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Executive summary

This Community Consultation Report provides a summary of the community consultation carried out by Roads and Maritime Services to support the display of shortlisted route options for a New England Highway bypass of Singleton.

An assessment of route options is being carried out to select a preferred route for a future bypass, which would address current congestion and future traffic demands.

A bypass would ensure the efficient operation of the New England Highway and the surrounding road network, as well as improve safety and travel times and reduce heavy vehicle traffic through Singleton.

Once a preferred route is finalised, it will be included within Singleton Council’s Local Environmental Plan, reserving the land for future construction of the bypass. The timing of construction of the bypass has not been confirmed.

The shortlisted route options were displayed for community feedback between 28 September and 23 October 2015. During the public display 168 submissions were received from the community and stakeholders.

Key issues raised by the community and stakeholders include:

- Changes to hydrology and potential impacts on flooding
- Property acquisition/compensation
- Isolation or fragmentation of agricultural land
- Impact on business/trade
- Property value.

The community also commented on impacts to business and trade and the visual, environmental and noise impacts of road traffic.

The decision

We will take community and stakeholder feedback into account when selecting a preferred route for the New England Highway bypass of Singleton.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background
Roads and Maritime Services is carrying out a route options assessment to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass of Singleton.

The New England Highway forms part of the National Land Transport Network and is a major freight and commuter route between Newcastle and the Upper Hunter. The highway passes through Singleton and forms the main road access through the town and to the CBD.

A preliminary feasibility study for a potential New England Highway bypass of Singleton was completed in 2013. The study determined there was merit in further investigating potential bypass options.

A route options assessment started in November 2014 to select a preferred bypass route. The assessment builds on the preliminary feasibility study by further investigating previous options while also developing others for consideration.

Key objectives for the project include:

- Improving travel reliability and times on the New England Highway through Singleton, particularly for road freight supporting the operations of the coalfields located in the Upper Hunter and the North West New England Region
- Improving the amenity of Singleton by providing an alternative route for heavy vehicles outside the town centre
- Improving road safety for through and local traffic in Singleton.

The bypass seeks to address the following Transport for NSW strategic goals and objectives:

- Reduce fatalities and serious injuries by upgrading sections of the network
- Support freight and long distance travel, which is important to the NSW economy
- Providing or improving arterial road access to serve residential and employment growth areas
- Providing localised improvements to address specific congestion issues
- Improve urban amenity by building town bypasses and measures to mitigate traffic impact.

1.2. The proposal
As part of the route options assessment, the following three shortlisted options were displayed for community comment between 28 September and 23 October 2015.
Each of the three options include a two lane New England Highway bypass of Singleton with provision for a future upgrade to four lanes.

Community and stakeholder feedback, further technical investigations and a value management workshop will be used to select the preferred bypass route.

The preferred bypass route is expected to be displayed in the second half of 2016.
Once finalised, the bypass route will be included within Singleton Council’s Local Environmental Plan, reserving the land for future construction of the bypass.

The next stage will be to develop a concept design for the preferred route and to carry out an environmental assessment. The environmental assessment may take several years to complete and during this time we will seek further community feedback.

The timing of construction of the bypass has not been confirmed. The NSW Government has committed $92 million towards the upgrade under Rebuilding NSW, subject to a final business case. Further funding will be required from the Australian Government to allow construction to proceed.

2. Consultation approach

1.3. Consultation objectives

Our consultation objectives were to:
1. Inform the community and stakeholders of the three route options
2. Invite feedback on the three shortlisted options
3. Gather local knowledge that will help with the selection of a preferred bypass route.

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 28 September to 23 October 2015 on the three shortlisted route options to seek feedback from local residents and interested stakeholders. The feedback received and presented in this report will be considered as part of the route options assessment to select a preferred route for the New England Highway bypass of Singleton.
### 2.3. How consultation was done

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local media</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media release announcing the display and inviting comment on 28 September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reminder media release prior to the end of the comment period on 16 October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Copies of the media releases are available at Appendix A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper advertisements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advertisement in the Singleton Argus on 9 October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A copy of the advertisement is available at Appendix B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project update newsletter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Delivered to 8,000 businesses and residences in Singleton, Singleton Heights, Fern Gully, Gowrie, Maison Dieu, Wattle Ponds and Whittingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Directly mailed to key stakeholders including government agencies, utility providers, emergency services, schools, large businesses, freight and transport organisations and community groups in the local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A copy of the Project Update is available at Appendix C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A letter and a project update were sent to 86 land owners identified as potentially directly affected by one or more of the route options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A copy of the letter is available at Appendix D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webpage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project webpage updated 28 September 2015 with the latest project information including the route options assessment report, community project update and frequently asked questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A copy of the frequently asked questions is available at Appendix E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information sessions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two information sessions held at the Quest Hotel, 5–7 Civic Avenue, Singleton on Tuesday 13 October from 3pm to 7pm and Thursday 15 October from 3pm to 7pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A total of 125 people visited the Roads and Maritime information sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Static poster display</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project updates and posters were on display during the comment period at the Singleton Library, the Singleton motor registry and the Member for Upper Hunter’s office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A copy of the poster is available at Appendix F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Consultation summary

3.1. Overview
Three shortlisted route options were displayed for community feedback between 28 September and 23 October 2015. We received 168 submissions from the community and stakeholders in response to the display, including:

- 97 emails
- 27 letters
- 44 telephone calls.

A total of 27 issues were raised in the submissions received. Some submissions contained multiple comments and raised multiple issues. Submissions were received from interested community members and groups, residents, Singleton Council and businesses in the Singleton area.

It is important to note 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 the fact based assessment process to assist in finalising the concept design and preparing the review of environmental factors.

The most commonly raised issues included:
- Changes to hydrology and potential impacts to local flooding (13%)
- Property acquisition/compensation (12%)
- Traffic forecasts, use of local routes and travel times (9%)
- Isolation or fragmentation of agricultural land (8%)
- Impact on business/Trade loss (6%)
- Property value (5%)
- Support for the project (5%).

A number of the submissions included a preference or dislike for a particular route option along with their key reasons for this preference or dislike. The feedback received will be considered when selecting a preferred bypass route, which is scheduled to be displayed in the second half of 2016.
Number of respondents by stakeholder category

- Interested community member/local resident: 78%
- Option A - potentially directly affected property owner: 5%
- Option B - potentially directly affected property owner: 5%
- Option C - potentially directly affected property owner: 9%
- Transport groups: 1%
- Local businesses: 1%
- Community / environmental groups: 1%
- Singleton Council: 1%

Number of submissions for/against proposal

- Support: 78%
- Did not specify: 17%
- Oppose: 5%
### Number of comments by key issue category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key issues</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes to hydrology and potential impacts to local flooding</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property acquisition / compensation</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic forecasts, use of local routes and travel times</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation or fragmentation of agricultural land</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on business/trade loss</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property value</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for project</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise from road traffic</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual amenity</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to social amenity</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacent land use</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation process</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options assessment report/feasibility assessment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air quality</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interchanges</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on non-Aboriginal heritage / European heritage</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objection to project</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative routes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology/biodiversity</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic safety</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future process</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Highway and rail bridge upgrade at Gowrie Gates</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersection upgrade at New England Highway and Golden Highway at Belford</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian access</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction staging and impacts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property damage and existing condition surveys</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community benefit and costs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>519</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue category</td>
<td>Number of comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes to hydrology and potential impacts on flooding</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Property acquisition/compensation</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue category</td>
<td>Number of comments</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Traffic forecasts, network performance and travel times | 45                 | • Number of vehicles, including heavy vehicles, using the New England Highway.  
• Accessing the bypass and local roads.  
• Benefits to travel times.                                                                 | Traffic volumes on the highway through Singleton are predicted to increase to more than 30,000 vehicles per day over the next 25 years. Increased traffic volumes are based on residential population growth forecast by the Bureau of Transport Statistics and future land developments outlined in the Singleton Council Local Environmental Plan (LEP).  
Potential interchange locations have been identified for each bypass route in conjunction with the traffic modelling carried out as part of the options assessment. |
| Isolation or fragmentation of agricultural land    | 44                 | • Impact of the proposed routes on agricultural land.  
• Preferred route should avoid impacting on viable farming land.                                                                 | Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project a socio-economic study would be completed to assess the potential impacts of a future bypass including impacts on agriculture and farming. |
| Impact on business/trade                           | 31                 | • Impact of the future bypass on business.                                                                 | Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During the next stage of the project a socio-economic study would be completed to assess the potential impacts of a future bypass including impacts on businesses, agriculture and farming. |
| Property value                                     | 28                 | • Changing value of property and land.  
• Affecting ability to sell property.  
• Financial implications for home improvement/property development.                                                                 | The impact on individual properties will not be known until a preferred route is chosen and further investigations and designs are completed.  
Affected landowners are encouraged to contact the project team to discuss their individual circumstances, including the process of acquisition.  
Hardship cases would be considered in line with the Just Terms legislation following confirmation of the preferred route. |
<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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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bypass route.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Further information on the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roads and Maritime uses for property acquisition can be found at:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project support</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>• Support for proposal.</td>
<td>We thank community members for their support and interest in the New England Highway bypass of Singleton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More information about the project is available on the Roads and Maritime website. The project web page is the best way to check on progress and obtain the latest updates regarding the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>• Impacts of traffic noise from the bypass.</td>
<td>The management of road traffic noise is a major factor in road planning and the management of vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project further environmental studies including a noise assessment would be completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual amenity</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>• The visual changes that the bypass may cause.</td>
<td>Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project specialist environmental studies would be completed, including visual assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to social amenity</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>• Impacts to quality of life.</td>
<td>Once a preferred route option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project a socio-economic assessment would be completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacent land use</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>• Impact or effect that the bypass may have on neighbouring properties e.g. urban expansion of Singleton</td>
<td>Once a preferred route option is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project a socio-economic</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>
<tr>
<td>Consultation process</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>• Concerns around the information available for comment and how it was advertised or delivered.</td>
<td>Roads and Maritime is committed to actively engaging with community and stakeholders in the planning and construction of road projects. Roads and Maritime sent the project update to around 8,000 businesses and residences, and published information on the Roads and Maritime website. Letters were sent to property owners who may be directly impacted by one of the proposed options. Roads and Maritime will continue to work with the community and stakeholders, including Singleton Council, during the planning process to understand issues and minimise potential impacts. Community members who have provided feedback through our comment periods have been added to our database to receive future information about the project. Community members can request to be added to our database by emailing <a href="mailto:singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au">singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options assessment report/feasibility assessment</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>• Route option assessment criteria.</td>
<td>The project objectives are listed in the Options Identification Report. The following criteria were developed from these objectives and used to assess route options: • Travel time/attraction • Improve road safety • Provide best value for money • Improvement to traffic through town • Environment Impact – Flooding • Environment Impact – Heritage • Environmental Protection • Social and Amenity • Land use and ownership • Engineering Constraints.</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>13</td>
<td>• Impact of vehicle emissions.</td>
<td>Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project further environmental studies including an air quality assessment would be completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Interchanges                                       | 12                 | • Interchange operations.  
• Interchange integration with the bypass.  
• Safety of current traffic arrangement.                                                                                                           | Interchange locations have been identified and located based on modelled traffic demands.  
Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project the arrangements for specific interchanges would be investigated.  
The safety and ease of access for interchanges are an important consideration in the selection of a preferred option.  
Roads and Maritime will consider community feedback in designing interchange layouts. |
| Impact on non-Aboriginal heritage/European heritage | 13                 | • Impacts to local heritage items.                                                                                                              | A Preliminary Environmental Investigation has been undertaken as part of this phase of work. All options have avoided identified heritage items.  
Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the project specialist environmental studies would be completed, including heritage assessments in accordance with relevant NSW legislation. |
| Objection to project                               | 8                  | • A bypass is not needed.                                                                                                                     | A New England Highway bypass of Singleton would address current congestion and future traffic demands.  
In the five years to June 2014, there were 143 crashes along the New England Highway between Range Road and Rixs Creek Road, including |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue category</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
<th>Issues raised</th>
<th>Roads and Maritime response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>one fatality. The majority of these involved rear end crashes and cars running off the road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>A bypass would enable improved operation of the New England Highway and the surrounding road network, as well as improve safety and travel times and reduce heavy vehicle traffic through Singleton. The introduction of a bypass is expected to reduce traffic using the existing New England Highway through Singleton by 15% to 35%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative routes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>• Variations to shortlisted listed options or new options.</td>
<td>The southern route options were further developed to consider use of the Golden Highway before heading north along Putty Road during the route options assessment. These routes were reviewed during the route options assessment process. These options were not shortlisted for further comment as they created the longest bypass route and poor travel time savings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Particular interest around use of the Golden Highway and Putty Road.</td>
<td>Traffic assessment shows that a bypass along the Golden Highway would attract about half the volume of traffic of the shortlisted options closer to Singleton and reduce the benefits to road users and local residents along the existing New England Highway through Singleton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Traffic growth is forecast on Bureau of Transport Statistics and future land developments outlined in the Singleton Council Local Environmental Plan (LEP).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology/ Biodiversity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>• Impacts on flora and fauna.</td>
<td>A Preliminary Environmental Investigation has been carried out as part of this phase of work. No significant flora or fauna issues were identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. During this stage of the 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>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic safety</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>• Addressing road safety.</td>
<td>The introduction of a bypass is expected to reduce traffic from the existing New England Highway through Singleton by 15% to 35%, which would improve safety for motorists and reduce the number and severity of crashes along the existing New England Highway and surrounding roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future process</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>• What are the next steps for the project?</td>
<td>A value management workshop will be held on 9 March 2016 to guide the recommendation of a preferred route option. Participants will include Roads and Maritime project staff, technical experts, key stakeholders and two community representatives. The workshop will consider community feedback and the outcomes of technical investigations. The preferred route is expected to be displayed in the second half of 2016. Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed and an environmental assessment completed. The environmental assessment may take several years to complete and during this time we would seek further community feedback. The timing of construction of the bypass has not been confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Highway and rail bridge upgrade at Gowrie Gates</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>• Rail bridge upgrade at Gowrie Gates.</td>
<td>The upgrade to the Singleton railway (Gowrie Gates) underpass is a localised solution that would provide continued light and heavy vehicle access through to Singleton. A bypass would provide an alternative route for motorists heading north toward Muswellbrook and south toward Newcastle. The bypass aims to reduce traffic through Singleton and further alleviate heavy vehicle limitations at Gowrie Gates. For further information on the Gowrie Gates upgrade visit: <a href="http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/hunter/">www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/hunter/</a></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>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian access</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Impacts/arrangements for pedestrians.</td>
<td>Once a preferred route is selected, a concept design would be developed which would incorporate traffic arrangements and would include pedestrian arrangements/access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction staging and impacts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Timing of construction.</td>
<td>The timing of construction of the bypass has not been confirmed. The NSW Government has committed $92 million towards the upgrade under Rebuilding NSW, subject to a final business case. Further funding will be required from the Australian government to allow construction to proceed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Impact of construction.</td>
<td>Once a preferred route 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>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>Property damage and existing condition surveys</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Damage caused during and after construction.</td>
<td>Due care will be taken to minimise the impacts and where required restore properties to original condition. Roads and Maritime will carry out condition assessments of structures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Issue category | Number of comments | Issues raised | Roads and Maritime response
--- | --- | --- | ---
Community benefit and costs | 1 | • Consideration of community benefit and costs. | near the bypass construction site prior to major work commencing. The community will be encouraged to contact Roads and Maritime if they believe damage has been caused to their property during construction.

**3.2. Recommendations**

Roads and Maritime will consider all issues raised by community members and stakeholders when selecting a preferred route option.

**3.3. Next steps**

During the next phase of the project we will:

- Consider the issues raised in this report in the selection of a preferred option and subsequent, concept design and environmental assessment
- Refine traffic assessments, carry out specialist environmental studies, detailed cost estimates and flood modelling
- Carry out a Value Management Workshop to compare and rank key project factors and issues to select a preferred bypass route
- Display the preferred bypass option (expected second half of 2016)
- Provide information on project progress via the Roads and Maritime website and through media and direct communication methods
- Make further contact with directly affected property owners after a preferred option is selected.
Appendix A: Media releases
14 October 2015

COMMUNITY REMINDED TO HAVE A SAY ON ROUTE OPTIONS FOR NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY BYPASS OF SINGLETON

Michael Johnsen, Member for Upper Hunter today reminded the local community to have a say on route options for a future New England Highway bypass of Singleton before comments close on Friday 23 October.

Roads and Maritime Services has been carrying out a route options assessment since November last year to select the preferred corridor for the bypass.

Mr Johnsen said comments are now invited on the shortlisted options which will be considered in further investigations.

“The NSW Government has committed $92 million toward the upgrade under Rebuilding NSW including $1 million this financial year to continue assessing bypass options and community consultation to help select the preferred route,” Mr Johnsen said.

“The New England Highway is used by more than 25,000 vehicles a day through Singleton and is a major freight and commuter route forming part of the National Land Transport Network.”

Mr Johnsen said the selected route for the bypass would aim to ensure the efficient operation of the New England Highway and the surrounding road network, as well as improve safety, traffic flow and reduce congestion through the town centre.

“A bypass would also improve access for regional NSW and support the growth, efficiency and productivity of the freight industry,” Mr Johnsen continued.

“The preferred option for the bypass is expected to be displayed for further comment in the second half of next year.

“Roads and Maritime will continue to keep the community and stakeholders informed as the project progresses,” Mr Johnsen concluded.

Members of the community can view the bypass options at public displays at the Singleton Motor Registry on weekdays between 9am and 4pm and the Singleton Library on weekdays between 9am and 8pm and Saturdays between 9am to 12pm.

The community are invited to provide feedback by Friday 23 October by emailing singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au or phoning 1800 991 254 during business hours.

For more information please visit www.rms.nsw.gov.au.
28 SEPTEMBER 2015

HAVE A SAY ON PREFERRED BYPASS ROUTE FOR NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY OF SINGLETON

Michael Johnsen, Member for Upper Hunter today invited the Upper Hunter community to contact Roads and Maritime Services, and have a say on options to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass of Singleton.

Mr Johnsen said a route options assessment has been under way since November last year to select a preferred bypass corridor.

Community feedback is now invited to short listed options which will be considered when carrying out further investigations.

“The NSW Government has allocated $92 million for the upgrade under Rebuilding NSW and provided $1 million this financial year to further assess bypass options and community consultation which will assist in selecting a preferred local route,” Mr Johnsen said.

“The New England Highway is part of the National Land Transport Network and is a major freight and commuter route forming part of the inland Sydney-Brisbane corridor.

“The highway is currently used by more than 25,000 vehicles a day through Singleton.

“The planned bypass would ensure the efficient operation of the New England Highway and the surrounding road network, as well as improve safety, traffic flow and reduce congestion through the town centre, allowing more amenity for local residents.

“A bypass would also provide essential access for regional NSW and support an efficient and productive freight industry.”

Members of the community can view the bypass options at public displays at the Singleton Motor Registry on weekdays between 9am and 4pm and the Singleton Library on weekdays between 9am and 8pm and Saturdays between 9am to 12pm.

The community can also find out more information and discuss the options at staffed drop in sessions to be held on Tuesday 13 and Thursday 15 October from 3pm to 7pm at Quest Hotel, 5-7 Civic Avenue at Singleton.
The community are invited to provide feedback by Friday 23 October by phoning 1800 991 254 during business hours or emailing singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au.

“A preferred option for the bypass is expected to be displayed for further comment in the second half of next year, so I would encourage our community to provide their valuable feedback” Mr Johnsen continued.

“Roads and Maritime will of course continue to keep our local Singleton community and stakeholders, as well as the wider Upper Hunter, informed as the project progresses,” Michael Johnsen concluded.

For more information please visit www.rms.nsw.gov.au.

ENDS
Appendix B: Newspaper Advertisement
Roads and Maritime Services is carrying out an options assessment to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass at Singleton.

The assessment builds on the preliminary feasibility study by further investigating previous options while also developing others for consideration.

The community is invited to view the bypass options and find out more information at staffed drop-in sessions to be held on 13 and 15 October 2015 from 3.00pm to 7.00pm at Quest Hotel, 5-7 Civic Avenue, Singleton.

The plans and community update are available to view at www.rms.nsw.gov.au, the Roads and Maritime Motor Registry office at Singleton and Singleton Library.

Feedback on the options is invited by Friday 23 October 2015 and will be considered in identifying the preferred route.

For more information and to provide feedback please contact 1800 991 254, singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au or visit rms.nsw.gov.au
Appendix C: Project update
New England Highway bypass at Singleton – Route options

September 2015

The NSW Government has committed $92 million for the upgrade under Rebuilding NSW.

Roads and Maritime Services is carrying out an options assessment to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass at Singleton. This community update provides information about the route options that have been developed. Feedback on the options is invited by Friday 23 October 2015 and will be considered in selecting the preferred route.

Background

The New England Highway forms part of the National Land Transport Network and is a major freight and commuter route between Newcastle and the Upper Hunter.

The highway passes through Singleton and forms the main road access through the town and to the CBD. Over 25,000 vehicles a day travel on the highway through Singleton and across the Hunter River.

A preliminary feasibility study for a potential New England Highway bypass of Singleton was completed in 2013. The study determined there was merit in further investigating potential bypass options.

An options assessment started in November 2014 to identify a preferred bypass route. The assessment builds on the preliminary feasibility study by further investigating previous options while also developing others for consideration.

The NSW Government has allocated $1 million in 2015–16 for further assessment of bypass options and community consultation which will assist in identifying a preferred route.

Once finalised, the bypass corridor will be included within Singleton Council’s Local Environmental Plan, reserving the land for future construction of the bypass.

Timing for construction of the bypass has not been confirmed.
Why is a bypass needed?

A New England Highway bypass at Singleton would address current congestion and future traffic demands at this pinch point.

Over 25,000 vehicles use the highway through Singleton each day including around 3750 heavy vehicles. Traffic volumes are predicted to increase to over 30,000 vehicles per day over the next 25 years.

There is also a crash history in this area. In the five years to June 2014, there were 143 crashes along the New England Highway between Range Road and Rixs Creek Road, including a fatality. The majority of these involved rear end crashes and cars running off the road.

Benefits

A bypass would:

• Improve travel times along the New England Highway through Singleton
• Improve the Singleton town centre amenity
• Improve safety for all road users at this known pinch point
• Reduce heavy vehicle freight traffic through Singleton.

Bypass options

The assessment considered multiple corridor and route options across the township of Singleton and surrounding suburbs to the east and west, including Gowrie, Singleton Heights, Glenridding, Whittingham, Hunterview and Darlington.

The assessment included detailed traffic investigations, environmental and flooding evaluations, strategic designs, cost estimates and economic analysis of proposed routes.

The options assessment considered:

• Travel times
• Traffic flow and accessibility improvements
• Environmental impacts including flooding, heritage and biodiversity
• Social and amenity impacts
• Land use
• Engineering constraints.


Three route options showing potential interchange locations have been short-listed for community feedback:

**Option A**

The option A route departs the New England Highway adjacent to the Mount Thorley Railway Spur, heads west across the Main Northern railway line and skirts around the Hunter River floodplain. It continues north over Putty Road and the Hunter River, west of town, before crossing the New England Highway west of Gowrie Gates and rejoining the highway north of McDougalls Hill.

**Option B**

The option B route departs the New England Highway near Newington Lane and heads west over the Main Northern railway line and then across the floodplain, over Putty Road close to the town centre. It continues over the Hunter River, west of the town, before crossing the New England Highway west of Gowrie Gates and rejoining the highway west of McDougalls Hill.

**Option C**

The option C route departs the New England Highway near Newington Lane and heads north east across the Hunter River floodplain. It then crosses the Hunter River south of Gresford Road and follows the eastern bank of the Hunter River north through Singleton Heights crossing over Bridgman Road and the Main Northern railway line and rejoining the highway north of Rixs Creek Road.

All options would provide one travel lane in each direction based on forecast traffic demand. The corridor width would allow for widening to two travel lanes in each direction if required in the future.
New England Highway bypass at Singleton route options

Key
- Option A: 13km
- Option B: 8.9km
- Option A/B
- Option C: 11.9km

Potential interchanges:
1. Range Road
2. Putty Road
3. Newington Lane
4. Glenridding Road
5. Gowrie Gates
6. Magpie Street
7. Bridgman Road
8. Rixs Creek Road

Option A: 13km
Option B: 8.9km
Option A/B
Option C: 11.9km
Next steps

More information will be provided to the community and stakeholders as the project progresses. A preferred option is expected to be displayed for comment in mid 2016.

Development process

- 2012–13 Preliminary feasibility assessment
- October 2013 Feasibility study determined merit in further investigating potential bypass options
- November 2014 Start bypass options assessment
- Community consultation
  - Display possible route options
  - Further investigations
- Mid 2016 Preferred bypass location identified and displayed for community feedback

Working with the community

Feedback was sought during the feasibility stage of the project. One of the key issues identified was the flooding impacts in the Singleton area, which has been considered as part of the current investigations.

We will work with the community and stakeholders, including Singleton Council during the planning process to understand issues and minimise potential impacts.

Community feedback is invited on the shortlisted route options by Friday 23 October 2015.

Feedback received will be considered when carrying out further investigations to identify the preferred bypass route.

Drop-in information sessions

The community is invited to view the bypass options and find out more information at staffed displays to be held on 13 and 15 October 2015 from 3pm to 7pm at Quest Hotel, 5–7 Civic Avenue, Singleton. Drop-in at any time to talk to the project team.

Information is also available at rms.nsw.gov.au/projects

Send us your feedback

Feedback is invited by Friday 23 October 2015 via:

Phone: 1800 991 254 (during business hours)
Email: singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au
Mail: Joel Rosendahl
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 1800 703 457.
Appendix D: Potentially directly affected property owner letter
Dear NAME

**Future New England Highway bypass at Singleton**
**Property: Lot XXX DP XXXXXX**

Roads and Maritime Services is carrying out an options assessment to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass at Singleton.

As part of this process, three route options have been shortlisted and are on display for public comment until 23 October 2015.

The assessment builds on the 2013 Preliminary Feasibility Assessment study and includes options to improve traffic flow along the New England Highway and local town amenity through Singleton.

**Your property(s) listed above has been identified as being potentially directly affected by one or more of the options on display.**

We encourage you to review the enclosed project update including the three shortlisted route options and view or download further information on the options by visiting [rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects)

We also invite you to have a conversation with us about the future bypass at one of our upcoming staff displays to be held on 13 and 15 October 2015, the details of which are provided in the enclosed project update.

Alternatively, please call 1800 991 254 for further information, provide feedback or make a time to meet with a member of the project team regarding the potential impact of the options on your property.

You can also make a written submission by 23 October 2015, via:

**Email:** singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au

**Mail:** Joel Rosendahl, Roads and Maritime Services, Locked Bag 2030, Newcastle NSW 2300
Your feedback will be considered when carrying out further investigations to identify the preferred bypass route. The preferred bypass option is expected to be displayed for comment in the second half of 2016. Timing for construction of the bypass has not been confirmed.

Yours sincerely

Joel Rosendahl
Project Development Manager
Appendix E: Frequently Asked Questions
Why is a bypass needed at Singleton?

A New England Highway bypass at Singleton would address current congestion and future traffic demands at this pinch point.

There is also a crash history. In the five years to June 2014, there were 143 crashes along the New England Highway between Range Road and Rixs Creek Road, including a fatality. The majority of these involved rear end crashes and cars running off the road.

A bypass would ensure the efficient operation of the New England Highway and the surrounding road network, as well as improve safety and travel times and reduce heavy vehicle traffic through Singleton. The introduction of a bypass is expected to reduce traffic by 15% to 35% from Singleton town centre.

A bypass is aimed at providing a cost effective option that provides essential access for regional NSW and supports an efficient and productive freight industry as detailed in the NSW Government’s Long Term Transport Master Plan.

How many cars travel along the New England Highway each day?

Over 25,000 vehicles use the highway through Singleton each day with around 3750 of these being heavy vehicles.

What is the expected future traffic growth along the New England Highway in this area?

Traffic volumes on the highway through Singleton are predicted to increase to over 30,000 vehicles per day over the next 25 years. Forecast traffic growth is based on residential population growth forecasted by the Bureau of Transport Statistics, future land developments outlined in the Singleton Council Local Environmental Plan (LEP), and the possible upturn of the mining sector.

Where would the bypass be located?

While a preferred route is yet to be identified, the bypass is expected to start to the north of
Range Road and finish to the west of Singleton Heights and McDougalls Hill.

**How many lanes would the bypass provide?**

All options would provide one travel lane in each direction based on forecast traffic demand. The corridor width would allow for widening to two travel lanes in each direction if required in the future.

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**About the assessment**

**Why is an options assessment being carried out?**

An options assessment is being carried out to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass at Singleton. Once finalised, the bypass corridor will be included within Singleton Council’s Local Environmental Plan, reserving the land for future construction of the bypass.

**How does the options assessment differ from the preliminary feasibility study?**

A preliminary feasibility study was completed in 2013. The study shortlisted four route options and determined there was merit in further investigating potential bypass options. For further information on the feasibility study visit [rms.nsw.gov.au/projects](http://rms.nsw.gov.au/projects).

The route options assessment builds on the preliminary feasibility study by carrying out detailed investigations into traffic, environmental and flooding impacts, further strategic design and community consultation to refine options and identify a preferred option. This has included considering options previously not investigated as part of the feasibility study.

**Who is carrying out the options assessment?**

Roads and Maritime engaged AECOM in late October 2014 to carry out the options assessment on our behalf.

**What routes were considered?**

The assessment considered multiple corridor and route options across the township of Singleton and the surrounding suburbs to the east and west, including Gowrie, Singleton Heights, Glenridding, Whittingham, Hunterview and Darlington.


**What criteria were used to assess the corridor and route options?**

The following criteria were used to assess corridor and route options:

- Travel time/attraction
- Improvement to traffic through town/ accessibility to town
- Environment Impact – flooding
- Environment Impact – Heritage
- Environmental Protection
- Social and Amenity
- Land use and ownership
- Engineering Constraints.

**Have local flood plains been considered when looking at options?**

All bypass options aim to minimise flooding impacts. The next stage of the project will further consider the flood immunity of the New England Highway, prior to selecting a preferred option.

**Why are the southern options identified in the preliminary feasibility study no longer being considered?**

The southern route options were developed to make use of the Golden Highway before heading north along Putty Road. These routes were reviewed during the options assessment process. These options were not shortlisted for further comment as they created the longest bypass route, poor travel time savings for motorists, had the second highest cost and would provide the least benefits to the future operation of the New England Highway.

**Have the northern options identified in the preliminary feasibility study been shortlisted for further comment?**

Northern options 1 and 2, identified in the feasibility study were further investigated as part of the options assessment.

Northern option 1 was removed from the shortlisting process due to its high cost, while
northern option 2 has been refined to minimise flood implications for the local area and has been shortlisted for further comment.

Why has the central option identified in the preliminary feasibility study been modified?
The central option identified in the preliminary feasibility study was modified to minimise flooding impacts for the surrounding properties.

What is the current strategic cost estimate for the options considered?
The assessment indicated cost estimates for the options up to $600 million in 2015 dollars.

Why is Roads and Maritime planning to upgrade the highway at Singleton Gowrie Gates when a future bypass is planned?
The upgrade to the Singleton railway (Gowrie Gates) underpass is a localised solution that will provide continued light and heavy vehicle access through to Singleton. A bypass will provide an alternative route for motorists heading north to Muswellbrook and south to Newcastle. The bypass aims to reduce traffic through Singleton and further alleviate heavy vehicle limitations at Gowrie Gates.

For further information on the Singleton railway upgrade visit rms.nsw.gov.au/projects

Will an upgrade of the New England Highway between the Golden Highway and Singleton be included in this bypass proposal?
The Singleton bypass project is investigating a bypass of the New England Highway at Singleton to improve traffic flow and travel times on the highway and amenity for local traffic through town.

Upgrading or widening the New England Highway between the Golden Highway and Singleton is beyond the scope of this project.

How will this project affect the intersection of the Golden Highway and the New England Highway?
Current corridor and route options proposed for the bypass are located to the west of the Golden Highway intersection.

There is another project underway which is planning to upgrade the highway between Belford and the Golden Highway, including upgrading the Golden Highway intersection. For further information about this project visit rms.nsw.gov.au/projects

Property Owner & Community Impacts

When will Roads and Maritime start discussions with affected property owners?
Once a preferred option is finalised, Roads and Maritime will start approaching affected property owners to discuss future planning.

Roads and Maritime is available to discuss potential impacts with property owners at this time but it is not possible to provide definite information on the likely impact for any part of a property until a preferred option is chosen.

Contact details are available on the Roads and Maritime website.

Will/when will Roads and Maritime acquire affected properties?
Roads and Maritime may need to acquire properties to build the future bypass. Acquisition will not start until a preferred option is identified and an environmental assessment is carried out.

If land acquisition is required, Roads and Maritime will contact land owners to initiate a process of consultation and negotiation.


I own a business in the Singleton CBD. How will this affect me?
During development of a preferred option, a socio-economic study will be completed to assess the potential impacts of a future bypass.

Information relating to studies that have been undertaken in relation to the impact of bypasses on towns is available on the Roads and Maritime website at: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/resources/town-bypasses.html

When will the bypass be built?
Timing for construction of the bypass has not been confirmed. The NSW Government has announced $92 million for the upgrade under Rebuilding NSW.
The New England Highway is part of the National Land Transport Network and funding for planning, improvements and upgrading is primarily a matter for the Australian Government.

Based on similar projects at least 4 years of planning and land acquisition are required before construction can begin.

**What has been the consultation process so far?**

Feedback was collected from the community during the feasibility stage of the project. One of the key issues identified was the flooding impacts in the Singleton area, which has been considered as part of the current investigations.

We will work with the community and stakeholders, including Singleton Council during the planning process to understand issues and minimise potential impacts.

**What happens next?**

**How will community feedback be considered?**

Comments and feedback from the community will be considered along with the results of investigations to select the preferred bypass route.

**What are the next steps for the project?**

Along with considering community and stakeholder feedback, we may need to refine traffic assessments, carry out specialist environmental studies, detailed cost estimations and flood modelling for Singleton.

Once complete, a further value management / engineering processes would be undertaken to identify the preferred route.

**When will a decision be made on the preferred option?**

The preferred bypass option is expected to be displayed in the second half of 2016.

**How can I find out more information?**

The community is invited to view the bypass options and find out more information at staffed displays to be held on 13 and 15 October 2015 from 3pm to 7pm at Quest hotel, 5-7 Civic Avenue, Singleton. Drop-in at any time to talk to the project team.

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

**How can I provide feedback?**

Feedback on the bypass options is invited by **Friday 23 October 2015**.

Please send us your feedback by:

- **Phoning:** 1800 991 254 during business hours
- **Emailing:** singleton.bypass@rms.nsw.gov.au
- **Mailing:** Joel Rosendahl
  Roads and Maritime Services
  Locked Bag 2030
  Newcastle NSW 2300

Frequently asked questions_September_2015_RMS 15.414
Appendix F: Poster
New England Highway bypass at Singleton – Route options

The NSW Government has committed $92 million for the upgrade under Rebuilding NSW. Roads and Maritime Services is carrying out an options assessment to select a preferred route for a future New England Highway bypass at Singleton. A bypass route would improve safety and travel times and reduce heavy vehicle traffic through Singleton. The assessment builds on the 2013 preliminary feasibility study and includes three route options shortlisted for community feedback.

Community feedback is invited by Friday 23 October 2015 and will be considered in selecting the preferred route.

Bypass options

Option A
The option A route departs the New England Highway adjacent to the Mount Thorley Railway Spur, heads west across the Main Northern railway line and skirts around the Hunter River floodplain. It continues north over Putty Road and the Hunter River, west of town, before crossing the New England Highway west of Gowrie Gates and rejoining the highway north of McDougalls Hill.

Option B
The option B route departs the New England Highway near Newington Lane and heads west over the Main Northern railway line and then across the floodplain, over Putty Road close to the town centre. It continues over the Hunter River, west of the town, before crossing the New England Highway west of Gowrie Gates and rejoining the highway west of McDougalls Hill.

Option C
The option C route departs the New England Highway near Newington Lane and heads north east across the Hunter River floodplain. It then crosses the Hunter River south of Gresford Road and follows the eastern bank of the Hunter River north through Singleton Heights crossing over Bridgeman Road and the Main Northern railway line and rejoining the highway north of Rixs Creek Road.

All options would provide one travel lane in each direction based on forecast traffic demand. The corridor width would allow for widening to two travel lanes in each direction if required in the future.