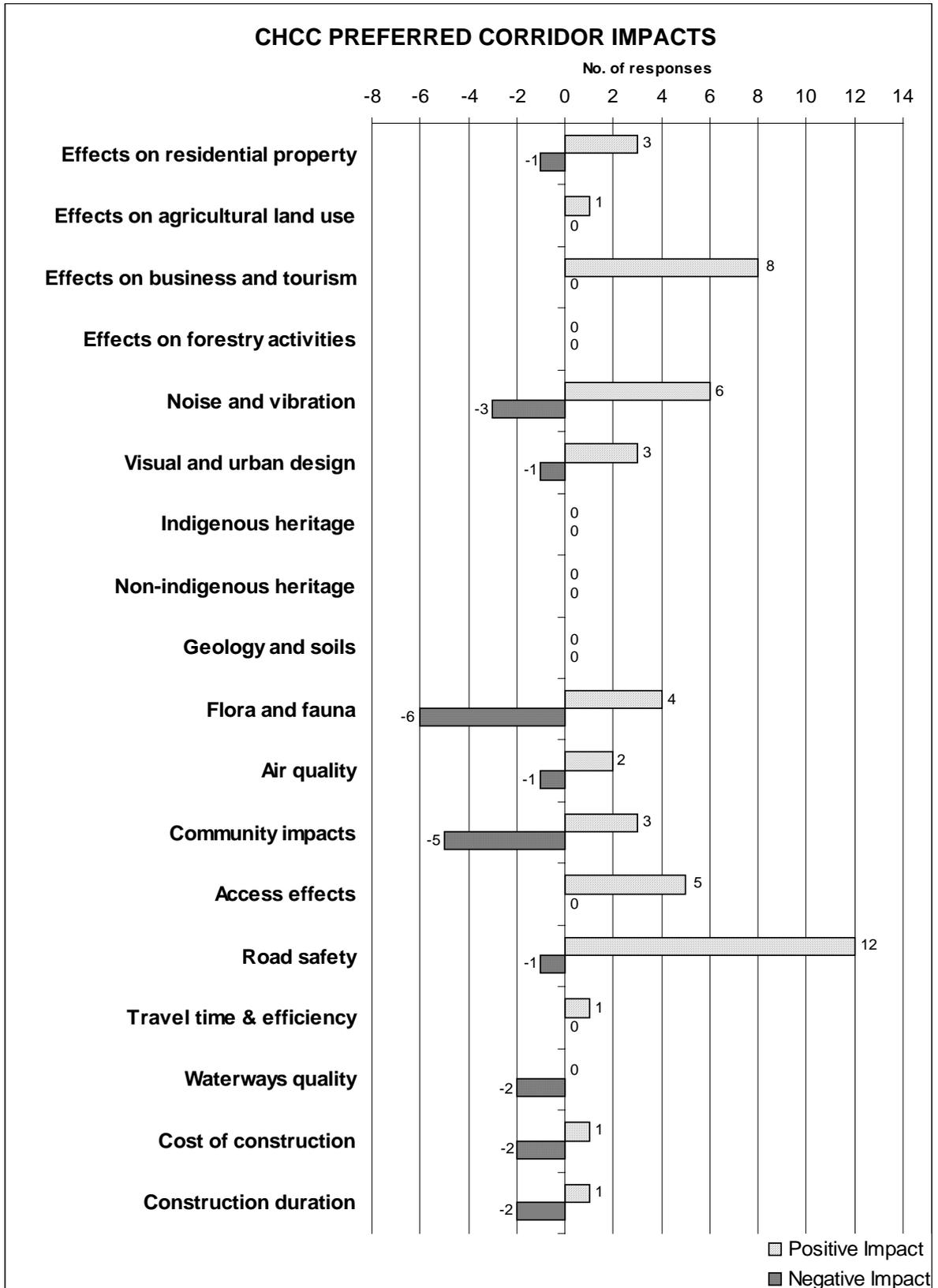


Figure 5H

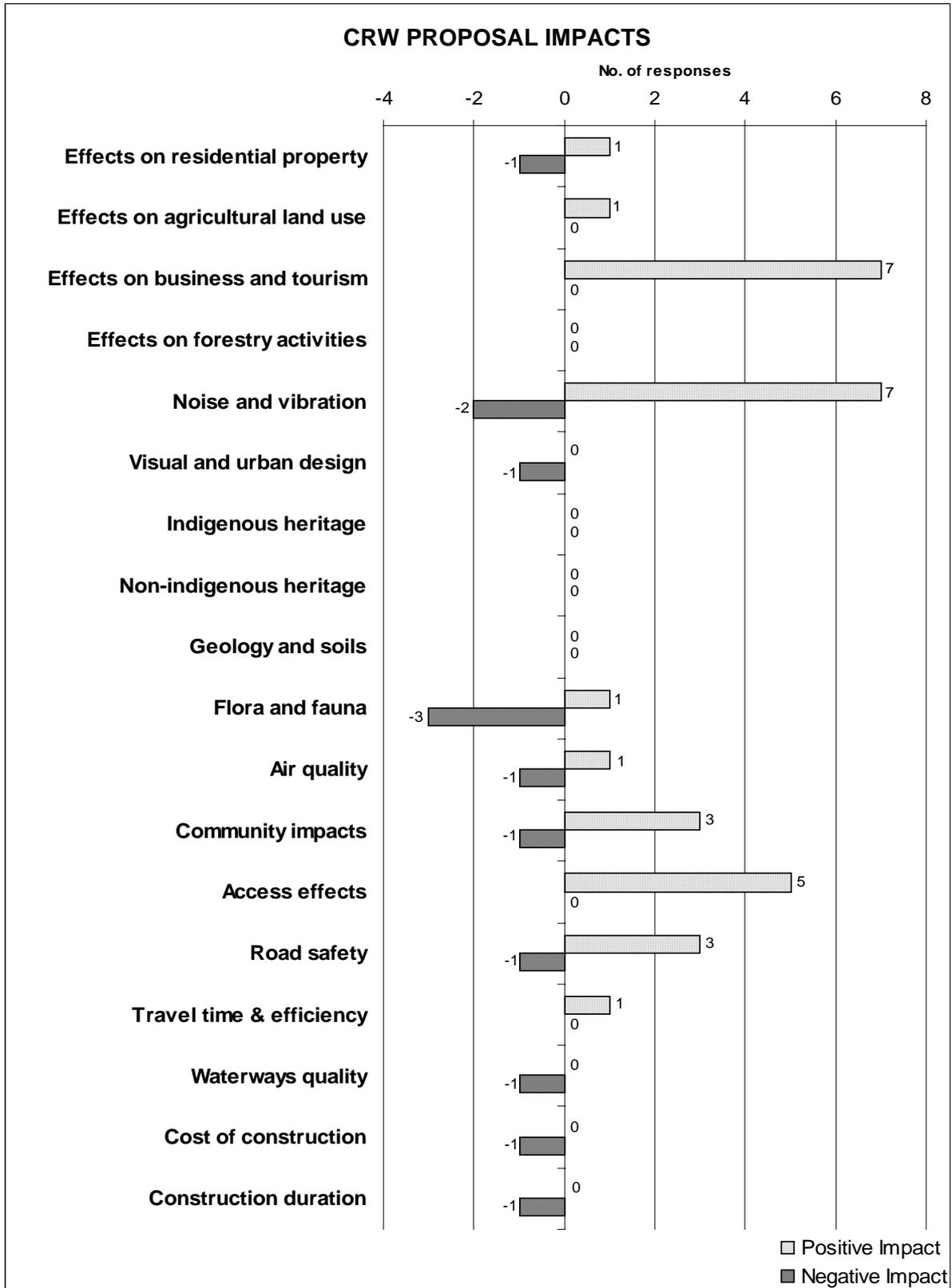


Figure 5l

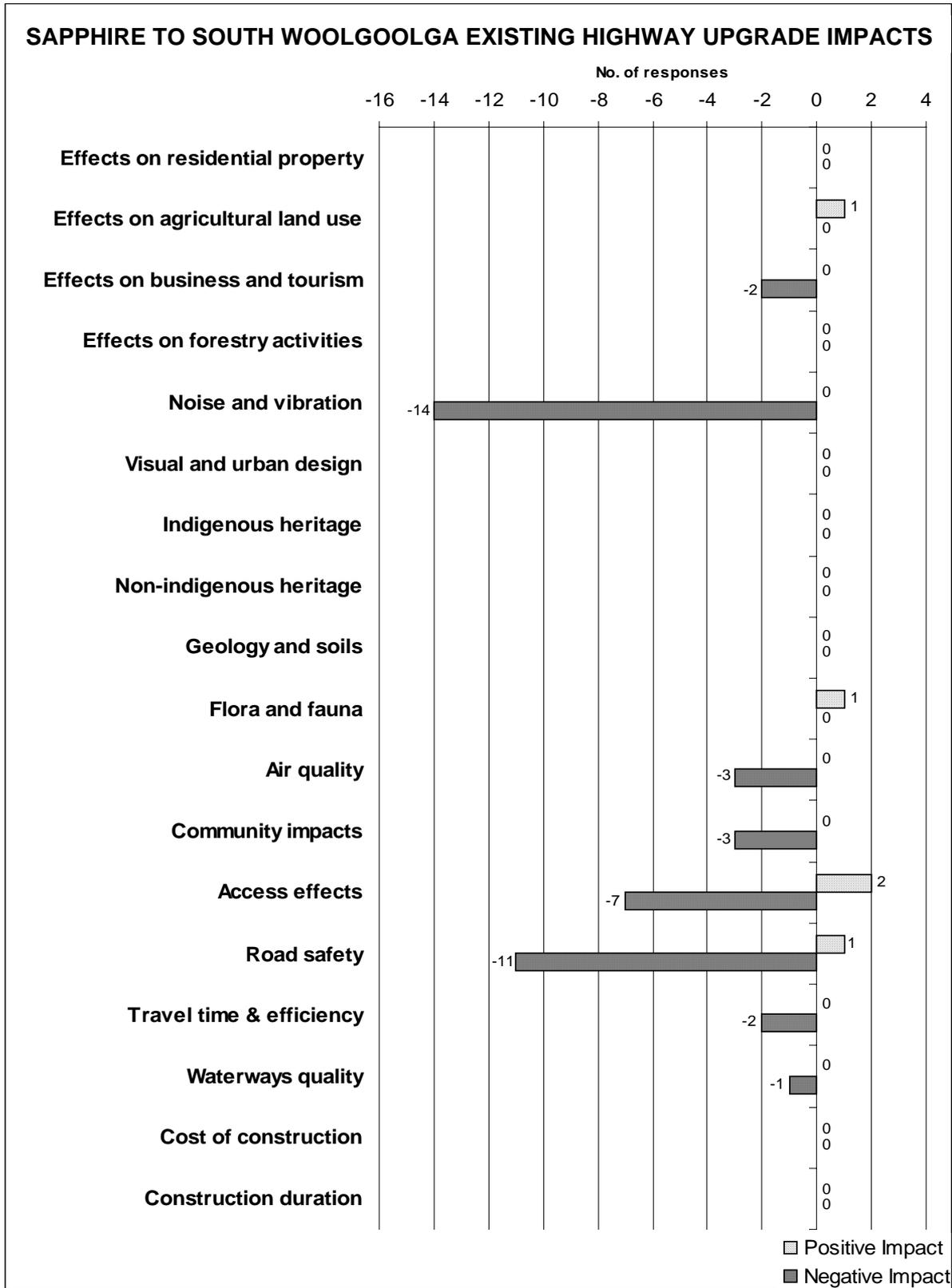


Figure 5J

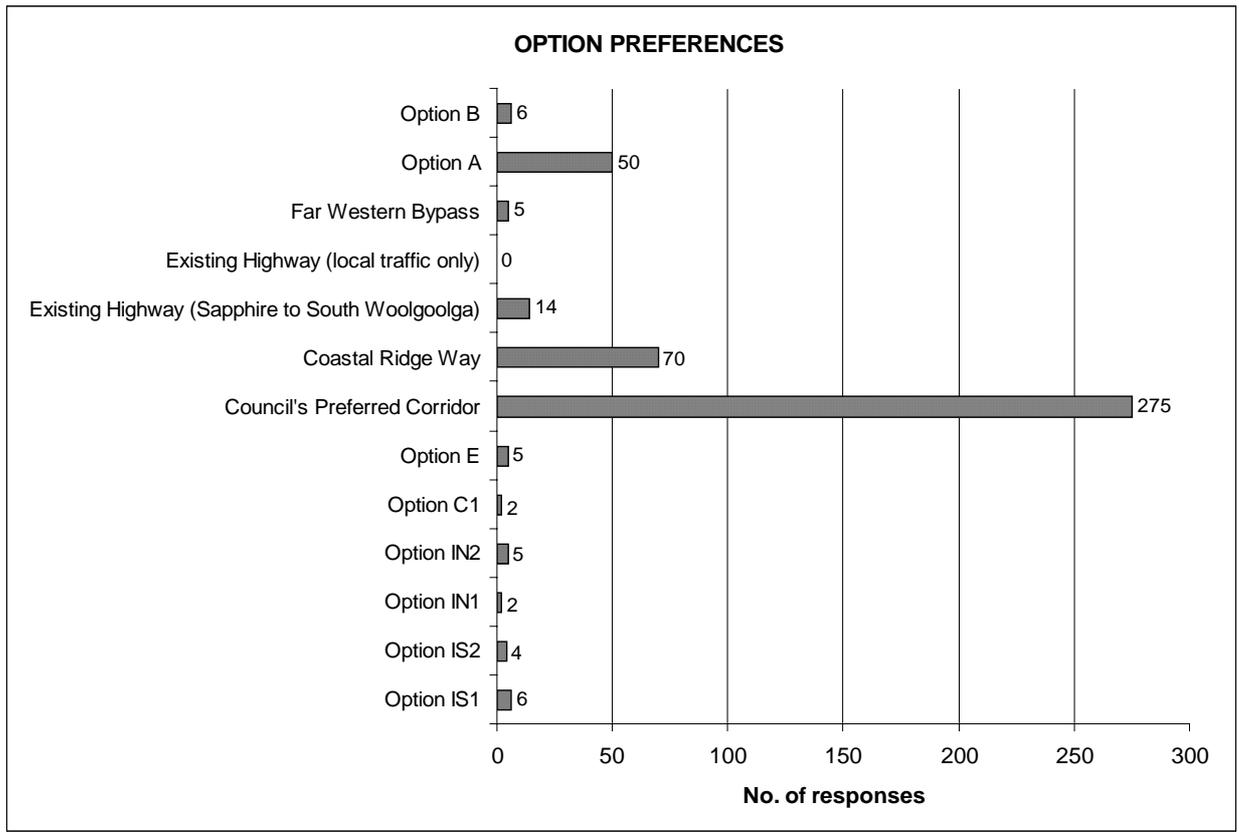


Figure 5K

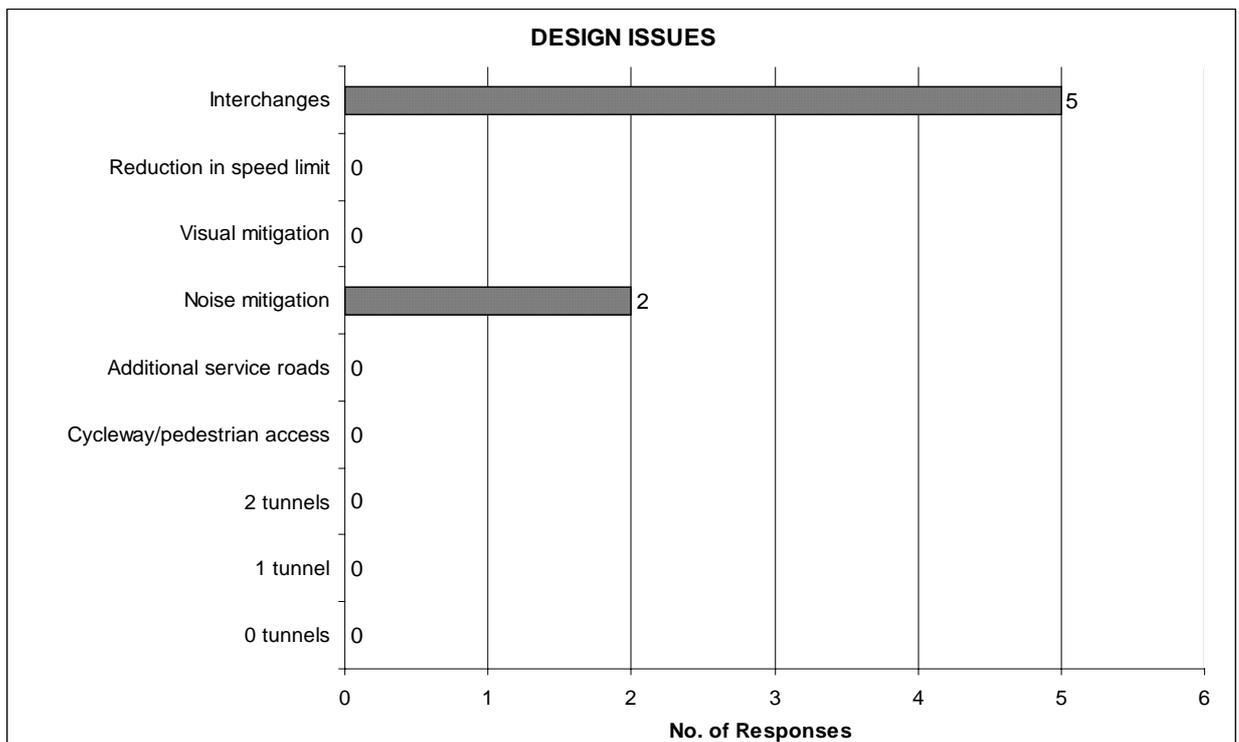


Table 5.1 Interim Community Submission Issues and Responses*

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	Community Update 4	
IS267	There is no good evidence to reject Option B except that it would affect 'valuable agricultural land' yet IS1, IS2, IN1 and IN2 also affect 'valuable agricultural land' but these routes are now short-listed. Explain why Option E, which ranks below Option B2 and costs a similar amount as Option B, has been short-listed whilst Option B has been rejected. I ask the RTA reconsider Option B as an option for the Pacific Highway upgrade ... The most logical and safest route for the highway upgrade would be to link Option B with Option E.	<p>A Value Management Study including technical and non-technical participants from a range of Government, Council and Community interests was held in April 2003. From the Value Management Study and subsequent investigations, Option B1 and B2 were considered not to merit further investigation due to the need to protect viable agricultural land at this location.</p> <p>Following a request by CHCC, Option E (a combination of the original Options C and B) was developed to reduce impacts on zoned and potential urban/residential lands in west and south Woolgoolga and also on banana growing properties to the west of Sandy Beach.</p>
IS272, 274, 277, 390	Figure 1 in Community Update 4 is severely flawed. It is false and unacceptable to show the West Coffs Development Area as 'Banana/Intensive Cultivation Land' and/or 'Excluded'.	The cadastre used on the figure for assessment of agricultural land was provided by CHCC in 2002 and the aerial photo for Coffs Harbour was taken in February 2002. The information shown in Figure 1 was correct at the time of data collection. Future development was considered when assessing the relative impacts of the options. Discussions were held with CHCC in 2003 to obtain information on future land releases/take up in the study area to determine the effects of the upgrade options. Details of future development areas are contained in Table 4.1 of Working Paper No 1 Statutory and Strategic Planning p15 (February 2004).
IS273	It has been reported that the highway alignment would create a 300m no-spray buffer either side of the new roadway. This will restrict the application of farm chemicals by aircraft which will have significant repercussions for pest and disease control on plantations, potentially jeopardising the viability of banana farms within the locality of the alignment. The footprint of the no-spray buffer needs to be determined for each option in each section in order to identify the route of lesser impact on banana enterprises and production.	The effective footprint of the no-spray buffer for each option is currently being investigated in consultation with NSW Agriculture and CHCC. It is acknowledged that the no-spray buffer area could impact on banana farm operations and viability in some circumstances. Ongoing consultation with the banana industry has been undertaken throughout the development of the route options and will continue to take place throughout the process of option evaluation, refinement of concept design and confirmation of road boundaries.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	Further consultation with the banana industry is encouraged so as to ascertain and clarify their concerns and identify route options and measures that may minimise impacts on the industry.	
IS278, 279, 280, 401	The positive aspects of Option A have been seemingly ignored by the RTA due to the RTA's bias against Option A.	A summary of Option A was provided in Community Update #3. Further detailed assessment of Option A can be found in the Route Options Development (ROD) report (2002) and its associated working papers. One of the purposes of Community Update #4 (Feb 04) was to outline the outcomes of the Value Management Study held in April 2003. The study found that Option A performed best against socio-economic (or community) performance categories but worst against all other categories. Another purpose of the Update was to outline the development of two new options for the Woolgoolga Section (C1 and E) and to seek comment regarding these revised options. These comments will be considered along side of those sought earlier for Option A.
	Strategy Report	
IS272, 274, 277, 390	The data regarding traffic noise appears to be very 'flimsy'. It is inappropriate and unacceptable for the report to refer to the IN1 corridor as 'semi rural/rural residential development'. In comparison with other highway bypass reports (elsewhere in NSW and Qld) ... the assertion that '50dBA at night time would be achieved at 100-900m from the edge of the alignment' appears to be seriously flawed. It is incumbent upon the RTA to publish the full 'Strategic Noise Assessment (2004)' report for closer analysis by the community. Independent inquiries indicate that (even after the suggested noise mitigation works) the Base Criteria of 50dBA at night time in the West Coffs Development Area would not be achieved outside 500m from the edge of the corridor. This data erodes the credibility of the Strategy Report.	Section 7.4 of the Strategy Report states that "For the Inner Bypass the Base Criteria of 50dBA at night time would be achieved at 100-900m from the edge of the alignment without noise mitigation, <u>depending on the topography, gradient and receiver elevation</u> ". The Report also states that "With noise mitigation the Base Criteria of 50dBA at night time would be achieved at 50m-450m from the edge of the alignment, <u>depending on the topography, gradient and receiver elevation</u> ." Further details on noise are contained within Working Paper No 4 – Strategic Noise Assessment. This full report can be obtained by contacting the project information line, or by visiting the project website. This report has been available since the February 2004 information release.
IS272, 274, 277, 390	Why does the Strategy Report fail to address diesel pollution for heavy vehicles which is a significant consideration in the pristine West Coffs urban area?	A strategic Air Quality study is attached as Appendix C to the Strategy Report (2004). The study is also summarized in the Strategy Report. Further air quality studies would be taken during the Environmental Impact Assessment phase.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	Strategic Noise Assessment Working Paper No.4	
IS272, 274, 277, 390	The published noise figures appear to only reflect the A scale. Investigation reveals that any one heavy vehicle movement which generates greater than 35dBA (at night) will wake a sleeping person. The published noise figures also relate to an averaged set of figures. Clearly, therefore, with many heavy vehicles using the highway bypass, there will be numerous sleep disturbances in the vicinity of Option IN1.	Noise assessments have been carried out in accordance with the DEC ECRTN and in accordance with the RTA's Environment Noise Management Manual (ENMM).
	Review of the Coastal Ridge Way Proposal Report	
ICF01	CRW/CHCC's preferred corridor – make it a tollway so the user pays.	<p>Development of the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project is part of the 10 year Pacific Highway Upgrading Program, which is fully funded by State and Federal Government. The CRW and CHCC preferred corridor are part of investigations into the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy, which is looking at the future of the Pacific Highway through the Coffs Harbour urban area. The study is investigating whether a bypass is feasible in the future and, if so, the outcome of the study could be to reserve land for such a bypass. Refer to the following recent reports - <i>Strategy Report, Review of the Coastal Ridge Way Proposal, CHCC Preferred Corridor Feasibility Assessment</i>. Detailed environmental impact assessment for such a bypass would not take place until closer to the time of construction when funding arrangements are confirmed. Other road network improvements through Coffs Harbour such as the eastern and western distributors and intersection improvements along the Highway are assumed to be in place before such a bypass is required.</p> <p>A wide range of factors will be taken into consideration as part of the process of selecting a preferred option for the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy. Although significant factors, cost and economic viability are not the only factors that will be considered in the selection of a preferred option.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	Exhibition of new and revised options	
IS278, 279, 280, 401	The time to respond to the options was inadequate.	The period allowed for response was 4 weeks, this was extended by a further 2 weeks if requested. Submissions received prior to the closing date for submissions on the assessment of Council's Preferred Corridor (Friday 25 June 2004) will also be taken into consideration during the selection of the preferred option.
	Cost and Economic Evaluation	
	<i>Southern (Coffs Harbour) section</i>	
IS272, 274, 277, 390	The calculation of costs for acquisition/compensation of land required for the highway corridor appears to be simply a percentage of the project costs. As such, the figures bear no resemblance to current market value (which is the basis upon which the Just terms Compensation legislation is based). Reading of the figures indicates that an allowance of \$15m has been allowed for all acquisition costs for the inner corridor. That allowance would not even cover 40 developed residential allotments (with houses). Seeing as IN1 will require the acquisition of many more residential allotments, the cost allocation is seriously inaccurate. Consequently, the BCR calculation is similarly inaccurate.	Cost estimates for Land Acquisition have been based on indicative costs from other comparable projects. The total acquisition budget established in the estimate is for between 5% and 10% of total project cost – typical for the vast majority of non-metropolitan highway projects. The cost estimates (including contingencies) provide for uncertainty across all project elements. Variations to property acquisition costs are not likely to significantly affect the total cost of the options or their economic viability (BCR calculations).
	Noise Assessment	
	<i>Northern (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) section</i>	
IS278, 279, 280, 401	Evidence from other communities indicates a failure by the RTA to satisfactorily mitigate sound problems.	The RTA is required to mitigate road traffic noise in accordance with the DEC guidelines. The RTA is also required to carry out post-construction noise monitoring (i.e. after the road is constructed) to measure compliance with the DEC guidelines and, if required, provide additional mitigation measures to ensure compliance with the guidelines.
	Socio-Economic Assessment	
	<i>Southern (Coffs Harbour) section</i>	
IS125, 241, 275, 276, 396, 397, 398, 399	The economic viability of IN1 will be even more marginal once the vast compensation payments the RTA will be obliged to make under the provisions of the Just Terms Compensation Act in line with current market values are factored in.	Property acquisition costs are included in the estimates for all options (including Option IN1) and the assessment of the economic viability of the options.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
IS125, 241, 275, 276, 396, 397, 398, 399	Under the heading 'Socio-economic outcomes for Option IN1' it is asserted 'Urban property impacts – Low Beneficial'. That assertion is ludicrous ... the urban property impact of Option IN1 will be high.	The impact assessments are for the overall impact of the options on the whole of the community – including impacts on communities adjacent to the existing highway and communities adjacent to the options. Removal of traffic from the existing Pacific Highway would have benefits for urban land use and property for properties along the existing highway. However, there would be adverse impacts on rural land use and property from an Inner Bypass.
	Ecological Assessment	
	<i>Northern (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) section</i>	
IS267	<p>The location of the proposed half change intersection on Hearns Lake Rd is environmentally unacceptable because it is less than 50m from sensitive wetlands north of Hearns Lake and so could seriously impact upon them. For example, run off and sedimentation from construction of this intersection would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact the potential habitat of the endangered wallum froglet (<i>Crinia tinnula</i>) in the Melaleuca swamp and lagoons that are located beside the proposed development, and • Adversely affect nesting and foraging habitats of at least 22 bird species including several migratory species and vulnerable species. A recent survey completed in January 2003 showed that more than 100 birds currently nest in trees in this lagoon. 	<p>A detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would be undertaken following selection of the preferred option. The EIA will more fully detail the impacts of the preferred option and proposed mitigation measures (which could include adjustments to the Concept Design).</p> <p>Drainage design would be prepared as part of the detailed design phase whereupon the significance and sensitivity of these wetland features would be also taken into consideration.</p> <p>Environmental impacts during construction would be addressed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment phase. A Construction Environmental Management Plan would also be prepared prior to works to manage potential environmental impacts.</p>
	Urban Design and Visual Assessment	
	<i>Southern (Coffs Harbour) section</i>	
IS272, 274, 277, 390	It is unacceptable to make the statement that Option IN1 will have 'very significant visual impacts' without offering a solution. The cost estimates make no allowance for comprehensive (and appropriate) visual impact mitigation works. On this basis alone, the BCR assessment is flawed.	<p>Potential Urban Design outcomes are detailed on p17 of WP2 – Urban Design and Visual Assessment (2004). Urban design treatments would be further refined at the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) stage.</p> <p>The cost estimates include provision for visual impact mitigation works.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	Traffic and Transport	
	<i>Northern (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) section</i>	
IS278, 279, 280, 401	Traffic volumes have increased dramatically and no new traffic count has been done since the Yelgun to Chinderah section of highway was completed. Traffic from the New England highway has moved onto the Pacific Highway and there is no accounting for the effect of this on residents.	Section 4.4 of the Supplementary Options Report (February 2004) discusses the influence of the Yelgun-Chinderah bypass opening on volumes (particularly heavy vehicle volumes) through the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section. Some recent growth is evident, but longer term trends are unknown at this stage. Comparison of relative levels of traffic attracted to each option are not impacted by Yelgun-Chinderah project. Table 4.3 of the Supplementary Options Report (February 2004) presents data from surveys undertaken since opening of the Yelgun-Chinderah bypass.
IS278, 279, 280	Option E: traffic volumes inadequately accounted for.	Analysis of heavy vehicles is based upon the same methodology as that used in the Route Options Development Report (November 2002), therefore all options are treated in the same way.
	Statutory and Strategic Planning	
	<i>Both sections</i>	
IS04, 126, 278, 279, 280, 345, 347, 391, 392	All proposed options – IN1, IN2, IS1, IS2, C1 and E – are bandaid solutions.	All of the options were developed and evaluated to cater for a period of in excess of 20 years. It is considered that the Inner Bypass Options in Coffs Harbour, and Options C1 and E in Woolgoolga will achieve the separation of local and through traffic, and improve local traffic movements through the townships. In addition to traffic modelling, other parameters included in this evaluation period were State, regional and local planning strategies that have identified guidelines, key strategies, objectives and predictions covering a wide range of issues. These include transport, air quality, road safety, population growth, settlement patterns, and future urban and rural residential development. Further details of the statutory and strategic planning implications of the alternative options considered within this context can be found in the <i>Strategy Report, Working Paper No 1: Statutory and Strategic Planning Issues</i> , and the <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Supplementary Options Report</i> .

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	<i>Southern (Coffs Harbour) section</i>	
IS125, 241, 275, 276, 396, 397, 398, 399	<p>Option IN1: Violates the planning provisions of LEP 2000 ... the West Coffs Development Control Plan ... and Council's Infrastructure Plans Seriously compromises the West Coffs Contribution Plans Destroys the economic and social viability of DA 1186/03 Seriously conflicts with approved engineering drawings for the provision of services to DA 1186/03 ... and recently constructed roads and services as part of the recent Development Approvals.</p>	<p><i>Coffs Harbour LEP 2000</i> IN1 passes through land zoned Residential 2A in Coffs Harbour LEP 2000. Roads are a permissible use in this zone with the consent of Council and the IN1 option is in accordance with the provisions of the LEP.</p> <p><i>West Coffs</i> There is no DCP for West Coffs at this stage. IN1 passes through the area designated as the West Coffs Residential Release area on the West Coffs Information Sheet and is zoned 2A Residential under the LEP. The Information Sheet is a concept development plan (that is a masterplan) containing a number of strategies, rather than a Development Control Plan containing specific controls for development.</p> <p>At the time the <i>Strategy Report</i> and <i>Working Paper No 1: Statutory and Strategic Planning Issues</i> were being prepared, the status and timing of development in this area was reported by Council as being "medium term - Council now delaying further planning action pending outcome of Highway planning." Between the time of preparing the reports and release of the information, Council approved a number of development applications including a large subdivision off Spagnolos Road. Council has advised that it is currently updating and converting the Information Sheet to a new DCP to control development in the area.</p> <p><i>Infrastructure plans</i> Presumably the infrastructure plans referred to are the roadworks, water supply and sewerage strategies outlined in the West Coffs Information Sheet. The status of these strategies have similar standing as the other strategies in the West Coffs Developer Contribution Plan came into operation in February 2000 and was updated on 16 October 2003. This coincided with the subdivision planning in the Spagnolos Road area.</p> <p>Impacts of IN1 on DA 1186/03 will be taken into account during the selection of the preferred option.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	Other Issues	
IS105	Do something about Pine Creek – too many dead and injured.	Pine Creek is outside the study area covered by the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy. It is part of the approved Bonville Upgrade Project. Approval is currently being sought for modifications to the southern end of the project.
IS278, 279, 280, 401	Pollution from trucks, particularly the size of diesel pollutants can enter lungs and the bloodstream. Even in small doses, these particles are considered to be carcinogenic.	An air quality study for the southern section around Coffs Harbour was conducted by Holmes Air Sciences and can be found as Appendix C to the <i>Strategy Report</i> . The study considered air quality issues associated with traffic emissions and compared the relative impacts of the existing highway upgrade with the inner bypass on air quality by analysing 2021 traffic volumes. More detailed Air Quality studies will be carried out at the time of Environmental Impact Assessment.
IS278, 279, 280, 401	Needs to be a public independent inquiry into the process and behaviour of the RTA and Coffs Harbour City Council concerning the bypass issue	The RTA is following the appropriate process for the identification and evaluation of options leading towards the selection of the preferred option. Following its selection, the preferred option would be subject to a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
IS401	The RTA has paid no regard for Woolgoolga's substantial Indian community by way of literature written in the Indian Language or interpreters to ensure the Indian community was adequately informed.	Meetings were publicised and held at the First Sikh Temple and the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple following the announcement of the development of the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy in 2001. Since then, with each subsequent information release, Punjabi translations of the display posters have been provided at both Sikh temples and also at the Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre which is a venue frequented by members of the Sikh community. The composition of the Community Focus Group for the Woolgoolga Area also includes two Sikh community representatives. Members are active in disseminating information and recording feedback from the particular group/s they represent.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
IS408	To solve the potential traffic problems of the Moonee release area, there must be highway access at Bucca Road, Moonee Beach Road/Hoys Road and Split Solitary Road. Bucca Road is a major intersection that requires upgrading. A grade separated intersection, such as the one proposed at Moonee Beach Road to connect with Hoys Road, would allow the North Moonee development to connect with Bucca Road and alleviate the need for the unnecessary use of 'local roads' to congest the roundabout in Moonee Beach Road to reach the highway.	<p>Page 4 of Community Update 3 released in December 2002 illustrated a concept for a grade-separated interchange linking Moonee Beach Road and Hoys Road. Final designs for this interchange, the Bucca Road intersection and access from new development at Moonee will be refined in consultation with Council.</p> <p>With regard to the Draft Moonee Development Control Plan (DCP), the RTA supports Council's proposal for accesses to the Pacific Highway to be located at Split Solitary Road and Moonee Beach Road/Hoys Road to service the proposed development.</p>

* Direct statements from submissions and survey forms have been used in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 where necessary to retain the original intent of the respondent and each issue can be sourced back to the respondent/s. The words quoted against each specific issue are direct quotations from written submissions and survey forms where possible. Where this has not been practicable, the words generally reflect the intent of the questions asked or concerns raised, even though somewhat different words may have been used to express this. The responses to the submissions and survey forms have been structured in a way that attempts to address commonly raised matters in a single response. The issues and responses are not categorised in any priority order.

Table 5.2 Interim Submission Design Issues and Responses*

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	Existing highway	
ICF13	Re-route traffic off Bray Street at Taloumbi Road and extend Taloumbi Road across the railway line and link up with Mastracolas Road which would divert all left-hand traffic at Bray Street to the highway. Then the diverted traffic would have all points to travel – that is, to the beach, Plaza, and north and south highway lanes from the roundabout.	This is a local traffic management issue on the existing highway. The Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy is being developed to address the need to upgrade the Pacific Highway between Sapphire and Woolgoolga while planning for future traffic needs within the Coffs Harbour urban area.
ICF31	Maintain existing highway but make it three-lane northbound from Englands Road with southbound traffic bypassing Coffs Harbour CBD by taking a 1.25km tunnel under Macauleys Headland (just north of Big Banana) to the Hogbin Drive Extension. Re-entry onto the highway would be at Englands Road roundabout and make Hogbin Drive bypass two lanes southbound and one lane northbound. This would halve the traffic through the city and maintain similar numbers on Hogbin Drive extension.	The investigations into the Inner Bypass options and upgrading the existing highway were based on the assumption that the Eastern Distributor (Hogbin Drive) and western distributor (Mastrocolas Road) routes would be completed. The suggestion to divert south-bound traffic to Hogbin Drive with a 1.25km tunnel is, in effect, a modified upgrade of the existing highway through Coffs Harbour. Community Update #4 advised that the upgrade of the existing highway does not merit further consideration due to its socio-economic impacts on the Coffs Harbour urban area.
IS85	Need traffic lights at the intersection of Emerald Beach and the highway.	With the upgrade of the existing highway to a high standard dual carriageway from Sapphire to Woolgoolga a seagull intersection would be provided at Fiddaman Road. Traffic lights would not be required at this upgraded intersection.
	Coffs Harbour City Council's preferred corridor	
IS01	Consider a link road from the CRW to the coast at Moonee Beach – it's only about 2.5km. If calculations on vehicle flow were done again with inclusion of the link road, the numbers would be considerably higher. Vehicles going to the areas between Korora and Woolgoolga would all use the CRW and come off on the link road. This would leave the Coffs business area free of traffic.	All route options investigated within Council's preferred corridor (including the CRW) allowed for Bucca road to provide a link to the existing highway at Moonee Beach.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	Other	
IS135	Alternative route suggestion: Use combination of IS1/IS2 with IN1/IN2, upgrade existing highway from Korora to Moonee, then divert west with a tunnel between the areas of semi-built up development and, keeping to the west of these areas, pass through the Orara East State Forest taking a more easterly course than Option A to reconnect with Option A only when almost west of Safety Beach. By utilizing only a section of Option A, the longest uphill sections will be tempered.	This proposal would be very expensive due to the high cost of the tunnels required and, as a result, would not be an economically viable option. The additional length of the proposal (compared to the more easterly options) would also reduce its functional performance.

* Direct statements from submissions and survey forms have been used in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 where necessary to retain the original intent of the respondent and each issue can be sourced back to the respondent/s. The words quoted against each specific issue are direct quotations from written submissions and survey forms where possible. Where this has not been practicable, the words generally reflect the intent of the questions asked or concerns raised, even though somewhat different words may have been used to express this. The responses to the submissions and survey forms have been structured in a way that attempts to address commonly raised matters in a single response. The issues and responses are not categorised in any priority order.

6. Conclusion

A range of views was expressed on the assessment of the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor in the survey forms and submissions received.

Community comment on the findings of this assessment and previously displayed options will be considered as part of the process to select a preferred option. Other inputs will include various reports produced by the project team, comments received from government agencies, and the outcomes of studies and workshops held to evaluate and assess the various options.

Options will be compared to identify the route that achieves the best balance between social, ecological, functional and value for money factors.

A decision on a preferred route is expected to be announced before the end of the year.

7. References

Australian Centre for Value Management (2003) *Pacific Highway Upgrade, Sapphire to Woolgoolga project, Moonee to Woolgoolga Section, Value Management Workshop Report, April 2003*

Australian Centre for Value Management (2003) *Sapphire to Woolgoolga project, Sapphire to Moonee Section, Value Engineering Workshop Report, April 2003*

Connell Wagner (2004a) *Community Update No.4, Coffs Harbour Highway Planning, Southern and Northern Sections, February 2004*

Connell Wagner (2004b) *Coffs Harbour City Council Preferred Corridor Feasibility Assessment, June 2004*

Connell Wagner (2004c) *Community Update No.5, Coffs Harbour Highway Planning, Southern and Northern Sections, June 2004*

Connell Wagner (2004d) *Strategy Report, Coffs Harbour Highway Planning, Coffs Harbour Section, February 2004*

Connell Wagner (2004e) *Supplementary Options Report, Coffs Harbour Highway Planning, Sapphire to Woolgoolga Section, February 2004*

Connell Wagner (2004f) *Review of the Coastal Ridge Way Proposal, Coffs Harbour Highway Planning, Coffs Harbour Section, February 2004*

Connell Wagner (2002a) *Information Sheet No.2 Coffs Harbour Highway Planning, Developing a Planning Strategy for the Pacific Highway Coffs Harbour, March 2002*

Connell Wagner (2002b) *Community Update No.3 Coffs Harbour Highway Planning, Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options, December 2002*

Appendix A

Community Submission Issues and Responses

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
	Community Update 5	
CF27	Why is there no place to comment on the unacceptability of the Coastal Route? This is skewed canvassing.	Comments on the coastal route were invited in the "Have your say" form in Community Update No 4 released in February 2004. Responses are addressed in the submissions report issued in May 2004
<p>CF27, 141, 175, 184, 185, 190, 193, 196</p> <p>S06, 07, 86, 94, 96, 101, 102, 103, 104</p>	<p>Route options within Council's preferred corridor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction techniques can overcome deep cut/high fill scenario • Social desirability outweighs poor biophysical parameters • BCR rating will inevitably improve with time and increased traffic counts • Initial cost not much more than Coastal Route Options and will become much more beneficial with time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is acknowledged in general, however there are practical limits to the feasible depths of cuts and fills. The footprint required to accommodate a dual carriageway divided highway could exceed 200m in places and have unacceptable environmental impacts plus extremely high cost. The physical proposals for the options were therefore developed as a balanced response to various influences and not solely as larger cut and fill engineering solutions • Consistent with the adopted 'triple bottom line' approach, the evaluation involved comparing options relative to three primary outcome areas of which social impact is one. Others are environmental impact (biophysical and heritage) and functional performance (eg traffic, safety and economic benefit). The evaluation did not attempt to prioritise between these key outcome areas, recognising all as important • The economic analysis was undertaken in accordance with the RTA Economic Analysis Manual and uses an evaluation period of 30 years. The analysis assumed that the options were opened to traffic in 2024. The full methodology is described in <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options Working Paper No 9 Cost Estimates and Economic Analysis</i>, October 2002. The BCR value of options in CHCC preferred corridor over the full 30 year evaluation period are all less than 0.5 (between 0.25 and 0.49) and therefore represent a poor investment opportunity. • The lowest cost option in the Council preferred corridor was \$1,205M including allowance for upgrade of bypassed highway sections to suitable standard. This is significantly more than the upper range estimate of \$900M for the coastal route option. The coastal route options have a benefit cost advantage that is over 3 times that of the CHCC preferred corridor options.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flora, fauna and Aboriginal impacts – these are surmountable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The biophysical and heritage impacts on the natural environment are very significantly adverse. Each of the options in the CHCC preferred corridor require access to the south via the Coastal Ridge Way (CRW) route. The <i>Review of the Coastal Ridge Way Proposal</i> report (February 2004) found that the potential scale of impact is such that even the most comprehensive of mitigation measures would be unlikely to yield a satisfactory outcome in terms of ecological values.
<p>CF31, 51, 52, 153, 154, 171, 243, 252, 275, 282, 286</p> <p>S07, 16, 17, 86</p>	<p>Cost should not play a part in the process or be the deciding factor. If the project was Sydney-based, money would not be a consideration. The route options suggest more concentration on financial costs rather than socio-economic costs.</p>	<p>As noted in CF27 above, the evaluation was based on the performance and impacts of the options in three key outcome areas including social, environmental and functional. Nonetheless, cost and economic viability are important influences in assessing the feasibility of all infrastructure proposals.</p>
CF34	<p>A baffle wall should be incorporated from Korora to Emerald Beach in the Coastal Route Options. It is not shown in the costings.</p>	<p>The cost estimates for upgrading the existing highway between Korora and south Woolgoolga include an allowance for noise mitigation measures in sections where they have been identified as necessary. The costings are detailed in <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options Working Paper No 9 Cost Estimates and Economic Analysis</i> (October 2002) and the <i>Coffs Harbour Section Strategy Report</i> (February 2004)</p>
CF38	<p>The update does not identify the criteria for 'ability to stage', 'economic viability', 'socio-economic', 'biophysical' and 'indigenous heritage'. 'Poor value for money' is a subjective statement by the RTA. Clearly the local residents do not think the CRW is poor value and don't understand why this view, supported by the local council, should have been twice overruled by the RTA.</p>	<p>Criteria for all these factors are described in detail in the working papers and reports that were released in December 2002 and February 2004. BCR is a primary indicator of "Value for money" which is an essential assessment criterion for any government-funded infrastructure project.</p>
<p>CF40, 80, 111, 168, 188, 192</p> <p>S86, 94, 96</p>	<p>Why send to the community a survey on Coffs Harbour Highway Planning when the decision by the RTA is in progress?</p>	<p>The assessment of future highway options has been progressed in accordance with the initial process agreed with the original Steering Committee. The RTA and DIPNR subsequently agreed to the inclusion in the process of this assessment of Council's preferred corridor. While the release of the report has provided clear conclusions regarding the feasibility assessment, a final decision on shortlisted routes will not be made until the review of submissions has been completed.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
CF45	The people of Coffs Harbour should be asked to vote on this.	The Pacific Highway is a State Highway and it needs to serve the requirements of a far wider community than just the Coffs Harbour community. The planning and assessment of future highway options must necessarily consider a wide range of criteria as well as the interests of all stakeholders.
CF49	If the Pacific Highway (as it is at present) is saving heavy vehicle traffic \$120 (has been stated), why not put this levy on these vehicles? It would help towards the cost of achieving a new highway.	Levying taxes on heavy vehicle is a macroeconomic issue beyond the scope of this assessment. One of the objectives of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program is to reduce freight transport costs. Imposing a levy equivalent to these cost savings would be counter to this objective.
CF55	Upgrading the existing highway would be sufficient. Bray Street intersection certainly needs an overpass to reduce bottleneck.	Upgrading the existing highway through Coffs Harbour in accordance with CHCC's future traffic network strategy would alleviate existing traffic congestion in the shorter term. However, in the longer term, a major upgrade to urban motorway standard would be required to meet predicted demands in the area. This option was assessed in the <i>Strategy Report</i> and accompanying working papers (February 2004) and found to have unacceptable socio-economic impacts on the Coffs Harbour urban area.
CF59	Cost can be overcome by making this route a tollway eg \$2 a vehicle = 10,000 vehicles a day \$20,000. Brisbane and Sydney have tollways, why not Coffs Harbour?	Development of the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project is part of the 10 year Pacific Highway Upgrading Program, which is fully funded by State and Federal Government. The CRW and CHCC preferred corridor are part of investigations into the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy, which is looking at the future of the Pacific Highway through the Coffs Harbour urban area. The study is investigating whether a bypass is feasible in the future and, if so, the outcome of the study could be to reserve land for such a bypass. Refer to the following recent reports - <i>Strategy Report</i> , <i>Review of the Coastal Ridge Way Proposal</i> , <i>CHCC Preferred Corridor Feasibility Assessment</i> .
CF64, 79	The RTA should re-examine the Orara Valley route (far western option) rejoining the existing highway at Halfway Creek. This option has the lowest cost per kilometre, is shorter, less expensive and has minimal environmental impact	The far western route option has previously assessed and rejected by the RTA, DIPNR and CHCC. It was specifically excluded by a resolution of Council from the CHCC preferred corridor.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
CF94	<p>Socio-economic criteria should be a dollar unit of measure. Then these four options would compare favourably with other options.</p> <p>Not enough geographical information for more accurate interpretation of impact a bypass would have on habitat and residential areas along Corindi River option in this brochure.</p>	<p>Quantification of socio-economic impacts as suggested is extremely difficult to achieve even at the detailed impact assessment level and has not been carried out for this strategic investigation. The qualitative assessment carried out has clearly identified the socio-economic criteria and the basis of the option comparisons and this resulted in clear conclusions. The results for the southern and northern sections can be found in <i>Coffs Harbour Section Working Paper No 6 Socio-Economic Assessment</i> (February 2004) and <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options Socio-Economic Assessment Working Paper No 7</i> (December 2002).</p> <p>The level of geographical information collected for this investigation was adequate and appropriate for a comparative assessment of the options.</p>
CF98, 99	The assessments were not made by a neutral institution, they are inadequate and imperfect. Therefore a correct evaluation is not possible.	The CHCC preferred corridor assessment was carried out by Connell Wagner, a professional engineering and environmental planning consultancy. It was conducted as a strategic assessment of potential route options in the preferred corridor nominated by Council and, relative to previous such investigations, it was very comprehensive.
CF103	If the CRW is unaffordable, upgrade the existing highway route through Coffs Harbour with over and underpasses – it would have less impact on residential areas of Coffs Harbour.	A major upgrade of the existing highway to urban motorway standard through Coffs Harbour has previously been assessed and the results are reported in the <i>Strategy Report</i> (February 2004). This option was found to have unacceptable socio-economic impacts on the Coffs Harbour urban area.
CF105 S07	Re all four options in Council's preferred corridor, the RTA has added the upgrade to bypassed sections of existing highway to exaggerate the difference with the Coastal Route Options. It would not be necessary if an option in Council's preferred corridor were chosen.	With a bypass located within Council's preferred corridor, an upgrade of the existing highway between Sapphire and Woolgoolga would be required to cater for the traffic generated by future development along the beaches north of Coffs Harbour. Consequently, an allowance for upgrading the bypassed sections of the existing highway was necessary to allow a valid comparison of the more western route options and the coastal route.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
CF106	Why not put a tunnel or covered cutting through the city? If it can be afforded for Sydney, why not Coffs Harbour?	<p>A tunnel of through the city would not be feasible or economically viable. Tunnel sections were investigated and included as part of the major highway upgrade proposal that was reported in the <i>Strategy Report</i> (February 2004). This option was found to have unacceptable socio-economic impacts on the Coffs Harbour urban area.</p>
<p>CF107, 108, 120, 127, 128, 142, 151, 156, 178, 182, 185, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196, 231, 280, 284</p> <p>S25, 87, 92, 94, 96</p>	The CRW/Option A route can be built without tunnels according to independent engineering advice.	<p>Experiences on other Pacific Highway projects indicate significant difficulties with cuttings of the depths proposed – including long term stability issues and safety risks, environmental impacts and cost effectiveness compared to other techniques.</p> <p>A cutting in excess of 80m deep would need to be over 250m wide to ensure the stability of the face of the cutting. Earthworks of this magnitude are unlikely to be practical due to the topography and geology of the terrain traversed by options within Council's preferred corridor. There are also potential high safety risks (and ongoing costs) associated with future stability of the exposed face of the cutting.</p> <p>Significant biophysical impacts would be expected with a cutting of this magnitude. Obtaining the necessary approvals from DIPNR for the removal of such a large area of natural vegetation within State Forest would be extremely difficult.</p> <p>As many of the ridgelines provide fauna corridors, extensive fauna overpasses are likely to be required in these deep cuttings. The cost of providing these fauna overpasses would significantly reduce any apparent cost savings provided by the use of deep cuttings instead of tunnels.</p> <p>Significant volumes of additional earthworks would be created by the proposed cuttings. Although some may be reused, disposal of significant quantities would still be required and suitable disposal sites would be difficult to locate in the environmentally sensitive terrain traversed by the CRW proposal.</p> <p>(refer CF27, 141, 175, 184, 185, 190, 193, 196, S06, 07)</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
CF107, 120, 173, 201, 203, 256, 286 S17, 87, 96	EIA should be carried out on whole route, not just northern or southern sections.	The planning time frames for the northern and southern sections are different. To carry out an EIA now for the southern section would be inappropriate given that the studies have found that new highway investment is not likely to be justified for 10-15 years. EIA is appropriately conducted nearer to when government has determined to proceed with construction. This also allows relevant legislative controls of the day to be addressed. A key aim of the Strategy is to reserve the land for a future highway route.
CF110	A sound/noise study would be beneficial as the valley between Bruxner Park and Shephards Lane is a natural amphitheatre.	A preliminary noise assessment was carried out as part of the investigation into the inner bypass and upgrading the existing highway. This is reported in <i>Coffs Harbour Section Working Paper No 4, Strategic Noise Assessment</i> (February 2004)
CF116	If there is money to throw around, how about completing Hogbin Drive and Mastracolas Road?	Completion of Hogbin Drive is separate issue to be determined by CHCC. Hogbin Drive was assumed to have been completed in the assessment of traffic modelling and other assessments. The funding for upgrading the Pacific Highway is part of the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program.
CF117, 129, 130, 132, 142, 151, 160, 168, 182, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 201, 202, 207, 216, 222, 229, 233, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 240, 247, 249, 253, 254, 255, 256, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 286, 291, 292 S06, 07, 17, 19, 86, 92, 94, 95, 96, 98	Preferred/acceptable route is combination of Coastal Ridge Way-Corindi River option because it is 5-7km shorter and/or tunnels would not be necessary.	The shortest route in the Council preferred corridor is the Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River at 46.8km. At 49.7km the CRW / Corindi River option is approximately 3km longer - refer <i>CHCC Preferred Corridor Feasibility Assessment</i> (June 2004). The Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River option is 6 to 7 km shorter than the Coastal Route options and the CRW / Corindi River option is 3 to 4 km shorter than these options.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
S03	<p>The routes are assessed as having poor traffic function. They may be at the moment if you believe RTA vehicle figures. RTA's through vehicle numbers were measured at Port Macquarie – what a joke – whilst WAR numbers were measured at Woolgoolga. RTA's figures are 100% under what is really travelling on the highway.</p> <p>Biophysical is assessed as being very high adverse but RTA did no real study of threatened species and wildlife corridors. In fact, the very high adverse biophysical factors apply to the Coastal Route Options.</p> <p>Indigenous heritage is assessed as high adverse but it seems that the local Aborigines had trouble locating the five sites that were supposedly in the way of Option A. RTA had no trouble going around indigenous sites on the Buladelah bypass so why can't RTA go around the five sites that are on Option A?</p>	<p>Traffic function encompasses a number of factors including road safety for all users, transport efficiency and long term functionality. Traffic surveys at various locations within Coffs Harbour City were carried out in 2001 and in 2003. The results of these surveys are reported in the <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options Traffic and Transport Working Paper No 8</i> (November 2002) and the <i>Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy Report</i> (February 2004). Further traffic surveys and assessment will be conducted in subsequent project development stages to confirm traffic levels.</p> <p>Ecological field surveys and assessments were carried out as part of the option evaluation for both the southern and northern sections of the Strategy. Refer to the Ecological Assessments carried out for both the Sapphire to Woolgoolga route options stage (<i>Working Paper No 4 - December 2002</i>) and the Coffs Harbour investigations (<i>Working Paper No 5 - February 2004</i>). A Biodiversity Assessment was also undertaken as part of the <i>Review of the Coastal Ridge Way Proposal</i> (February 2004). The assessment of the biophysical impact of options within Council's preferred corridor was based on these investigations</p> <p>The route of Option A was substantially changed to avoid a significant Aboriginal heritage site. This option is still considered unacceptable by the Aboriginal community as it traverses areas of significant known and potential Aboriginal heritage. Option A also traverses a culturally sensitive landscape which is well known and highly valued by the Aboriginal community (<i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options Development Report – December 2002</i>). It was therefore assessed as having a "high adverse" impact compared with the alternative options.</p>
CF122	Give the heavy vehicles that use the existing Pacific Highway a fuel rebate or discount to go out west.	This is a macro-economic issue and beyond the scope of this assessment.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
CF141, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196, 279, 284, 285 S06, 86, 87, 94	Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route: Heavy vehicles would not be deterred from using it. The maximum grade of 6% only occurs on one short hill. Most of the grades are only 2%, which the truckies think is no problem. Even the 6% grade is all right once in 55km.	6% is the maximum design grade used as a standard for all Pacific Highway projects. The CRW / Option A option has a 11km section of continual uphill climb (with varying grades) and this has the potential to deter heavy vehicles if another option is available.
CF142 S24	When are the out of date traffic figures for the Coastal Route Options to be updated so that fair comparisons can be made?	Traffic counts are carried out continually at RTA permanent counting stations. A further detailed traffic assessment (including surveys) will be carried out at the EIA stage.
CF154, 231 S13, 22, 23, 25, 98	Why is the RTA ignoring research that says the incidence of cancer increases with highways put through the middle of residential and school areas eg Albury Wodonga highway – cancer is up by 70% in the twin town accommodating the highway?	<p>There is no research which provides definitive evidence of such a claim. 1998 to 2002 cancer mortality rates for Albury were 186 per 100,000 compared to the NSW State average over the same period of 187 per 100,000. (NSW Cancer Council). 2001 cancer mortality rates for Wodonga were 216 per 100,000 compared to the Victorian State average of 203 per 100,00 for the same year. (Victorian Cancer Council).</p> <p>A bypass which enables vehicles (including heavy vehicles) to travel at a constant speed on relatively flat grades will result in a lower level of pollutants than the existing stop / start operation on the highway through Coffs Harbour.</p>
CF158 S08	The estimates of costs for the inner bypass are misleading considering current acquisition costs and are probably within 50% inaccurate.	<p>Cost estimates for Land Acquisition have been based on indicative costs from other comparable projects. The total acquisition budget established in the estimate is for between 5% and 10% of total project cost – typical for the vast majority of non-metropolitan highway projects.</p> <p>The cost estimates (including contingencies) provide for uncertainty across all project elements. Variations to property acquisition costs are not likely to significantly affect the total cost of the options or their economic viability (BCR calculations).</p>
S12	The assessment is incomplete because it does not address the impacts of the Coastal Route Options including air pollution, noise pollution and dangerous goods hazards.	Air pollution, noise pollution and dangerous goods hazards have been assessed in the Coffs Harbour Section <i>Strategy Report</i> (February 2004) and Working Papers No 4 and 8. Air and noise were also assessed in the Sapphire to Woolgoolga <i>Route Options Report</i> and Working Paper No 5.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
S13	It appears that the Sherwood Nature Reserve was put there only to make the RTA preferred option stronger.	The Sherwood Nature Reserve was declared Under Section 7 of the <i>National Park Estate (Reservations) Act 2003</i> by the National Parks and Wildlife Minister.
S15	Request for discussions regarding any land exchanges and access arrangements associated with the construction of an interchange at Headland Road and associated impacts on retail trade or other impacts including safe pedestrian impacts, provision of bus shelters, cycleway access.	Arrangement will be made for the requested discussions to take place as soon as possible.
CF178	Regarding traffic function assessment, it does not consider road users' time/cost or additional health, safety, inconvenience or the high costs of construction per km when working in with traffic.	At this strategic assessment stage, the costs of road user delay are broadly taken into account through the unit project cost rates that were adopted. The estimates will be assessed in more detail as part of the subsequent project development stage. In preparing the preliminary concept designs for the route options, consideration has been given to designs which minimise inconvenience and/or delay to road users during construction. Further consideration will be given to this matter during future refinement of the concept designs.
S23	If it was possible to construct the F3, any of the options within Council's preferred corridor would be a drop in the bucket.	The CRW, which forms the southern part of Council's preferred corridor, would have deeper cuttings than any other highway project in NSW (refer to Appendix A of Review of the <i>Coastal Ridge Way Proposal</i> February 2004) which illustrates the generally more rugged terrain of the CRW route when compared to the F3 Freeway, Yelgun to Chinderah and Bulahdelah to Coolongolook.
S24	The use of noise barriers and different road surface material to cut down noise have been proven to be virtually useless ... with little change in noise volume.	Noise barriers and road treatments have been proven in very many cases to be effective in reducing traffic noise levels and thereby meeting noise goals set in Department of Environment and Conservation guidelines. Detailed noise monitoring and assessment would be part of the EIA assessment stage to determine mitigation measures needed to comply with DEC goals. In sensitive areas, the development approval would require post construction noise modelling to ensure noise goals are achieved.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
CF212	RTA costings need to be scrutinised because it seems positives have been minimised and negatives have been maximised. An independent costing would be favoured.	All cost estimates have been prepared in accordance with established estimating procedures and have already gone through a rigorous checking process.
S25	Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route only requires the State Government to rescind 0.01% of Sherwood Nature Reserve which they rushed through State Parliament in order for the inner bypasses to be thought the only option.	The figure would be more in the order 1% of the Nature Reserve (or 700m of the route out of approximately 55km). Nevertheless, the process of revoking Nature Reserves requires an Act of Parliament and would be difficult to justify given the significant environmental impacts associated with the option and the availability of viable alternative options.
CF219	Coastal Ridge Way / Option A and Western Bucca Valley / Option A routes: more use of tunnels should be considered to minimise long uphill sections.	The inclusion of tunnels into rural highways is usually minimised as they are very costly and thus reduce benefits that could otherwise accrue to the option. However, significant tunnels have been incorporated in sections of these options where extremely deep cuttings would otherwise be required
CF221	Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River route: this route would not necessitate expensive tunnels.	This option still requires construction of CRW in the south (between Englands Road and Ulidarra National Park) which presents significant engineering challenges. Inclusion of tunnel sections was concluded to be a necessary component of CRW in the south.
CF241	Please advise the properties east of Sherwood Creek Road and Upper Corindi Road that these proposals will affect.	The route options identified in CHCC preferred corridor are engineering design alignments suitable for the comparative assessment of the route options in this feasibility study. They were not used to identify specific property impacts.
S26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84	<p>It is unlikely that funding would be found for a single rural highway project such as the options in Council's preferred corridor with such high costs and limited BCRs.</p> <p>Council's preferred corridor options: disagree that there would be low adverse effect on community cohesion – west of highway settlements cross frequently to Bucca Valley for family reunion, social and recreational pursuits.</p>	<p>Acknowledged. This was an important conclusion from the study.</p> <p>The impacts of options within Council's preferred corridor on community cohesion were assessed as being low adverse relative to the other route options investigated for the Strategy.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	<p>Council's preferred corridor options: disagree that effects on tourism will be low beneficial due to high rate of tourists attracted to the unspoiled nature of the forests, National Parks and reserves, lookouts as well as attractive farmland.</p> <p>Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route: some say that RTA could compensate by 'swapping' road take for another patch of Forestry but it is evident that National Parks and Wildlife are already taking up land previously owned by Forestry and no land will be available for new forestry operations for some time.</p> <p>Council's preferred corridor options: could mean that Council will have to maintain the majority of the existing highway through the area with only proportional help from State Government. Local road users would be penalised by having to put up with sub-standard roads to travel on daily as well as taking a share from rates that could be used for other local infrastructure.</p> <p>Council's preferred corridor options: unfair to residents to impose this option with such limited time to respond and with so little information available. CFG representatives had only had full details for one week giving little time to canvass resident opinions.</p> <p>Bucca Road has a limited extent in providing an effective local connection between the bypass options and the existing highway. Local roads could not handle predicted traffic volumes without significant realignment and upgrade.</p>	<p>The assessment of the impact of Council's preferred corridor options on tourism considers the overall impact of the options across all of the study area.</p> <p>The biophysical impact of the CRW / Option A route has been assessed as severe and it is very doubtful that compensatory habitat could be provided for the loss of such large areas of high conservation status vegetation.</p> <p>Arrangements for the management (including maintenance and upgrading) of bypassed sections of the existing highway have not yet been determined.</p> <p>Council notified the Minister for Roads of its decision regarding the preferred corridor in late 2003. In February 2004, the Minister announced that the RTA would investigate the feasibility of route options within Council's preferred corridor. The extent of the corridor was shown in Community Update No.4 released at the time of the Minister's announcement. The feasibility study was exhibited in June 2004 and comments were invited during a 4 week period.</p> <p>Acknowledged. The need to upgrade Bucca Road to provide an appropriate standard link between the existing highway and the route options within Council's preferred corridor is identified in Community Update No.5 (June 2004).</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	<p>Council's preferred corridor options: unlikely to be of much use to people living along the highway or the Northern Beaches who would continue to use the current highway for daily trips to Coffs Harbour.</p> <p>Upgrade the Pacific Highway to Corindi where appropriate from Mullaway.</p> <p>Assist local ring roads eg Hogbin Drive and Mastrocolas to be completed.</p> <p>Limit access onto the present highway by providing service roads where appropriate or provide road geometry to limit accident potential for vehicles making right hand turns across the existing highway.</p> <p>Let the residents of Bucca, Forest Glen and Moonee know exactly what noise and traffic volume impacts a major upgrade of the eastern end of Bucca Road will have on them.</p>	<p>Acknowledged. The limited ability of route options within Council's preferred corridor to service the northern beaches area is reflected in the traffic volumes predicted to be attracted to these routes.</p> <p>Should the coastal route options be selected as the preferred option and the Sapphire to Woolgoolga project proceeds, an upgrade along the existing corridor from Arrawarra Creek to Halfway Creek would become a logical future project under the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program.</p> <p>This is a matter for CHCC. Traffic modelling used in the current investigations has assumed these local network improvements were in place.</p> <p>These proposals would improve road safety and transport efficiency. These are objectives of the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program.</p> <p>The use of Bucca Road as a link to the existing highway would only become an issue should an outer bypass option such as options in the CHCC preferred corridor be selected as the preferred option. These matters would be further investigated if an option within Council's preferred corridor is selected as the preferred option for the Strategy.</p>
S85	<p>This is a push to favour the coastal plain route and the environmental and heritage issues raised are more a function of cost of the project rather than any real concern for the environment and heritage. From an environmental perspective, it is difficult to believe that an authority that can tie itself into needing to widen within the previous Pine Creek State Forest (now National Park) with its suite of threatened species and to choose an option at Halfway Creek which had significant impact on the environment, when there were better options, that that authority is only using the environment to achieve a low-cost option.</p>	<p>It is appropriate for the RTA to investigate all feasible options when developing a new major highway proposal. Comparison of issues relating to the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy with issues encountered on other projects is not necessarily relevant. Each project needs to be assessed on its own individual merits. The purpose of the Coffs Harbour strategy is to find a future route option that achieves the best balance between social, environmental, functional and value for money factors.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	The RTA continually talks about the negative impacts on the environment due to a western route. The impact on people does not appear to have been considered.	As stated above, social impact is one of the key assessment factors considered in the comparison of corridors and route options along with the other key outcome areas (e.g. environmental and functional performance).
S86	The increase in heavy vehicles is the result of poor strategy planning by the RTA which does not take into account the flow-on effect of efficiency gains from the highway upgrades between Brisbane and the Byron Bay region and the southern parts of the Pacific Highway that are yet to be upgraded. The selection or rejection of an option because of a poor BCR is therefore flawed. The BCR does not account for impacts on locations that are down/upstream of the upgrade. The BCR of the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route should be modified to reflect the efficiency gains and benefits from upgrades that have been made both north and south.	BCR is a project-based indicator of economic viability and can only be assessed for the extent (or length) of a particular route option. It is a measure of the benefits to road users of a particular enhancement project. The RTA has previously examined the overall benefits of the Pacific Highway Program and the anticipated increased heavy vehicle / freight activity along the NSW coastal corridor.
S87	<p>Coffs Harbour Inner Bypass options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violate the planning provisions of LEP 2000 • Violate the planning provisions of the existing and proposed West Coffs DCP • Are marginally economically viable at best • BCR ignores several community costs • Are based on outdated and flawed data (accordingly the route assessment process should be started again) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffs Harbour LEP 2000: N1 passes through land zoned Residential 2A in Coffs Harbour LEP 2000. Roads are a permissible use in this zone with the consent of Council and the IN1 option is in accordance with the provisions of the LEP. • West Coffs DCP: There was no DCP for West Coffs in February 2004 when the inner bypass options were released. IN1 passes through the area designated as the West Coffs Residential Release area on the West Coffs Information Sheet and zoned 2A Residential under the LEP. The Information Sheet is a Development Concept Plan (that is a masterplan) containing a number of strategies, rather than a Development Control Plan containing specific controls for development. At the time <i>the Strategy Report and Working Paper No 1: Statutory and Strategic Planning Issues</i> (February 2004) were being prepared, the status and timing of development in this area was reported by Council as being "medium term - Council now delaying further planning action pending outcome of Highway planning." Between the time of preparing the reports and release of the information, Council approved a number of development applications including a large subdivision off Spagnolos Road. Council has now updated and converted the Information Sheet to a new DCP to control development in the area.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BCRs of the inner bypass options are marginal at the present time. This is the reason why studies have shown that the bypass is not a justified investment until some years in the future. The aim of the Pacific Highway Planning Strategy is to identify whether a bypass would be needed in the future and to reserve land before urban development precludes this opportunity. At the time development of the bypass is required, it would be expected that higher volumes of traffic would result in the BCR being higher. • Social costs are not factored into BCR measures but assessed separately. The purpose of the Coffs Harbour strategy is to find a future route option that achieves the best balance between social, environmental, functional and value for money factors. • The investigations into the Coffs Harbour bypass have been ongoing for more than three years and are based on available data at the time of assessment
S88, 89	If the truck transport industry will not use the existing federally funded New England Highway, then federal money should be transferred to the Pacific Highway to enable the development of a bypass located west of the coastal plain.	The Federal Government is contributing \$600M towards the \$2.2 billion, 10 year Pacific Highway Upgrade Programme. In its June 2004 budget, the Federal Government allocated \$765M to the Pacific Highway Upgrade programme over the next 5 years.
S93	Council's preferred corridor options: protective measures for fauna, revegetation and compensatory habitat are unlikely to be effective enough to substantially reduce potential impacts.	Acknowledged. This was a finding of the CHCC Preferred Corridor Feasibility Assessment and one of the reasons why these options are not considered viable solutions for the Pacific Highway through Coffs Harbour.
S96	By including bypass Option A for Woolgoolga in the CHCC route options in the concluding remarks that "none of these route options are considered viable" creates the impression that this applies to bypass option A if separated from the Coastal Ridge Way and Bucca Valley options. Option A for would yield a BCR (1.1) better than the inner bypass options for Coffs Harbour (0.7 to 1.0) and an order of magnitude better than the CHCC routes (0.25 to 0.49). The unsuspecting public would therefore presume that bypass option A has been totally excluded for further consideration as a bypass option for the northern section.	As part of the feasibility assessment of the CHCC preferred corridor, it was evident that some possible route options would necessarily include the northern part of Option A that had been previously developed as an option for the northern Sapphire to Woolgoolga section of the strategy area. The findings in relation to Option A are reported in the <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options Development Report (December 2002)</i> . The BCR of Option A needs to be compared with other options in the northern section rather than options in the southern section.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	<p>When releasing the study, the RTA urged Council and bypass activist groups to accept the independent umpire's very clear decision (i.e. in favour of the coastal route not coastal ridge way route options). WAR requests the RTA to qualify the so-called independence of the umpire, noting that if the RTA is referring to Connell Wagner, they are a prime contractor of the project and would not be considered 'independent' by engineering, legal or financial standards.</p> <p>In the Update, a statement is made that "The corridor crosses the Sherwood Nature Reserve west of Woolgoolga". The update fails to mention that Coastal Ridge Way / Option A crosses at one of the reserve's narrowest section being only about 500-700m in a total length of the route of 55 km representing only 0.01% of the route. There also is no mention that bypass option E also passes through or in close proximity to 3 parcels of land also declared "Special Management Zones" under the National Park Estate (Reservations) Act 2002 or that the RTA's coastal route passes directly through fragile wildlife linkages between the forested hills and the regionally significant coastal plain arguably more fragile than the vastness of the forests ... There are exceptions to the National Park Estate (Reservations) Act 2002 that enables revocation of special management zones where exchange of land may be made or up to 20 ha being made available for public purpose (such as a state highway). This could certainly be applied to the small amount of Sherwood Reserve impacted by option A</p>	<p>The CHCC preferred corridor assessment was carried out by Connell Wagner - a professional engineering and environmental planning consultancy.</p> <p>The 500-700m crossing of the Sherwood Nature Reserve in a total length of 55km represents approximately 1% of the route. Nevertheless, revocation of State Forest land would be required as well as revocation of land in the Nature Reserve. The total area of high conservation status native vegetation required to construct the CRW / Option A option is far greater than 20ha.</p> <p>Option E passes close to 3 parcels of land declared "Special Management Zones" under the National Park Estate (Reservations) Act. It does not directly affect those areas.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	<p>The Update does not mention that C1 passes through the Draft West Woolgoolga Development Control Plan (DCP) ... and both options C1 and E traverse a corner of the South Woolgoolga Urban Investigation Area also posing unacceptable constraints and impacts to the development of the Woolgoolga township.</p> <p>Update refers to construction of the Coastal Ridge Way from Englands Road through to the Ulidara National Park. This should read "Construction of the Coastal Ridge Way from Englands Road <u>around the</u> Ulidara National Park". It may be argued that the Coastal Ridge Way passes as close to the Ulidara National Park as option E for Woolgoolga passes Forestry Management Zone 3A north of Bark Hut Road.</p> <p>The Biophysical information in the Update grossly understates the negative impacts for the coastal route options.</p> <p>Further investigations into the Coastal Ridge Way are required to reduce the cost of construction and impacts, particularly given the extended timeframe before which construction of the southern section is anticipated. In the meantime, given the significantly lower cost and better BCR of the option A route, this option must proceed.</p>	<p><i>Community Update No.4</i> (February 2004) and the <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Supplementary Options Report</i> (February 2004) identify the impact of Options C1 and E on the Draft West Woolgoolga Development Control Plan (DCP) and the South Woolgoolga Urban Investigation Area. In relation to the West Woolgoolga DCP, the <i>Supplementary Options Report</i> (February 2004) states that "the overall implications for land use planning in the vicinity of Woolgoolga are highly adverse in the case of Option C1" (p.22). The West Woolgoolga Urban Investigation Area does not have any statutory planning status and the area would need to be included in CHCC review of its 1996 Urban Development Strategy.</p> <p>Acknowledged. "through to" in this context should be interpreted as "up to" not through.</p> <p>The biophysical assessment carried out for all options was based on NPWS wildlife registers and field investigation by qualified ecological specialists. When compared to the coastal options, the nature and extent of impacts of the Option A route were concluded to be far more severe. (<i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options Development Report - December 2002</i>).</p> <p>The CRW has already undergone extensive investigations in consultation with the principal proponent. Further investigations are unlikely to result in significant reductions in cost and impacts of the proposal or improvements to its economic viability.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	<p>The WAR Group contends that the total road building cost for both the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route and the RTA preferred coastal route are both in the range of \$1,000M after taking into account a strategic cost estimate contingency (possible variation of 30 to 35 %) especially with the tunnel complications for either option around Coffs Harbour CBD. If the socio-economic costs are quantified, the CRW option remains the preferred triple bottom line option.</p> <p>Due to the number of interchanges between Sapphire and Woolgoolga, the conflict between fast moving through traffic and slower tourist and agriculture style traffic will persist.</p> <p>The environmental arguments opposing the CRW / Option A route are not defensible. Most of the route ... runs predominantly along the border between developed rural land holdings and State Forest. Where the northern sectors of Option A pass through the Wedding Bells State Forest, the alignment is actually close to existing forest trails where significant logging is now taking place. Vegetation maps clearly show that the CRW and Option A deviates around protected areas within State Forest and where Option A traverses 700m of the Sherwood Nature Reserve it does so through none of the identified very high ecological status mapped areas. ... The Connell Wagner ecological reports admit flora and fauna studies of the same detail have never been conducted east of Woolgoolga Creek Flora Reserve.</p>	<p>As previously noted, the cost of options in the CHCC preferred corridor are significantly higher than the upper range estimate for a coastal route, with contingency allowances applied to all estimates. The feasibility study concludes that the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route performs better than a coastal route in the key area of socio-economic impact. However, for the other key areas (environmental and functional) it performs poorly and it represents poor value for money.</p> <p>The number of access points and intersections onto the highway would be significantly reduced on the upgraded highway with rationalisation of the intersections and with service roads provided on a staged basis where warranted for local traffic.</p> <p>Refer to responses above.</p>

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
(continued...)	<p>There is a low probability that the RTA will be able to successfully mitigate traffic noise to acceptable standards along the coastal routes.</p> <p>Given the magnitude of influence on the BCR the subjective traffic predictions need independent verification. Traffic counts performed during June 2004 by WAR show an increase of 35% of heavy vehicle movements travelling north and south on the Pacific Highway at Woolgoolga.</p> <p>With the combined growth of local traffic being experienced and increasing use of through heavy vehicles as the Pacific Highway improves, the local community do not believe that a bypass of the Coffs Harbour CBD can be delayed to the extent suggested by the RTA and DIPNR.</p> <p>An independent investigation is required into the most likely heavy traffic use of the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A and Coastal Ridge Way with Corindi River extension.</p> <p>More detailed ecological studies are required of routes C1 and E prior to and not after final route selection.</p>	<p>Detailed noise monitoring and assessment would be part of the EIA assessment stage to determine mitigation measures needed to comply with DEC goals. The RTA has an obligation to fulfil relevant DEC traffic noise goals as part of any new highway planning project and this would be addressed in any project approval. In sensitive areas, the development approval would require post construction noise modelling to ensure noise goals are achieved.</p> <p>The traffic data available and used for the study is considered suitable for the purposes of assessing feasibility and comparing the relative merits of the options identified.</p> <p>The first essential step in the development of the Strategy is to identify the preferred route option. Once this is achieved, consideration can be given to the priority and timing of the implementation of the proposal.</p> <p>The community concerns about traffic in the main Coffs Harbour urban area are acknowledged. However, the single carriageway section of highway north of Sapphire is currently a higher priority under the Pacific Highway Program.</p> <p>The strategic assessment is adequate and appropriate for comparing the function of the options for heavy vehicles. A CRW / Corindi River combination would be about 3km longer than the Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River route that was assessed.</p> <p>The level of ecological studies carried out is sufficient to allow a reasonable comparison between these options.</p>
S98	Fencing, walkways and cycleways will be required to mitigate the risks associated with walking or cycling along the route.	This is a matter that would be considered at the EIA and refined concept design stage.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
S99	<p>Studies have shown that by not choosing the CRW, between 37ha-60ha of banana lands will be bulldozed. In fact, between 404ha-562ha will be adversely affected because growers will be unable to carry out their normal farming practices such as crop spraying within 300m of the proposed highway.</p> <p>If the Coastal Route Options are chosen, banana growers would require a detailed independent study of the micro climate impacts on the surrounding valleys of cuttings and tunnels along the route. This study would make an independent assessment of which combination of options would have the least impact on banana lands and would be required prior to a final decision on the routes.</p> <p>If the highway is proposed through banana lands, significant precautions would be required to prevent unintended infestations of Panama disease.</p> <p>Growers are concerned that sufficient access be constructed to allow heavy farm machinery to access their properties.</p>	<p>The buffer zone for crop spraying needs to be calculated on an individual banana property basis in consultation with NSW Agriculture. The 300m allowance is a conservative estimate suitable for the comparative assessment of options in this strategic planning stage. Calculations show that for the total coastal route options between Englands Road and Arrawarra, the direct impact on bananas ranges from 38 to 58ha. With a buffer zone of 150m (Council and NSW Agriculture standard buffer), approximately 187-266ha would be affected and with a buffer of 300m, from 285-429ha would be affected.</p> <p>The impact on bananas is one of numerous factors to be considered when evaluating the route options. As noted above, the estimates of impact are considered suitable for the comparative assessment of options. More detailed study as part of the EIA stage would provide a means of confirming these estimates.</p> <p>This is a matter to be considered at the EIA assessment when property-specific investigations will be carried out for all agricultural lands. Required precautions could be included in an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the construction of the project.</p> <p>During the EIA process, individual access requirements will be assessed and provisions made so that access for farm machinery can be maintained.</p>

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Appendix B

Submission Design Issues and Responses

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
CF12	I would prefer a four-lane ramp that would carry highway traffic over the present highway from Cook Drive to Korora Hill.	Such a ramp or viaduct would have an unacceptable visual and social impact and prohibitively high cost.
CF31	Consider an option to leave highway at Smiths Road, through valley between Avocado Heights and Emerald Heights avoiding all residential – join A or E?	This would seem to be similar to the route taken by Options B1 and B2, which have been rejected as not worthy of further consideration (Community Update No 4, February 2004).
CF32	Suggest Coastal Ridge Way to bypass Coffs Harbour, come in to Moonee Beach through to Sandy Beach and Option E to bypass Woolgoolga.	The CRW proposal has been assessed in the <i>Review of the Coastal Ridge Way Proposal</i> (February 2004). The Option E bypass of Woolgoolga has been assessed in the <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Supplementary Options Report</i> (February 2004).
CF73	What about an amended route with IS2 and IN2 to follow Coastal Route Option to Maccues Road then link again with Option A?	Options IS2 and IN2 have been assessed in the <i>Strategy Report</i> (February 2004). Option A has been assessed in the <i>Sapphire to Woolgoolga Route Options Development Report</i> (December 2002).
CF88, 89	Preferred option for Sapphire access is for overpass to be placed at Gaudrons Road-Split Solitary Road.	Noted. Decisions on intersection / interchange arrangements between Sapphire and Woolgoolga will be further considered following the selection of the preferred option.
CF139	Consider a route which turns right at Englands Road, swinging across low level land to the north-west of existing Go-Kart track, to the east of the Health Campus and parallelling Hogbin Drive over Howard and High Streets with an elevated interchange to cross Coffs Creek. Then over the existing rail overpass, through Park Beach shopping and residential areas to tunnel under Macauleys Headland to join the existing highway corridor either at Clarence Crescent or just south of West Korora Road.	Due to the significant constraints associated with the adjacent urban land use, all options east of the existing highway were considered to be non feasible options for the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy.
CF161	The two inner options could go from the Englands Road roundabout and bypass existing housing developments to return to the existing highway at a point past the resort areas north of Coffs Harbour.	This option is not feasible due to the terrain, land use and environmental constraints west of Korora.
CF177	It is essential that any road have a centre barrier or division to stop the head-ons which are the main causes of death. It is not speed that is the trouble but people straying into the wrong lanes.	As with other upgraded sections of the highway to the south and north of Coffs Harbour, the proposed upgrade would provide a high standard dual carriageway highway with central medians to separate opposite direction traffic.
CF212	A good opportunity for a service road to the Coastal Ridge Way / Option A route would be close to Maccues Road down to Moonee.	Functionally, this proposal is very similar to Bucca Road and would have minimal impact of the assessment of the options within Council's preferred corridor.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION No.	ISSUES RAISED	RESPONSE
CF213	Suggestion for alternative bypass. See Appendix A.	An option through the Orara Valley has been previously assessed and rejected as not viable by the RTA, DIPNR and CHCC. It was specifically excluded by a resolution of Council from the CHCC preferred corridor.
S05	Request for noise mitigation and access via a service road into and out of Sapphire Beachfront Apartments.	Noted. Details of service roads and intersection arrangements will be further developed as part of the concept development and EIA stage for the preferred option. Noise mitigation measures will be developed following a detailed noise monitoring process and noise assessment as part of the EIA stage.
S09, 11	Request for interchange at Split Solitary Road.	As above.
S10	Request for roundabout at Headlands Road rather than an overpass.	Roundabouts are not an accepted solution for intersections on high speed highways. Intersection / interchange arrangements for this area will be further developed if the coastal route is selected as the preferred option.
S13	Nowhere has a proposal been found that addresses the noise problems of the residents between Sapphire and Woolgoolga. There is no mention of an overpass at Graham Drive South although there appears to be up to \$80M set aside for future grade-separated interchanges.	The Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy is being developed to address the need to upgrade the highway between Sapphire and Woolgoolga, while planning for future traffic needs within the Coffs Harbour urban area. The treatment of existing noise issues between Sapphire and Woolgoolga is a separate matter outside the scope of the Strategy. Community Updates No.3 (December 2002) and No.4 (February 2004) identified a possible future grade-separated interchange in the vicinity of Graham Drive South.
S24	If the RTA's and DIPNR's preferred Coastal Route Options are approved, implement an 80km/h speed limit between Woolgoolga and Boambee which could encourage heavy vehicles to return to the New England Highway and make local traffic conditions much safer.	Safety audits of the highway are undertaken on a regular basis. Speed limits are reviewed as part of that process.

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Appendix A
