South Batemans Bay Link Road
Community consultation and engagement summary for the Preferred Option report
Transport for NSW | MARCH 2020
Executive summary

Transport for NSW is progressing plans for the South Batemans Bay Link Road project and has carried out investigations and assessments to identify a preferred option.

The preferred option includes a new two lane road and intersection to connect the Princes Highway to the South Batemans Bay Link Road.

Four intersection options were investigated and assessed to identify the preferred option. These options were comparatively assessed against road safety standards, traffic efficiency, environmental impacts, property and community needs, constructability and delivery cost and budget.

To provide a safe and efficient intersection, a roundabout was identified as the preferred option as it:

- provides for all traffic movements between the South Batemans Bay Link Road and the Princes Highway
- improves safety on the Princes Highway by extending the 70km/h speed limit
- is a safer intersection as it has limited conflict points
- is easier to build
- has the least impact on the Princes Highway during construction
- has the least impact on property, fauna habitat and other environmental considerations
- provides good value for money.

Prior to finalising the concept design, the project team asked for feedback from Eurobodalla Shire Council (Council) and key community stakeholders on the preferred option for the intersection (roundabout) and new road.

The Preferred Option Report was publicly displayed from 25 October to 22 November 2019 and the community were invited to provide feedback. A number of written, face to face and digital engagement activities including a community update, drop in sessions, advertising and social media, were carried out to advise stakeholders and the community of the preferred option.

Feedback was received from over 50 people via email or through written feedback at drop in sessions. The feedback can be broadly categorised into the following themes:

- Support for the project in general
- Feedback on the Preferred Option (roundabout)
- Timing of the project (start date)
- Traffic, lanes and safety
- Cycle/pedestrian facilities.

As part of the investigations being carried out for the Review of Environmental Factors (REF), a socio-economic report was also commissioned. This report included engagement with local business owners and community groups, and will be provided separately as part of the REF. In this summary, extracts from the socio-economic report are included to provide an overview of feedback from business and community groups.

Feedback provided will be considered to further develop the project.
Purpose of this report

This community consultation and engagement summary relates to the South Batemans Bay Link Road Preferred Option Report and should be read in conjunction with that document which is available on the project website (www.rms.work/sbblr).

This summary provides an overview of the community and stakeholder consultation and engagement carried out during the display of the Preferred Option Report, including information about the consultation activities and feedback received.
Public exhibition and engagement activities

The Preferred Option Report was publicly displayed from 25 October to 22 November 2019. The table below is a summary of the engagement activities carried out during the display period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity type</th>
<th>Details of activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media release</td>
<td>A media release advising the release of the Preferred Option Report was issued by The Hon Andrew Constance MP on 25 October 2019. Various media outlets ran the story, and links to these articles can be found in this summary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Update (four-page newsletter)</td>
<td>A newsletter style Community Update was published on 25 October via the project website. The Community Update was printed (500 copies) and distributed to stakeholders at information sessions and static displays locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Update (A5 Postcard)</td>
<td>An A5 postcard was printed and distributed to 7,600 businesses and properties located in the Batemans Bay, Batehaven, Sunshine Bay, Lilly Pilli, Malua Bay areas. The postcard provided a summary of the preferred option and invited recipients to view the report online and submit feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static displays</td>
<td>Static displays were set-up at the Batemans Bay Library, Service NSW Batemans Bay, Eurobodalla Council Moruya and the Moruya Library. The static displays provided community members with the opportunity to view the full report on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webpage</td>
<td>The project webpage <a href="http://www.rms.work/sbblr">www.rms.work/sbblr</a> was updated and provided the Preferred Option Report, together with the Community Update and details on of the community drop-in sessions and feedback options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community information sessions (drop-in sessions)</td>
<td>A staffed drop-in session was held at the Village Centre (shopping centre in Batemans Bay) on Thursday 7 November, where 100 people visited the stand. The advertised session at the Batemans Bay Sunday Markets was cancelled due to weather. This session was replaced with a stand at the Hand-Made Market on Saturday 9 November, where 150 people attended. A stand was also set-up outside the Batehaven Newsagency, where 30 people attended. Attendees at drop in sessions were able to: - provide feedback on the preferred option - ask questions about the project, the options assessment process and the preferred option - view hard copies of the Preferred Option Report - register for further project updates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendees were also provided information about how to access the online version of the report and how to provide feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Adverts were placed in the Bay Post on 30 October, 1, 6 and 8 November 2019. These ads announced the release of the report and listed the drop-in session details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Paid Facebook posted were used inform the target audience that the Preferred Options Report had been released and details of the drop-in sessions. The NSW Roads Facebook post links can be viewed here: Report released post Drop-in session invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder email</td>
<td>An email was sent to around 200 registered stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Media release**

A media release advising the exhibition of the Preferred Option Report was issued by The Hon Andrew Constance MP 25 October 2019 and was featured in the following news outlets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
South Batemans Bay Link Road
Preferred Option – Community consultation and engagement summary

Community update and postcard

Sample of Community Update

South Batemans Bay Link Road
Preferred option – Community update
October 2019

The NSW Government has committed $30 million to connect the South Batemans Bay Link Road to the Princes Highway.

Background
The South Batemans Bay Link Road will connect the Princes Highway to the South Batemans Bay foreshore.

Key benefits of the project include:
- Improved connectivity between the Princes Highway and Batemans Bay
- Traffic management
- Improved access to local businesses
- Community engagement
- Construction and design benefits

What happens next?
We are seeking feedback on the preferred option which will be used to finalise the design of the project. We will use this feedback to ensure the best outcome for the community.

Meet the project team
- South Batemans Bay Link Road Team
- Batemans Bay Council
- Shoalhaven City Council
- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Community consultation

Visit our website to view the latest progress and have your say.

Sample of the A5 postcard:
Advertising

Advertising was purchased to help promote the report and encourage feedback. Adverts were placed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bay Post</td>
<td>30 October, 1, 6 &amp; 8 November 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Copy of the Bay Post advertisement
Facebook Posts

Paid Facebook posts were used inform the target audience that the Preferred Option Report was released and to provide details of the drop-in sessions. Comments received on Facebook have been included in the feedback section of this report.

The NSW Roads Facebook post links can be viewed here:

Report released post
Drop-in session invitation

Sample of the Facebook posts:
Community Engagement

The community consultation and engagement during the display period enabled feedback to be received face to face at drop in sessions as well as by email, phone or via social media. The table below provides a summary of our engagement reach and the feedback received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement type</th>
<th>Engagement reach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Update (print copy and online version)</td>
<td>500 copies distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5 Postcard (print copy)</td>
<td>7,600 distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face engagement at drop-in sessions</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook post – announcement post &amp; drop-in sessions</td>
<td>Release of report post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reach: 83,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drop-in session event post:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organic reach: 6,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Paid reach: 4,243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback received</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emails received to project team inbox</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written feedback at drop-in sessions</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone calls to project team 1800 number</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook post – announcement post &amp; drop-in sessions</td>
<td>Release of report post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reactions: 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comments: 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shares: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drop-in session event post:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Event responses: 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Batemans Bay Link Road
 Preferred Option – Community consultation and engagement summary
Common feedback received

There were a number of common points provided as feedback. These are broadly categorised as:

1. Support for the project in general
2. Feedback on the Preferred Option (roundabout)
3. Timing of the project (start date)
4. Traffic, lanes and safety
5. Cycle/pedestrian facilities
6. Other

The following is a summary of the feedback received during the consultation period:

1. Support for the project in general
   o Numerous comments (in person and via email) were received in support of the project.
   o It was suggested that the project will help minimise the need to go through the Batemans Bay CBD (especially during holiday times) to access the Princes Highway.
   o Some people acknowledged that the roundabout provided value for money and that there were limited funds across government.

2. Feedback on the Preferred Option (roundabout) design
   o The majority of comments (in person and via email) were received in support of the roundabout as the preferred option for the intersection, noting that it meets traffic demand and improves safety.
   o The northbound bypass lane was seen as a benefit.
   o A comment was received noting that the arrows on the roundabout were confusing and appeared to be pointing north.
   o A comment was received stating that their preferred option is the Seagull, suggesting it was less disruptive to traffic and offers the least impact on productivity.
   o A comment was received stating that the design should have two northbound bypass lanes on the Princes Highway (past the intersection). The rationale for this suggestion is that during peak holiday periods, traffic heading north to Batemans Bay queues beyond this location.
   o Some concerns were raised over the selection of a roundabout on the Princes Highway, and that a roundabout may increase traffic congestion and impact highway flow.
   o A comment was also received suggesting a grade separated interchange would be a better solution.

3. Timing of the project (start date)
   o Verbally, many members of the community asked about the start and completion dates of the project. The sentiment was that work should be fast tracked to start as soon as possible.
   o Comments were received indicating a degree of frustration that the road has been ‘spoken’ about for many years, without funding or commitment.
4. **Traffic, lanes and safety**
   - The roundabout was acknowledged as a safe option which would reduce speeding on the Princes Highway and allow safe entry and exit at the intersection.
   - A suggestion was received to consider improving the sight lines as the existing unsealed intersection is unsafe.
   - There was a request to add a highway connection further south (of the project) to provide safe access to the Princes Highway for residents in villages such as Surf Beach.
   - Road widening and additional northbound traffic lanes on the Princes Highway was suggested to address concern about increased traffic and associated noise once the Batemans Bay Bridge replacement is completed.
   - A query was received about the single northbound lane (Princes Highway) to the west of the roundabout and whether this will be sufficient to meet future traffic demand.
   - Concern on how much traffic would use the South Batemans Bay Link Road and if traffic is likely to increase on surrounding residential streets.
   - Comments on the need for two continuous lanes in each direction on the Princes Highway between the South Batemans Bay Link Road and Batemans Bay Bridge, and through the industrial area (Cranbrook Road).

5. **Cycle/pedestrian facilities**
   - An email was received from a cyclist who uses the roads between Long Beach and Moruya. The email highlighted the need for allowances for a safe passage for cyclists and pedestrians.
   - The lack of paths for strollers and pedestrians was raised as an issue (this issue is not exclusive to the project area).
   - Some comments were raised about the ongoing use of the area and trails for mountain biking and the impact construction would have on this.

6. **Other**
   - A comment was received that a bypass (realignment of the Princes Highway) may be a better solution which will address current and future traffic growth and congestion in the north-south direction.
   - Feedback was received relating to crashes near a motel and aged care home (on the Princes Highway). It was suggested that speed limits in the area be reduced.
   - It was suggested that speed limits on some local roads be reduced. These included Dunns Road and George Bass Drive (given there is a school bus stop in the area).
   - A suggestion was received regarding landscaping opportunities. Examples of other road projects and landscaping treatments were provided for consideration.
   - Concerns about the road’s effect on local wildlife were raised. A suggestion for a fauna crossing to be constructed under Heron Road or under the new road was received.
   - A number of comments were received about local roads and signage. A concern was raised about impacts to traffic in the commercial and business centre of Batemans Bay. This related to impact to business and trade and the need for the project team to consult with businesses as the project progresses.
Socio-economic study

As part of the development of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF), a socio-economic study was also carried out during this time. This process included engaging with local business owners and community groups to gain feedback on anticipated impacts.

Targeted groups were asked a number of survey questions. These questions did not relate exclusively to the preferred option, but rather gave participants the opportunity to provide general feedback on the project.

The socio-economic report will be provided as part of the REF which will be displayed in mid-2020. A summary of the common themes from the study is outlined below.

Community group feedback

Relevant community groups were identified based on their location and membership profile with the survey carried out via telephone interviews.

Seven community groups were contacted, and the common themes of their feedback included:

- The project was generally supported by all and seen as needed. However, the perceived benefit is not significant, rather it was felt that the project will ‘make life a little easier’.
- It was seen as important that the proposal improves the flow of traffic along Beach Road and accessibility within Batemans Bay and southern towns. Respondents raised concern that there is effectively only one route in and out of the coastal area.
- It was viewed that the project should have been completed some time ago, to ensure infrastructure keeps up with growth.
- It was suggested that the project is crucial for students in the area as it will reduce student travel time.
- Cycling / Mountain biking (more for leisure not commuting) is very popular along Ridge Road. Footpath and cycling lanes should form part of the proposal. The lack of dedicated cycling infrastructure is a factor for the Batemans Bay regions (not isolated to the proposal area).
- Bushwalking trails are used in the project area and around the Princes Highway. It was requested that trails be accessible during construction and after completion.
- It was requested that noise be minimised during construction especially late at night.
- It was requested that environmental impacts and wildlife and nature should be minimised.
- It was suggested that the project should not bypass Mogo Zoo, as this could result in a decline in tourist patronage.

Business feedback

A cross-section of the business community was identified and engaged via a face-to-face survey. Businesses identified included large retail outlets in the Batemans Bay central business district, small to mid-size businesses in the Batemans Bay central business district and other businesses in surrounding villages, such as newsagencies, pharmacies and local independent grocery stores and service providers.

In total, 19 businesses participated in the survey, and the common themes of their feedback included:

- There was general support for the project and agreement that a roundabout is the best option
The majority of business survey respondents identified that their operation was not dependent on passing through-traffic. However, cafes, takeaways, and liquor retailers identified themselves as very dependent on this, attributing 20-50% of their turnover to passing through-traffic.

Over half all businesses surveyed thought that by providing better access and connectivity the proposal may lead to increased trade, as well as improved safety and amenity within the CBD.

Concerns were raised about the potential impact of construction if not managed appropriately. Businesses stressed the importance of communication, and the need to keep up the flow of information to local business about planned construction changes.

Traffic flow along Beach Road and the Princes Highway in and out of Batemans Bay would be improved as a result of the project.

There was awareness that traffic congestion (mostly in peak holiday periods) is an issue in the area. The seasonal aspect to this congestion was clear, with respondents reporting that local residents stay away from the CBD during public holiday periods.

Most participants felt that the project will provide customers with greater ease of movement and access to businesses.

It was requested that the construction processes be well communicated, and trading hour congestion be avoided.
Next Steps

The feedback provided as part of the community consultation and engagement offered a valuable insight into the community's opinion on the Preferred Option. The feedback received will be used to refine the design and inform the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) and detailed design.

The REF is underway and will be publicly displayed in mid-2020.

Community and stakeholders will continue to be updated as the project progresses.

Proposed location of the South Batemans Bay Link Road