



**Additional Crossing of the Clarence  
Grafton**

**Community Participation Plan**

September 2003



## Contents

1.	Introduction and background .....	4
2.	Community Participation Plan commitment .....	4
3.	Community Participation Plan objectives .....	5
4.	Community of interest .....	5
5.	Community participation needs .....	6
6.	Route selection process and community .....	6
	participation activities .....	6
7.	Specific tasks – Description and objectives .....	8
7.1	Government Agencies’ Workshop .....	8
7.2	Community Focus Group .....	8
7.3	Community Workshops .....	8
7.4	Media releases and advertisements .....	9
7.5	Community updates .....	9
7.6	Information displays .....	9
7.7	Community feedback sheets .....	9
7.8	1800 inquiry line .....	10
7.9	Written submissions .....	10
7.10	Report on outcomes .....	10
8.	Community input to decision making .....	10
9.	Community risk assessment .....	11
10.	CPP monitoring and evaluation .....	12

*Prepared by  
St Lawrence & Associates Consulting Services*



## **I. Introduction and background**

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) has been prepared to clarify and document the role the community will play in the second phase of the Additional Crossing of the Clarence River (the Project) by the RTA. The CPP is based on the RTA Community Involvement Notes and Practice Manual.

Phase one of the Additional Crossing of the Clarence River Project was conducted between mid 2002 and March 2003 and examined its feasibility. The Feasibility Study identified that an additional crossing within Grafton City was feasible. Crossings at Ulmarra, Cowper and Lawrence were determined as not feasible in regards to this Project.

Phase two of the project entails the selection of the preferred route for the additional crossing within Grafton. The study area for the crossing stretches from the existing bridge upstream to Susan Island and downstream to Elizabeth Island.

The purpose of the project is to provide an additional crossing of the Clarence River in order to improve road safety, reduce traffic delays and provide improved access between the north and south of the Clarence River.

These issues can be translated into broad project objectives as follows:

- Reduce road accidents and injuries.
- Be socially acceptable to the local community.
- Support economic development.
- Significantly improve traffic efficiency.
- Managed in accordance with Ecologically Sustainable Development principles.
- Achieve maximum effectiveness of expenditure.
- Provide for community participation in developing a solution.

The CPP will be made available to the Community Focus Group (CFG) for comment and will be formally adopted as the framework for community participation. The content of the CPP will remain flexible to ensure the ability to respond to change as the need arises.

The CPP will be used to monitor and evaluate outcomes of the community participation process.

## **2. Community Participation Plan commitment**

The RTA will look to the community for participation in formulating solutions and will consider community comment into decisions to the maximum extent possible.

The final decision on the preferred route resides with the NSW Government.

### **3. Community Participation Plan objectives**

The CPP has the following broad objectives:

- To ensure the community is provided with timely and adequate information about the project, including the site selection process.
- To ensure the community is provided with timely and adequate opportunities to contribute information during the site selection process.
- To maintain an effective working relationship between the RTA and the community.
- To seek a recommended preferred route by partnering with the community in the route identification and selection process.

### **4. Community of interest**

The community likely to be affected by the additional crossing within the study area and identified by the CPP includes:

- Grafton residents
- Grafton property owners
- Grafton business operators
- Grafton based employees
- Travelling public (local and through)
- Providers of business or community services to Grafton residents/businesses
- Business, community and environmental organisations
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- Local Government Councils
- Government agencies
- Emergency services
- Health services
- Public and private schools
- Transport and bus companies
- Utility service providers - telephone, electricity and water
- Motorist/bicycle/pedestrian groups
- Fishing groups

Refer to Appendix I – Community Participation Contact List

## 5. Community participation needs

The community will expect:

- To be kept informed of the project and its progress.
- To be informed of its impact on them.
- To have access to detailed information.
- To participate in the study process.
- To be able to provide input throughout the project..
- To be able to see how they have contributed to the project.
- To be given information in clear language.
- To have meetings at convenient times and places.
- To have easy and efficient access to information.
- To incur minimum cost to participants.

To ensure community access to the above the following must be taken into consideration:

- Adequate disability access for meeting and display venues.
- Communication techniques that are culturally appropriate for different sections of the community and that provide for a range of literacy levels.
- A gender inclusive approach.

## 6. Route selection process and community participation activities

Route Selection Process	Community Participation Activities
1. Feasibility Study (completed March 2003) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision to proceed to route selection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Focus Group (CFG)</li> <li>• Community Updates</li> <li>• Community Survey</li> </ul>
2. Inform the community about the process and provide background information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish community participation framework including establish a CFG</li> <li>• Hold agencies workshop</li> <li>• Establish 1800 inquiry line for entire project time frame</li> <li>• Letter to all residents in area of investigation</li> <li>• Media release No 1 and community update No 1 to inform community and invite nominations to CFG and Community Workshops</li> </ul>

Route Selection Process	Community Participation Activities
<p><i>Estimated Timeframe: Mid/End 2003</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisement No 1 for CFG nominations</li> <li>• Hold CFG No 1</li> <li>• Hold Community Workshops No 1</li> </ul>
<p>3. Develop route options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical data collection and investigation</li> <li>• Environmental overview</li> <li>• Community input</li> <li>• Generation of route options</li> </ul> <p><i>Estimated timeframe: End 2003/Early 2004</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys and interviews with residents (Environmental overview and technical assessment activities)</li> <li>• Media release No 2</li> <li>• Community update No 2</li> <li>• Community Workshops No 2</li> <li>• Hold CFG meeting No 2</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> advertisement</li> <li>• Public display of route options – staffed</li> <li>• Community feedback sheets</li> <li>• Public submissions</li> </ul>
<p>4. Route evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop recommended route considering technical, environmental, and community input and Route Evaluation Workshop</li> <li>• Additional investigations arising from the Route Evaluation Workshop</li> <li>• Recommendation made on preferred route</li> </ul> <p><i>Estimated timeframe: Early/Mid 2004</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of submissions</li> <li>• Media release No 3</li> <li>• Route Evaluation Workshop to include community representatives from CFG</li> </ul>
<p>5. Display preferred route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferred route announced</li> <li>• Public display of preferred route</li> </ul> <p><i>Estimated timeframe: Mid 2004</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media release No 4</li> <li>• Community Update No 3</li> <li>• Community Workshops No 3</li> <li>• CFG No 3</li> <li>• Community submissions</li> </ul>



## **7. Specific tasks – Description and objectives**

Following are the specific activities to be undertaken to ensure that a successful community participation programme is implemented for the project.

### **7.1 Government Agencies' Workshop**

The Government Agencies' workshop will be held at the commencement of the project with the following objectives:

- To identify the agencies that are key stakeholders.
- To allow all involved agencies to identify issues, concerns and requirements in relation to the project.
- To identify the key liaison officer from each agency.

### **7.2 Community Focus Group**

The CFG will consist of up to twenty community members and will meet a minimum three times at different stages of the project.

The CFG will be selected from an expression of interest calling for nominations.

The CFG will be selected from representatives from within the study area comprising residents (individual and groups), business owners, environmental groups and elected representatives from Grafton City Council, Pristine Waters Council and Copmanhurst Council.

The purpose of the CFG is for members to provide a voice for the group that they represent

The objectives of the CFG are:

- To establish an ongoing formal mechanism for representatives from the community to be involved throughout the project.
- To provide adequate and timely opportunities for CFG members to provide comment and information to the RTA from their group represented.
- To ensure a broad range of interest groups from within the community are adequately represented.

The RTA will provide adequate and timely information to CFG members about the route selection process and technical data to be considered.

CFG membership to be based on a demonstrated ability to relay information to and from the groups represented.

### **7.3 Community Workshops**

Community Workshops will be held at three stages of the project to allow the broader community an opportunity to attend without the commitment that is required for the CFG.

It is proposed that three workshops will be held on one day at each of the three stages and will be for two hours duration. This will allow the community to choose the most suitable time to attend. If more workshops are required additional time will be allocated.

The Community Workshops will:

- Ensure all interested members of the public can access information about the project and provide information in relation to issues, options and impacts.
- Be held in an accessible venue.

## **7.4 Media releases and advertisements**

Media releases and advertisements will be issued at appropriate intervals to ensure the general public is made aware of key events and outcomes in relation to the project, such as the Community Workshops and information displays.

## **7.5 Community updates**

Community updates in the form of newsletters will be produced a minimum of three times coinciding with key stages of the project.

The objectives are:

- To provide a comprehensive summary of actions and information to the broader community in relation to each stage of the project.
- To distribute the update to households, businesses, organisations and agencies within the study area and to any other request.

## **7.6 Information displays**

A main information display of the route options will be held at a location within Grafton for a minimum period of 8 days. The two Saturdays involved will be staffed from 10 am– 4 pm with the RTA project team. Smaller displays will be held at RTA offices and Council offices in Grafton.

The objectives are:

- To provide clear and visual information about the location of route options.
- To invite informed comment from the public.
- To provide one on one explanations to people making enquiries.
- To raise the level of awareness within the public about the project.

## **7.7 Community feedback sheets**

Community feedback sheets will be available at Community Workshops and the information displays.

The objectives are to:

- Provide a user-friendly method for the public to make comment.
- To provide a measure of support or concern about issues and options.

## **7.8 1800 inquiry line**

A free call inquiry line will operate throughout the project. Its objectives are:

- To provide an accessible (no cost or need for literacy level) and anonymous (if requested) means by which the community can receive or provide information about the project.
- To respond to each call within one working day.
- To provide a means to measure issues of interest to the public.

## **7.9 Written submissions**

Written submissions will be received from the community at any time during the project. The objectives are:

- To ensure the community know that written submissions will be received.
- To consider the submissions in the development of the preferred options.
- To provide the opportunity for further comment once the preferred option is announced.

## **7.10 Report on outcomes**

A report will be prepared at the conclusion of the project summarising the community participation process and providing an evaluation of the methods undertaken. The objectives are:

- To provide a record of the community participation process.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the community participation process.
- To recommend any changes to the methods used.

# **8. Community input to decision making**

The decision making process at all stages of the project involves consideration of a range of information and data derived from a range of sources, including the community.

Advice and recommendations from the community will be incorporated into decisions to the maximum extent possible. To ensure the information from the community is balanced numerous opportunities for the community to contribute a cross section of views will be provided.

The CFG will operate throughout the project. To ensure continuity and a fully informed membership is maintained, the distributed nomination form will indicate the need for ongoing commitment.

A route evaluation workshop will be held towards the end of this phase of the project using the principles of Value Management to recommend a preferred route to the RTA.

Representatives from the CFG will participate in this 2-day workshop.

The final decision for the preferred route is the responsibility of the NSW Government. The decision is based on outputs of the route selection process provided by the RTA, which in turn has formulated its position by incorporating this community participation process.

## 9. Community risk assessment

Effective community participation minimises the likelihood of a community feeling alienated from or misunderstanding the route selection process. However the events listed below can threaten an equitable and effective community participation process. Strategies to address these events are provided.

- Attempted domination of CFG and Community Workshops by individuals or groups. To address this event:
  - “Ground rules” are set by the facilitator at the commencement of meetings to ensure everyone has a reasonable opportunity based on mutual respect to ask questions, make comment and participate. Additionally if required, individuals can have their views noted and a further opportunity to meet with the RTA outside the meeting.
  - CFG to have a broad base of interests represented.
  - Community Workshops to be limited to twenty participants based on ‘first come, first serve’ registration of interest. Three workshops will be held at different times of the day. If the demand requires it, additional workshops will be held.
- Public campaign of strong opposition by residents or other interest groups affected by route options. To address this event:
  - Affected parties strongly encouraged to make submissions and to meet with the RTA Project Manager regarding their issues and concerns.
  - Issues identified by the affected parties are to be appropriately evaluated in the public arena.
  - Actions to mitigate the impacts to be identified with residents or interest group/s and taken into consideration.
  - Evaluate if the campaign is due to a weakness in the community participation process, environmental overview assessment or technical analysis and document accordingly.
- Land acquisition and resumption concerns. The State Government has a documented policy based on the Land Acquisition Act. To address these enquiries:
  - Information about the Act will be provided to the CFG and Community Workshops.
  - A copy of the information brochure will be supplied when requested.

## 10. CPP monitoring and evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of the CPP it will be monitored and adjusted as necessary throughout the project. The monitoring will be in the form of on-going evaluation against the broad objectives of the CPP and each activity's objectives as they are completed.

In addition the principles for effective community participation as set down in the RTA Community Involvement Practice Notes and Manual will be applied. These are:

- Participation of a wide cross-section of views and interests.
- Transparency of the process and decision-making processes.
- Integrity and fairness of communication to build trust.
- Accountability of the community participation process to all interested parties to ensure that it is a genuine undertaking.
- Cost-effective activities.
- Certainty by the community that they will continue to have opportunities to be involved.

Monitoring and evaluation techniques will include:

- Feedback forms following CFG meetings and Community Workshops.
- Attendance at meetings.
- Informal and formal discussions with CFG members.
- Formal evaluation by each member or the groups they represent.
- Evaluation discussions between community participation consultant and RTA officers.
- Evaluation questionnaires completed by other agencies.
- Feedback survey for the public display to include evaluation of process questions.
- Statistics from the info line re number of calls, satisfaction with service, speed of reply, type of query, ability to respond to query.
- Informal feedback re community updates and self evaluation.
- Scans and analysis of media response.
- Number of queries from media and speed of response.

Approved July 2003

Peter Collins  
Regional Manager, Northern  
RTA Grafton