



Transport
Roads & Maritime
Services

ADDITIONAL CROSSING OF THE THE CLARENCE RIVER AT GRAFTON

Updated community liaison plan

November 2013

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Document date and version

Document date: August 2013
Version: 1.0

Review and update

The community liaison plan will be progressively reviewed and updated to include project requirements and community feedback.

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I. Introduction and background

I.1 Overview

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is preparing a concept design and environmental impact statement for preferred option announced in April 2013 for a new bridge over the Clarence River at Grafton. The NSW Government is funding these investigations.

I.2 Background

The local community has been advocating for a second crossing for many years to reduce congestion and traffic delays over the existing bridge, in particular during morning and afternoon peak periods. The process to identify a preferred option included:

- In June 2011, RMS published the *Feasibility Assessment Report* that describes the assessment undertaken by RMS on the 41 suggestions identified following the community consultation from December 2010 to March 2011.
- In October 2011, 25 preliminary route options in five strategic corridors were identified for further engineering and environmental investigation.
- In January 2012, RMS short-listed six route options in the work to identify a preferred option. This process has been documented in the *Preliminary Route Options Report*.
- In December 2012, Option C was identified as the recommended preferred option for an additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton. The outcomes are reported in the December 2012 *Recommended Preferred Option Report*.
- In April 2013, the preferred option was confirmed as Option C.

A history of consultation activity to date is located on the RMS project website.

1.3 Communications process

The process for preparing the concept design and undertaking the environmental assessment is outlined in Appendix A.

A program of consultation activities aims to engage the community in the development of concept design and environmental assessment.

The key stages in the consultation process are summarised below:

1. Lodge the State Significant Infrastructure application and report with the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DP&I).
2. DP&I determine Director General Requirements for the Environment Impact Statement in consultation with State and Local Government agencies and then forward to RMS.
3. Undertake field surveys to inform the preparation of the environmental impact statement and concept design
4. Display the refined concept design
 - a. Receive community submissions on the strategic concept design.
 - b. Hold community display/information session with the community to discuss the proposal and seek feedback on the strategic design from the community.
5. Display the environmental impact statement (EIS) and concept design.
 - a. Receive community submissions on the EIS.
 - b. Hold community display/information session with the community to discuss the proposal and seek feedback from the community.
6. Consider submissions on the EIS and incorporate into Submissions Report.
7. Display and submit submissions report and any changes made to the Proposal to further minimize impacts in response to submissions to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.
8. Decision whether to approve the Proposal made by the NSW Minister for Planning.

The activities are described at Appendix B, 'Community liaison activity plan'. The appendix will be updated as the project progress.

1.4 Purpose of this plan

This updated community liaison plan describes how the project team will engage with the community during the concept design and environment assessment phase. Community issues, ideas and concerns, along with information from the technical and environmental investigations, will assist the project team to prepare the concept design and environmental impact statement for the Proposal.

This community liaison plan outlines:

- Strategies for community liaison and consultation
- Communication activities to implement these strategies
- How the community liaison process will be monitored, evaluated and reported back to the community.

The project team will make it a priority to:

- Engage with the local Council and the business community, as well as potentially directly affected landowners and other key stakeholders.
- Clearly explain the needs and purpose of a second crossing and its relationship to any future upgrading of the Summerland Way.
- Engage with the community to refine the strategic concept design.
- Provide a clear description of the project, its potential impacts and measures which RMS will include in the Proposal to manage any adverse impacts. This will be documented in the Environmental Impact Statement which will be prepared in accordance with the Director General Requirements under Part 5.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- Engage with the community and key stakeholders to better understand their issues and concerns and provide opportunities for feedback.

A range of consultation and communication tools will be used to inform and involve the community and provide opportunities for the community to provide feedback. The consultation approach will be transparent and potentially refined over time based on feedback from the community.

The community will be engaged and kept informed during each stage of the project.

1.5 Key messages

The key messages for this project include:

- RMS is currently preparing a concept design and an environmental impact statement on preferred option identified in April 2013.
- Community feedback on the strategic concept design will be used to finalise the concept design which will be described in the environmental impact statement
- Community feedback received during the route selection phase of the project will be considered when preparing the concept design and EIS
- The consultation process will continue to be inclusive, transparent and flexible.
- RMS will continue to value all community feedback received on the Proposal
- It is important to plan now for a future crossing and to provide certainty for the future development of Grafton.
- The Proposal is being assessed as a State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) project under Part 5.1 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and will be determined by the NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

2. Stakeholders and issues

2.1 Key stakeholders

The project team will continue to consult with the community and stakeholders. The stakeholders include a wide range of interests from the communities of Grafton, South Grafton and surrounds, Clarence Valley Council, residents, businesses and landowners.

At this stage of the process, timing for construction of the project has not yet been determined and will be subject to available funding.

The key stakeholders and community groups who will be engaged during the project include:

- Those communities within the area directly and indirectly impacted by the project
- Clarence Valley Council
- Local businesses of Grafton and South Grafton
- Grafton Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- South Grafton Progress Association
- Local Schools (including Clarence Valley Anglican School, South Grafton Primary School, Beautizone Kindergarten, Jack & Jill Pre-School, Gummyaney Aboriginal Pre-School)
- Transport and heavy vehicle operators (including Busways and the Australian Trucking Association)
- Emergency Services (including NSW Police, NSW Fire Brigade, NSW Ambulance, SES)
- Tourism Operators (including Clarence Valley Tourism, Clarence River Tourism, Clarence River Historical Society)
- CountryLink
- Australian Rail Track Corporation
- Local environmental groups (including Clarence Valley Environment Centre, Landcare Lower Clarence Catchment)
- Local Aboriginal groups (including Grafton-Ngerie Aboriginal Land Council)
- Recreational river user groups
- NSW Maritime
- Transport for NSW
- Department of Infrastructure and Planning
- Office of Environment and Heritage
- Grafton TAFE
- Interest groups and resident groups.

2.2 Likely critical issues

During community consultation, the issues that will need to be considered during the preparation of the strategic and concept design and environmental impact statement will include:

Process issues

- Ongoing community involvement to maintain transparency with the community in the project, as well as the decision making process for the environmental assessment
- Access to technical information and reports
- Clarity regarding the needs, purpose, impacts and possible mitigation measures of the second crossing.

Issues assessed, including as part of the EIS process, will include

- Traffic management, access and safety
- Social, economic, property and land use
- Urban design, visual impact and landscape character

- Noise and vibration
- Flooding and drainage
- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage
- Ecology.

3. Communication activities

3.1 Telephone and email contact line

A 24 hour toll free information line (1800 633 332) and project email address (grafonbridge@rms.nsw.gov.au) have been established. These communication channels will be promoted on information materials to provide the community with a free and readily available means of communicating with the project team.

3.2 Meetings with key stakeholders

RMS will continue to meet with key stakeholders to provide briefings on the proposal, and discuss the consultation process going forward. These meetings will be held as required and will be noted in the meeting register on the project website.

3.3 Meetings with individual stakeholders

RMS will meet with individual stakeholders to discuss the project, give and respond to feedback and discuss the consultation process going forward. These meetings will be held as required or requested. For privacy reasons, meetings with individual stakeholders will not be noted in the meeting register on the project website.

3.4 Staffed and static (unstaffed) displays

Staffed displays will be held to give the community the opportunity to provide feedback on details on the concept design, and the EIS. All planned staffed displays will be advertised in the nominated local newspapers and radio station. Dates, times, locations of staffed display will be confirmed and advertised with suitable prior notice.

Static (unstaffed) displays will be located at the follow locations:

- RMS Pacific Highway Office (project team location)
- RMS Motor Registry Office Grafton
- RMS Regional Office Grafton

RMS where possible, will make project display material available at the following additional locations:

- Clarence Valley Council and Grafton Library
- Ulmarra Petrol Station/Post Office, Pacific Highway, Ulmarra
- South Grafton News and Gifts, 38 Skinner Street, South Grafton
- General Store Coutts Crossing, Armidale Road, Coutts Crossing
- Junction Hill Family Store, 5 Casino Road, Junction Hill
- Maclean Council Office, 50 River Street, Maclean
- Yamba Library, Woolli Street, Yamba

Display locations will be listed on the project website.

Further to this, staff are available during business hours as the project office to talk to the community or interested stakeholders about the project. This is an ongoing service provided to the community by Roads and Maritime

3.5 Community updates

Community updates will be produced at project milestones to keep the community informed about the project investigations and consultation process. These updates will be available on the project website, the RMS Pacific Highway and Regional offices, Grafton and distributed in the local area, including to potentially directly affected property owners and residents on the project contacts database.

3.6 Letter box notifications

Letter box notifications to residents will support the newspaper and radio advertisements.

3.7 Project website

RMS will continue to manage and update a dedicated project page on the RMS website <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/graftonbridge>. The website will provide regular updates on the project's progress and includes project information such as community updates, media releases, presentations and notes of meetings, interactive maps, reports and other background information.

3.8 Advertisement

Newspaper advertisements will be placed in the local 'Daily Examiner, 'Lower Clarence Review' and 'Coastal View' to advise of project milestones such as the release of the strategic concept design, the release of the environmental impact statement (including the concept design) and consultation activities such as staffed displays and information sessions. Radio advertisements on 2G/FM104.7 will also be used to advise the community of activities.

3.9 Media

RMS will supply local media with regular project information including at project milestones such as the release of the concept design, the release of the environmental impact statement and consultation activities such as staffed displays and information sessions.

3.10 Emails to registered stakeholders

Email notifications will be sent to registered community members to provide regular notification of milestones, the release of the concept design, the release of the environmental impact

statement and consultation activities such as staffed displays and information sessions. The emails are an additional prompt for registered stakeholders. Stakeholders can request to be placed on or taken off this email list at any time.

4. Enquiries and complaints management

4.1 Contact management system

All enquiries and complaints received will be entered into a community and stakeholder contact database, referred to as the contact management system, to allow for a record and tracking system to ensure enquiries and complaints are managed in line with agreed timeframes.

The contact management system is a web based data system which allows the following information to be recorded:

- Name and contact details of the caller
- Time and date of the contact
- Location details
- Issue type and details
- Actions taken
- Personnel handling the representation and current status details.

4.2 Enquiries and complaints management procedure

The procedure proposed for the management of enquiries and complaints includes:

- The enquiry/complaint received.
- Nature of the enquiry/complaint is determined and recorded in the database system. Enquiry/complaint is either dealt with immediately or requires further action/investigation.
- If dealt with immediately the enquiry/complaint is closed in Consultation Manager. If further action/investigation is required it is recorded in Consultation Manager.
- Response is provided within 15 business days of receipt of correspondence (unless otherwise agreed with respondent) and enquiry/complaint is closed in Consultation Manager. If a response cannot be provided it will be escalated as appropriate.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

The project team will monitor the performance and effectiveness of the communication activities on a regular basis. The community liaison plan is a live document to be updated as the project progresses.

Appendix A – Process for identifying a route for a second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton



Appendix B – Community liaison activity plan (program of activities)

For further information on each of these specific activities refer to Communication activities (Section 3).

Activities and timings outlined below are indicative and depend partly on the issues raised by the community.

Activity	Detail	Indicative Timing
Ongoing communication with the community	Project website http://www.rms.gov.au/grafonbridge Project email address grafonbridge@rms.nsw.gov.au . 24hr project information line 1800 633 332 (toll free)	On going
Logging and tracking of all correspondence, enquiries and complaints	Consultation Manager, a web based contact data base will log and track community contact. All issues will be tagged enabling specific issues to be monitored.	On going
Meetings with key stakeholders	Project team will meet regularly with key stakeholders including Transport for NSW, council, business groups and residents (see Key stakeholders). The purpose of these meetings will be to provide a briefing on the project and discuss the consultation process going forward. A meeting register is updated regularly and made available on the project website.	Ongoing
Meetings with individual stakeholders	Project team will meet with individual stakeholders as required or requested. The purpose of these meetings will be to provide a briefing on the project, discuss potential property impacts and the consultation process going forward.	Ongoing
Display of Preliminary Concept Design		
Community update	A community update on the strategic concept design will be displayed for community comment.	Late 2013

Staffed displays Static (unstaffed display)	Staffed displays to be held to give the community an opportunity to consider the strategic concept design; ask questions of the project team and provide an opportunity for the community to give feedback. Staffed display date and time will be advertised prior and will be held at Shopping World' (staffed display).	Late 2013
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Static (unstaffed display)	Static (unstaffed) displays where possible, will be located at the venues outlined in Section 3.8 Staffed and static (unstaffed) displays.	Late 2013

Display of the environmental impact statement and concept design		
Community update	<p>Community update to provide a summary of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an assessment of potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed upgrade. • The EIS also includes a detailed description of the construction work needed to build the proposed upgrade and how the highway would function once it is built. 	mid 2014
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	A report on the EIS will be made available on the project website and at staffed displays.	mid 2014
Staffed displays Static (unstaffed display)	<p>Staffed displays to be held to give the community an opportunity to consider the concept design; ask questions of the project team and provide an opportunity for the community to give feedback.</p> <p>Staffed display date and time will be advertised prior and will be held at Shopping World' (staffed display).</p>	mid 2014

Display of the environmental impact statement Submissions Report		
Community update	<p>Community update to provide a summary of the issues raised by community and stakeholders on the EIS report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any mitigation measures proposed to address issues raised. • How these mitigation measures have been incorporated into the concept design. 	late 2014