

Additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton – Preferred option display

Letter from Bob Higgins

The Minister for Roads and Ports has announced **Option C** as the preferred option for an additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton.

This update shows the preferred route option, outlines the reasons why it was selected and describes the next steps for the project.

Those property owners potentially directly affected by Option C are being contacted directly. If you have any questions or concerns please get in touch with the project team, contact details are on the back page.

The next steps for the project are to refine the concept design for Option C and to prepare and display an environmental assessment for community comment.

The project team for these next steps will be led by Adam Cameron as the Project Manager and supported by Steve Arnold (General Manager Project Development) and John Alexander (Regional Manager, Northern).

Chris Clark and I would like to thank all members of the community who have become involved in this important project for Grafton and the Clarence Valley for their contribution towards this route selection process.

– Robert (Bob) Higgins, Project Director

Process to identify the preferred option

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) has worked with the community to identify a preferred location for an additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton.

In January 2012, six short-listed route options were announced for further investigation.

In September 2012, the *Route Options Development Report* was displayed for public comment. The report described the preliminary concept design and the investigations undertaken for each of the six options.

A recommended preferred option was identified following consideration of the technical investigations, community comment and the outcomes of a value management workshop with participants from key stakeholders, the community, government agencies and the project team.

The assessment of the six short-listed options found that:

- Options 14 and 15 provided the least improvements to the efficiency of the road network, were amongst the poorest performing options when assessed against the assessment criteria, were the two most expensive options and provided the least value for money.
- Option 11 was a poorer performing option than Options E and C and has substantial amenity impacts in a quiet residential area.
- Option A was a poorer performing option than Options E and C, has greater impacts on businesses than the other options, was higher in cost than Option E and provided poorer value for money than both Options E and C.

A comparative assessment of Options E and C found that:

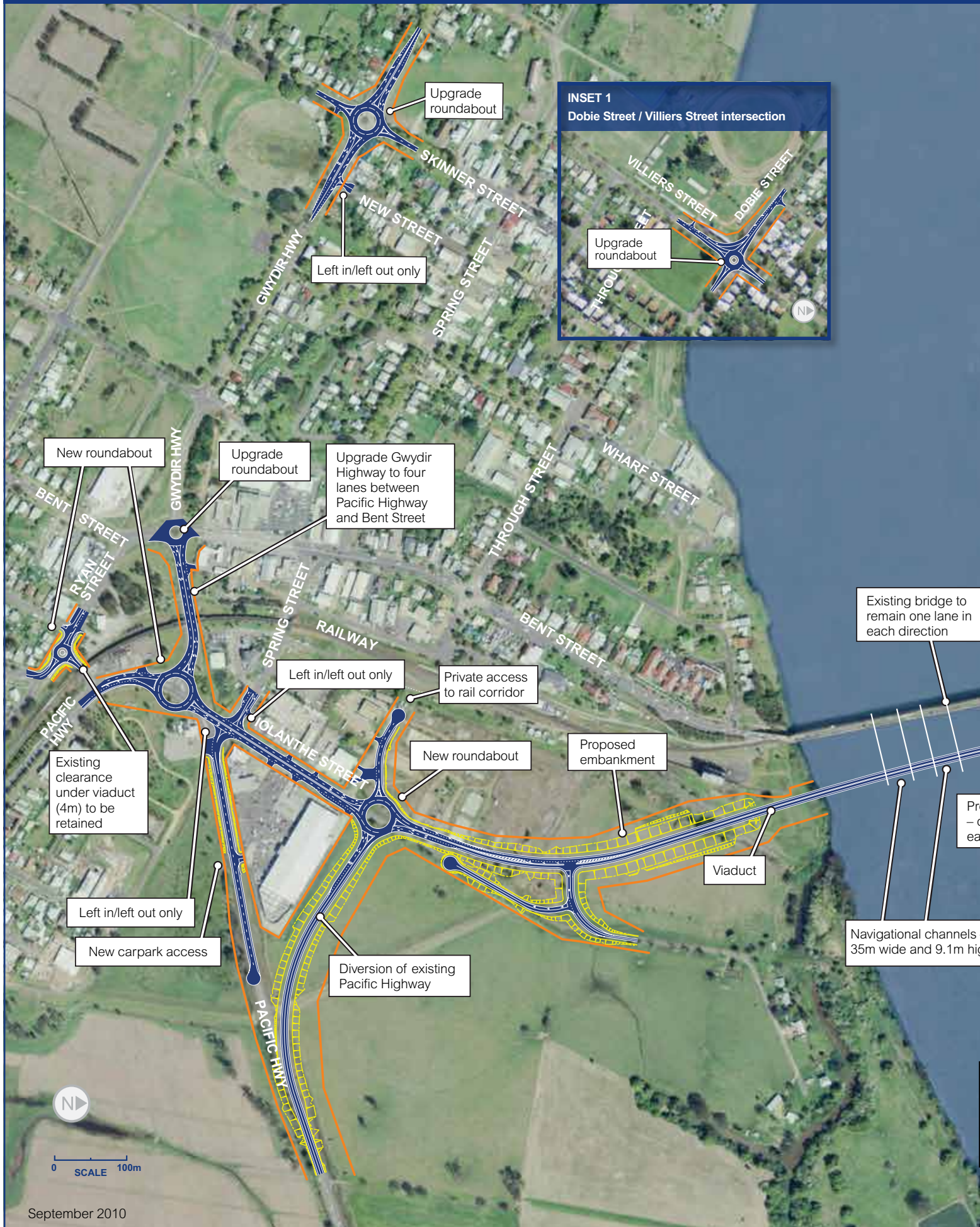
- On balance, Option C presents greater overall value to the community, in particular addressing long term connectivity, providing for economic growth and supporting Grafton as a regional centre.
- Option C provides better transport efficiency improvements over the whole of the road network for both the short term and long term, including for road freight movements.
- Option C provides better outcomes in the socio economic area, including its ability to better support Grafton as a regional centre.
- Option C provides better outcomes in terms of non-Aboriginal heritage by avoiding impacts on the precinct around Victoria and Villiers streets.

In December 2012, Option C was identified as the recommended preferred route option and community feedback was invited to 4 March 2013. The *Recommended Preferred Option Report* (December 2012) is available on the project website.

A total of 67 submissions were received during the consultation period providing a variety of comments about the recommended preferred option and some suggested improvements.

A report on the submissions received is included in the *Preferred Option and Submissions Report* (April 2013) which is available on the project website, www.rms.nsw.gov.au/graftonbridge

OPTION C - THE PREFERRED OPTION



Refinements to the recommended preferred option

Refinements to the recommended preferred option have been identified from comments received during the consultation period and further investigations by the project team. These refinements have included:

- Refinements to the design for Pound Street to improve the level of on-street parking and access for delivery vehicles to local businesses.
- Provision for access to the sugar loading facility at South Grafton from Through Street.
- Further refinements to indicative road boundaries to address future maintenance requirements.

Further refinements will be made through the concept design and environmental assessment phase (see Next steps, back page).

Opportunities for staging of the preferred option

The adjacent plan shows the upgrade required to cater for predicted traffic volumes through to about 2049.

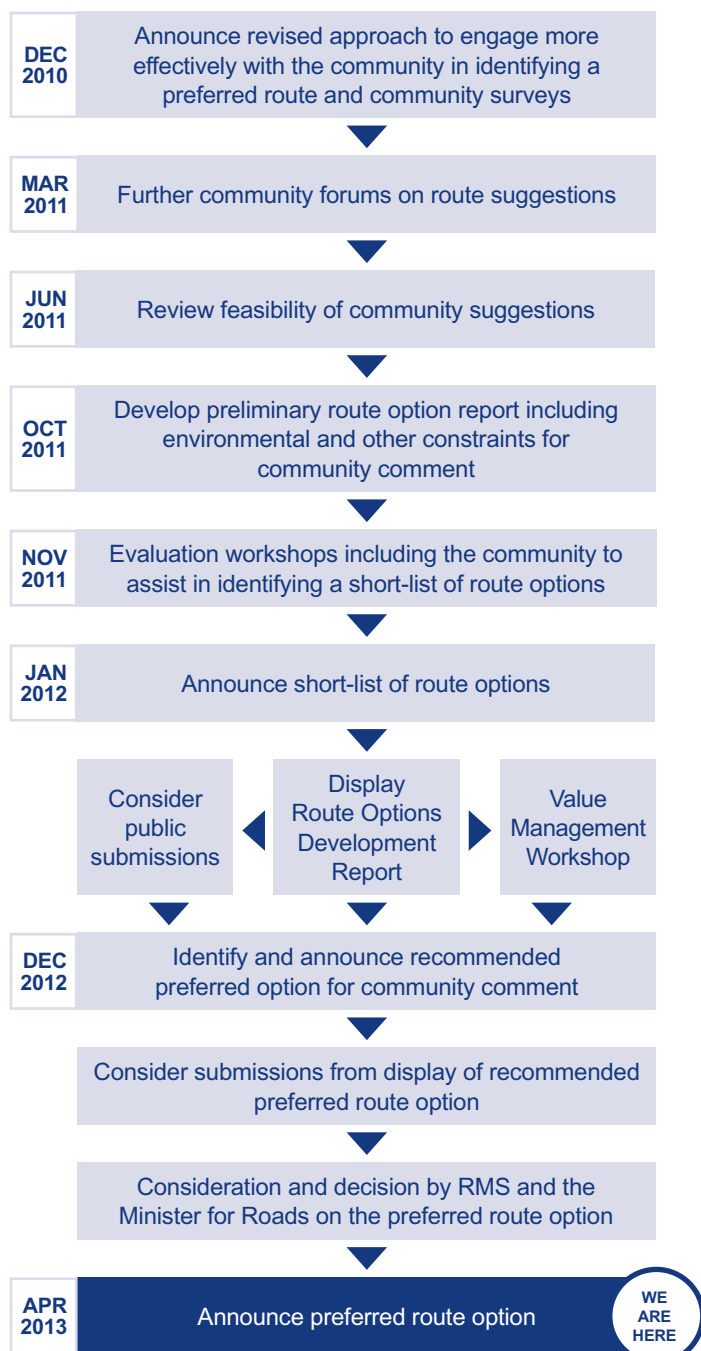
Only some of the upgrade (e.g. intersection upgrades and road widening) shown would be required when the additional crossing is initially opened to traffic. Further work could be undertaken when required to cater for increases in traffic volumes.

Staging opportunities will be further investigated during concept design and preparation of the environmental assessment for the preferred option.



The *Preferred Option and Submissions Report* (April 2013) is available on the project website or contact the project team.

The report includes community feedback received following the display of the recommended preferred option, details of the preferred option (including refinements to the recommended preferred option) and the next steps in the development of the project.



Next steps

The next steps will involve refining the concept design for the preferred option as well as a detailed environmental assessment of the proposal. The environmental assessment will assess the potential impact of the proposal on a wide range of issues and will identify, where required, possible mitigation measures to manage these potential impacts. Issues assessed 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.

The environmental assessment and concept design will be displayed for community comment. Issues raised in the submissions will be considered and, if appropriate, the proposal will be further refined to manage potential impacts.

For more information

Visit: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/graftonbridge

The project website is regularly updated and contains copies of the reports undertaken on the project to date, community consultation, interactive maps and traffic modelling videos.

Static displays are on display at key locations. Please visit the project website for details or visit the shop front at the Pacific Highway office, 21 Prince Street, Grafton.

Contact us

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