

Meeting Notes



Transport
Roads & Traffic
Authority

MARCH 2011

Additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton

COMMUNITY FORUM

16 March 2011

1pm to 3pm

On Wednesday 16 March 2011 two community forums were held, one in the afternoon and one in the evening at the Grafton Community Centre, with presentations by the Project Manager and transportation consultant followed by questions and answers.

More than 80 people attended the forums.

The forums discussed three key areas:

- Traffic, including the current heavy vehicle movements.
- Project objectives.
- Methodology to short list community suggestions

Presentation notes are available on the project website.

Questions, comments and responses made at the forum have been captured broadly below.

With the approval of the attendees, the sessions were videoed. For the full presentation, community discussion and question and answer details please view the recordings available on the project website.

QUESTION/COMMENT	RESPONSE
Traffic and Transport	
Day of the Origin-Destination study was 19 August. Thursday and Friday are the busiest days for shopping, especially as external people come to town for shopping. I would like to record that I categorically disagree that Thursday is a representative day in Grafton.	Typically surveys are completed on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Not Monday or Friday due to variations by being so close to the weekend. Thursdays are typically 5-6% higher than the weekday average. I'm comfortable that Thursday is representative of what's going on. We generally use the 85 percentile for figures to

QUESTION/COMMENT	RESPONSE
	record and assess the road networks.
Looking at the heavy vehicle fact sheet, it appears to say 29,500 is the average traffic travelling over the bridge per day. Is this correct?	Question taken on notice for response later in the forum.
It should be noted that when it says average per weekday that this is a non school holiday/public holiday weekday. This definition is important later when you are looking at cost ratio analysis. This can introduce a bias.	Traffic volumes used for cost / benefit analyses always exclude school holidays and public holidays.
In your experience other than in Grafton, have you seen 5% heavy vehicles passing through a town?	Typically the rule of thumb is 8% of heavy vehicles on any road.
Grafton has a population of about 10,000 and South Grafton 6000 people (real estate figures). Growth population in one year was about 480 people. These are important figures. Need to consider population growth in planning.	Noted.
12% heavy vehicles are considered through trips in the executive summary. On page 31 of the Heavy Vehicle Report, Villiers Street carries 10% heavy vehicles. When I looked at figures for Ballina, I noted that Ballina has 12% of heavy vehicles travelling through. I am concerned about these figures.	This 12% of through heavy vehicles is not comparable to the 10% along Villiers Street. (12% of heavy vehicles crossing the Grafton Bridge are through vehicles, ie external to external. 10% of all vehicles on Villiers Street are heavy vehicles)
In our own figures, we have anticipated growth along Villiers Street that suggests 1600 vehicles per day. The Pacific Highway has 2200 vehicles per day. Don't think we need heavy vehicles through Grafton.	Noted.
It is stated that the survey was undertaken between 5am-7pm. Within that time, 3 hours has a bridge curfew on the bridge for heavy vehicles. Even if 10 heavy vehicles per hr didn't cross due to the curfew, this means the figures need to be upped. Also if the Casino transport hub comes to fruition, then freight will increase truck movements. Don't need trucks through Grafton.	Noted.
A short time ago there was a traffic diversion that put traffic on the Summerland Way. This	Noted.

QUESTION/COMMENT	RESPONSE
<p>resulted in lots of heavy vehicles through Grafton. People should declare/outline what they are after.</p> <p>I also noted there are about 7 roundabouts in the Grafton township –none of which are heavy vehicle friendly.</p>	
<p>Buses have been bundled in with heavy vehicles. Can you sort these apart? School buses have to cross to get to Clarenza. Buses should be examined separately to heavy vehicles.</p>	<p>The data can identify which vehicles are buses and separate these from the total heavy vehicles.</p>
<p>Don't agree with data presented.</p>	<p>There is opportunity to go through the data further at end of presentation.</p>
<p>The Origin-Destination count didn't account for 8% of traffic which may include trucks.</p> <p>The report states not full data collected due to some count failures and some sensor problems.</p> <p>Should go back and redo survey.</p>	<p>The report includes only data collected from working counters –no faulty data was used.</p>
<p>May not be faulty but data not sufficient.</p>	<p>Traffic counters were checked weekly. We weren't aware of some counters were not working until after the fact.</p>
<p>Looking at External to External figures these increased from 2% to 3%. This is a vast increase when looking into the future.</p>	<p>There is a difference in the reporting figures from 2009 and 2010 due to different areas being recorded –a geographically difference.</p> <p>The purpose of showing the two studies is to outline there is a difference and why, not for a direct comparison.</p>
<p>I worked for a local bus company for a few years. A bridge next to existing bridge will not change patterns. They use an interchange now to minimise movements.</p> <p>About 6 or 7 buses come from the north and cross the bridge. A bridge to the north may help. Most heavy vehicles use Summerland Way at night and come through after 7pm. About 50/hr pass through after 7pm.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Was Clarenza included in the Internal to Internal figures?</p>	<p>Clarenza is included in Internal to Internal figures.</p>
<p>If a truck stops in Grafton and then continues through what is it classed as?</p>	<p>Vehicles are matched on a reasonable time stop from station to station. If a vehicle stopped for a period of time longer than that allocated then it would be classified as two trips.</p>

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	For example if a vehicle stops for 2 hours then it is classed as External to Internal and then Internal to External.
Heavy vehicle curfew on the bridge is 4.5 hours.	Noted.
3 truck companies were not contacted in regards to questionnaire.	A response will be provided later in the presentation.
Tube Counts	
Summary says 29,500 – heavy vehicle report says 27,500.	Noted.
Figures can be manipulated. 5% is too many.	Details of the traffic count data are in the report.
The September 2006, Upgrading the Pacific Highway, Summerland Way report states there is no compelling reason to build an inland highway due to a number of factors.	The report has been provided on the website as background information. Findings of the report need to be read in context with the purpose of the report.
Is this back on the agenda due to Casino?	Pacific Highway is a high priority status under Infrastructure Australia. In terms of the TRAIN proposal – we understand a submission has been made. We are waiting to hear more information and any factual numbers around this proposal.
Why wouldn't we continue on the existing road with a tunnel? If bridge is close to existing bridge it would be cheaper. Long term future should be to Brisbane via inland route via Beaudesert.	Noted.
Why wasn't a counter put to understand movements from Pacific Highway to bridge?	This information is available in the report.
Where was the counter on Pound Street situated? North of Alice Street has a viaduct so can't get through with heavy vehicles.	The Pound Street counter was north of Alice Street..
During the floods there were numerous trucks held up on Casino Road. Has this been incorporated into options?	As part of the investigations we will certainly look at the impacts of flood events, as well as Pacific Highway upgrades. Traffic through Grafton in the last flood event was exacerbated by a number of inland routes being closed.
Villiers Street counter was located north of Oliver Street. Heavy vehicles often turn off before this counter. Also in the Summerland Way 2006 report it	To put this in context, the Summerland Report discusses Pacific Highway bypasses of Grafton and some of the impacts of these. These are very wide bypasses of Grafton.

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<p>investigated eastern and western bypasses of Grafton.</p> <p>Need bridge out of town. Show of hands in favour.</p>	<p>Show of hands will be recorded in the video.</p>
<p>Centenary Drive connection to Summerland Way would need to be flood free. People from South Grafton would probably use the new bridge to get to the top end of Grafton.</p> <p>Then the old bridge should be upgraded to 4 lanes. Heritage rules allow this, providing the use of the principles generally remains the same. Infrastructure is there already.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Questionnaire</p>	
<p>When undertaking the survey was it indicated that this was being undertaken on behalf of the RTA and for the Summerland Way project?</p>	<p>Following mention of the questionnaire at the last forum the RTA undertook some further checking. Our feedback was that companies were first contacted by phone by GTA Consultants and companies were told it was on behalf of the RTA.</p> <p>The email which forwarded the survey to the businesses did not include the RTA's logo or indicate that it was for investigations into the Grafton Bridge. It is a learning for us (RTA) to address in the future.</p> <p>We will be doing a business survey and any heavy vehicle trucking companies that want to participate in this would be most welcome.</p>
<p>There is a discrepancy in the numbers of people surveyed noted in the afternoon and evening sessions at last forum.</p> <p>Should consider undertaking this survey again.</p>	<p>Researched was undertaken after the last forum. More than 30 companies were contacted by phone and in excess of 20 companies sent the questionnaire.</p>
<p>Telephone call was picked up by an administration person and the content was that there was heavy vehicle survey and would they be interested.</p> <p>The Manager has forwarded the email. There is no RTA logo etc. Should have been sent by hard copy with the RTA's logo.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Haulage Transport company – didn't receive email personally and thought it should have had RTA on it. Didn't know anything about any surveys as I wasn't in the area at the time.</p> <p>Suggest more counting needs to be done. I</p>	<p>Questions and comments will be taken on board. If you wish to, you can provide further comments and feedback on the survey by contacting the project team on the project email, phone number or in writing.</p>

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<p>run 25 trucks a day each crossing the bridge around 4 times a day. Lots of variation in counts.</p> <p>Bridge population of trucks isn't going to go away with upgrades going on around the area. As evidence during floods, heavy vehicle situation will not get better.</p>	
<p>When the RTA introduced log books a couple of years back, they invited companies together and had a full information night. A travelling road show well informed people.</p> <p>The RTA in Grafton doesn't take into account the communities concerns.</p>	<p>The RTA is taking this serious. We very much welcome input and are happy to look into suggestions such as having an industry forum.</p>
<p>There are anomalies in data.</p> <p>Concerned about the RTA –directing and controlling the community. Setting timeframes and agendas.</p> <p>Want open forums and discussions.</p> <p>Want percentages on options from the postal survey.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
Project Objectives	
<p>Understand from your comments the RTA wouldn't consider re instating the 2003/04 objectives?</p>	<p>We are interested on your views on the project objectives and will consider comments - as mentioned in the December 2010 community update.</p> <p>Anyone is welcome to provide comments. If you can send an email of what you consider to be the appropriate objectives these will be considered.</p>
<p>Is the RTA aware of the weight of the trains that cross the bridge?</p> <p>What's the viability of the current bridge?</p> <p>What is the tonnage of the current trains?</p> <p>Ground shakes. Super trains with 4 working engines now coming through.</p> <p>Is it correct since 2001 flood there are no pylons on the river bed? How much longer will this bridge last?</p>	<p>Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) owns the bridge. They look after load restrictions on the bridge. The RTA works closely with this organisation.</p> <p>Structural studies have fairly recently been completed. The ARTC monitors the bridge and ensures that the foundations are appropriate for the existing transport using the bridge.</p>
<p>With trains getting longer and heavier and the Grafton water supply crossing over the existing bridge, how much more can this bridge take?</p> <p>Water supply would be a large weight on the</p>	<p>Loads have increased on the bridge over time, however importantly the bridge was originally designed to carry two railway lines. The trains are much heavier than the water supply crossing the bridge.</p>

QUESTION/COMMENT	RESPONSE
bridge.	
One of the objectives should be to bring forward the percentages on options in survey results. Some of the 41 options can be taken off straight away.	Written survey results will be compiled into report due for release shortly.
Objectives are imperative to short list options. Need to have a meeting to discuss this, and the outcomes of the postal survey.	After feedback is received on the objectives, the project team will consider the feedback and respond via another forum.
Short-listing of localities – November report has the objectives and criteria for assessment.	We have collated the reports that reference the project purpose and objectives for everyone's review.
Methodology	
In the heavy vehicle study the AM and PM peak figures are provided. What classifies as congestion / when will congestion occur? Once one way flow is greater than 1200 vehicles per hour, is that considered as congested?	Difficult to answer as this depends on the location and a number of other factors. On the highway congestion is considered to be at around 1300-1400/hour on a lane.
Currently 1200 vehicles per hour on the Bridge. If alternatives such as demand management were considered would this help?	Demand management techniques can assist in keeping congestion down. What practical measures can be developed is one of the issues to explore.
If you built a bridge away from town and then lifted the curfew on the trucks, would this make a big difference to business in the transport industry? Haulage company owner noted he would use an out of town bridge.	Noted.
Why wasn't the heavy vehicle count done over 24 hours?	Aimed at picking up the majority of traffic. Cost may not add value to pick up that extra 8% of traffic. Sufficient reliable data could be obtained between 5am and 7pm.
Wouldn't 6% of that 8% be heavy vehicles?	The tubes counts were used to support the Origin-Destination survey. The tube count survey is a 24 hour survey over a full week period.
Heavy vehicles are 14t GVM – not small truck. Need to only account for heavy vehicles (>14t).	The classifications used in the study are the standard Austroads Classification. Data for all classifications can be extracted from the tube count surveys.
Short-listing of options – who will carry this	The initial feasibility assessment to cull the 41 suggestions down to a more manageable

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out?	number will be completed by the project team. Feedback on this will be communicated back to the community.
<p>The December Community Liaison Plan was an update of the August Community Liaison Plan. The updated plan mentions a focus group of nominated representatives. Was this initiated by RTA?</p> <p>Would like to discuss this further. I think it's important not to form a focus group.</p>	If anyone wishes to provide comments on Community Liaison Plan please contact the project team. We can then consider this and provide feedback.
All bridges flex and are designed to take heavy loads. Flooding in 1966 - shortest route to highway would be at Centenary Drive. Photo shows all other roads closed.	Noted.