



Additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton

The RTA is revising the approach to this issue, to engage more effectively with the community and stakeholders in identifying a preferred route for a second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton.

Background

The existing crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton was opened to traffic in 1932. It is a combined rail and road structure. The current approaches to the bridge are generally four lanes that merge into a two-lane bridge.

The crossing carries an average weekday volume of 27,000 vehicles (2009) and experiences long queues and delays during morning and afternoon peaks.

The local community has been advocating for a second crossing for many years to improve traffic flow in the centre of Grafton and reduce congestion.



Letter from Bob Higgins



Hello

We have prepared this document to explain to the community some changes in direction, to identify a route for a second crossing project of the Clarence River at Grafton.

A revised process is outlined, where we are going back to ask residents and stakeholders their views on suitable crossing locations and the issues that may arise.

We need to get the location of the second crossing right. Sections of the community have asked us to reconsider options for a second bridge as well as raising concerns about the basis and justification for identifying the four preliminary route options.

We take these issues seriously.

It is very important as part of this process that we:

- engage with the local Council and the business community, as well as affected landowners, all bridge users and other key stakeholders; and
- clearly explain the needs and purpose of this second crossing, and its relationship to any future upgrading of the Summerland Way.

I ask for your support as we re-examine all possible options. The first step is to survey residents on:

- what they consider the most important issues in planning a second crossing;
- what areas we should avoid and why;
- suggestions for the location of a second crossing and very importantly why.

This information will greatly assist the project team in preparing a full list of options and then by working with the community, develop a short list of options for further consideration and finally determining a preferred option for the second crossing.

The process will be transparent. We will involve and make information available to all residents and stakeholders at the appropriate times, and not afterwards.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Project Manager Chris Clark (details at the back of the brochure), after reading this document, if you need further information.

Regards

Bob Higgins
Project Director

Chris Clark
Project Manager



RTA studies and conclusions so far

Over the last 10 years, the RTA has carried out a number of studies to identify areas that would be suitable for a second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton.

A 2009 study indicated that most of the traffic that uses the existing bridge is **local traffic**. This means that:

- 45% of the vehicles are local vehicles travelling between Grafton and South Grafton and back.
- 53% of vehicles have either an origin in Grafton/South Grafton and a destination external to Grafton, or, an origin external to Grafton and a destination in Grafton/South Grafton.
- 2% of the total vehicles crossing the bridge is through traffic – traffic that has both an origin and destination external to Grafton itself.

Based on this study the RTA advised the appropriate location for a new crossing would be in the vicinity of the existing bridge.

In February 2010, the RTA sought feedback from the community on four preliminary route crossing locations close to the existing bridge. See the RTA website for more information.

At Clarence Valley Council's September 2010 meeting, it was agreed:

1. *"The Mayor, on behalf of Council, write to the RTA and the Minister for Roads and the Shadow Minister to request that, as part of the current research/consultation into the position of the Grafton Bridge, the RTA survey the people of Grafton and surrounds for their desire as to the position of the new Summerland Way/Grafton Bridge and, if necessary, expand their study zone to encompass other areas for the placement of the bridge that starts from community involvement into potential sites that are acceptable to the majority of residents and moves on from there. Taking into consideration the possibility of the Summerland Way becoming a major transport route and the need to keep heavy traffic away from the centre of Grafton. Thus, providing a viable bridge into the future for Grafton and its surrounds."*
2. *"It should be made very clear that Council fully supports the need for a new bridge at Grafton and this motion in no way suggests otherwise."*

The RTA has agreed to conduct the attached survey. The survey can be found on the project website. In addition, a phone survey will be conducted early next year.

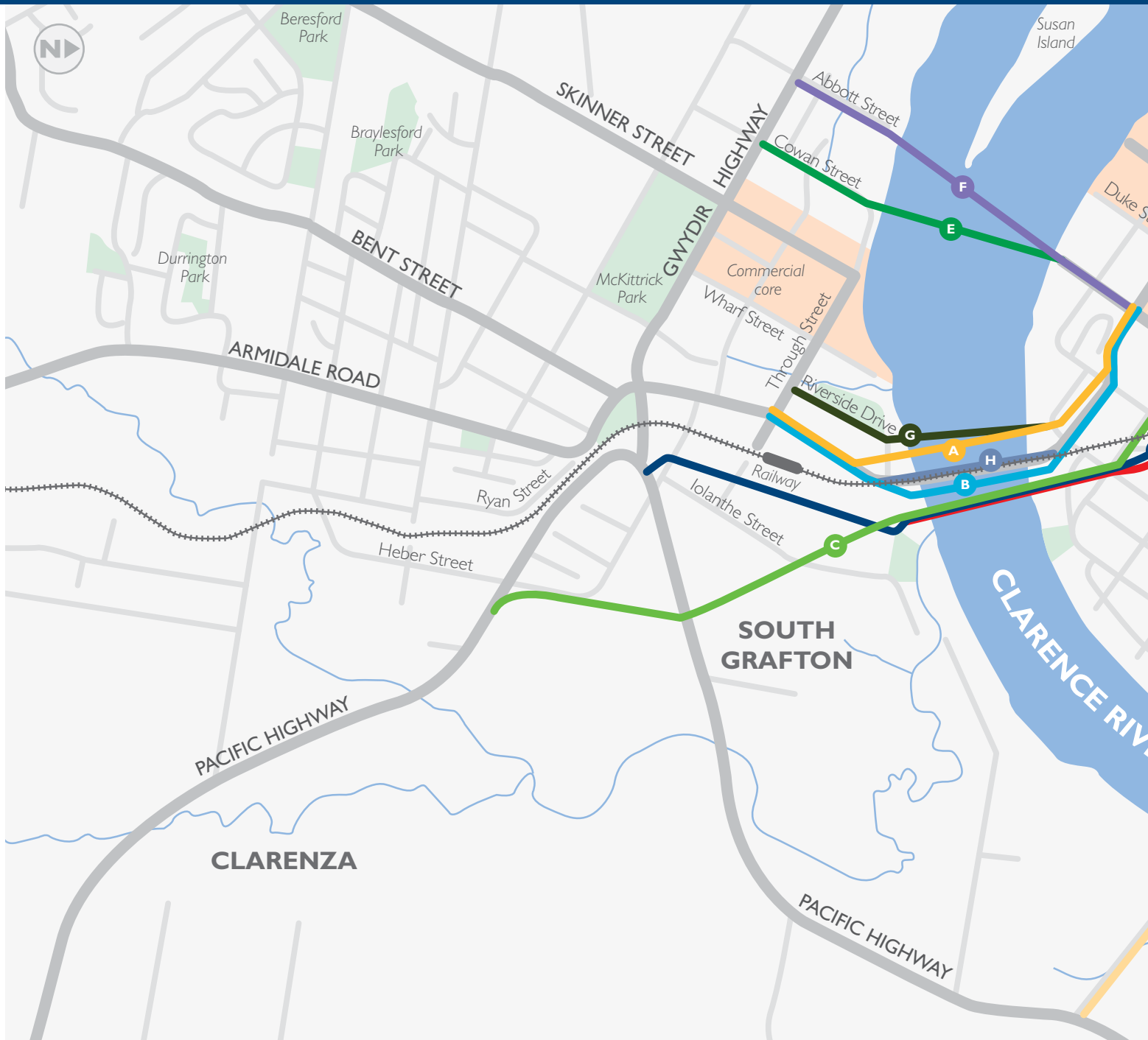
Crossing options raised by community to date

In March 2010, the RTA held discussions with the community about the preliminary options for a second crossing. The community raised options and ideas both for the study area described in the February 2010 brochure and outside this study area.

In April 2010, the then Minister for Transport and Roads met with some Grafton residents to discuss these investigations. The Minister asked the RTA to review all issues raised by the community.

The ideas and options raised by the community are described in the map on pages 4-5.

The four options proposed by the RTA in February 2010 and further options



LEGEND

Preliminary route options considered at the 2004 value management workshop		Preliminary route options proposed by the community following the February 2010 display	
█	Option A	█	Option E
█	Option B	█	Option F
█	Option F	█	Option G
Preliminary route options publicly displayed in February 2010		█	Option H
█	Option A	█	Option I
█	Option B	█	Option J
█	Option C	█	Option K
█	Option D	█	Option L
		█	Option M

The February 2003 Feasibility Study (see RTA website) identified Susan Island as an area of high ecological value and a very significant site for the local Aboriginal people. Proposed options involving Susan Island are not shown in the map and will not be considered further as possible options for a second crossing.



Community surveys

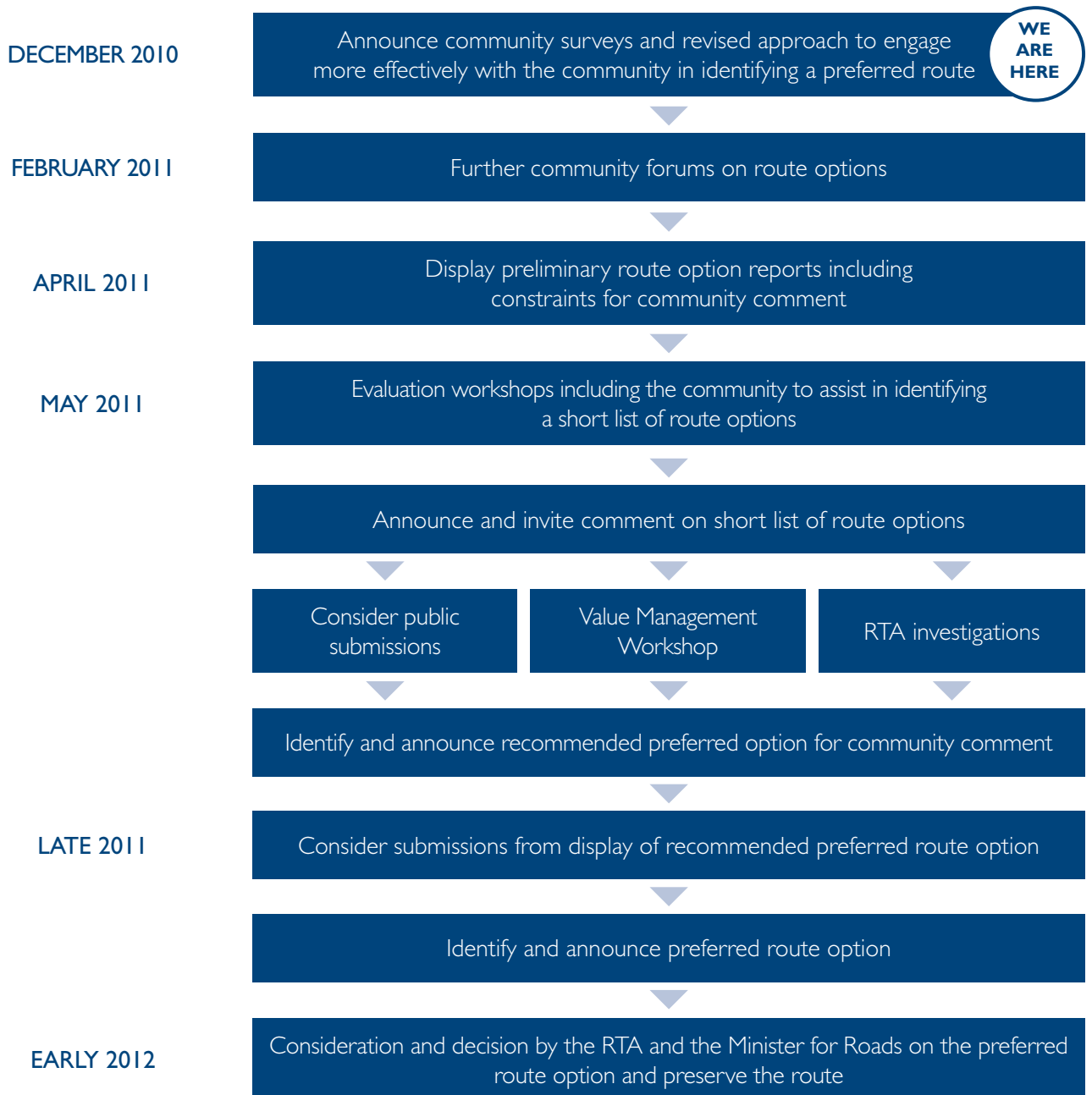
You will find with this brochure an initial community survey which you are invited to fill in and return to the RTA. The survey asks the community for their feedback about a second crossing of the Clarence River. This survey asks you to respond to some questions and indicate any additional areas you would like to have considered. In addition, a random sample of residents will also have an opportunity to respond to these questions during a phone survey. The phone survey will be conducted early next year to gather further feedback.

What happens next?

1. The RTA, with input from the community, will look at each preliminary route option, and consider them for a second crossing. Each preliminary route option may affect a range of things including residents, schools, flooding characteristics, etc.
2. The RTA, with the input from the community, will shortlist the preliminary route options to those that are most feasible for a second crossing.

Revised process to find the best option

The timetable suggested below is indicative and depends partly on issues raised by the community.



Project objectives

Are our project objectives the same?

Yes, we believe they should remain but seek your views.

Currently, they are to:

- Enhance safety for all road users over the length of the project.
- Improve traffic efficiency between and within Grafton and South Grafton.
- Support regional and local economic development.
- Involve all stakeholders and consider their interests.
- Provide value for money.
- Minimise impacts on the environment.

These objectives **are important** as they will be used to compare the feasibility of the preliminary route options generated by the community, and then the shortlist of options.

A wide range of information will help make a decision on a shortlist and a preferred option.

Project considerations

- Do the options enhance safety for all road users?
- Do the options improve traffic efficiency between and within Grafton and South Grafton?
- Do the options support regional and local economic development?
- Do the options consider the community's interests?
- Do the options provide value for money?
- Do the options minimise impacts on the environment – built, natural, social or community?

More information can be found on the RTA project website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au/graftonbridge

More information and questions and answers

Why is the RTA changing its direction?

We recognise that the community wants to examine the merits of different options for a second crossing; both close to and separate from the existing river crossing.

Can we propose ideas and options outside the previously advertised study area?

Yes. We will examine the merits of all options raised.

Will this process be worked through collaboratively WITH the community?

Yes. The section of this brochure 'What happens next?' describes the updated process. This process will include shopfront displays, community meetings and one on one meetings with key stakeholders.

What about property impacts?

Examining other route options and ideas may eventually result in property impacts that are different to those described in the February 2010 community update.

For those people whose property would be affected by an option described in the February 2010 community update, it may be that these options remain as feasible options in the ongoing process and could still be selected as the preferred option.

Does the RTA have a favoured option?

No. We will examine all route options and work through the issues transparently with the community.

What makes this process different from the process to date?

The RTA will re-examine the technical and community information, collaboratively with the community.

So the current preliminary route options are not permanently removed?

No. They could still be feasible options. We need to examine all route options and work through the issues transparently with the community.

How is the final decision made?

The RTA, with input from the community, will work on preparing a shortlist of options.

The RTA and the community will examine the issues relating to these options.

A decision on the preferred route will be made based on field studies, a value management workshop and thorough consideration of community submissions.

The recommended option will be displayed for community comment before being adopted as the preferred option.

What about the community liaison plan July 2010?

This has been updated to include the changed investigation process. The updated community liaison plan is available on the RTA website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au/graftonbridge

Have your say

We invite you to complete this survey and return it by **Tuesday 8 February 2011** (no postage stamp is required).

1. What do you think are the most important issues when planning a second crossing?

2. What are the areas to avoid and why?

3. In addition to those shown on the map in the brochure, are there other options for the second crossing that could be considered and why? Please use the map below to draw in your suggestion.

4. Are there any other issues you would like to raise?

* A separate submission is welcome if there is insufficient room, or you wish to add further comment.



Your postcode _____

Optional information

Name _____

Address _____

Suburb _____ Postcode _____ State _____

Telephone number _____ and/or email address: _____

Do you want to be kept informed about this project Yes

How would you like to be kept informed? Email Mail

If yes make sure you complete sufficient contact information above.

To mail this questionnaire fold along the dotted lines and seal with clear tape.

Mail your completed questionnaire (no stamp required) to the address below.

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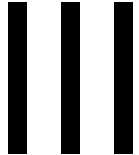
Personal details not to be published.

FOLD HERE FIRST



Delivery Address:
PO Box 546
GRAFTON NSW 2460

No stamp required
if posted in Australia



RTA
Grafton Bridge
Reply Paid 546
GRAFTON NSW 2460

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Contacts in the RTA

The following changes to the project team have occurred:

The General Manager Pacific Highway Bob Higgins assumes the role of providing direction and leadership to the project team in identifying a preferred route for the second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton.

Chris Clark from the Pacific Highway office is the project manager.

Any correspondence can be sent to:

Chris Clark
PO Box 546
Grafton NSW 2460

Phone: 1800 633 332 (toll free)
Email: graftonbridge@rta.nsw.gov.au

Staffed display locations

Staffed displays will be held at:

Grafton Shopping World

Thursday 9 December and Thursday 16 December,
from 9am to 1pm and 5pm to 7pm.

Bi Lo Complex, Bent Street, South Grafton

Thursday 9 December and Thursday 16 December,
from 9am to 1pm and 5pm to 7pm.

The RTA welcomes the community to these displays to speak with members of the project team.

Display locations

Display locations will be at the:

RTA Pacific Highway Office (project team location)
21 Prince Street, Grafton NSW 2460
(Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4.30pm)

RTA Regional Office Grafton

31 Victoria Street, Grafton NSW 2460
(Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4.30pm)

RTA Motor Registry Office Grafton

3 King Street, Grafton NSW 2460
(Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)



recycled



elemental
chlorine
free



mill
certified



renewable
energy



sustainable
forest



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For further enquiries

Chris Clark, RTA Project Manager

T 1800 633 332 | **E** graftonbridge@rta.nsw.gov.au

www.rta.nsw.gov.au/graftonbridge

December 2010
RTA/Pub. 10.368

**** December community update:**

There has been a printing error on page six of the update distributed to some areas in Grafton and surrounds. The correct version of the December 2010 community update is on the project website. The correct version of the community update will be distributed throughout Grafton and surrounds shortly. The RTA apologises for any inconvenience caused by the distribution of the incorrect update.