Scone Town Centre Rail Bridge
Community Consultation Report

July 2016
Executive summary

This Community Consultation Report provides a summary of the community consultation carried out by Roads and Maritime Services to support the public display of three proposed options for the Scone town centre rail bridge. The rail bridge is one part of the preferred option for the future upgrade of the New England Highway at Scone which also includes a highway bypass to improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for road users, as well as addressing rising road and rail volumes and safety issues.

Strategic options have been developed for the rail bridge at three locations:

- Kelly Street
- St Aubins Street
- Sherwood Street.

The three options were displayed for community feedback between 15 December 2015 and 19 February 2016. During the public display 187 submissions were received from the community and stakeholders.

Key issues raised by the community and stakeholders include:

- Alternatives and need
- Local traffic
- Local business and passing trade
- Community facilities
- Emergency services.

The community also commented on other issues including design features, impact on property, heavy vehicles, and stakeholder and community consultation.

The decision

We will take the community and stakeholder feedback into account when further developing and selecting a preferred option for the Scone rail bridge.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Roads and Maritime Services started investigating options to address the impact of rail operations on the New England Highway rail level crossing at Scone in 2011. After extensive community and stakeholder consultation, in April 2014 the Australian and NSW governments announced the preferred option for the future upgrade of the New England Highway at Scone would include a highway bypass of Scone and a town centre bridge over the rail line (rail bridge). The rail bridge component of the proposal would improve local road connectivity, emergency services access, and traffic flow through Scone.

Our objectives for the rail bridge are to:

- Provide unimpeded access for emergency services to the western side of the Great Northern Railway
- Improve safety for all road users
- Eliminate community division caused by rail infrastructure.

Strategic options have been developed for the rail bridge at three locations:

- Kelly Street
- St Aubins Street
- Sherwood Street.

The Australian and NSW governments committed $90 million towards the highway bypass and rail bridge. Work on the bypass is expected to start in mid 2017 and be open to traffic by mid 2019. The timing of construction and opening of the rail bridge is dependent on selection of the preferred option, due to interactions with the bypass. The St Aubins Street and Sherwood Street options could be constructed at the same time as the bypass. For traffic management reasons, the Kelly Street option would be constructed after the bypass is complete.

1.2. The project

Three options for the rail bridge were displayed for public comment. These options are described briefly below and shown in Figure 1.

Option A – St Aubins Street

This option is a road bridge over the rail corridor at St Aubins Street, from the intersection with Kelly Street to west of Guernsey Street. Key features of this option are:

- Overpass is at right angles to the rail corridor – simpler bridge construction
- Two lanes with shoulders and a footway provision on the north side of the overpass
- Property acquisition on the north side of the overpass, particularly between the rail corridor and Guernsey Street
- Closure of Guernsey Street - cul-de-sac treatment either side of the overpass
• Access provided off the cul-de-sac on the south side of the overpass for access to hardware business – carpark and rear of business
• Overbridge to span the rail corridor and an access road on the eastside of the rail corridor
• Retaining walls to contain overpass and limit impact on private property.

Option B – Kelly Street
This option is a road bridge over the rail corridor at Kelly Street, from the intersection with Susan Street to Mount Street. Key features of this option are:
• Overpass is at skewed angle to the rail corridor – more complex bridge construction
• Two lanes with shoulders and footway provision on the south side of the overpass
• New roundabout intersection treatment at the intersection with Susan Street
• Overbridge to span the rail corridor and an extension of Muffett Street to Susan Street
• Upgrade of intersection between Kelly and Guernsey streets
• New connection off Kelly Street for Belmore Street and upgrade of Belmore Street – connection to Kelly Street closed at southern end
• Property acquisition required for the new Belmore Street connection and two residential properties on Kelly Street
• Impact on Elizabeth Park
• Retaining walls to contain overpass and limit further impact on open space and private property.

Option C – Sherwood Street
This option is a road bridge over the rail corridor at Sherwood Street, from the intersection between Philip and Waverly streets to Kelly Street. Key features of this option are:
• Overpass on a curve over the rail corridor – more complex bridge construction
• Two lanes with shoulders and no footway provision
• Connection of Sherwood Street to Waverly Street and new intersection treatment at Philip Street
• Realignment of Muffett Street north and south of Sherwood Street
• New connection from Muffett Street to Sherwood Street on south side of Sherwood Street
• New connection with Kelly Street on the west side of the rail corridor
• Cul-de-sac treatment at northern end of Belmore Street
• Property acquisition required on the west side of the rail corridor and for Muffett Street and Waverly Street connections
• Retaining walls to contain overpass on north side of Sherwood Street to limit further impact on private property.
Figure 1: Proposed rail bridge options
2. Consultation approach

2.1. Consultation objectives
Our consultation objectives were to:

- Inform the community and stakeholders of three proposed rail bridge options
- Work with the community and stakeholders to identify issues and minimise impact
- Invite feedback to help develop the rail bridge project and select a preferred option
- Expand the database of stakeholders who would like to be kept informed about the rail bridge project.

2.2. Values
Our values underpin our decisions and behaviours when working with customers, colleagues, stakeholders and partners.

- **Customer focus** - We place the customer at the centre of everything we do
- **Collaboration** - We value each other and create better outcomes by working together
- **Solutions** - We deliver sustainable and innovative solutions to NSW’s transport needs
- **Integrity** - We take responsibility and communicate openly
- **Safety** - We prioritise safety for our people and our customers.

We consulted with the community from 15 December 2015 to 19 February 2016 on three rail bridge options to seek comment, feedback, ideas and suggestions from the community and stakeholders. The feedback received and presented in this report will be considered in further developing the rail bridge project and selecting a preferred option.
2.3. How consultation was carried out

Community members and stakeholders were encouraged to provide their feedback, leave comments and make submissions at information sessions or by mail, email or phone contact with the project team. Our key consultation tools are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Engagement tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation method</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Local media                    | • Media release announcing the public display and inviting comments was issued on 15 December 2015  
                              | • Reminder media release issued on 3 February 2016                      |
|                                | • Copies of the media releases are available at Appendix A               |
| Newspaper advertisements       | • Information session locations and website link were advertised in the Scone Advocate on 7, 14, 21 and 28 January 2016  
                              | • A copy of the advertisement is available at Appendix B                 |
| Project update newsletter      | • Delivered to about 3,000 businesses and residences in Scone.           |
|                                | • Made available to download from the Roads and Maritime website        |
|                                | • A copy of the project update is available at Appendix C                |
| Webpage                        | • Project webpage updated 15 December 2015 with latest project information including project update newsletter  
| Information sessions           | • Three drop-in information sessions held at the Scone Motor Inn, 53 New England Highway, Scone on:  
                              | - Thursday 21 January 2016 from 3pm to 7pm                               |
|                                | - Thursday 4 February 2016 from 3pm to 7pm                               |
|                                | - Friday 5 February 2016 from 10am to 2pm                                |
|                                | • A total of 200 people visited the Roads and Maritime information sessions |
| Stakeholder briefings          | • Upper Hunter Shire Council                                            |
3. Consultation summary

3.1. Overview

The three rail bridge options were displayed for community feedback between 15 December 2015 and 19 February 2016. We received 187 submissions from the community and stakeholders in response to the display, including:

- 95 emails
- 92 letters.

Of the submissions, 83 were unique submissions with the remainder (104) comprised of form letters.

Submissions were received from residents, business owners and employees, Upper Hunter Shire Council, Scone Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and emergency service providers (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Number of respondents by stakeholder category](image)

Figure 2: Number of respondents by stakeholder category
A total of 21 issues were raised in the submissions received. Some submissions contained multiple comments and raised multiple issues. A number of comments expressed support or opposition for the project or specific options as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Number of comments who support or oppose options

It is important to note that we follow issues based decision making. This means that although preferences on options are noted, we examine the issues raised throughout the consultation period using a fact based assessment process to assist in further developing the project and selecting a preferred option.

The most commonly raised issues included:

- Alternatives and need (87 comments)
- Local traffic (46 comments)
- Local business and passing trade (29 comments)
- Community facilities (21 comments)
- Emergency services (17 comments).

Submissions also provided feedback on other issues including design features, impact on property, heavy vehicles, and stakeholder and community consultation.

The feedback will be taken into consideration in further developing the rail bridge project and selecting a preferred option.
### Table 2: Number of comments by key issue category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key issue category</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives and need</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local traffic</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local business and passing trade</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community facilities</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design features</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property impacts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy vehicles</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder and community consultation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and visual amenity</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noise and vibration</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Aboriginal heritage</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project timing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project objectives</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction impacts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project governance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air quality</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>288</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Responses to issues raised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue category</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
<th>Issues raised</th>
<th>Roads and Maritime response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Alternatives and need| 87                 | • Suggested the railway should be diverted around Scone, lowered to pass under existing roads or placed in a tunnel under Scone   | An options assessment and feasibility study for the Scone - Kelly Street Level Crossing was carried out from 2011-2014. The development and refinement of options for the Scone (Kelly Street) level crossing took place through a series of technical processes and workshops with stakeholders, technical staff and the local community. Twenty potential options were initially identified. During a series of workshops, a multi-criteria analysis approach was used to reduce this to five options which were displayed for community comment in November 2012. The displayed options included four road options and one rail option (Options 1–5). During the display, Upper Hunter Shire Council advocated and displayed a variation (Option 6) of Roads and Maritime’s Option 4 - an ‘in-town’ road over rail bridge at Kelly Street. Each of the five options were developed to the level of a strategic concept design. The designs were then technically assessed in terms of:  
• Present and future traffic conditions, including road network level of service and crash reduction  
• Cost and economic analysis  
• Road and level crossing safety  
• Constructability and construction timeframes.  
These options went through a process of assessment by stakeholders, including community members, through a value management workshop and study. During the workshop and study, each of the options was assessed against project objectives and stakeholder defined criteria. The value management workshop resulted in two options which would remain under consideration. These were:  
• New England Highway bypass at Scone – Option 1  
• A hybrid ‘in-town’ option, incorporating features of Option 4 and its variant – Option 6.  
Further assessment led to the selection of a recommended preferred option.  
The recommended preferred option was modified Option 1 – New England Highway bypass of Scone and local road over rail bridge at Kelly Street. Modified Option 1 performed strongly against the objectives of the project as determined in the Terms of |
<p>|                      |                    | • Provided variations to the displayed options                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                      |                    | • Questioned why a rail bridge was required                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                      |                    | • Questioned why a rail bridge was required in addition to the bypass         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                      |                    | • Suggested building an overpass or level crossing north of town to provide a link to the industrial area and saleyards. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue category</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
<th>Issues raised</th>
<th>Roads and Maritime response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reference and best aligned to the long term plans and strategies of the Australian and NSW governments. The local road bridge would address severance of the town, improving emergency services access and the reliability of travel through Scone via Kelly Street. When a preferred option for the rail bridge is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on local traffic impact</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>• Impact on access to properties&lt;br&gt;• Increased traffic on local roads and associated safety concerns&lt;br&gt;• Concerns around changed traffic movements caused by rail bridge options, including street closures and modifications.</td>
<td>The rail bridge project is at an early stage of design. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed which would incorporate traffic arrangements and include consideration for access and connectivity. An environmental assessment would be completed which would include a traffic and transport assessment to address traffic related impacts, including parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on local business and passing trade</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>• Adverse impact on access to local business&lt;br&gt;• Concerned rail bridge will adversely impact passing trade.</td>
<td>When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. The environmental assessment would include a socio-economic study to assess the potential impacts of a rail bridge, including impact on businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community facilities</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>• Impact on community facilities including parks, gardens, visitors centre and swimming pool.</td>
<td>When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage, a socio-economic assessment would be completed with consideration of impact on community facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue category</td>
<td>Number of comments</td>
<td>Issues raised</td>
<td>Roads and Maritime response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency services</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>• Impact on emergency services response times&lt;br&gt;• Benefit to emergency services response times.</td>
<td>The rail bridge would improve efficiency of the road network for local traffic. The rail bridge would address severance of the town, improving emergency services access and the reliability of travel through Scone via Kelly Street. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. Further consultation with emergency services would also be carried out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design features</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>• Requested design details including traffic lights, roundabouts, number of lanes, pedestrian facilities and retaining walls.</td>
<td>The rail bridge project is at an early stage of design. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. The concept design would show further detail on specific elements of the project. A cost/benefit analysis would also be carried out when a preferred option is selected. The concept design would be prepared in consideration of a variety of factors, including community feedback. The environmental assessment would be displayed for community feedback, which would be considered when finalising the design and environmental assessment. The project would then move into detailed design pending environmental approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property impacts</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>• Uncertainty around which properties may be impacted&lt;br&gt;• Impact on property values.</td>
<td>The impact on individual properties will not be known until a preferred option is selected and further investigations and designs are completed. It is acknowledged the project would involve partial and total acquisition of property located within the footprint of the project which will impact affected property owners. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. The environmental assessment would include a socio-economic assessment, with consideration of impacts to land use and property. Any property acquisition would be carried out in accordance with the Land Acquisition Information Guide (Roads and Maritime, 2014) and the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991. We would consult with all directly affected landholders, including Upper Hunter Shire Council, during the detailed design stage when property acquisition requirements are</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue category</td>
<td>Number of comments</td>
<td>Issues raised</td>
<td>Roads and Maritime response</td>
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| Heavy vehicles                        | 10                 | • Concerns around heavy vehicle movements to and from the industrial area and saleyards along local streets  
  • Questioned whether the rail bridge will allow clearance for taller vehicles. | The rail bridge project is at an early stage of design. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed which would incorporate traffic arrangements and would consider heavy vehicle access and volumes, and potential safety implications.  
  The bridge and intersections required for the rail bridge project would be designed to current standards and traffic modelling would be carried out to ensure intersections operate well for all turning movements. Designation of heavy vehicle routes on local roads is the responsibility of Upper Hunter Shire Council. |
| Stakeholder and community consultation | 9                  | • Lack of consultation with the community and stakeholders  
  • Felt Roads and Maritime has not listened to and/or actioned community feedback  
  • Timing of the public display  
  • Perceived lack of disclosure to the community about modifications of previously displayed designs. | Since the project started in 2011 we have endeavoured to keep the community informed as the project progressed and worked with the Scone community and key stakeholders to ensure concerns and issues were understood and reflected in the project options developed. In the past five years, we have received about 395 submissions from the community and key stakeholders on options to address the impact of rail operations on the New England Highway rail level crossing at Scone. This community feedback has been used to select and refine project options.  
  The community was invited to provide feedback on three strategic options for a rail bridge from 15 December 2015 to 19 February 2016. The display period was extended from the standard 28 days to 66 days to account for the holiday season. About 3,000 project updates were distributed to Scone residences and businesses providing information about the project and inviting community comment by attendance at one of three staffed community information sessions or via submission.  
  We appreciate the feedback received on the consultation activities to date and will continue to work with the community and stakeholders during the planning process to understand issues and minimise potential impacts.  
  Community members who have provided feedback have been added to our database. |
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<tr>
<th>Issue category</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Landscape and visual amenity</strong> 8 • Concerned about the visual impact the rail bridge may cause.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed which would include a specialist visual assessment.</td>
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<td><strong>Funding</strong> 6 • Cost of the proposed options.</td>
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<td>A cost/benefit analysis would be prepared to help with selection of a preferred option. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed.</td>
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<td><strong>Noise and vibration</strong> 6 • Impact of traffic noise from a road over rail bridge.</td>
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<td>The management of road traffic noise is a major factor of road planning and the management of vehicles. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed which would include a noise assessment.</td>
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<td><strong>Non-Aboriginal heritage</strong> 6 • Impact to heritage items.</td>
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<td>When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed which would include heritage assessments, in accordance with relevant NSW legislation.</td>
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<td><strong>Project timing</strong> 5 • Queried the timeline for construction of the rail bridge • The rail bridge should be built before bypass.</td>
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<td>Construction of the bypass is expected to start in late 2017 and be open to traffic in 2019. The duration of construction would be limited as far as practicable with due consideration for worker and public safety and reasonable hours of work to minimise community impacts. The timing of construction and opening of the rail bridge is dependent on selection of the preferred option due to interactions with the bypass. Rail bridge Option B (Kelly Street) would need to start after opening of the bypass to avoid traffic management issues and would take about one year to construct. Options A or C could be built concurrently with the bypass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue category</td>
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<td>Issues raised</td>
<td>Roads and Maritime response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project objectives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- Proposed options won’t improve urban amenity or safety</td>
<td>The objective of the rail bridge is to reduce severance of the town, improve emergency services access and reliability of travel through Scone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- Proposed options won’t remove through traffic from Scone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction impacts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Proposed rail bridge options are unacceptable due to construction impacts.</td>
<td>The rail bridge project is at an early stage of design. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. As part of this stage, recommendations for minimising construction impacts would be assessed and documented. If the project is approved for construction, a detailed construction plan would be prepared outlining how construction impacts would be managed, in accordance with safeguards from the environmental assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic and access - parking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- Impact to parking.</td>
<td>The rail bridge project is at an early stage of design. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed which would incorporate traffic arrangements and would consider access and connectivity. In addition, an environmental assessment will be completed including a traffic and transport assessment to address traffic related impacts including parking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project governance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Questions about decision making processes.</td>
<td>The rail bridge project is at an early stage. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. The concept design would be prepared in consideration of a variety of factors, including community feedback. The environmental assessment would be displayed for community feedback, which would be considered when finalising the design and environmental assessment. The project would then move into detailed design pending environmental approval. After environmental approval, construction of the rail bridge would be subject to a tender process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue category</td>
<td>Number of comments</td>
<td>Issues raised</td>
<td>Roads and Maritime response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air quality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Impact of vehicle emissions.</td>
<td>When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed which would include an air quality assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• No environmental assessment of options in the main brochure.</td>
<td>The rail bridge project is at an early stage of design. When a preferred option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During the next stage of the project a variety of specialist studies would be completed to assess the potential impact of a rail bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Error in the project image.</td>
<td>The cover image was amended for the online version.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2. Recommendations
Roads and Maritime will consider all issues raised by community members and stakeholders when further developing and selecting a preferred rail bridge option.

3.3. Next steps
During the next phase of the project we will:

- Consider the issues raised in this report in the further development and selection of a preferred option and subsequent concept design and environmental assessment
- Carry out specialist environmental studies
- Provide information on project progress via the Roads and Maritime website and through media and direct communication methods, including:
  - Provide project updates via letterbox drop
  - Hold community information sessions
  - Provide project website updates
- Continue to keep the community informed as the project progresses.
Appendix A: Media releases
HAVE YOUR SAY ON CONCEPT DESIGN FOR PROPOSED SCONE BYPASS AND STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR TOWN CENTRE RAIL BRIDGE

Michael Johnsen MP, Member for Hunter today invited members of the Scone community to provide feedback on the concept design and environmental assessment for the proposed New England Highway bypass and the strategic options for a town centre rail bridge.

Mr Johnsen said the community could have a say on the Australian and NSW government funded bypass and town centre rail bridge which aims to improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for road users.

“Roads and Maritime Services has carried out an environmental assessment for the proposed bypass to assess the potential environmental and social impacts of the proposal and identify activities to manage and mitigate them,” Mr Johnsen said.

“The investigations found the bypass would not significantly impact the environment if appropriate measures were in place.

“Strategic options have been developed for a town centre rail bridge proposed at one of three locations, Kelly, St Aubins or Sherwood streets.”

People can attend drop-in sessions on Thursday 21 January between 3pm and 7pm, Thursday 4 February between 3pm and 7pm and Friday 5 February between 10am and 2pm at the Scone Motor Inn to speak with the project team.

“The environmental assessment and project update will be available from Tuesday 15 December to view or download at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects,” Mr Johnsen said.

“The environmental assessment for the bypass can be seen weekdays from 9am to 4pm at Upper Hunter Shire Council. Copies of the project update detailing the concept design for the bypass and the strategic options for the town centre rail bridge are also available.

“Feedback is invited by 19 February 2016 and will be considered when finalising the concept design and environmental assessment.

“Our local community and stakeholders will be kept informed during the planning process to help identify issues and minimise potential impacts of the proposed bypass and town centre rail bridge.”

More information is also available at www.rms.nsw.gov.au.

Media contact: 0265431065
Joint Media Statement

3 February 2016

Have your say:
Community invited to Scone Bypass drop-in sessions

THE community has been invited to provide feedback on the concept design and environmental assessment for the proposed New England Highway bypass, and strategic design options for the Scone town centre rail bridge.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss said the Australian and NSW government-funded proposal would provide much needed improvements to traffic conditions in the area.

“The Australian and New South Wales governments are providing $90 million to build the bypass and town centre rail bridge at Scone to improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for road users,” Mr Truss said.

NSW Minister for Roads Duncan Gay said the bypass would remove 3,500 vehicles per day from local roads in the Scone town centre, improving safety and traffic flow.

“The New England Highway is an important route for freight vehicles and this bypass will improve freight productivity by reducing travel time and cutting freight costs,” Mr Gay said.

Nationals Duty Senator for Hunter John Williams said the proposed future upgrade of the New England Highway will also help address rising road and rail volumes.

“The highway south of Scone currently carries 8,400 vehicles a day, peaking in town at 14,000. This bypass aims to ease congestion and reduce safety risks in the area,” Senator Williams said.

NSW Member for Upper Hunter Michael Johnsen said the environmental assessment for the Scone bypass helped determine the potential environmental and social impacts of the proposal, and identify activities to manage them.

“We will certainly be managing any potential issues to ensure the best possible outcome for the local community. Community members are invited to attend drop-in sessions to speak with the project team and to learn more about the bypass,” Mr Johnsen said.
Drop-in sessions will take place on Thursday 4 February between 3pm and 7pm and Friday 5 February between 10am and 2pm at the Scone Motor Inn. Feedback is invited by 19 February and will be considered when finalising the concept design and environmental assessment.

The environmental assessment and project update are available to view or download at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects.

The documents can also be viewed on weekdays between 9am and 4pm at Upper Hunter Shire Council. Copies of the project update detailing the concept design for the bypass and the strategic options for the town centre rail bridge are also available.

**Media Contacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Mr Truss:</th>
<th>Brett Heffernan</th>
<th>0467 650 020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For Mr Gay:</td>
<td>Clementine Julian</td>
<td>0417 635 891</td>
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<tr>
<td>For Senator Williams:</td>
<td>Greg Kachel</td>
<td>0428 253 560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Mr Johnsen:</td>
<td>Electorate office</td>
<td>02 6543 1065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Newspaper advertisement
Roads and Maritime Services is planning a New England Highway bypass and town centre rail bridge at Scone to improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for motorists. You are invited to have your say on the concept design and environmental assessment for the New England Highway bypass of Scone and strategic design options for the town centre rail bridge.

We invite you to drop-in at any time during the below information sessions to talk to the project team and find out more about the project. Formal presentations are not scheduled as part of the information sessions.

**Scone Motor Inn**
53 New England Highway, Scone
**Thursday 21 January 2016 from 3pm to 7pm**
**Thursday 4 February 2016 from 3pm to 7pm**
**Friday 5 February 2016 from 10am to 2pm**

Feedback is invited until **Friday 19 February 2016** and will be considered to finalise both proposals.

For more information or to provide feedback please contact Phil Davidson on (02) 4924 0332, Philip.Davidson@rms.nsw.gov.au or visit rms.nsw.gov.au
Appendix C: Project update
New England Highway bypass of Scone and town centre rail bridge

December 2015

The Australian and NSW Governments are providing $90 million to build a New England Highway bypass and town centre rail bridge at Scone to improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for road users.

A concept design and environmental assessment have been carried out for the highway bypass to identify potential impacts of the upgrade and mitigation activities. Strategic design options have also been developed for the town centre rail bridge.

Stakeholders and the community are invited to comment on the concept design and environmental assessment for the highway bypass and strategic design options for the town centre rail bridge by 19 February 2016. Roads and Maritime will consider feedback to finalise both proposals.

Background

The New England Highway is part of the inland Sydney to Brisbane National Land Transport Network and the primary route connecting the Upper Hunter with Maitland and Newcastle.

In Scone, the highway intersects with the Great Northern Railway at Kelly Street. The Kelly Street rail level crossing is the only remaining level crossing on the New England Highway.

The highway south of Scone carries 8400 vehicles a day, peaking in town at 14,000. Around 8000 vehicles use the Kelly Street crossing every day, including 1200 heavy vehicles.

There is also a crash history on this four kilometre section of highway with 29 crashes in the five years to June 2014, with no fatalities recorded during this period.

In April 2014 the Australian and NSW Governments announced the preferred option for the future upgrade of the New England Highway at Scone would include a highway bypass and town centre road over rail bridge to address rising road and rail volumes and safety issues.

The announcement followed the completion of an options assessment and feasibility study which is available to view at the Roads and Maritime website rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects.

The concept design and environmental assessment for the highway bypass, together with the town centre rail bridge strategic design options, have been developed for community and stakeholder feedback.

Roads and Maritime is continuing to work closely with Upper Hunter Shire Council to develop the proposal.
The proposal

Key features of the proposal include:

- A two lane highway bypass to the west of Scone, which would pass through the Scone Golf Course and bridge over the rail line south of town, and at Kingdon Street and Liverpool Street
- Access to and from the bypass to the north and south of town and midway at St Aubins Street which would provide for all turning movements
- A local road over rail bridge in town.

Benefits

Key benefits of the proposal include:

- Improved traffic flow and amenity for local traffic
- Improved travel times for freight and long distance traffic
- Improved safety for all road users.

The bypass aims to support freight and long distance travel as part of the Sydney-Brisbane National Land Transport Network and would benefit the NSW and national economy.

Bypassing Scone also aligns with the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan’s focus on providing essential access for regional NSW by providing town bypasses to:

- Improve travel and amenity within towns
- Reduce delays caused to freight traffic
- Increase safety
- Improve urban amenity through reduced noise, lower emissions and less traffic.

New England Highway bypass of Scone

Environmental assessment

Roads and Maritime has carried out an environmental assessment for the highway bypass to assess the potential environmental and social impacts of the proposal and identify activities to manage and mitigate these impacts.

The environmental assessment was prepared in consultation with a range of key stakeholders including technical specialists and considered feedback received from the community.

The investigations found that the bypass proposal would not significantly impact the environment with the application of a range of mitigation and management measures.

Key considerations for assessment

The following key areas of potential impact have been identified in the environmental investigations. The environmental assessment describes these impacts and activities to reduce them.

Traffic and access

The bypass would require changed traffic arrangements during various stages of construction along sections of the existing New England Highway, Kingdon Street, Liverpool Street and St Aubins Street. This could lead to short term delays for motorists, however impacts are expected to be localised and of minimal duration.

Construction vehicles would access the upgrade area via the New England Highway and Liverpool Street wherever possible to minimise impacts within the Scone town centre. Potential construction impacts would be managed through the development of traffic management plans and consultation with stakeholders and the community.

Traffic modelling found that traffic along Kelly Street would steadily increase if the upgrade was not constructed. Projected future traffic volumes along Kelly Street and on Liverpool Street (east of Aberdeen Street) would reduce when the upgrade is completed.

Traffic flow within the town centre would improve as a result of through traffic bypassing the town and local traffic using the St Aubins Street intersection to bypass the town centre. These changes to traffic flow would result in an increase in traffic using Aberdeen Street and St Aubins Street with potential traffic impacts for local residents. Traffic using Aberdeen Street between Liverpool Street and the new intersection at St Aubins Street is forecast to increase by around 2000 vehicles per day.

Hydrology and flooding

A hydrology study was carried out including Parsons Gully, Kingdon Ponds, Middlebrook Creek and Figtree Creek and considered flood levels for various flood events with and without a bypass.

The modelling showed very little difference in the flood levels for one in 20 year and one in 100 year flood events without the construction of a bypass. For one in 20 year and greater flood events, the majority of the floodplain area is inundated including most of Scone to the west of the Great Northern Railway.

The modelling for one in 20 year and one in 100 year flood events with the construction of a bypass showed there would be a minor increase in the water levels in areas generally to the west of the proposal and in the vicinity of White Park. The impact to residences in these areas is expected to be minimal. A decrease in water levels would occur to the east of the proposal in the general vicinity of Aberdeen Street.

Roads and Maritime would continue to refine the design during the detailed design stage to further reduce potential flooding impacts. Roads and Maritime would also carry out consultation with all potentially affected property owners including providing details about the predicted changes in flood levels in relation to each individual property.
Operational traffic noise
Operational traffic noise modelling was carried out to compare the current background noise with future predicted noise levels after the bypass is built. The results show that operational traffic noise would exceed appropriate levels at a number of properties along the route.

Potential management measures identified for consideration include quieter road surfaces, noise treatment to residences and noise barriers. Individual noise treatments for properties identified as being potentially affected by operational traffic noise would be discussed with property owners during the detailed design stage.

Visual impact
The greatest visual impacts of the upgrade would be on the western edge of Scone. Elements of the proposal that are likely to be the most visually intrusive include the embankments, bridges and vehicle movements. Vehicle headlights may also cause visual impacts at night. The proposed bridge over Kingdon and Liverpool streets would visually divide these road corridors, separating the eastern and western sides of the streets. This would result in visual impacts for pedestrians and motorists travelling along these streets.

Construction of the upgrade would result in reduced traffic volumes through the Scone town centre which is likely to have positive impacts on visual amenity along the existing New England Highway.

To minimise the visual impacts of the proposal, landscaping on either side of the upgrade using native species is proposed to improve visual amenity after the upgrade is built and maintain the rural landscape character. Bridges would also be simple and visually appealing structures to blend in with the landscape.

Socio-economic impact
The key socio-economic benefits identified by the assessment are:
- Improved traffic flow and visual amenity along Kelly Street from improved driver and pedestrian safety, reduced traffic noise and lower emissions from vehicles
- Improved connectivity between both sides of the Great Northern Railway particularly for emergency services
- Increased employment opportunities from construction of the upgrade with business opportunities to supply goods and services for construction. These employment opportunities would improve business outcomes for the local retail outlets, accommodation facilities, eateries and services.

The key socio-economic impacts arising from the proposal include:
- Impacts associated with full or partial acquisition of properties
- Amenity impacts on residents, social infrastructure and recreational facilities along or adjacent to the upgrade created by increased operational noise, visual amenity and air quality impacts from construction and operation of the bypass
- Potentially reduced trade for businesses along Kelly Street when through traffic is bypassed from the Scone town centre.

Early and ongoing consultation with affected property owners, businesses and communities as well as inviting community feedback for the ongoing planning, environmental management and monitoring is important to minimise potential socio-economic impacts during construction and operation of the bypass.

Design changes since the 2014 public display
There have been several changes made to the bypass design since the 2014 public display following further investigations into hydrology and flooding, traffic operations, road safety, and noise and visual impacts.

The changes include:
- Minor realignment of the bypass near Liverpool Street and through Scone Golf Course to minimise impacts on the golf course and reduce flooding, visual and noise impacts for nearby properties
- Removal of the right turn out of Kelly Street at the southern bypass connection to improve road safety and traffic flow
- Inclusion of the right turn out of St Aubins Street to allow full access to the bypass for vehicles travelling from the west
- Removal of the right turn into Kelly Street from the northern bypass connection to improve road safety and traffic flow.

Strategic design options for town centre rail bridge
The Scone Kelly Street Level Crossing options assessment and feasibility report carried out in 2014 recommended the preferred option of a bypass and town centre rail bridge at Kelly Street. The town centre rail bridge would improve local road connectivity, emergency services access and traffic flow through Scone.

The report recognised that construction of the bridge at Kelly Street would need to be carried out after the bypass is completed to minimise traffic disruptions. Closure of the Kelly Street rail level crossing during construction of the bypass would leave only the Liverpool Street crossing available for all traffic.

Following further investigations, strategic options have been developed for a town centre rail bridge at three locations including Kelly Street, St Aubins Street and Sherwood Street. The St Aubins Street and Sherwood Street options have been considered as they could be constructed at the same time as the bypass.
Involving the community and stakeholders

Roads and Maritime is committed to working with the community and stakeholders during the planning process to identify issues and minimise potential impacts of the proposal and construction activities.

Stakeholders and the community are invited to comment on the concept design and environmental assessment for the highway bypass and strategic design options for the town centre rail bridge by 19 February 2016.

Feedback will be considered to finalise the environmental assessment for the highway bypass and the preferred option for the town centre rail bridge.

Drop-in information sessions

Stakeholders and the community are invited to drop-in at any time during the information sessions to talk to the project team and find out more about the project. Formal presentations are not scheduled as part of the information sessions.

Location: Scone Motor Inn
Address: 53 New England Highway, Scone
Date: Thursday 21 January 2016 from 3pm to 7pm
        Thursday 4 February 2016 from 3pm to 7pm
        Friday 5 February 2016 from 10am to 2pm

Information is also available on the website at rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects.

Next steps

Upcoming planning activities include:

- Community and stakeholder consultation
- Finalise the environmental assessment for the highway bypass
- Finalise the preferred option for the town centre rail bridge, which is expected to be displayed for community feedback in mid 2016.

Project development process

Contact us

For more information about this project please contact the Project Manager, Phil Davidson by:

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Email: Philip.Davidson@rms.nsw.gov.au
Mail: Phil Davidson
Roads and Maritime Services
Locked Bag 2030 Newcastle NSW 2300

If you need help understanding this information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to call us on 1300 761 923.