

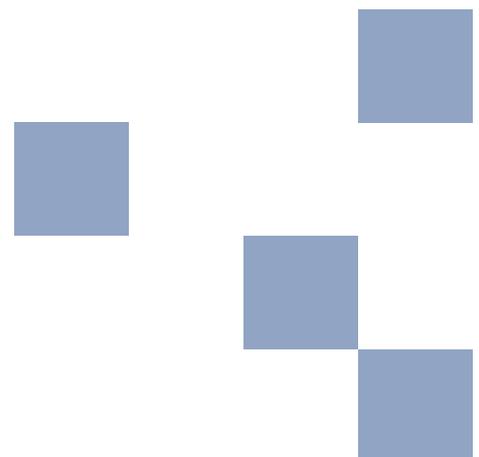


Transport  
Roads & Traffic  
Authority

# ADDITIONAL CROSSING OF THE CLARENCE RIVER AT GRAFTON

Summary of postal survey feedback

FEBRUARY 2011



## Introduction

In December 2010, the RTA invited Grafton and surrounding community areas to participate in a postal survey regarding the additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton.

The postal survey formed part of the December 2010 community update distributed to the Grafton community. The community update (which included the postal survey) was distributed through letter box drops, mail outs, as well as staff displays and on the RTA project website.

430 submissions were received as part of the consultation period between 6 December 2010 and 8 February 2011. Further submissions have been received after this date and these will also be carefully considered. Next month we will publish a lot more information on the issues people raised.

The postal survey asked the community for feedback on key issues and any additional routes that should be considered as part of this project.

The survey asked four questions:

- What do you think are the most important issues when planning a second crossing?
- What are the areas to avoid and why?
- In addition to those shown on the map in the brochure (community update), are there other options for the second crossing that could be considered and why? Please use the map below to draw in your suggestion
- Are there any other issues you would like to raise?

This is a **summary** of the issues and themes emerging from an initial review of the responses received. A report containing much more information will be published at the end of March 2011 and will be posted on the project website.

## Summary of responses:

### Q1 What do you think are the most important issues when planning a second crossing?

*Key issues and themes identified: (these are listed in no particular order)*

- Build the bridge now and give the community certainty.
- Ensure that the project plans for the future – locate the second crossing in the best position to address both current and future traffic needs.
- Minimise impact on residential areas: noise, visual amenity and quality of life.
- Consider sensitive heritage issues: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.
- Avoid funneling unnecessary traffic into the CBD, especially heavy vehicles.
- Utilise existing infrastructure; locate the second crossing to maximise the efficiency of the existing network between the Gwydir Highway, Summerland Way and the Pacific Highway.
- Cater for increasing commuter and heavy vehicle traffic – including future proposed developments such as Trans Regional Amalgamated Infrastructure Network (TRAIN).

- Minimise the number of heavy vehicles and their movements in the town centre.
- Resolve traffic congestion around peak traffic periods (8-9am and 3-6pm).
- Consider a bypass to improve traffic flow in the town centre.
- Consider the location of key local facilities including schools, hospitals, nursing homes and TAFE colleges; in terms of their environmental amenity and access needs.
- Consider the safety of all road users; emergency vehicles need more reliable access.
- Need to better understand the traffic patterns to make an informed decision.
- RTA needs to follow due process and involve the community in the decision making process.

## Q2 What are the areas to avoid and why?

*Key issues and themes identified: (these are listed in no particular order)*

- Minimise the impact on heritage and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Avoid flood prone areas; concerns were raised about the viability of downriver options identified in the December 2010 community update.
- Avoid steep grades.
- Avoid tree lined streets.
- Protect the existing bridge as it is a historically significant structure.
- Avoid existing residential areas and subsequent impacts on noise and visual amenity.
- Avoid demolishing existing houses.
- Avoid traffic being funnelled into the CBD, especially heavy vehicles; traffic congestion in the town centre needs to be minimized.
- Diverting traffic away from the CBD area may adversely impact on businesses.
- Diverting traffic away from the CBD would not utilise existing infrastructure and may not address existing traffic congestion.

## Q3 In addition to those shown on the map in the brochure (community update), are there other options for the second crossing that could be considered and why? Please use the map below to draw in your suggestion

Options from Seelands to Tyndale were proposed by residents and respondents. However the majority of the options suggested were variations of the 13 options (Option A to M) described in the December 2010 community update raised by residents/RTA in 2010.

Comments varied widely regarding the preferred location for the second river crossing. Each of the suggestions shown in the December 2010 community update attracted some level of support and comment.

Option M generated significant interest – both supporting and opposing this suggestion.

*Key issues and themes identified: (these are listed in no particular order)*

- Move heavy vehicles away from the town centre and have better connections with the existing network.
- A second crossing should help direct traffic to and from the existing network (Pacific Highway, Gwydir Highway and Summerland Way).
- Consider keeping the current bridge for the local traffic /second bridge crossing for external traffic.
- Consider traffic being 'one way' across the existing bridge and then the second river crossing.
- Route suggestions (J to M) as shown in the December 2010 community update were positively considered as it is believed these options would reduce traffic congestion in the Grafton CBD.
- Some respondents suggested an additional option located to the east of Elizabeth Island with connections to the Pacific Highway.
- Interest in an external bypass (outside the Grafton urban area) was expressed.

The list of community suggestions will be discussed in the Submissions Report currently being prepared.

#### **Q4 Are there any other issues you would like to raise?**

*Comments received included: (these are listed in no particular order)*

- When planning a second bridge the asset needs to provide a benefit to the local community both now and into the future.
- The RTA should comply with its consultation policy and engage with the community.
- The efficiency of school routes needs to be investigated – with many local schools moving out of the CBD area, will the existing bridge continue to be the most efficient bus route?
- Diverting heavy vehicle traffic may ease traffic issues, in particular on the existing bridge; however it may not address the traffic congestion experienced during peak periods.
- Options should not bypass the town, rather a second crossing should accommodate and decongest the local traffic.
- If out of town options are considered, feeder roads and traffic calming may be necessary to prevent 'rat runs'.
- Recent flooding has highlighted the need to construct the second crossing in locations that are 'flood proof'.
- Closing or restricting access from local streets onto the existing bridge could make a positive difference.
- Increased traffic on the Summerland Way will need to come through the town via the heavy vehicle route along Villiers Street; increasing the adverse impact on local residents.
- The future Pacific Highway bypass of Grafton needs to be considered when identifying the most appropriate location for the second river crossing.
- Second bridge should be high enough for yachts to be able to pass underneath.
- Don't take the cheap option; need the best option for the future.

## Next steps

In March 2011 a telephone survey of 500 randomly selected residents from the local community will be conducted by an independent market research company to further inform the project team of community views. The issues and themes contained in this feedback summary will be used by the market research company to develop the telephone survey.

Please consider this summary and if you would like any other issues and themes to be considered in the telephone survey, we would appreciate it if you could comment by:

- Emailing the project team at [graftonbridge@rta.nsw.gov.au](mailto:graftonbridge@rta.nsw.gov.au)
- Writing to the RTA at PO Box 546 Grafton NSW 2460
- Phoning the free information line 1800 633 332 or
- Sharing your views at the community forum to be held on Thursday 3 March.

Comments will be received until **Thursday 3 March 2011**.

Your feedback will be forwarded to the independent market research company to assist in the development of the telephone survey to occur in March 2011.