

AUGUST 2013



New England Highway, Tenterfield – Heavy Vehicle Bypass

The Australian Government has committed \$6 million for the planning of a heavy vehicle bypass at Tenterfield and an upgrade and safety improvements at Bolivia Hill as part of the Nation Building Program.

The New England Highway is a major link from the Hunter to the New England area and beyond. The highway currently passes through Tenterfield's central business district, which causes traffic and safety issues from the mix of heavy vehicle and through traffic with local trips and pedestrian activity.

Current status

In March 2013, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) displayed the project's draft preliminary route options. The options were identified through community suggestions and early technical and environmental investigations carried out by the project team.

A community meeting and drop in session were also held in March. The project team presented information on investigations carried out to date, including traffic analysis and preliminary ecology studies. This presentation is available to view on the project website.

These community sessions provided an opportunity to meet the project team, discuss and provide feedback on the draft preliminary route options and identify additional options and further constraints. At this time the project team also briefed Tenterfield Shire Council to present and explain the draft preliminary route options and seek feedback.

Refinements and combinations of the displayed routes will also be considered and evaluated in the next stage.

Preliminary investigations

Traffic analysis

A range of traffic studies have been carried out to assist in the assessment of the preliminary route options. These studies included a seven-day traffic count at key locations across the study area, intersection traffic counts, pedestrian crossing counts, origin and destination surveys as well as travel time surveys.

Survey period (seven days)	Average daily volumes	
	Total vehicles	Heavy vehicles
New England Highway <i>North of Bruxner Highway</i>	2527	483
New England Highway <i>South of Saddlers Road</i>	2317	472
Bruxner Way <i>West of New England Highway</i>	335	59
Bruxner Highway <i>East of Bellevue Street</i>	1052	159

Environmental surveys

Preliminary ecology surveys across the study area have also been conducted. These surveys assessed large areas of native vegetation within the study area, potential creek crossings and watercourses for potential endangered ecological communities and threatened species.

Two endangered ecological communities were identified in these surveys – the White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and the New England Peppermint Woodland. Two threatened fauna species were also recorded – the Little Eagle and Hooded Robin. Further detailed ecology surveys will be carried out on each of the shortlisted route options.

Community feedback

More than 100 people attended the community information sessions on 14 and 15 March 2013 and provided feedback on the draft preliminary route options and assessment methodology and criteria. The community feedback report, which summarises feedback received, is now available to view on the project website. Also available is a question and answer factsheet, which outlines a number of commonly asked questions and project team responses.

Feedback on assessment criteria

Community members were asked to rank the level of importance of each of the project objectives which the route assessment criteria will be drawn from. The majority of respondents identified all the criteria to be of high importance. The criteria 'provide sustainable economic outcomes for the local community' and 'improve road safety' ranked most highly.

This feedback will be used by the project team to confirm the criteria to use in the assessment of each route option, which will aim to balance the interests of the community and stakeholders with those of RMS and the Australian Government.

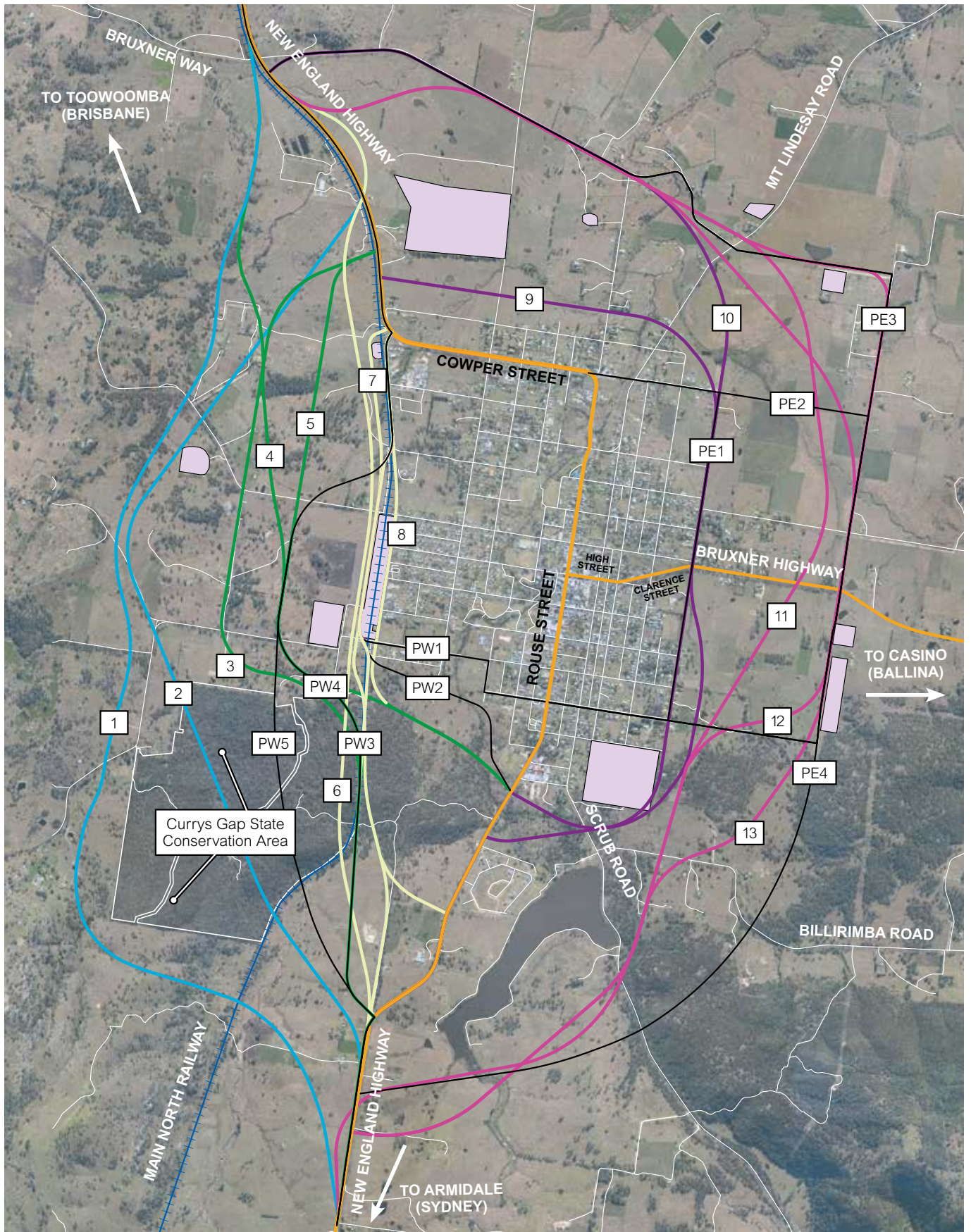
Feedback on draft preliminary route options

The community was also invited to provide feedback on the draft preliminary route options or any other concerns, suggestions or issues. The 10 most frequently raised concerns or considerations were:

- Impact of the proposed heavy vehicle bypass on residents and residential areas.
- Importance of addressing traffic from the Bruxner Highway and/or Mt Lindesay Road in addition to the New England Highway.
- Safety.
- Economic impact on businesses and the local community.
- Cost.
- Environmental concerns.
- Impacts on Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage.
- Concern about impacts to the town water supply.
- Noise.
- Traffic volumes.

Considering this feedback, 22 preliminary route options have been confirmed for further assessment (see map opposite). The preliminary route options now being assessed include the 13 draft preliminary options and nine options from the Tenterfield Shire Council commissioned Peece Report (2009).

As more detailed investigations take place and additional constraints are identified, there may be small variations to these options to ultimately identify the best route option for the project.



Preliminary heavy vehicle bypass route options

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Existing Highway | Outer West | Inner East | Local road |
| Pepee Options | Central West | Indicative route options (numbered left to right) | Existing rail |
| Inner West | Outer East | | Heritage and constraint areas |

Next steps

The project team is now assessing each of the preliminary route options against the assessment criteria. The criteria consider the project objectives as well as engineering, environmental, social and economic constraints throughout the study area. This process will allow route options to be shortlisted for further investigation and development.

Further community consultation on the shortlisted routes will occur late in 2013 once the route analysis and shortlisting process has been completed.

Contact us

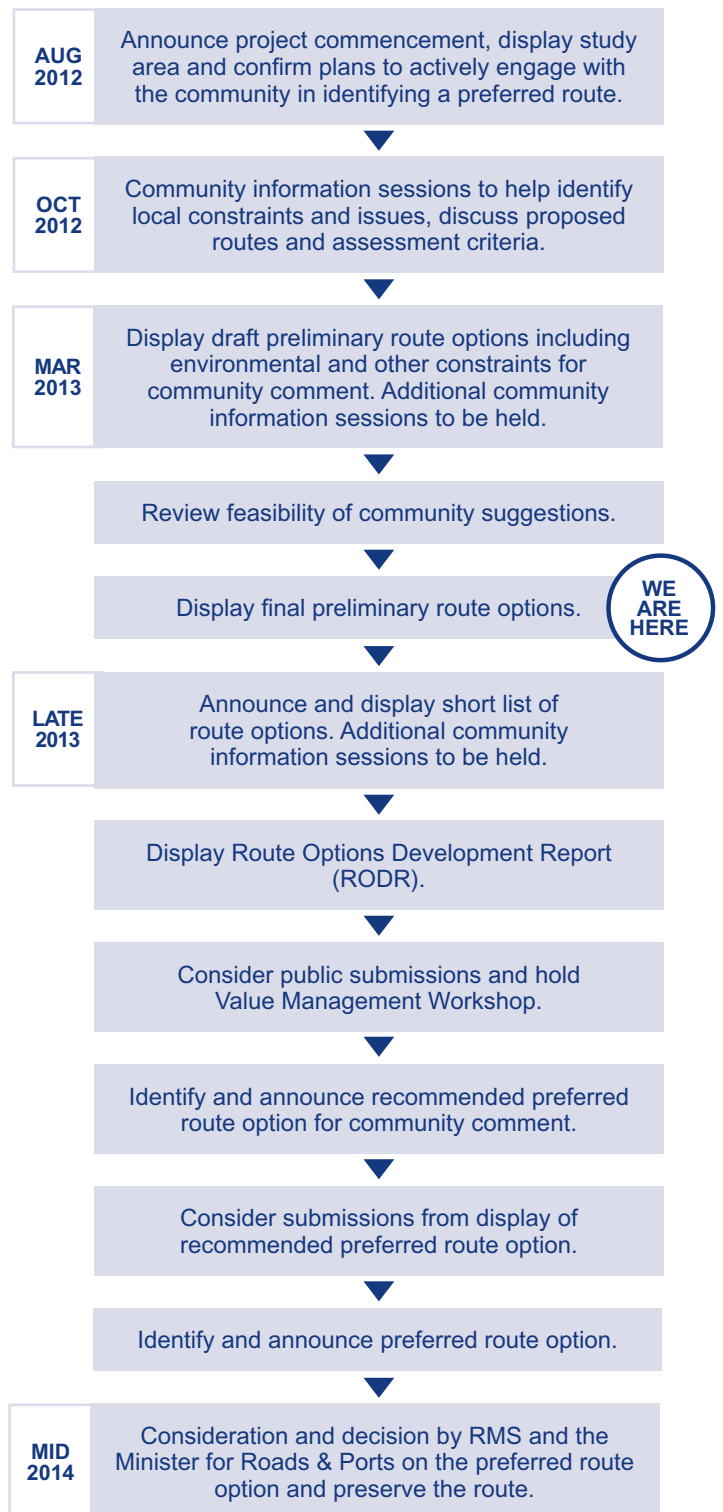
If you would like more information, please contact the project team at:

Phone: 1800 810 680 (toll free)

Email: community.input@ghd.com

Web: www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects/projects/north_eastern_region/new_england_tenterfield

Write to: Tenterfield heavy vehicle bypass project team
Roads and Maritime Services
PO Box 576
Grafton
NSW 2460



© Roads and Maritime Services

This paper is • carbon neutral • Australian-made • recycled fibre • elemental chlorine free • pulp derived from sustainably managed sources.

For further enquiries

Tenterfield heavy vehicle bypass project team, Roads and Maritime Services

PO Box 576, Grafton, NSW 2460

T 1800 810 680 | E community.input@ghd.com

www.rms.nsw.gov.au

August 2013

RMS 13.366