SCONE LEVEL CROSSING OPTIONS AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

Issues report

DECEMBER 2012

RMS/Pub. 12.660
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Appendix A – Terms of Reference
Appendix B – November 2012 Community Update
Appendix C – Upper Hunter Shire Council submission
1. Introduction

In Scone, the Great Northern Railway intersects with the New England Highway (Kelly Street) and with Liverpool Street (a Regional road). These two level crossings are located approximately 500 – 600m apart. The Lower Hunter Transport Needs Study (Hyder Consulting, 2008) identified the level crossing on the New England Highway in Scone as a candidate project for infrastructure improvements within the short term (0 – 5 years) and recommended a grade separation.

Current coal train operations from the Gunnedah area through Scone at times reportedly divide the town, closing access at both the New England Highway and Liverpool Street. There has been public interest in addressing the issue given the potential increase in coal train haulage along the line which the Lower Hunter Transport Needs Study predicts will increase from 3 million tonnes per annum (2005) to 14 million tonnes per annum (2022).

In August 2011 the Roads and Maritime Service (RMS), on behalf of the Australian Government, commenced an Options and Feasibility Study to consider rail operations on the New England Highway (Kelly Street) level crossing at Scone. The five options outlined in the Options Identification Report have now been developed further and public comment on the options will inform the decision on the preferred option.

1.1 Purpose of this report

This report relates to community consultation undertaken as part of the public exhibition of the concept route options for the Scone level crossing options and feasibility study. The concept route options were placed on display from 12 November to 30 November 2012.

The purpose of this report is to assist RMS in the decision making process with respect to selecting a preferred route. This report:
• Describes activities undertaken during the route options display period.
• Identifies, summarises and discusses the comments received by the RMS during the exhibition period.
• Outlines the next steps in selecting a preferred option.

1.2 Route options

The five route options placed on display were:
• Option 1: New England Highway bypass of Scone.
• Option 2: New England Highway realignment to Muffett Street.
• Option 3: Road over rail bridge at Kelly Street level crossing.
• Option 4: Road over rail bridge at Kelly Street level crossing.
• Option 5: Railway bypass of Scone.

Upper Hunter Shire Council is proposing a modification to Option 4 (Road over rail bridge at Kelly Street level crossing) as its preferred option. Some of Council's suggested modifications to Option 4 include:
• Kelly Street (New England Highway) would be reduced to a single through lane in each direction through the commercial area.
• Different intersection treatments at Susan, Muffett, and Guernsey streets.
• Muffett Street traffic would be diverted through local streets during construction.
• New England Highway traffic would be diverted to Guernsey Street for part of the construction.

RMS and Council encouraged feedback on this suggestion and in this report the suggestion will be described as ‘Option 6’. Council's suggestion was been posted on the RMS project website.
Comments made in submissions relating to Option 6 are also considered in this report and will form part of the value management workshop.

1.3 Purpose of the assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to:
- Consider impacts of the operation of the New England Highway rail level crossing in Scone on the local community and the operation of transport including:
  - risks to the response capabilities of police and emergency service providers by existing arrangements, and
  - potential impact of any planned changes such as to coal haulage.
- Develop strategic concept design options for addressing any identified significant adverse impacts.
- Determine through a detailed traffic study the impacts of identified options.
- Undertake a value management study including community and stakeholder consultation.
- Undertake economic analysis and cost estimation of feasible options.
- Identify a preferred solution.

1.4 Consultation objectives

The overall aim of the project’s consultation process is to ensure that the development of the preferred route involves the community and stakeholders and considers their interests.

Objectives of the route options display included:
- Informing the community about the project and raising awareness of the comment period.
- Involving the community in the project by building our understanding of the values and issues.
- Ensuring the community input and concerns are considered in the selection of a preferred route option.

1.5 Data collation and analysis

Each submission received was given a submissions number. Comments were reviewed and analysed based on:
- Option preference.
- Comments made on options.
- Key issues raised.

Data collection and collation was based on interpretation of submissions. Where comments or statements were not clear collation and analysis was based on inference, interpretation and context of the submission.
2. Consultation

2.1 Consultation activities

Consultation activities undertaken during the route options display is described in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Consultation activities undertaken to support the route options display**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notification to landowners and businesses</td>
<td>30 letters sent to landowners potentially directly affected by the five options highlighting the consultation process and offering individual meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with landowners and businesses</td>
<td>One landowner/business requested a meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements and announcements</td>
<td>Advertisements placed in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Newcastle Herald (12/11, 16/11 and 24/11/2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scone Advocate (15/11, 22/11 and 29/11/2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A copy of the advertisement is shown in Figure 2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Update November 2012</td>
<td>2,600 community updates were distributed to residents and businesses in Scone, Satur, Parkville and Wingen. The Community Update (provided in Appendix B) was also available at all five of the static display locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Forms</td>
<td>Distributed with the Community Update and available at display locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static displays</td>
<td>Static display locations included:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scone information centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Space at Campbells Corner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scone Library / community information centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Upper Hunter Valley Shire Council chambers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• RMS office - 59 Darby Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poster at display is shown in Figure 2.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in information sessions</td>
<td>Informal drop in sessions were held on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 3pm: Campbells Corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4:30 – 7pm: Bill Rose Sports Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10am – 12 noon: Campbells Corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 2pm: Scone Information Centre (this session was organised following a request from Council.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>The project page was viewed 769 times during the comment period by 524 unique viewers. The website has been a source of information and feedback for wider stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2.1 Advertisement placed in The Scone Advocate and The Newcastle Herald
Scone Level Crossing Feasibility Study
– Route Options Display

Roads and Maritime Services is seeking your input on the five short-listed route options to address the impacts of rail operations on the New England Highway (Kelly Street) Rail Level Crossing in Scone.

**OPTION 1**
- **MAY 2012**: Announce Scone Rail Level Crossing Options and Feasibility Assessment
- **AUG 2012**: Community meeting – Terms of reference
- **SEP – NOV 2012**: Stakeholder workshops to shortlist potential options
- **MAY 2013**: Release options identification report including environmental and other constraints

**OPTION 2**

**OPTION 3**
- **Dates to mark in your calendar**
  - Information display
    - Space at Campbells Corner – 1pm to 3pm
    - 22 November
  - Information display
    - Bill Rose Sports Complex – 4.30pm to 7pm
    - 22 November
  - Information display
    - Space at Campbells Corner – 10am to 12pm
    - 23 November
  - Nominations due
  - Value Management Workshop
  - 30 November
  - Comment period closes
  - Community feedback due
  - 30 November
  - Value Management Workshop
  - 11 December

**OPTION 4**

**OPTION 5**

**Contact the project manager**
Phone: 02 4924 0332 | Email: philip.davidson@rms.nsw.gov.au
Write to: Phil Davidson, RMS Project Manager
Locked Bag 30, Newcastle NSW 2300
For more information about the options visit the project website [www.rms.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au)

**Comments are invited by 30 November 2012.**

Figure 2.2 Static display poster.
2.2 Participation in consultation activities

A summary of participation in consultation activities is provided in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Summary of participation in activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffed displays</td>
<td>150-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with landowners and businesses</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.3 About 150 – 200 people attended the community information sessions.
Table 2.3 provides a summary of feedback received.

**Table 2.3 Summary of feedback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Contact</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calls</td>
<td>Approximately 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback forms</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emailed submissions*</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scone Community Centre feedback sheet</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes emailed letters.

In some cases multiple submissions were received by members of the community, adding comments to previous submissions made. These were logged as one submission but method of contact was noted.

2.3 Media articles

A total of 13 media articles appeared in local newspapers, namely The Scone Advocate, Maitland Mercury and Hunter Valley News from mid October 2012 until the end of the exhibition period.

Example of a media article is provided below.
REMEMBRANCE
Day services in the Upper Hunter were held in Scone, Aberdeen, Merriwa and Murrurundi, and on Sunday, marking the signing of the armistice which ended the ‘war to end all wars’ at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918.

Over 100 people attended in Scone to sing, pray, lay wreaths and stand in silence in memory of those that have served and died.

The service was consecrated by Scone RSL vice president Wayne Saunders, poems were read by branch president Val Quinnell and students Michael Cook and Lincoln Towler, Reverend Nate Atkinson took the prayer, Scone Singers lead the anthem and hymns and Lachlan White sounded the Last Post and Reveille.

Aberdeen answers

THE call to support Remembrance Day, made by World War II veteran Ken Newell in last week’s The Scone Advocate, was heartily answered by the Aberdeen community.

“There was almost 100 people. It shock me, we only had ten last year,” Mr Newell said.

“It was just a lovely event. You could feel the atmosphere of friendship and respect.

“We had grandparents, parents with kiddies. We must have had at least 50 children. A young girl had played the last post for us.

“The two schools and eight others put the wreaths on the cenotaph,” he said.

Everything went amazing.

Mr Newell thanked all that attended the RSL Club.

“When we went inside to have the nibbles and a cup of tea everyone mingled and it was wonderful.”

Merriwa remembers

THE 11am service in Merriwa attracted about 80 people and school students Elizabeth Hailey and Michael Gibbey took part, reading The Ode and addressing the crowd on the meaning of Remembrance Day.

Afterwards Merriwa RSL sub-branch Bob Bain conducted a ceremony at the RSL Club Memorial Garden for seven ex-sub branch members who had passed away in the last year.

MINUTE OF SILENCE: Scone Remembrance Day service at the memorial on Sunday.

Reverend Michael Wheateley dedicated permanent plaques in the garden watched by 50 onlookers including family members.

Refreshments at the Merriwa RSL Club followed.

“More photos from Scone, Murrurundi and Aberdeen page 2.

Remembrance Day

TODAY we gather to remember the sons and daughters of the Upper Hunter who served with gallantry in the countless conflicts and on hundreds of battlegrounds during the Great War.

Five hundred and forty men and women from this region – all driven by a heartfelt obligation to God, King and Country – volunteered to fight.

By December 1915 every eligible man in Bunnan, Blandford, Aberdeen, Rouchel, Ellerston, Moonan Flat and Stewarts Flat had enlisted.

One hundred and five of these men died.

Nine families lost 2 sons and one family lost 3.

Three families in the district had five sons in uniform; another had 3.

Others were to welcome home their sons only to see them die from wounds and sicknesses related to their war service.

Upper Hunter Shire Council mayor Michael Johnsen addressing the Scone Remembrance Day service on Sunday.

IT IS potentially the biggest change to Scone since the rail line opened in 1871.

With a pamphlet on five options for Scone’s railway crossing problem hitting letter boxes this week, everyone is sure to have a view on what direction Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) should – or shouldn’t - take.

A sixth option - a variation on option 3 - put forward by the Upper Hunter Shire Council may also be on display next week.

The public can have a say on the options for Scone’s railway crossing on the New England Highway until November 30.

Community drop in sessions will be held at Campbell’s Corner on the corner of Kelly and Liverpool streets on Thursday, November 21 from 1pm to 3pm and Friday, November 22 from 10am to 12pm.

Another will be on Thursday at the Bill Rose Sports Complex in Kingdon Street from 4.30pm to 7pm.

Getting the right solution and finding funding fast is vital according to Upper Hunter Shire mayor Michael Johnsen.

“Having five options for consideration is welcome news and providing the general community and council an opportunity to have a say is important,” Cr Johnsen said.

“The critical thing now is that when the preferred option is finalised by RMS and submitted to the federal government, funding the project becomes a priority,” Cr Johnsen said.

Hunter MP Joel Fitzgibbon, is also encouraging the community to comment to RMS.

“The sessions are informal and the community is welcome to attend at any time during the session. The team will take feedback and answer any questions,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

Feedback will be considered in a workshop on Tuesday, December 11 with the project team, council, government agencies, other key stakeholders.

“Members of the community are invited to nominate themselves for the December 11 workshop by Friday, November 30,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

Written submissions on the level crossing options also close November 30.

For further information visit www.rms.nsw.gov.au.
3. Comments received

3.1 Overview

Of the 93 submissions received as of 3 December 2012 there was a strong preference of Option 1. Some of the recurring issues raised in all submissions related to:

- Traffic and access.
- Road design and safety.
- Social impact and community amenity.
- Socio-economic impacts.
- Noise and air emissions from heavy vehicles and rail traffic.
- Need for long term planning solution.
- Visual impact on the town of Scone and nearby residents.
- Impact on heritage buildings in Scone and preservation of Scones history.
- Flooding.
- Consultation process.
- Tree removal.

3.2 Preference on options

There was a range of preferences identified from the comments received with regard to a preferred option. A summary of preferences is provided in Table 3.1. Where a respondent stated they favoured two options preferences were counted for each option. Where it was noted respondents provided feedback several times stating the same preference is was counted only once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Number of preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Options 1 and 5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note RMS follows issues based decision making. This means that although we note preferences on options, we will examine the issues raised throughout the multi criteria assessment process used to identify the preferred option.

3.3 Comments on Options

Comments received noted positive and negative aspects of each option. These are summarised below. Common issues were raised on options 2, 3 and 4, as such these have been grouped together.

3.3.1 Option 1

Issues cited as reasons to favour this option

- Minimal disruption during construction and operation.
- Eliminates heavy vehicles passing through town.
- Addresses need for a rail crossing and diverts traffic around town.
- Does not impact on traffic flow in Scone.
- Promotes better town amenity.
- Facilitates pedestrian and cyclist safety.
• Removes rail crossing in Kelly Street.
• Town benefits as a result of relocation of the New England Highway.
• Minimal economic impact on the town.
• Safer access to recreational amenities.
• Provides for emergency vehicle access.
• Has the least property impacts.
• Removal of trucks from town centre reduces noise and pollution impact on town and residents.
• No extra traffic lights.
• No impact on recreational areas.
• Least impact on heritage areas and buildings.

Issues cited as reasons to not favour this option
• 20% more expensive than in town options.
• Construction impacts on sports complex.
• Construction in soft soils.
• Flooding impacts to low lying urban areas.
• Not a solution on its own, needs to be combined with option 5.
• Access issues at Kingdon Street and bypass intersection.
• Kelly Street being local road.
• Visual impact on town and residents.
• Impact on amenity of the town.
• Impact on Grammar School as a result of noise and access to nearby sporting facilities.
• Splits town in half.
• Impact on passing business / trade.
• Still does not provide quick access for emergency vehicles.
• New traffic lights at Liverpool Street – will have local traffic flow issues.
• Delays still experienced on Kelly Street crossing as a result of pedestrians and local traffic.

3.3.2 Options 2, 3, and 4

Issues cited as reasons to favour this option
• Realignment of Muffett Street will cause least disruption during construction to neighbouring properties.
• Minimises impact on town.
• Fewer businesses impacted.
• Good access and egress.
• Cheaper options and address current local traffic issues.
• Option 4 reduces impact on heritage buildings and caravan park.
• Utilise existing road corridor.

Issues cited as reasons to not favour this option
• Impact on existing houses in Kelly Street.
• Impact on commercial activities and buildings.
• Highway traffic will still pass through town.
• Impact on look and form of town.
• Traffic issues not addressed and resolved.
• No pedestrian access to swimming pool.
• Achieves none of the desirable outcomes.
• Impact on Elizabeth Park precinct and Tourist Information Centre.
• Impact on businesses along Muffett Street corridor.
• Impact on heritage and commercial buildings.
• Location of traffic lights and signalised intersection at Susan Street with Option 2.
• Property acquisition and costs.
• Does not resolve traffic flow and safety issues.
• Does not resolve heavy vehicle in town issues.
• Access for heavy vehicles onto Highway from industrial areas.
• Geometry and alignment of road.

3.3.3 Option 5
Issues cited as reasons to favour this option
• Opens the town with no trains passing through.
• Less noise in CBD.
• Opportunity for trains to run later and higher frequency of trains as trains would be from the town.
• New England Highway will still pass through Scone – economic benefits from travellers.
• Presents a long term solution.
• Addresses rail and road traffic issues.
• Allows for free flowing traffic in town with removal of rail line.

Issues cited as reasons to not favour this option
• Significant cost to implement.
• Highway traffic will still travel in town.
• Visual impact due to height of structures.
• Doesn’t address road traffic issue in town.
• Long construction time.
• Railway station will be relocated and further away – difficult to access for people with no transport.
• Lack of plans to develop land where old railway was.
• Impacts on sporting facilities.
• Impact on Scone Grammar school from increase in noise and pedestrian safety.
• Close to heritage items at St Aubins.
• Impacts on nearby residents – visual and noise.
• New noise receptors.
• Impact on floodplain due to embankment and drainage structures.

3.3.4 Option 6
Issues cited as reasons to favour this option
• Removes need for traffic lights in Susan Street.
• Less impact on Elizabeth Park.
• Less impact in private land.
• Safer for traffic using Muffett Street on sale days.
• Presents more holistic approach for traffic calming in town.
• Provides access to industrial areas.
• Construction impacts minimal compared to other options.

Issues cited as reasons to not favour this option
• Does not remove heavy vehicles from town.
• No provision for traffic to turn right from Guernsey Street and cross railway.
• Through lanes for heavy vehicles does not solve traffic issues.
• Pedestrian safety issues and impact on schools in the area.
• Impacts on heritage area at the north end of town.
• Location of traffic lights (Muffett Street) and impacts on residents due to braking and acceleration from heavy vehicles.
• Not a safe option.
• Impact on industrial area.
• Requires opening of Kingdon Street rail crossing.
• Increases traffic in Kingdon Street.
3.4 Issues raised

Recurring issues raised and detail relating to each issue is provided below.

3.4.1 Traffic and Access
About 84 submissions raised issues relating to traffic and access. Specifically issues included:
- Removal of heavy vehicles from the town of Scone (Kelly Street).
- Increases in heavy vehicles with wide loads and long loads travelling though the town of Scone and expected increases in the future.
- 50 kilometre per hour speed zones in small towns is frustrating.
- Queuing along Liverpool Street at the rail crossing.
- Need for 24 hours emergency service access across the rail line.
- Need to reduce the number of vehicles in Kelly Street.
- Local traffic management – roundabouts preferred to traffic lights.
- Access to and from the town, business, industrial and commercial areas.
- Provision for local access
- Making Kelly Street one lane will have traffic impacts.
- Coal trains dissecting the town.
- Liverpool Street is the main thoroughfare to the west.
- The bridge at Aberdeen will generate more traffic that will pass through Scone.
- Needs to be better traffic flow in town.
- Level crossings remain which does not solve the problem.

3.4.2 Road design and safety
About 32 submissions raised issues relating to road design and safety. Issues included:
- Alignment of some options and tight curves are a potential point of traffic conflict and accidents.
- Pedestrian safety in the Kelly Street corridor.
- Cyclist safety.
- Safety of school children to get to schools and to sporting amenities.
- Potential for accidents with heavy vehicles going through the town.
- Danger of collisions at level crossings.
- Road design with regard to geometry and curves makes tight turns for heavy vehicles and impacts on ingress and egress.

3.4.3 Social impacts and amenity
Approximately 55 submissions raised issues relating to social impact on residents and amenity of the town of Scone. Submissions indicated that the local community want to see the town of Scone preserved and providing opportunities for social interaction amongst locals and a place where tourists can and want to stop. Issues raised included:
- Maintaining amenity and lifestyle in the town.
- Making Scone a safer place with less heavy vehicles.
- Preservation of the streetscape.
- Potential impact on Elizabeth Park, Coronation Park, Bill Rose Sporting Complex, Scone Golf Course, sewerage treatment plant and the swimming pool.
- Impact on Scone Grammar School.
- Impact on residential areas.
- Property impacts, acquisition and compensation.
- Severing the town in half.
- Impact on the Mare and Foal statute and potential need for relocation.
- Relocation of the rail station, there was support to leave it where it is due to access if it is moved.
- Encroachment on the Tourist Information Centre.
- Impact on property values.
- Construction impacts on the town and residents.
3.4.4 Socio-economic
Approximately 27 submissions raised issues relating to socio-economic implications. These related to individual livelihood impacts and also wider impacts on the Scone business community. Issues included:

- Diverting the road and railway from the main street in Scone will enhance the town’s business district and promote retail over the longer term.
- Need for access to Kelly Street for continued business development.
- Potential impact on local business due to loss of passing trade.
- Livelihood impacts of residents in close proximity to options.
- Need to maintain access to industrial and commercial areas and to the motel and caravan park.
- Provision for continued tourism.
- Project will generate local benefits during construction as a result of jobs and cash flow into community.
- Other town bypasses have been successful and towns have thrived eg Bega, Goulburn and Armidale.
- Cost of option 5.

3.4.5 Noise and air emissions
Approximately 23 submissions raised issues relating to noise and vibration, and pollution due to fuel from coal trains and trucks. Noise from heavy vehicles related to braking and accelerating at traffic lights. Dust emissions were raised resulting from heavy vehicles and the passing coal trains. Issues raised included:

- Need to reduce noise from heavy vehicles in Kelly Street.
- Need to reduce heavy vehicle emissions in Kelly Street.
- Increase in vehicles and trains and potential impact on the town and residents with regard to noise and air pollution and dust.
- New receptors.
- Potential noise impacts as a result if necessity to build above the flood levees.
- Noise and vibration impacts and proposed attenuation.
- Design to minimize noise and vibration impacts.

3.4.6 Non Aboriginal heritage
Approximately 13 submissions raised impact on heritage buildings as an issue. Specifically:

- The impact on historic and heritage buildings in Scone.
- Heritage items generate tourism.
- Consideration to be given to Scone’s history.
- Preservation of the Scone railway as it is 150 years old.

3.4.7 Need for long term planning
About 14 submissions raised the issue that planning for the project need to consider a long-term option and a long-term vision for Scone. This needs to be a permanent solution rather than a “band aid” option or a “quick fix”. It was also raised that consideration needs to be given to wider corridor issues on the New England Highway.

3.4.8 Visual impacts
About 10 Submissions raised issues relating to visual. These included:

- Visual impact on the town as a result of an overpass structure.
- Shadowing from the overpass.
- Impact on visual amenity of the town due to concrete structure.
- Visual amenity and aesthetics in Kelly Street corridor.
- Rail and highway bypass options will impact on the visual amenity of the western side of Scone and residents in Satur Street.
- Impact on rural character and atmosphere.
3.4.9 Flooding and drainage
About 8 submissions raised flooding and drainage as an issue. Issues included:
- Building the bypass on an area of high risk.
- Flood assessment need to be undertaken.
- Design bypass to alleviate flooding in the town.
- Levee can be used to remove water from the town.
- Impact on floodplain and low lying areas.

3.4.10 Consultation
About 7 submissions raised issues about the consultation process undertaken. These issues related to:
- Lack of consultation undertaken.
- Insufficient time to comment on options.
- Displays don’t indicate affected properties.
- Some residents stated they were impacted by have not been contacted.
- Lack of opportunity to ask questions.
- Earlier consultation with residents would have identified community values and heritage areas.
- Not deemed as affected by RMS unless property or land is to be acquired.
- Lack of transparency in consultation process and information provided by RMS.

3.4.11 Tree removal
About 4 submissions raised issues relating to removal of trees and impact on parkland.

3.4.12 Upper Hunter Shire Council submission
The Upper Hunter Shire Council made a submission to RMS. A copy of the submission is provided in Appendix C.

In summary Council’s submission included:
- Benefits and concerns of each option.
- Suggested modifications on some of the options and why options should not be considered.
- A description of the Upper Hunter Shire Council’s option.
- Justification for Council’s option.
- Comments regarding noise and vibration attenuation.
4. Conclusion and next steps

No preferred option has been selected for the project at this stage.

The information provided by the community and stakeholders to date, along with investigations undertaken and outcome of the Value Management Study will be used in the selection of the preferred route.

4.1 Value management study

A value management process will be undertaken and will include a workshop. This workshop with participants from the project team, Council, government agencies, other key stakeholders and the community will be held on Tuesday 11 December 2012. At this workshop participants will assess the five route options based on the outcomes of the technical and environmental investigations and the issues raised in this report.

RMS will provide feedback to the community and stakeholders on the outcome of the value management workshop.

4.2 Recommendation on preferred option

RMS will recommend a preferred option to the Australian Government taking into consideration the outcomes of the value management workshop, the route assessment process and public comments.

The RMS is targeting to identify a preferred route option by the end of 2012.
Appendix A – Terms of Reference
NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY (KELLY STREET) – RAIL LEVEL CROSSING, SCONE
PROPOSED OPTIONS AND FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT
Terms of Reference

Overview
The New England Highway intersects with the Great Northern Railway forming a level crossing in Kelly Street, Scone.

It is understood that the rail line will carry more and longer coal trains between the Gunnedah Coalfields and the Port of Newcastle in the future. It also has the potential to be part of a Newcastle/Sydney connection to the inland railway.

The level crossing in Kelly Street, Scone is the final remaining at-grade rail crossing on the New England Highway.

The purpose of the proposed Assessment is to consider impacts of the operation of the level crossing on the local community, including police and emergency service providers, and the operation of transport and to identify a preferred solution.

Background
The New England Highway forms part of the Sydney-Brisbane Corridor of the National Land Transport Network. The Great Northern Railway between Newcastle and Werris Creek also forms part of the National Land Transport Network and will carry more and longer coal trains between the Gunnedah Coalfields and the Port of Newcastle in the future. The Great Northern Railway also has the potential to be part of a Newcastle/Sydney connection to the inland railway.

In Scone, the Great Northern Railway intersects with the New England Highway (Kelly Street) and with Liverpool Street (a local road). These two level crossings are located approximately 500-600m apart.

The Lower Hunter Transport Needs Study (LHTNS) identified the level crossing on the New England Highway in Scone as a candidate project for infrastructure improvements within the short term (0-5 years) and recommended grade separation.

Current coal train operations from the Gunnedah area through Scone at times reportedly divide the town, closing access at both the New England Highway and Liverpool Street. There has been keen public interest in addressing the issue considering the potential increase in coal train haulage along the line which the LHTNS reports is predicted to increase from 3 million tonnes per annum (2005) to 14 million tonnes per annum (2022). Other studies have indicated that the growth in coal haulage will be significantly higher.

Purpose of the Assessment
The purpose is to:

- Consider impacts of the operation of the New England Highway rail level crossing in Scone on the local community and the operation of transport including:
  - risks to the response capabilities of police and emergency service providers by existing arrangements, and
potential impact of any planned changes such as to coal haulage.

- Develop strategic concept design options for addressing any identified significant adverse impacts.
- Determine through a detailed traffic study the impacts of identified options.
- Undertake a value management study including community and stakeholder consultation.
- Undertake economic analysis and cost estimation of feasible options.
- Identify a preferred solution.
Scope of Work

The scope of work for the Assessment will include:

- Review and evaluate the findings of previous studies and investigations that have examined the New England Highway and rail operations through Scone to identify potential impacts.
- Review rail use projections in consultation with the ARTC to identify future impacts on the road network in the study area.
- Undertake community and stakeholder consultation including police and emergency service providers, rail authorities, Council, Federal DoIT, ARTC, Transport for NSW.
- Undertake any additional investigations in the study area including environmental, geotechnical, survey and utility investigations to assist with development and assessment of upgrade options.
- Develop / consider both the short-term and long-term upgrade options for the New England Highway through Scone that address the impacts of rail operations.
- Undertake economic analysis and cost estimation of feasible options.
- Recommend a preferred solution.

It is proposed to engage a professional services contractor that could undertake all tasks associated with investigating impacts, consulting with the community and stakeholders, and developing feasible options to address any identified significant adverse impacts.

All options investigated would give consideration to providing greater accessibility and efficiency for the New England Highway and the local community.

Deliverables

The key deliverables from the Assessment will be:

- Identify current and anticipated future impacts of the operation of the New England Highway rail level crossing in Scone on the local community, including police and emergency service providers, and the operation of transport.
- Identify feasible strategic options to address any significant adverse impacts.
- Evaluate the strategic options.
- Estimate the cost for the strategic options.
- Undertake economic analysis of the strategic options.
- Identify a preferred strategic option.
Key Milestones

The key milestones and dates for the Assessment are:

- Approve funding and Terms of Reference       June 2011
- Approve Terms of Reference                   June - July 2011
- Prepare tendering and engage PSC contractor  July – October 2011
- Finalise report and recommend preferred option September – December 2012

Consultation with stakeholders

The local community, Council, Federal DoIT, ARTC, Transport for NSW and other stakeholders will be consulted throughout the process. The consultation strategy will be documented in an approved Community Involvement Plan.

It is proposed to hold a Community and Stakeholder Workshop early in the process in order to quickly identify any relevant issues. The Workshop would also inform the community that the Assessment is being undertaken to investigate potential solutions to identified significant adverse impacts and to seek comments and/or suggestions.
Appendix B – November 2012 Community Update
Community Update

NOVEMBER 2012

Scone Level Crossing Feasibility Study
– Route Options Display

Roads and Maritime Services is seeking your input on the five short-listed route options to address the impacts of rail operations on the New England Highway (Kelly Street) rail level crossing in Scone.

In this update:
• A summary of the five route options for community comment.
• Route option maps.
• Upcoming community consultation activities.
• Information on how a preferred route will be decided and an invitation to participate in that process.

Option subject to ARTC approval

Comments are invited by 30 November 2012.
Update on the project

In August 2011 Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), on behalf of the Australian Government, commenced an Options and Feasibility Study to consider the impacts of rail operations on the New England Highway (Kelly Street) rail level crossing at Scone, and identify a preferred solution. This project is being funded under the Australian Government Regional Infrastructure Fund.

An Options Identification Report is available on the project website and outlines the process undertaken to identify issues, effects and constraints of existing and future changes to rail haulage on the New England Highway through Scone, and identify a broad range of potential options. The report documents how the options were workshopped with stakeholders to identify the five options for further consideration in the Options and Feasibility Assessment.

The five options have now been further developed including:

- Preliminary concept designs of all options.
- A traffic assessment.
- A construction staging assessment.
- Strategic lower cost estimates.
- An assessment of value for money.

The process from here

Community comments on the five options, the investigations undertaken and the outcomes of a value management workshop will inform a decision on the preferred route option.

RMS is targeting to identify the recommended preferred option by the end of 2012.

Your feedback on the recommended preferred option is shown in the flowchart (right).
Summary of the options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Strategic cost estimate (2012 dollars)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>New England Highway bypass of Scone</td>
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<td>Option 2</td>
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<td>New England Highway realignment to Muffett Street</td>
<td>$75 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road over rail bridge at Kelly Street level crossing</td>
<td>$65 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Road over rail bridge at Kelly Street level crossing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Railway bypass of Scone</td>
<td>$250 million</td>
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Note: This section of the Main Northern Railway is managed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC).

Next step: to recommend a preferred route option

Each of these five options provide opportunities and challenges. The preferred option will be selected by assessing which option represents the most appropriate balance between functional, social, environmental, engineering and cost factors.

The inputs to the recommended preferred option will include:

- Comments received from community consultation.
- The investigations carried out.
- The outcomes of a value management workshop.
Option 2. New England Highway realignment to Muffett Street

Kelly Street rail level crossing retained
Relocate Mare and Foal Statue
New traffic signals at Susan Street
50km/h speed limit
No access

© Aerial photograph: Terramean Mapping Technologies Pty Ltd. Photo taken October 2011
Option 3. Road over rail bridge at Kelly Street level crossing

- Close Kelly Street rail crossing
- Relocate Mare and Foal Statue
- New Muffett Street intersection
- New traffic signals at Susan Street
- No access

© Aerial photograph: Terranea Mapping Technologies Pty Ltd. Photo taken October 2011
Option 4. Road over rail bridge at Kelly Street level crossing

- Adjust road level in Guernsey Street
- Adjust road level in Mount Street
- Close Kelly Street rail crossing
- New roundabout at Guernsey Street
- New Muffett Street intersection and realignment
- Extension of Susan Street to Kelly Street rail level crossing and Muffett Street as traffic diversion during construction. Converts to parking area at end of project
- New traffic signals at Susan Street
- 50km/h speed limit

© Aerial photograph: Terranean Mapping Technologies Pty Ltd. Photo taken October 2011
Option 5. Railway bypass of Scone

- Rail bridge over Liverpool Street
- Bill Rose Sports complex to be adjusted
- Rail viaduct (3.8km)
- New rail bypass
- Remove existing rail line through Scone
- Remove Liverpool Street rail crossing

Note: This section of the Main Northern Railway is managed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC).
Option subject to ARTC approval
Upcoming community consultation
Get involved to help select the preferred option.

Information displays
These are informal sessions. You are invited to drop in any time during the session. The team can take your feedback and answer any questions you may have about the options or how they may impact you.

Dates to mark in your calendar

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Information display</th>
<th>22 November</th>
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<td>Bill Rose Sports Complex</td>
<td>4.30pm to 7pm</td>
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<th>Nominations due</th>
<th>30 November</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value management workshop</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Comment period closes</th>
<th>30 November</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community feedback due</td>
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Value Management Workshop
A workshop with participants from the project team, Council, government agencies, other key stakeholders and the community will be held on Tuesday 11 December 2012.

At this workshop participants will assess the five route options based on the outcomes of the technical and environmental investigations and the issues raised in the submissions received from the display of options.

The workshop will input to the identification of a recommended preferred option. We invite you to nominate to attend.

For further project enquiries
Please contact:
Project Manager, Phil Davidson
T 02 4924 0332
E philip.davidson@rms.nsw.gov.au

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Nomination to attend the value management workshop

Prior to nominating, please carefully consider your suitability based on the following self assessment criteria:

- Ability to commit the necessary time (you cannot substitute other people if you can’t make it) to a one day workshop, **11 December 2012 from 9am**.
- You represent yourself and participate as an individual.
- You agree to contribute within the agreed structure of the workshop.
- You acknowledge there will be a diversity of views and agree to allow all participants to contribute equally.
- You give a genuine commitment to achieving the best outcome.
- You agree with common courtesy and will treat others with respect throughout all dealings.
- You are either:
  1. A property owner, residential or business owner/tenant within Scone; or
  2. A regular user that does not live in the vicinity of one of the route options.

Nominations close **30 November 2012**.

I hereby nominate myself to participate in the value management workshop.

I am a property owner or resident (primary residency), or business owner/tenant impacted on or near one of the route options (please tick).

☐ Option 1  ☐ Option 2  ☐ Option 3  ☐ Option 4  ☐ Option 5

Or, I am a regular road user living at:

I am able to commit my time for the one day workshop, **11 December 2012 from 9am**.

**Personal details**

Name:

Address:

Suburb:  Postcode:  State:

Please indicate best phone number and time to contact:

Email address:

For further information or to speak to the project manager, please call 02 4924 0332.
Feedback

We would like to hear your views on the options; in particular, we would like to know:

- What do you think is the most important consideration when determining the preferred route option?
- What do you like about some of the options?
- What do you not like about some of the options?

Please provide your feedback in writing by **30 November 2012**. Submissions may be sent attached to this reply paid envelope, emailed to philip.davidson@rms.nsw.gov.au, or submitted via the project website.

To mail this questionnaire fold along the dotted lines and seal with clear tape. Mail your completed form (no stamp required) to the address below.
Appendix C – Comments from Upper Hunter Shire Council
SUBMISSION TO ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES

MR PHIL DAVIDSON
PROJECT MANAGER FOR ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES

SCONE LEVEL CROSSING FEASIBILITY STUDY

27TH NOVEMBER 2012
I refer to the Upper Hunter Shire Council’s previous representations in relation to the Scone Level Crossing – Options and Feasibility Study. Whilst Council appreciates the plans developed by the RMS this submission is presented with the aim of addressing the concerns of Council in relation to the proposed five options. These concerns are based on the benefits of local knowledge and traffic disposition in the area and relate to features such as civil design (alignments), flooding, intersection treatments, drivability, environmental and heritage issues, constructability and funding.

In addition to outlining the benefits and concerns of each of the five options Council has developed an alternative option which it believes will address any negative impacts associated with the Scone Level Crossing so that it maximises the positive benefits related to such works. The main features of Council’s option are further discussed in detail at the end of this submission along with plans attached for consideration.

At Council’s Ordinary Meeting, held on Monday the 26th of November 2012, Council resolved unanimously to support the:

- further development and evaluation of the revised rail overpass option (4.1) in Kelly Street submitted to the RMS by Council as the preferred solution to meet the key objectives of improved emergency access and improved local and highway traffic conditions
- implementation of a single through lane and ‘browsing’ lane along Kelly Street with the associated traffic improvements at Gundy Road and Kingdon Street intersections
- further investigation of warrants to construct additional passing lanes both north and south of Scone along the New England Highway
- concurrent development of a heavy vehicle alternative route

The assessment to date has covered the identification of route options and the strategic design for each. Internal briefing sessions have been held with Council, the Chamber of Commerce and several community groups. These were to inform and provide the community with a better understanding of each option and its potential impacts. There are four road and one rail option identified for further assessment. Preliminary estimates of the four road options range from $65 to $95 million and the rail option $250 million. Council’s alternate option has been estimated at $51 million, using the RMS costing criteria.

Council’s concerns are highlighted in the following summary of the five short listed options.

**OPTION 1: NEH BYPASS TO THE WEST OF TOWN (BRIDGE SOUTH OF TOWN)**

Option 1 is an internal bypass of the Scone town centre, effectively removing all through traffic from Kelly Street. Although the alignment makes use of land owned by Council and land previously identified as road reserve, the type of embankment construction to be used will have major flooding impacts to low lying urban areas of Scone and will require a more detailed analysis.

- length of bypass is 4.2km and involves the construction of earth embankments
- proposed route traverses the floodplain – detailed engineering design required
- design height over existing rail line 11m and embankment width 65m on southern approach
- design height at St Aubins Street 2m above ground level within flood plain
- high percentage of pavement below 1 in 20 year flood level
- Liverpool Street intersects the bypass which allows local traffic access to both sides of town.

Benefits:
- heavy vehicles diverted around town centre via the bypass
Concerns:
- all through traffic may be diverted around the town centre via the bypass
- significant cost (estimated at $95 million)
- impact on the flood plain and low lying urban areas due to embankments and drainage structures
- impact on public facilities (sports complex, golf course and sewer treatment works) because of proximity of the alignment
- impact on local business due to the loss of through traffic
- access issues regarding traffic flow and volumes at Kingdon Street and bypass intersection being only a left in/left out
- intersection treatment at the northern approach and lack of northbound right hand turn protection for traffic leaving Kelly Street
- significant construction difficulty on soft soils through the flood plain and sourcing embankment material because of earthworks imbalance
- rail crossings to remain an impediment to local traffic
- downgrading of Kelly Street to local road status and becoming Councils responsibility with maintenance and operational costs thereafter

Council believes that if this option is to be further considered, the following modifications should be developed for inclusion:
- the reconfiguration of access to and from Kingdon Street at the bypass to eliminate the left in/left and replace a new entry from Liverpool Street.
- the realignment adjacent to the golf course and sports complex to modify impact.
- the installation of a roundabout at the northern approach similar to that at the southern approach, to provide heavy vehicle entry from Kelly Street northbound, to link to the industrial area / Primo / Saleyards northbound and better southbound access into Kelly Street.
- the design and reconnection of the cycle way in Liverpool Street.

This option will require extensive flood assessments to determine the impacts on the remaining flood plain and surrounding low lying areas, together with noise attenuation from both the new bypass and existing rail corridor.

**OPTION 2: REALIGN NEH TO MUFFETT STREET (BRIDGE NORTH TO TOWN)**

This option realigns the NEH along Muffett Street adjacent to the rail corridor. The highway would be bridged across the railway prior to the sale yards at a height of 8 metres joining the existing highway to the north of Scone.

- proposed alignment length 2 km – additional road connections to sale yards 1km (via a private access road to primo) and northern connection to Kelly Street
- level crossing in Kelly Street would remain for local access
- traffic lights at Susan Street and roundabout at northern approach to the rail overpass bridge.

Benefits:
- limited disturbance to neighbouring properties during construction at the northern end of the works

Concerns:
- no obvious benefit over or above option 3 or 4, at a much higher cost.
- greater impact on the southern section of the proposed route during construction.
- cost to realign and reconstruct Muffett Street to dual lane and highway standards.
- encroachment on Elizabeth Park and Tourist Information Centre via the large signalized Susan Street intersection.
- impact on heritage building, industrial, commercial and residential properties.
- access onto highway from industrial area difficult for large vehicles due to the lack of turn protection for entry/exit.
- limitations for subdivision at northern approach and a roundabout at a grade.
• geometry of alignment with a combination of horizontal and vertical curves over rail line is undesirable.

This option is unacceptable and should not be considered any further as it provides no obvious benefits over or above option 3 or 4, contains more significant impacts on the industrial area of Muffett Street and the sale yards and the negative effects on commercial, residential and heritage buildings, at a much higher cost.

**OPTIONS 3 AND 4: – ROAD OVER RAIL BRIDGE AT OR NEAR THE KELLY STREET RAIL CROSSING**

Both options provide for a road bridge over the rail line in the proximity of the existing Kelly Street rail level crossing. The proposed structure is a four lane road bridge over the rail line and associated road approach works to maintain and provide local road connections. These options maintain highway access through Scone.

The scale of these options are smaller than Option 2, at a lower cost, however, Option 4 (modified) has significant benefits over Option 3, as identified below.

**OPTION 3:**

- route length 700 metres
- traffic lights at Susan Street intersection
- traffic lights on Kelly Street at northern intersection (caravan park)
- T - intersection treatment at Muffett Street from industrial area
- large bridge extending over rail line and Muffett Street to maintain temporary access to sale yards

**Benefits:**

- lower construction cost than the extension along Muffett Street
- alternative access for local traffic when trains impact on Liverpool Street rail crossing

**Concerns:**

- impact and encroachment on Elizabeth Park and Tourist Information Centre due to a large signalised intersection at Susan Street
- access difficulty for heavy vehicles from Muffett Street into highway traffic because of steep grade and curve to intersection and lack of turn protection for exiting traffic
- impact on heritage building and commercial and residential properties
- steep grades approaching traffic lights at northern connection to highway and the effects of the setting sun directly behind the proposed traffic lights
- noise impacts from traffic lights on motel, caravan park and residents because of stopping and starting traffic
- closing the existing crossing adds 500m to pedestrian access
- high cost of land acquisition
- geometry of alignment with a combination of horizontal and vertical curves is undesirable

This option is unacceptable and should not be considered any further due to the significant effects on public facilities such as Elizabeth Park and the Tourist Information Centre, the safety and access issues involved with the Muffett Street intersection and Kelly Street intersection, the interruption to traffic flow with two sets of traffic lights together with the 90° turns for highway traffic at the northern set of traffic lights.

**OPTION 4:**

- centre line of the proposed alignment is offset approximately 20m north of the existing Kelly Street level crossing
- height of the bridge structure is 8.5m with minimal approach grades of 3 to 6%
• bridge configuration is two north bound and two south bound lanes, a 5m median and two 3.5m walkways (total width of structure 28m)
• length of proposed bridge is 65m which spans the temporary access to Muffett Street
• highway configuration is a four lane carriageway with a 5m median/turn lane (total width of pavement 21m)
• route length 700 metres with connections at Muffett, Guernsey and Belmore Streets
• dual lane traffic signals at Susan Street, T intersection at Muffett Street, temporary Muffett Street underpass, four legged roundabout at Guernsey Street and Belmore Street
• construction is a combination of earth embankment and vertical retaining walls minimizing footprint on the landscape

Benefits:
• reduced impact on heritage building and caravan park than option 3.0
• cost of construction compared to Options 1, 2 and 5.
• relative ease of construction
• generally utilizes existing road corridor
• alternative access for local traffic when trains impact on Liverpool Street rail crossing

Concerns:
• unnecessary cost of temporary access to Muffett Street, sale yards and industrial area
• access difficulty for heavy vehicles from Muffett Street into highway traffic without traffic signals and/or merging lanes
• size of roundabout on Susan Street and its impact and encroachment on Elizabeth Park and Tourist Information Centre
• Temporary connection by Susan Street eliminates Elizabeth Park, Visitor Information Centre together with lost expenditure of additional bridge length.

Constraints at these sites relate to proximity to Elizabeth Park, neighbouring heritage properties, access to Muffett Street industrial area and maintaining appropriate access to local roads and adjacent properties during construction.

This option is nearest to the proposal put forward by Council, the differences being:
• bridge length being 20 metres longer and 6 metres wider in the RMS option
• traffic signals at the Muffett Street intersection substitute the typical T-intersection in the RMS option, to provide better heavy vehicle access to the New England Highway and improve traffic flow on the New England Highway.
• a small single lane roundabout at Susan Street in Council’s option in lieu of dual lane traffic signals, which are significantly more expensive, impact on traffic flow and Elizabeth Park.
• typical ‘seagull’ intersection at the Guernsey Street intersection replacing a dual lane 4 legged roundabout in the RMS option which would be significantly more expensive, greater footprint and negative impact on traffic flow (northbound).
• continued connection of Forbes Street to the Highway in Council’s option.
• pavement and lane configuration, to single lane in Council’s option compared to dual lane in RMS option, significantly lower cost, slower traffic in 50kph zone not attempting overtaking in the confined length between Susan Street and Guernsey Street intersections.
• Temporary access for constructability at Susan Street to Muffett Street can be provided by Kingdon and Guernsey Street northbound and Guernsey/Liverpool Streets southbound, with access to the Industrial Estate via Susan and Phillip Streets, without the cost of the temporary underpass and impact on Elizabeth Park in the RMS Option 4.

Of the three overpass options (being Options 2, 3 and 4), this option (4), with the modifications proposed by Council (4.1), would be the acceptable solution, in conjunction with the development of a Heavy Vehicle Alternative Route for Scone.

The benefits of this option (as modified) over all other options are detailed at pages 6 and 7 of this document.
Option 5: Rail Realignment and New Railway Station to the West of Town (Subject to ARTC Approval)

Remove rail operations to the floodplain west of town - both level crossings will be removed and rail operations relocated between Satur and the town CBD. Passenger services would operate from a new elevated station near Liverpool Street with ground level parking in a flood plain area. Due to the type of construction required for the rail realignment the effects from and on the flood plain to the lower lying areas of Scone will need to be considered in detail. To date this has not happened.

- proposed alignment is 6 km in length and involves the construction of earth embankments, rail viaduct and box culvert embankment
- height of the viaduct to rail level at both Kingdon and Liverpool Streets - 8 metres
- grade separation (bridging) of the road and rail at Liverpool Street and at the NEH to the north of Scone required
- width of earth embankments at Milton Farm and at the sewerage treatment plant - 30 metres
- the effects on the floodplain will need to be considered in detail

Benefits:
- removal of the rail from the centre of town opens opportunities for the remnant corridor
- free flowing town traffic due to the removal of the rail line out of the town centre

Concerns:
- visually unappealing because of the height above the natural surface (approximately 8m to rail line, 9.2m to platform and 12m to roof of terminal)
- elevated rail station platform with ground level parking in flood plain
- impact on heritage buildings at St Aubins
- significant cost (estimated at $250 million)
- considerable construction timeframe (estimated at two years)
- effects on floodplain due to earth embankments and drainage structures
- new noise receivers because of an elevated rail line and subsequent dispersal of sound
- limited access to other transport facilities due the new station being remote from other services
- impact on sports complex, golf course and sewerage plant

Council believes, that as it stands, this option should not be considered any further, without modification to retain the existing rail line as a passenger only line and the railway station in its current location. Noise attenuation along the entire length of the elevated viaduct alignment would be essential.

Option 4.1 (UHSC Proposal)

The initial design for both options 3 and 4 was based on the design previously tabled by UHSC at the August 2011 community meeting. Council staff have since reviewed this alignment and presented plans to the RMS for consideration prior to the current RMS options being placed on exhibition. These plans are attached as Council’s preferred option for the value management study.

This proposal has been presented to the Scone Chamber of Commerce, community groups and has the endorsement from Council and these groups.

The following comments are added for clarity:

- the proposed alignment is similar to that chosen for Option 4
- design height over rail line is 8 metres with minimal approach grades of 4% and 6% respectively
- construction is a combination of earth embankment and vertical retaining walls minimizing footprint on the landscape
- pavement width and configuration is for a single through lane for highway traffic with turning protection at Gundy Road, Muffett, Guernsey and Belmore Streets for improved local traffic flows, together with intersection improvements to Joan, Smith and Main Streets.
• proposed pavements width over the rail corridor is 17m
• roundabout at Susan Street, traffic lights at Muffett Street and turning lanes at Guernsey Street are provided to manage traffic flows
• single roundabout at Susan Street minimizes encroachment into Elizabeth Park and enables the provision of a short term parking area adjacent to the mare and foal statue
• traffic lights at the Muffett Street intersection allow safe passage onto the highway for heavy vehicles for both north and southbound traffic

any encroachment into Elizabeth Park will be off-set by park expansion towards the new alignment
the provision of a single through lane for highway traffic lessens the impact on residential, commercial and heritage listed buildings
additional open space at both Guernsey and Muffett Streets will provide landscaped entry statement opportunities prior to entering the CBD area
bridge construction and northern approach works can be completed off line with minimal or no disruption to current traffic flows along Kelly Street at the existing level crossing
traffic can be diverted along Guernsey, Kingdon and Liverpool Streets onto Kelly Street during construction works on the southern approach
Muffett Street connection can be constructed with access provision to the industrial area and saleyards via Main-Philip or Sherwood Streets
Significant cost saving ($51m – lowest cost option)

The modified option presented by Council is based on a holistic approach to improving travel times, congestion and reducing the risk to road users along the highway. Rearranging traffic configuration through Scone to a single through lane with a browsing lane dedicated for parallel parking improves safety and associated parking manoeuvres. At a recent meeting with RMS Senior Road Safety and Traffic staff in relation to the decommissioning of the speed camera in Kelly Street, it was agreed to introduce a single through lane from the southern boundary of Scone to Kingdon Street and from Susan Street to the northern boundary which would easily extend to incorporate the Council’s proposed browsing lane concept through the CBD and overpass option.

The draft NSW Transport Master Plan released in September has little commitment to upgrades along the section of highway between Muswellbrook and Murrurundi involving the construction of overtaking lanes. Some mention of how to reduce the impacts of freight movements in Scone is made under the medium to long term (5-20 year) time frame however no concrete ideas are offered for consideration. With forecast growth in coal mining in the Gunnedah basin and increases in the freight tasks associated with this growth, there is a high probability that the network between Murrurundi and Muswellbrook will not have the appropriate capacity to service this industry.

South of Scone the New England Highway serves as both a major freight and commuter road and north of Scone the highway mostly operates to service interstate freight movements, with some local and regional tourism, passenger and freight traffic to towns on the route. As traffic volumes grow over time the construction of more frequent and longer overtaking lanes will be necessary. Attached are plans showing the existing overtaking lanes along the network and the current posted speed limits. The length of northbound passing lane is approx 16.4km and southbound 13.2km. These figures include a distance of 1.5km through the CBD area of Scone. The longest distance between passing lanes northbound is 15.3km between Scone and Wingen and southbound 12.3km between Cressfield Road and Scone. An overtaking opportunity on the southern boundary of Scone is within a 50km/h speed zone and similarly at South Muswellbrook from the Showground to Black Hill. For an overtaking opportunity to occur these speed limits are not adequate and need review. Having a passing opportunity for heavy vehicles in a busy CBD area such as Kelly Street is not acceptable. One of the reasons put forward by the RMS to retain dual lane traffic flow through Scone is the lost opportunity to pass. This creates an unsafe environment for local traffic and pedestrians and is rejected as a reason not to implement the browsing lane concept.

Overtaking opportunities, particularly for heavy vehicles, must be provided in the non-urban areas, where Council has identified a deficiency of opportunity both north and south of Scone.

Better value for money and safety is provided by providing these opportunities elsewhere rather than in any of the overpass options under consideration.
The Construction of the Kelly Street overpass adjacent to the existing alignment with a single through lane, at a lower anticipated cost than all other options would be the most favourable outcome until traffic volumes warrant further action. Traffic flow, efficiency, safety and amenity outcomes will come under pressure in future years and will require measures to be considered such as frequent and longer overtaking lanes and ultimately town bypasses around Scone and Murrurundi. For this reason the concurrent development of a heavy vehicle alternate route through Scone needs to progress. Any cost reduction in constructing Council's preferred option can be utilized to bring forward the provision of additional passing lanes and the construction of a heavy vehicle alternate route through Scone.

It is Council's opinion that factoring in considerations of value for money, ability to fund the project, timeframe for construction, impacts on the community, impact on road and rail traffic and constructability of the project, the revised rail overpass option in Kelly Street submitted to the RMS by Council is the preferred solution to meet the key objectives of improved emergency access and improved local and highway traffic conditions.

If you would like to view the presentation or any further information regarding Council's option (4.1) please refer to the Upper Hunter Shire Council website


These presentations are included in Council's submission.
**NOISE AND VIBRATION ATTENUATION:**

The impact on Scone, arising from the increase in coal trains, in terms of length, weight, speed and frequency severely impact the town, in terms of safety, traffic and amenity.

The mitigation of these effects include the impact of noise and vibration by the larger, faster and considerably more frequent trains within the affected corridor adjacent to the rail lines.

Every option for consideration in this Feasibility Study, including Council’s proposal, must include measures to attenuate noise and vibration within the rail corridor and the affected properties.

In regard to Option 5, the viaduct design for the entire length of the proposed alignment viaduct on the floodplain must include noise barrier walls and vibration dampeners on the elevated viaduct to mitigate noise and vibration across the floodplain from affecting the urban areas of Scone and Satur.

In regard to Options 1, 2, 3, 4 and 4.1 (Council’s proposal), the rail freight corridor remains in its current location, however, the additional noise and vibration caused by the change in rail usage will require noise barriers and possibly vibration attenuation through the urban environment.

Option 1, the construction of a bypass on the floodplain, will require noise attenuation for the elevated road formation as well as the rail corridor noise and vibration attenuation described above.

The provision for noise and vibration must be considered in the assessment of each option and the final recommended option for implementation as an essential element of the project.
Figure 1: UHSC Kelly St Traffic Improvements

Option 4.1 – Council’s Proposal – Holistic Approach
Figure 2: UHSC Proposal (Colac, Vic)

Implementation of centre through lane and outside lane “browsing” only
Figure 3: UHSC Proposal Northbound

Figure 4: UHSC Proposal Elizabeth Park
Uses existing alignment of highway and local streets with minimal impacts and land acquisitions

Seagull treatment at Guernsey Street

Traffic Lights at Muffett Street (Industrial Area)

Roundabout at Susan Street

Figure 5: Kelly Street Overpass Plan View

Option 4.1 – Council’s Proposal
Figure 6: Kelly Street Through Lane CBD (Kingdon St to Susan St)

Option 4.1 – Council’s Proposal

Single through lane and ‘browsing lane’ with roundabout at Kingdon Street

Existing traffic lights at Liverpool Street
Option 4.1 – Council’s Proposal

Single through lane and ‘browsing lane’ with roundabout at Kingdon Street

Right turn lane at Gundy Road

Figure 7: Kelly Street Through Lane CBD (Gundy Rd to Kingdon St)
Figure 8: Limited overtaking opportunities south of Scone

LEGEND
Two Lane – Two Way
North Bound Overtaking Lanes
South Bound Overtaking Lanes
Dual Overtaking Lanes
Figure 9: Limited overtaking opportunities north of Scone
Figure 10: Limited overtaking opportunities further north of Scone
SCONE LEVEL CROSSING FEASIBILITY STUDY
EXTRACT FROM ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

Several online discussions took place following the distribution of the RMS’ Five Options. Comments relating to Upper Hunter Shire Council’s submission and proposal are presented for consideration. Comments selected for inclusion have not been edited and appear as presented on the Scone Community Noticeboard Page.

- **Elizabeth Flaherty** Whichever option they choose it will take a good 12 months - 2 years to build... in the meantime the ARTC and Council are ready to implement emergency crossings, specifically for emergency services only, to give access. Their plans are to open the Kingdon Street Crossing and one near the saleyards, which is on private property but the owner has given their permission. Now all they need is for the RTA to make the road leading to the crossing in the saleyard all weather, as you can’t get down the track if it is raining. The RTA have stalled for months and Minister Hazard has not responded. This is something that could be done tomorrow and ensure emergency services can punch in a code and cross at one of two crossings, while everyone is thinking about the longer term solution.

- **Katrina Clement** Personally I think the options of 1 and 5 would be great except they put our children in danger at sporting events as the rail line will be so close to Bill Rose Sports complex. I would not be comfortable letting my children play sport with a busy train line right next to the fields.

- **Kim Cummins** If the railway line is moved out of town and they have to build a new railway station, it might not affect those with transport but it will affect those of us who don’t have transport. For those of you that don’t realise, Scone has two train services, Cityrail which leaves at 6.30am and returns at 7.30pm, then we have Countrylink that you have to book to travel on and you are not always able to get a seat. A lot of kids travel on the Cityrail train to go to the Youth club 3 nights a week because it’s close together and a lot of people travel on it also to go to Muswellbrook or so on, so to move the station further out of town it will put a lot of people out. We also have only 2 Taxi services in Scone, which you cannot always access because they have other commitments (bus and school services). It will just add more pressure to a town which has limited town service, so please people, when you look at the options, please think about everyone, not just yourselves, a bridge (Option 4) is the one I will be voting for.

- **Amy Van Haren** I agree number 5 would probably be the ideal option but there is no way it will happen because of the cost! if you really want something to happen you need to be realistic and choose an option which is affordable and requires minimal work because you can bet that is the one that RMS will choose and we still need to get the money for it...

- **Kim Cummins** And really, whatever option is eventually decided on, its all about allowing emergency services easy access to both sides of town, that is the most important thing, that is why we are having the feasibility study

- **April Eveleigh** I think people have got the wrong end of the stick somehow... It is not council that put out that brochure with the 5 options. It was RMS (or RTA as they were previously known). Council approached the owners of the houses that would be demolished from the overpass, as that was the only option they were aware of, until the RMS put out that brochure. Council found out about the other 4 options at the same time as the rest of the town. RMS have dealt very badly with the whole situation so far! And council have put out there own proposal for the overpass, which I’ve looked at, and I think it is a lot better than the one that RMS put out. I still think that the railway bypass of the town is the best option (but I don’t think a new station is necessary, as passenger trains could still use the current station, leaving the bypass track solely for the coal trains).
• **April Eveleigh** The council's proposal is by far the best option for the town... And I say that, even though I live in Belmore Street!! I think we have to take a step back from our own personal feelings and consider what truly is best for the community as a whole. Council's proposal addresses many issues within the town. It avoids our town being by-passed (and losing traveler's business). It deals with other traffic issues up the main street by providing roundabouts at other intersections along the hwy... But most of all, it addresses the main issue directly. Emergency services gaining access to the other side of town.

I do however have a few things on my mind. I did not feel I (or any of the general public) was given the chance to ask questions at the meeting. Firstly, when presenting the by-pass options (both rail and road), it was extensively highlighted how the sporting fields, heritage areas and other important business and social areas of the town would be affected negatively. However, when presenting the council's proposal, the fact that there would then, perhaps at a later date, be a heavy vehicle by-pass put in, in the same place as those that were proposed by RMS, was skimmed over and paid no attention to. Am I wrong in my thinking, that if a by-pass so badly effects the town when it is proposed by RMS, because of where it would be situated and what land it would cross, then would it not be bad for the town when proposed by the council as a heavy vehicle by-pass situated in the SAME PLACE?? It seemed a little contradictory to me. I really do not think that the trucks cause THAT much hassle in town. And with council's overpass proposal being a wholistic approach to addressing many traffic issues in the CBD, is it not hoped that this will help to slow the trucks down and free up the streets for local traffic anyway? I do not see the point in wasting money on a truck by-pass, on top of all the other work... Especially when it will cut straight through the same social and heritage listed sites as the other by-pass options.

Also, I think it would be a great waste of money for RMS to build a new train station, moving it further away from the CBD, when there is a perfectly good one already, and nobody minds the passenger trains. They are not the ones causing the major delays and traffic problems. If that option goes ahead, the station should stay where it is, and the coal/freight trains should by-pass.

I think it would be best if I come in to speak to one of the councillors to address my concerns about all the options.

• **April Eveleigh** My preference would be to by-pass the coal trains... However, I don't like the route they have it taking. It's going to effect the whole community, by going straight through clubs, sporting grounds, changing streets etc and it's going to be sooo high!! And as previously mentioned, I don't see the point in wasting money on a new station, when the one we have is fine.

• **Brooke Munn** With the chance of B doubles being used in the future for transport, how the hell is Kelly Street going to deal with that. When it eventually happens everyone is going to be blowing up at the council about fixing the problem. They have increased the length of the coal trains over the years, and now we need an overpass. So prepare yourselves for those big trucks hooning down the main street. As people have already pointed out, at times the red lights dont even stop them. To me, thats dangerous, and an accident waiting to happen. I already think the trucks in the street are uncalled for, not to mention the wideloads that close streets down for them to get through. The council have come up with a way to fix both these problems, and hope it all works out. I think the councils option is by far the best option within reason!!

• **Damien Pringle** Erica and Brooke I don't think you realize the problems with the train or the bypass.. Do u realize that if the train option goes thru it will be 8 meters above ground level? This will cause all of scone to see and hear it.. With the bypass it won't stop trucks thru the main street because the proposed bypass is the opposite direction to our industrial area which means primo. Martins. Any trucks to sale yards or industrial area will still b using the main street.. How do those solve the problems they don't.. To top it off I could end up with that 8 m rail line 20etres from my house or the bypass .. How would I ever be able to sell my house? Rms have already told us down here that we are not deemed affected unless they actually need my land to build on.. Bullshit.. There are alternatives that would b far better than the current routes proposed that would solve the issues but are not even on the table..
• **April Eveleigh** I agree with a lot of what you have said Damian. And while it is very unfortunate and upsetting that your property could be effected by those options, no matter which option goes ahead, SOMEONE's property will be. There's nothing that can be done about that unfortunately. I do however, as stated above, not happen to agree with the route they've chosen for the road/rail bypass, because it effects many public amenities, and it's noise and size will encroach upon the entire town. And moving the station is both unnecessary and an idiotic waste of money. As hard as it may be, i don't think that putting one's personal situation ahead of the town's best interests, as a whole, is a very socially conscious way of choosing which option is best though. Perhaps you should put submissions in. Stating your preferred option and outlining any of the issues that you have with the by-pass options, in the hopes that they may reduce the impacts of it on your property IF that option does go ahead. I wish you luck (I think you're safe though. I think the RMS already know which option they want to go with, though council's plans may hopefully get them to alter it somewhat.)

• **April Eveleigh** Steph, I think they'll go with the option 4, overpass of existing railway line on kelly street. Though I do hope they take council's proposal seriously, as it is close enough to what they are proposing in option 4, but a HEAP better!! And council's proposal is cheaper too.
Jackie (and Eric) Reiher from the Highway Caravan Park at 248 Kelly Street Scone called Council 29/11/2012 to express their support of Council’s proposed solution for the Scone Rail Level Crossing.

They support the ideas of the browsing lane, the heavy vehicle bypass, and the rail overpass.

They were given the number to also pass this view on to the RMS.

Their phone number is 6545 1078.

S. Taylor
29/11/2012
Dear Mr Bush

I attended the council meeting this week to hear the UHSC’s proposal for the overpass – I believe several good compromises for the town and heavy vehicles were proposed by the council however the best option remains to move the heavy transportation (tucks & trains) corridor to the flood plain. An essential element of the UHSC’s proposal is to have the heavy vehicle bypass included as an essential part of the plan so that the overpass is not built without a heavy vehicle bypass. Some of details of the plan that were not extensively discussed during the meeting concern me:

I am worried that the level crossing at Kingdon Street will be permanently opened so that traffic can be diverted during construction. This creates several problems for the residents of Kingdon St and Guernsey St

1) Currently noise from the trains at night is close to maximum average levels and frequently above acceptable maximum levels – adding the noise of a crossing with a train horn and the boom gate bells would exceed acceptable noise pollution levels for the residents close to the crossing – a permanent solution for this noise issue would be desirable for all affected dwellings. A level crossing at either Susan St or St Aubin’s St would affect far fewer residents.

2) The noise of heavy vehicles travelling along Kingdon street and Guernsey St during the construction phase would most likely exceed acceptable levels for a residential area – this would require a temporary solution – completion of the bypass before construction of the overpass would alleviate this issue.

3) A significant number of school children walk along Kingdon St and cross Guernsey St to get to the Primary school and the grammar school – this safety issue needs to be addressed permanently if the Kingdon St level crossing is permanently opened.

4) Cars leaving the sports complex frequently “hoon” along Kingdon St now, if they could drive straight through to Kelly St this would be made worse – permanent traffic calming infrastructure, safe pedestrian crossings and a pedestrian crossing for the gully would be needed

I applaud the practicality of the solution proposed by the council, as I appreciate the difficulty of getting funding for the heavy transportation corridor however I think it is essential that these issues are addressed for the affected residents. I will apply to participate in the meeting on December 11th and will be encouraging as many people who are affected by this plan to be there as well.

I look forward to your reply

Kind Regards
Joan Carrick (Wilkinson)