



Transport  
Roads & Maritime  
Services

# ADDITIONAL CROSSING OF THE THE CLARENCE RIVER AT GRAFTON

Updated community liaison plan

September 2012

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## Review and update

The community liaison plan will be progressively reviewed and updated to include project requirements and community feedback.

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## I. Introduction and background

### I.1 Overview

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is currently working towards the identification of a preferred option for a new crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton. The NSW Government is funding these investigations.

### I.2 Background

The local community has been advocating for a second crossing for many years to reduce congestion and traffic delays over the existing bridge, in particular during morning and afternoon peak periods. In June 2011, RMS published the *Feasibility Assessment Report* that describes the assessment undertaken by RMS on the 41 suggestions identified following the community consultation from December 2010 to March 2011.

In October 2011, 25 preliminary route options in five strategic corridors were identified for further engineering and environmental investigation.

In January 2012, RMS short-listed six route options in the work to identify a preferred option. This process has been documented in the *Preliminary Route Options Report*.

Since January 2012, further design refinements and investigations have been undertaken on the six route options. The outcomes are reported in the September 2012 *Route Options Development Report*.

RMS does not have a preferred option at this stage and will work with the community to examine the six route options and their issues transparently.

A history of consultation activity to date is located on the RMS project website.

### **1.3 Communications process**

The process for identifying a route for a second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton is shown in Appendix A.

A program of consultation activities aims to engage the community in the development of route options and preferred route.

The key stages in the consultation process are summarised below:

1. Identification of preliminary route options for further investigation.
2. Undertake community surveys on all options, and the issues that need to be considered when planning a second crossing.
3. Hold community discussion evenings to discuss key issues around route options.
4. Display the preliminary route options, including additional options proposed by the community.
  - a. Receive community submissions on the preliminary route options.
  - b. Hold evaluation workshops with the community to explain, evaluate and assist in identifying a shortlist of route options for consideration by the RMS.
5. Announce the shortlisted route options.
6. Display details of the shortlisted route options.
  - a. Community forum and other consultation activities to discuss key issues for the shortlisted route options.
  - b. Community submissions on the shortlisted route options.
  - c. Value management workshop with the project team, Council, agencies, other key stakeholders and the community collectively comparing the options.
7. Display the recommended preferred option.
8. Receive community submissions on the recommended preferred option.
9. Announce a preferred route option.
10. Preservation of the route in local plans.

The activities are described at Appendix B, 'Community liaison activity plan'. The appendix will be updated as the project progress.

### **1.4 Purpose of this plan**

This updated community liaison plan describes how the project team will engage with the community to assist with the identification of a preferred route option for the additional crossing of the Clarence River. Community issues, ideas and concerns along with information from the technical and environmental studies, will assist the project team to determine firstly a shortlist of options and then a preferred route option.

This community liaison plan outlines:

- Strategies for community liaison and consultation
- Communication activities to implement these strategies
- How the community liaison process will be monitored, evaluated and reported back to the community.

The project team will make it a priority to:

- Engage with the local Council and the business community, as well as potentially directly affected landowners and other key stakeholders.
- Clearly explain the needs and purpose of a second crossing and its relationship to any future upgrading of the Summerland Way.
- Engage with the community to develop and refine the route options for consideration.
- Engage with the community and key stakeholders to better understand their issues and concerns and provide opportunities for feedback.

A range of consultation and communication tools will be used to inform and involve the community and provide opportunities for the community to provide feedback. The consultation approach will be transparent and refined based on feedback from the community. The community will be engaged and kept informed during each stage of the project.

### **1.5 Key messages**

The key messages for this project include:

- RMS is currently working towards the identification of a preferred route for an additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton.
- The consultation process is to be inclusive, transparent and flexible.
- It is important to plan now for a future crossing and to provide certainty for the future development of Grafton.
- The preferred route for the crossing of the Clarence River and any road connections will be selected by assessing which option represents the most appropriate balance between traffic, social, environmental, engineering and cost factors.

## **2. Stakeholders and issues**

### **2.1 Key stakeholders**

The project team will continue to consult with the community and stakeholders. The stakeholders include a wide range of interests from the communities of Grafton, South Grafton and surrounds, Clarence Valley Council, residents, businesses and landowners. At this stage of the process, given there is no preferred option the consultation approach needs to be broad and communicated extensively.

The key stakeholders and community groups who will be engaged during the project include:

- Those communities within the area directly and indirectly impacted by possible options
- Clarence Valley Council
- Local businesses of Grafton and South Grafton
- Grafton Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- South Grafton Progress Association
- 2003/2004 Community Focus Group members

- Local Schools (including Clarence Valley Anglican School, South Grafton Primary School, Beautizone Kindergarten, Jack & Jill Pre-School, Gummyaney Aboriginal Pre-School)
- Transport and heavy vehicle operators (including the Australian Trucking Association)
- Emergency Services (including NSW Police, NSW Fire Brigade, NSW Ambulance, SES)
- Tourism Operators (including Clarence Valley Tourism, Clarence River Tourism, Clarence River Historical Society)
- CountryLink
- Australian Rail Track Corporation
- Local environmental groups (including Clarence Valley Environment Centre, Landcare Lower Clarence Catchment)
- Local Aboriginal groups (including Grafton Ngerrie Aboriginal Land Council)
- Recreational river user groups
- NSW Maritime
- Department of Infrastructure and Planning
- Office of Environment and Heritage
- Kyogle Council
- TAFE
- Interest groups and resident groups.

## 2.2 Likely critical issues

During community consultation between December 2010 and December 2012, the issues that will need to be considered when determining the preferred route option include:

### Process issues

- Ongoing community involvement in the decision making process
- Access to technical information and reports
- Clarity regarding the needs and purpose of the second crossing
- Consideration of options outside the existing study area, presented in February/March 2010

### Technical issues

- Cost/ benefit and funding of the project
- Social impact and loss of amenity caused by the construction of a second crossing
- Property acquisition impacts
- Economic impact of the project on the local economy
- Impacts of the project on Aboriginal heritage
- Heritage impacts (including impact on the local residential streets)
- Environmental impact of the project (including noise, dust, fauna and flora, emission, health of the river)
- Potential traffic increases in local streets
- Potential increase in heavy vehicle traffic in local streets
- Safety implications for all road users
- Construction impacts (including noise, dust, traffic impacts)
- Recreational impacts (including impact on activity on the Clarence River and near local parks and community facilities).



### **3. Communication activities**

#### **3.1 Telephone and email contact line**

A 24 hour toll free information line (1800 633 332) and project email address (graftonbridge@rms.nsw.gov.au) have been established. These communication channels will be promoted on information materials to provide the community with a free and readily available means of communicating with the project team.

#### **3.2 Community surveys**

Three community surveys have been undertaken to gauge the views of local residents and businesses.

- The December 2010 community update included a postal survey that asked the community for their feedback about a second crossing of the Clarence River. The postal survey invited the community to respond to some questions and indicate any additional areas that they would like to have considered.
- A telephone survey involving 514 randomly selected local residents and regular bridge users was undertaken in March 2011.
- To support the residential telephone survey, a separate business survey was also undertaken over the months of March and April 2011. The business survey was an online survey to give all local businesses the opportunity to participate.

The reports of the surveys undertaken can be found on the RMS project website.

Further surveys may be conducted during the route selection process to gather additional community input for the consideration of the preferred route.

#### **3.3 Community discussion evenings**

Community discussion evenings will be used to discuss critical issues with the community. The discussion evenings will be open sessions in a local venue. They will continue to be good exchanges of views and information. The feedback provided will be considered during the identification and refinement of the options.

Experts in the field will provide information to the discussion evenings. Issues identified for discussion include:

- Traffic modeling and heavy vehicles
- Land use and heritage issues
- Evaluation methods/criteria for decision making.
- Community surveys
- Project purpose and objectives
- Feasibility assessment of community suggestions

Presentations and community feedback from the discussion evenings are uploaded to the project website.

These meetings are also recorded and available on the project website.

### **3.4 Evaluation workshops**

Initially, the evaluation of options was documented to be a three part process. The scope of this process however has been modified to form a series of community information meetings in addition to a community/ stakeholder evaluation workshop. Presentations and notes from these workshops are on the RMS project website.

### **3.5 Value management process/workshop**

The value management process includes a facilitated technical workshop with the participants from the project team, Council, agencies, other key stakeholders and the community. A value management workshop will be held to consider the shortlisted route options. Presentations and notes from the workshop will be uploaded to the RMS project website.

### **3.6 Meetings with key stakeholders**

RMS will meet with key stakeholders to provide briefings on the project, and discuss the consultation process going forward. These meetings will be held as required and will be noted in the meeting register on the project website.

### **3.7 Meetings with individual stakeholders**

RMS will meet with individual stakeholders to discuss the project, give and respond to feedback and discuss the consultation process going forward. These meetings will be held as required or requested. For privacy reasons, meetings with individual stakeholders will not be noted in the meeting register on the project website.

### **3.8 Staffed and static (unstaffed) displays**

Staffed displays will be held to give the community the opportunity to provide feedback on the route options proposed. All planned staffed displays will be advertised in the nominated local newspapers and radio station. Dates, times, locations of staffed display will be confirmed and advertised with suitable prior notice.

Static (unstaffed) displays will be located at the follow locations:

- RMS Pacific Highway Office (project team location)
- RMS Motor Registry Office Grafton
- RMS Regional Office Grafton

RMS where possible, will make project display material available at the following additional locations:

- Clarence Valley Council and Grafton Library
- Ulmarra Petrol Station/Post Office, Pacific Highway, Ulmarra
- South Grafton News and Gifts, 38 Skinner Street, South Grafton
- General Store Coutts Crossing, Armidale Road, Coutts Crossing
- Junction Hill Family Store, 5 Casino Road, Junction Hill
- Maclean Council Office, 50 River Street, Maclean
- Yamba Library, Woolli Street, Yamba

Display locations are listed on the project website.

### **3.9 Community updates**

Community updates will be produced at project milestones to keep the community informed about the project investigations and consultation process. These updates will be available on the project website, the RMS Pacific Highway and Regional offices, Grafton and distributed in the local area, including to potentially directly affected property owners and residents on the project contacts database.

#### **3.10 Letter box notifications**

Letter box notifications to residents will support the newspaper and radio advertisements.

#### **3.11 Project website**

RMS will continue to manage and update a dedicated project page on the RMS website <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/graftonbridge>. The website will provide regular updates on the project's progress and includes project information such as community updates, media releases, presentations and notes of meetings, interactive maps, reports and other background information.

#### **3.12 Advertisement**

Newspaper advertisements will be placed in the local 'Daily Examiner, 'Lower Clarence Review' and 'Coastal View' to advise of project milestones such as the revised approach, route options and consultation activities such as staffed displays and evaluation workshops. Radio advertisements on 2G/FM104.7 will also be used to advise the community of activities.

#### **Talk back radio**

RMS will participate in a local talk back radio session during the display of the report on the shortlisted route options to provide updates and answer questions from the community.

## **Media**

RMS will supply local media with regular project information including at project milestones such as the revised approach, route options and consultation activities such as staffed displays and evaluation workshops to provide to the broader community.

## **Emails to registered stakeholders**

Email notifications will be sent to registered community members to provide regular notification of milestones, the revised approach, route options and consultation activities such as staffed displays and evaluation workshops. The emails are an additional prompt for registered stakeholders. Stakeholders can request to be placed on or taken off this email list at any time.

## **4. Enquiries and complaints management**

### **4.1 Contact management system**

All enquiries and complaints received will be entered into a community and stakeholder contact database, referred to as the contact management system, to allow for a record and tracking system to ensure enquiries and complaints are managed in line with agreed timeframes.

The contact management system is a web based data system which allows the following information to be recorded:

- Name and contact details of the caller
- Time and date of the contact
- Location details
- Issue type and details
- Actions taken
- Personnel handling the representation and current status details.

## 4.2 Enquiries and complaints management procedure

The procedure proposed for the management of enquiries and complaints includes:

- The enquiry/complaint received.
- Nature of the enquiry/complaint is determined and recorded in the database system. Enquiry/complaint is either dealt with immediately or requires further action/investigation.
- If dealt with immediately the enquiry/complaint is closed in Consultation Manager. If further action/investigation is required it is recorded in Consultation Manager.
- Response is provided within 15 business days of receipt of correspondence (unless otherwise agreed with respondent) and enquiry/complaint is closed in Consultation Manager. If a response cannot be provided it will be escalated as appropriate.

## 5. Monitoring and evaluation

The project team will monitor the performance and effectiveness of the communication activities on a regular basis. The project team will modify the community liaison plan and communication activities following feedback or issues identified in the process.

Evaluation of the consultation process and communications activities may involve feedback forms/surveys that may be provided to the community at meetings, workshops and staffed displays. This will invite the community's feedback on the following:

- Satisfaction of the consultation process and communications activities
- Value of community updates and other public information
- Availability, quality and distribution of information about the project to the local community and stakeholders
- Responsiveness of the team.

Key elements of overall evaluation include:

- Currency and accuracy of the contact management system
- Nature of issues/complaints raised and level of responsiveness and appropriateness of action taken by the team
- Response time frames
- Attendance at information sessions or meetings with stakeholders
- Determining community satisfaction about the consultation process and communications activities by a quantitative community and stakeholder survey.

## Appendix A – Process for identifying a route for a second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton



## Appendix B – Community liaison activity plan (program of activities)

For further information on each of these specific activities refer to Communication activities (Section 3).

Activities and timings outlined below are indicative and depend partly on the issues raised by the community.

Activity	Detail	Indicative Timing
Ongoing communication with the community	Project website <a href="http://www.rms.gov.au/grafonbridge">http://www.rms.gov.au/grafonbridge</a> Project email address <a href="mailto:grafonbridge@rms.nsw.gov.au">grafonbridge@rms.nsw.gov.au</a> . 24hr project information line 1800 633 332 (toll free)	On going
Logging and tracking of all correspondence, enquiries and complaints	Consultation Manager, a web based contact data base will log and track community contact. All issues will be tagged enabling specific issues to be monitored.	On going
Meetings with key stakeholders	Project team will meet regularly with key stakeholders including council, business groups and residents (see Key stakeholders). The purpose of these meetings will be to provide a briefing on the project and discuss the consultation process going forward. A meeting register is updated regularly and made available on the project website.	Ongoing
Meetings with individual stakeholders	Project team will meet with individual stakeholders as required or requested. The purpose of these meetings will be to provide a briefing on the project and discuss the consultation process going forward.	Ongoing
<b>Community surveys</b>		
Community surveys and publication of survey reports	An initial <u>survey questionnaire</u> was included in the December 2010 community update. Feedback was invited between December 2010 and March 2011 on important issues to be considered when planning a second crossing, as well as other possible route options.	December 2010
	The <i>Postal survey feedback report</i> (April 2011) documents the feedback received on the postal survey and is available on the project website.	March 2011
	A <u>phone survey</u> was conducted in March 2011.	
	The <i>Telephone survey report</i> (May 2011) documents the survey findings and is available on the project website	April 2011
	An <u>online business survey</u> was conducted in April and May.	
	The <i>Online business survey report</i> (June 2011) documents the survey findings and is available on the project website.	
<b>Display and assessment of preliminary route options</b>		

Release of community update	The June 2011 community update was published to provide an update on the project and outline the consultation process going forward. This includes the 25 preliminary route options that would go forward for further investigation following a feasibility assessment on the 41 community suggested options.	June 2011
Staffed displays Static (unstaffed display)	<p>Staffed displays were held to give the community an opportunity to consider the identified preliminary route options; ask questions of the project team regarding the new consultation process and provide an opportunity for the community to give feedback.</p> <p>Staffed displays are arranged for certain days and times (this information will be communicated prior) at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Shopping World' (staffed display).</li> <li>• Bi Lo Shopping Complex, South Grafton (staffed display).</li> </ul> <p>Static (unstaffed) displays where possible, will be located at the venues outlined in Section 3.8 Staffed and static (unstaffed) displays.</p>	June 2011
Series of community discussion evenings	Community discussion evenings were held to address specific issues raised during the December consultation period, along with technical issues being considered as part of the project investigations. The discussion evenings were open to the community and conducted in a local venue. Experts in the field provided input with the discussion evenings lead by an experienced facilitator.	June 2011
<i>Display of Preliminary Route Options Report, Part 1</i> for community comment	A report was published on the issues and constraints in Grafton and surrounds concerning an additional crossing for community comment.	June 2011
Series of information sessions	Information sessions were held to provide an opportunity for community members to view maps, provide feedback on the <i>Preliminary Route Options Report Part 1</i> and talk one on one with members of the project team.	August 2011
Release of community update	The October 2011 community update was published to provide an update on the key technical investigations undertaken on the 25 preliminary route options.	October 2011
<i>Display of Preliminary Route Options Report Part 2</i> for community comment	A report was published on the assessment of the 25 preliminary route options against the identified issues and constraints were displayed for community comment.	October 2011



Static (unstaffed display)	Static (unstaffed) displays held at 10 locations	October 2011
Series of information sessions	Information sessions provided an opportunity for community members to view maps, provide feedback on the <i>Preliminary Route Options Report Part 2</i> and talk one on one with members of the project team.	November 2011
Evaluation workshops	<p>A community and stakeholder evaluation workshop was held to discuss the options within each of the five corridors and to gain a shared understanding of which options provide the best balance across social, environmental, economic, engineering and cost issues.</p> <p>The workshop considered community and stakeholder issues and the outcomes of the technical, environmental and other specialist studies.</p> <p>Pre brief – Meeting about the evaluation workshop, what's involved and the selection of workshop participants.</p> <p>Workshop day 1 – Evaluation of the options based on project objectives, technical criteria and community input.</p> <p>Workshop day 2 – Evaluation of the options based on project objectives, technical criteria and community input.</p> <p>Discussion about the short-list of options to be considered by RMS along with the technical investigations.</p>	November 2011
<b>Announcement of short-listed route options</b>		
Announce the shortlisted options	The January 2012 community update was published to announce the six short-listed options.	January 2012
Display the <i>Preliminary Route Options Report – Final</i> .	A report was published on the assessment of the 25 preliminary route options against the identified issues and constraints, community comments and short-listing process.	January 2012
Staffed displays Static (unstaffed display)	Staffed displays took place at Grafton Shoppingworld and South Grafton Bi-Lo complex. Static (unstaffed) displays were placed at 10 locations.	February 2012
<b>Assessment of short-listed route options</b>		
Release of community update	A community update which includes the preliminary concept designs on the six options is available to provide an update on the project and outline the consultation process going forward.	September 2012
Display the <i>Route Options Development Report</i> for community comment	A report of the assessment of the six short-listed options is available for community comment.	September 2012

Staffed displays Static (unstaffed display)	Staffed displays will take place at Grafton Shoppingworld. Static (unstaffed) displays are being displayed at 10 locations.	September 2012
Community information sessions	Community information sessions will be held to provide an opportunity to talk one on one with members of the project team about the six short-listed options and the outcomes of the investigations in the report.	September 2012
Public forum	A facilitated public forum will be held to provide an opportunity for the community to present on issues associated with the six short-listed options.	September 2012
Radio forum	A radio forum will be held to provide a discussion and question and answer opportunity on the radio for community members.	September 2012
Online forum	An online forum is available on the website to provide an opportunity for community members to post comments on each of the options for community comment.	September 2012
Release of report on issues raised in community submissions	A report on issues raised in community submissions will be provided to attendees at the Value Management Workshop and made available on the website.	October 2012
Value management process	Representatives of the project team, Council, agencies, other key stakeholders and the community will work through a value management process to provide input into the recommended preferred option.	October 2012

Display of the recommended preferred option		
Display of the recommended preferred option	The recommended preferred option will be displayed for public comment.	Late 2012
Display the <i>Draft Preferred Option Report</i> for community comment	A report on the selection of the recommended preferred option will be made available for community comment. The report will include a report in the submissions received from the display of the <i>Route Options Development Report</i>	Late 2012
Staffed displays Static (unstaffed display)	Staffed displays will be arranged at certain locations, days and times (this information will be communicated prior) as venue availability may change.  Static (unstaffed) displays where possible, will be located at the venues outlined in Section 3.8 Staffed and static (unstaffed) displays.	Late 2012
Announcement of the preferred option and preservation of the route		
Identification of the preferred route option	Consideration of submissions from display of recommended preferred option and identification of	Early 2013

	preferred route option.	
Announcement of the preferred route option	The preferred route option to be announced by the RMS and the Minister for Roads.	Early 2013
Display the <i>Preferred Option Report</i>	A report on the selection of the preferred option will be made available. The report will include a report in the submissions received from the display of the <i>Draft Preferred Option Report</i>	Early 2013
Preservation of the route for the preferred option	Action to preserve the route for the preferred option.	Early 2013
Evaluation of consultation process	Key stakeholders, such as Council, agencies and community participants will be invited to take part in a qualitative survey and the results of the evaluation process will be placed in the project website.	Mid 2013