



Transport for NSW

Mulwala Bridge

Community consultation summary



Executive summary

Transport for NSW (Transport), in collaboration with Victoria's Department of Transport (DoT), is continuing to plan for a future crossing over the Murray River at Mulwala. The new bridge is required to replace the current bridge, which provides a critical transport link between the twin towns of Mulwala in NSW and Yarrawonga in Victoria.

In 2014, DoT (formerly known as Regional Roads Victoria) consulted with the community on crossing and connection options known as the 'Grey' and 'Green' routes. Following extensive consultation and planning work, the 'Grey' route option was endorsed as the preferred route by the NSW and Victorian governments in 2015.

Transport acknowledges community sentiment may have changed since initial consultation was carried out in 2014 and determined further consultation was necessary to confirm the preferred option. Consultation was held from 15 June to 30 July 2021, to help Transport better understand community issues, concerns and what is valued about the 'Grey' and 'Green' routes.

Consultation approach and participation

Transport used a range of communication tools and activities to generate awareness about the alignment options and provide multiple avenues for feedback, including:

- *community update delivered to all properties in Mulwala and Yarrawonga*
- *project website*
- *interactive 'Have your Say' site and Places map*
- *online information session*
- *project information line, email and postal address*
- *media release, resulting in local media coverage*
- *social media and newspaper advertising.*

The consultation period was promoted through multiple channels with broad reach, to ensure maximum exposure within Mulwala and Yarrawonga. Nearly 7000 properties received the community update. The three sponsored posts on the NSW Roads Facebook page received nearly 30,000 impressions and 1899 clicks were recorded through to the project website. The *Yarrawonga Chronicle*, in which paid advertising occurred, claims monthly combined print and digital readership of 39,750.

During the consultation period, 242 incoming interactions were received via the project information line, email and postal address, 929 participants viewed the online engagement tool page, over 150 comments were left on the interactive map, and the website homepage page recorded almost 4000 views. Thirty-eight participants attended the online information session, with the session recording viewed online by about 3500 people.

Of the more than 10,000 interactions, Transport received 285 submissions providing feedback about the 'Green' and 'Grey' route options. Comments within submissions were categorised into the following broad themes, with each category containing multiple sub-issues for more in-depth issue identification:

- *traffic and transport*
- *socio-economic*
- *project description*
- *general project detail*

- *environment*
- *design*
- *consultation process.*

Consultation issues and themes

'Traffic and transport' was the category that received the most comments (199), with a majority relating to removing through traffic and reducing congestion on Belmore Street, Yarrawonga.

Of the 285 submissions, 74 per cent of respondents indicated preference for the 'Green' route. Submissions supporting the 'Green' route were based around traffic, safety, recreation and tourism. Submissions that preferred the 'Green' route referenced reduced congestion due to heavy vehicles being diverted away from Belmore Street and Yarrawonga town centre. Submissions stated this would improve safety outcomes for pedestrians, particularly elderly community members, and transport customers.

Many supporters of the 'Green' route also requested the current bridge be retained, despite Transport's continued communication that the current bridge will be removed once a new bridge has been built. The existing structure has reached the end of its serviceable life and will be replaced by a bridge on either the 'Grey' or 'Green' route. It is uncertain if some 'Green' route support is dependent on retaining the current bridge, and if route preference would change knowing the current bridge will be removed either way.

Submissions supporting the 'Grey' route were based around local business, tourism, and accessibility. 'Grey' route support focussed on connectivity between the two town centres, including pedestrians and cyclists, and local traffic movements between frequently accessed destinations. This is supported by traffic modelling showing most traffic movements are between local destinations (as opposed to through traffic). Submissions indicated the 'Grey' route would support local businesses in Mulwala and Yarrawonga, as it funnels transport users, including tourists and pedestrians, through the town centres.

The relatively low number of submissions received in total, in relation to the reach of promotion and total number of interactions, may indicate that many people have no strong preference, are yet to decide their preferred option, are experiencing consultation fatigue, or their information needs were met by the materials/responses provided.

Next steps

This community consultation summary will be used to confirm the preferred option for the location of the future bridge. Transport will consider all feedback and comments on both bridge options and seek confirmation from the NSW and Victorian governments on the outcome.

Transport will provide a further update to the community in 2022.

Timeframes for design and construction of the new bridge are yet to be determined and depend on future budget allocation. This is expected to occur within the next five to 10 years, as per the Murray River Crossings Investment Prioritisation Assessment.

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1 Introduction

1.1 About the project

Transport for NSW, in collaboration with Victoria's Department of Transport (DoT), is continuing to plan for a future crossing over the Murray River at Mulwala. The new bridge is required to replace the existing, aged bridge, which provides a critical transport link between the twin towns of Mulwala, in NSW, and Yarrawonga, in Victoria.

Constructed in 1924, the existing Mulwala Bridge has reached the end of its serviceable life and needs to be replaced, to ensure a safe and serviceable structure that meets the community's current and future needs. When construction of the new bridge is complete, the current bridge will be demolished.

The current bridge, **Figure 1**, currently accommodates almost 10,000 vehicle crossings each day. This includes traffic that previously used the single-lane weir bridge, which closed to traffic in October 2021. Traffic and population modelling predicts continued growth in the local area, with Yarrawonga identified as a future key regional centre by the Victorian Planning Authority. The new Mulwala Bridge will play a critical role in ensuring transport and socio-economic connectivity between the twin towns, while providing efficient through access for heavy vehicles and passing traffic.

Following extensive consultation and planning work in 2014 by DoT (formerly known as Regional Roads Victoria), the 'Grey' route option was endorsed as the preferred route by the NSW and Victorian governments in 2015. Transport acknowledges community sentiment may have changed since initial consultation was carried out in 2014 and determined further consultation was necessary to confirm the preferred option. Outcomes of consultation carried out in mid-2021 will help inform this decision.



Figure 1 The current Mulwala Bridge to be replaced

1.1.1 Community profile

At the 2016 census, Yarrawonga had a population of 7930 people, and Mulwala had a population of 1986. In both Yarrawonga and Mulwala, more than 80 per cent of

people were born in Australia, and more than 70 per cent of people had both parents born in Australia.

According to the 2016 census, the most common occupations in Yarrawonga and Mulwala included technicians and trades workers, managers, labourers, professionals, and community and personal service workers. Of the employed people, almost five per cent worked in explosive manufacturing, making it the major employment industry in the area. Other major industries included clubs (hospitality), supermarket and grocery stores, accommodation and aged care residential services.

The area's main attraction is Lake Mulwala, a man-made reservoir created through the construction of the Yarrawonga Weir across the Murray River, and the local golf courses. The lake is used for recreational activities including boating, kayaking and fishing. Historically, there were two crossings of the Murray between Yarrawonga and Mulwala - across the weir (a stock route carrying a single lane of traffic – closed to traffic in October 2021) and the current bridge over Lake Mulwala (to be replaced).

1.2 Background

For more than 10 years, Transport and DoT have worked with the community, government agencies and industry to determine the best option for a new bridge crossing over the Murray River at Lake Mulwala.

In 2009, DoT commissioned a planning study to identify options for a new bridge and approaches within the townships of Yarrawonga and Mulwala. The study assessed multiple options and resulted in two options being progressed for further planning and consultation.

In 2014, DoT consulted with the community on crossing and connection options known as the 'Grey' and 'Green' routes (see **Figure 2**).

The Victorian and NSW governments both endorsed the 'Grey' route option for the Mulwala Bridge in 2015, as best responding to the transport needs of the two communities.

In 2018, the NSW and Victorian governments carried out the Murray River Crossings Investment Prioritisation Assessment, to help inform and prioritise future investment decisions by ranking each crossing over the Murray River. The assessment reviewed 32 bridge and ferry assets and considered freight connectivity, road safety, reliability, condition, proximity to alternate crossings and pedestrian and cyclist facilities.

Mulwala Bridge was ranked eighth highest priority for investment and was categorised as a medium-term priority (five to 10 years). While this priority ranking has not changed, Transport is continuing to investigate a preferred option for future certainty and land use planning.

1.2.1 Local government-led consultation

In 2017 and 2019, Moira Shire Council (Yarrawonga) and Federation Council (Mulwala) conducted plebiscites inviting their respective constituents to vote on their preferred alignment for the new Mulwala Bridge. Transport understands the outcomes of this consultation favoured the 'Green' route. Since then, both councils have publicly supported the 'Green' route. Furthermore, in 2019, Moira Shire Council released a concept design for the Yarrawonga Foreshore Masterplan, designed around the 'Green' route proceeding.

Transport is also aware of several community-led initiatives to seek feedback, with various outcomes.



Figure 2 Map provided in 2021 consultation material showing 'Grey' and 'Green' routes

1.3 Options consultation

Transport has acknowledged community sentiment may have changed since initial consultation in 2014, which led to the decision to conduct further consultation to confirm the preferred option. Consultation was held from 15 June to 30 July 2021.

During the consultation period, the community was invited to provide feedback about its preferred alignment, to help Transport better understand issues, concerns and what is valued about each option.

Figure 2 shows the 'Grey' and 'Green' alignment options, as presented to the community in 2021. The benefits and design considerations for each option, as described in the consultation newsletter, are provided in **Table 1** below.

Table 1 'Grey' and 'Green' route benefits and design considerations

	'Grey'	'Green'
Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connects from Belmore Street, Yarrawonga to Melbourne Street, Mulwala 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connects from Irvine Parade, Yarrawonga to Melbourne Street, Mulwala
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving connectivity to residential areas east of Belmore Street Providing an alternative freight route removing trucks from Belmore Street Minimal impacts to Melbourne Street, Mulwala, as existing conditions maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing through traffic and reducing congestion in Belmore Street, Yarrawonga Providing an alternative freight route, removing trucks from Belmore Street Improving access to the Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort

	'Grey'	'Green'
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the option for customers to access Belmore Street • Providing the shortest travel route for pedestrians and cyclists between Melbourne Street and Belmore Street • Providing direct access to Yarrawonga foreshore supporting tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening-up the Yarrawonga and Mulwala foreshores, once the current bridge is removed.
Design considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic on Irvine Parade between Belmore Street and the rail line • Increased environmental impacts such as noise, pollution and congestion to residents in Irvine Parade, between Piper Street and Belmore Street • Potential heritage impacts, including the relocation of a local heritage customs house • Preventing broader recreational use on Lake Mulwala • Preventing possible foreshore development by retaining current bridge location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased environmental impacts such as noise, pollution and congestion to residents in Piper Street and McNally Street, Yarrawonga • Significantly increased traffic on Piper Street and McNally Street as they would become the only local road connections to Belmore Street and East Yarrawonga • Removing the direct connection for southbound traffic from accessing Belmore Street • Increased traffic on Gulai Road, Mulwala • Reduced connectivity for residents east of Belmore Street travelling to Mulwala • Longer travel route for pedestrians and cyclists between Melbourne Street and Belmore Street • Unknown environmental and heritage impacts as assessment has not been carried out along proposed 'Green' route • Reduced direct access to Yarrawonga foreshore due to the crossing being further away • Impacts the water treatment plant and local businesses including reducing car parking at Club Mulwala RSL and acquisition of land from

	'Grey'	'Green'
		Yarrowonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort.

2 Consultation approach

2.1 Consultation objectives

Consultation was held from 15 June to 30 July 2021, to help Transport better understand community issues, concerns and what is valued about the 'Grey' and 'Green' routes.

Engagement objectives included:

- *creating awareness in Mulwala and Yarrawonga about the two alignment options, benefits, constraints, and feedback channels*
- *enabling access to information, by using a range of communication tools and feedback channels*
- *obtaining high levels of community participation in the consultation process, with feedback representing diverse perspectives and stakeholder groups*
- *enhancing community satisfaction about the consultation process, and acceptance of the project.*

2.2 Values

Transport's values underpin our decisions and behaviours when working with customers, colleagues, stakeholders and partners.

- *Customer focus: We place the customer at the centre of everything we do.*
- *Collaboration: We value each other and create better outcomes by working together.*
- *Solutions: We deliver sustainable and innovative solutions to NSW's transport needs.*
- *Integrity: We take responsibility and communicate openly.*
- *Safety: We prioritise safety for our people and our customers.*

2.3 COVID-19 considerations

Consultation on the 'Green' and 'Grey' route options took place during COVID-19 restrictions (June 2021).

As a result, Transport implemented a digital engagement approach as an alternative to in-person engagement methods. Alongside traditional consultation activities and communication tools, Transport employed digital engagement tools where typically in-person engagement would take place, including an Engagement HQ platform 'Places' map and an online information session.

2.4 Consultation methodology

Transport used a range of communication tools and activities to generate awareness about the alignment options and provide multiple avenues for feedback.

Table 2 summarises the engagement activities and communication tools used to support the consultation.

Table 2 Tools and activities

Activity	Timing	Detail
Community update	21/06/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community update: letterbox dropped to 6928 properties in Mulwala and Yarrawonga uploaded to project webpage nswroads.work/mulwalabridge and 'Have your Say' consultation page yoursay.transport.nsw.gov.au/murray-river-bridge-crossing-at-mulwala.
'Have your Say' site and Places map	Throughout consultation	<p>Project-specific consultation webpage established on Transport's 'Have your Say' site. www.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/mulwala-bridge-feedback This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an interactive 'Places' map, enabling visitors to drop pins and provide feedback - communication material available for download and promoting other available feedback channels - 'live' consultation channels updated at the end of consultation period.
Project website	Ongoing	<p>Project webpage on the Transport website nswroads.work/mulwalabridge. This contained the latest news, background, and downloadable resources including community updates, project notifications, FAQs and media releases.</p>
Online information session	14/07/2021, 1pm	<p>An online community information session was held via Microsoft Teams. Community members could access the livestream by going to nswroads.work/mulwalabridgeqanda. A recording was made available for viewing on the project website after the event.</p> <p>A document summarising community questions received during the session, and Transport and DoT responses, was also uploaded to project website.</p>
Project information line and email	Ongoing	<p>Ph: 1300 679 842 Email: murrayrivercrossing@transport.nsw.gov.au Post: New Mulwala Bridge project team, PO Box 484, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650</p>

Activity	Timing	Detail
Joint media release	15/06/2021	A joint media release from The Hon Paul Toole MP, NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, and The Hon Jacinta Allan, Victorian Minister for Transport Infrastructure.
Advertising	Throughout consultation	Social media campaign comprising three sponsored Facebook posts from the NSW Roads account, directing people to Transport's project webpage to find out more and provide feedback. Print advertisements appearing in the <i>Yarrawonga Chronicle</i> on 23 June and 7 July 2021.

3 Consultation summary

3.1 Project communication channels

In total, **242** incoming interactions were received via the project information line, email and postal address during the consultation period. **Table 3** shows the number of interactions by channel.

Table 3 number of incoming interactions by channel

Channel	Interactions
Project information line	12
Email	202
Letter	28

3.2 Online engagement

An interactive consultation tool was established on Transport's 'Have Your Say' (Engagement HQ) platform, enabling community members to access project information and resources, and leave feedback on an interactive map.

In total, 929 participants viewed the online engagement tool page during the consultation period. There were 25 total downloads of project materials.

Over 150 comments were left on the interactive map (**Figure 3**), with key issues and themes including:

- *support for the 'Green' route*
- *requests to retain current bridge*
- *concerns about heavy vehicle movements on Belmore Street, and existing congestion issues*
- *accommodating future population growth, development and Foreshore Master Plan.*

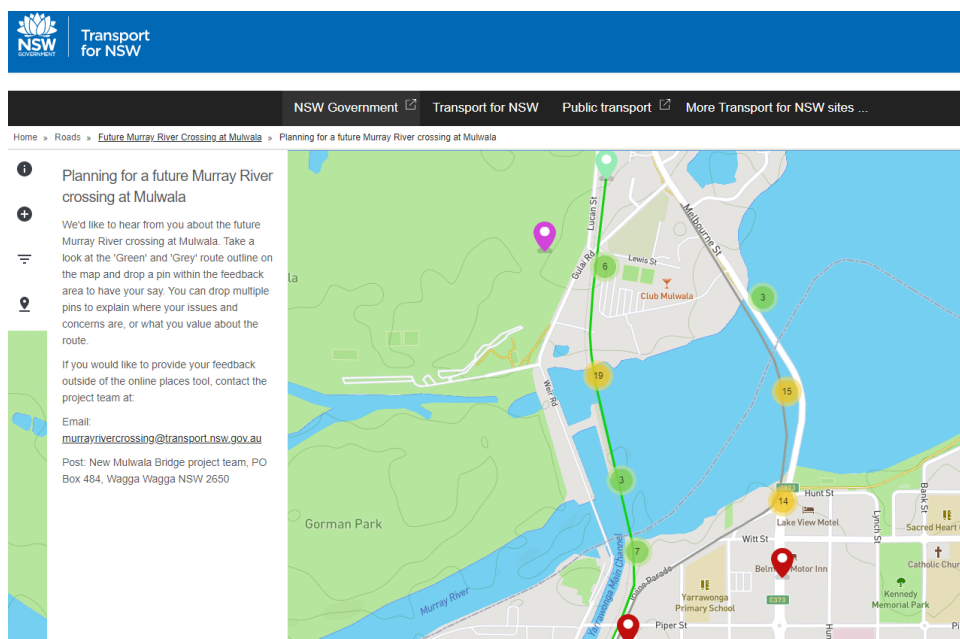


Figure 3 Screen shot of interactive Places map on 'Have your Say' page

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In addition to the 'Have your Say' interactive engagement platform, information was also available on Transport's project webpage. The webpage provided key project information and directed visitors to the various consultation channels. In total, there were almost 4000 page views during consultation. **Figure 4** shows detailed metrics from the project webpage, over the consultation period.



Figure 4 Project webpage metrics during consultation

3.3 Online information session

Transport hosted an online community information session on Wednesday 14 July at 1pm. The event provided an opportunity to learn more about the two design options, ask questions and get real-time answers from the project team.

Thirty-eight participants dialled in to the session, which was followed by a live question and answer session. A recording was made available on the project website after the session. In total, the session was viewed by about 3500 people.

There were 28 questions asked during the session (see **Appendix A** for all questions and responses). Question themes included:

- ongoing maintenance costs for current bridge
- retaining the current bridge
- possibility of size/weight limits on current bridge
- rationale for project prioritisation, compared to other crossings
- cost of the two options
- traffic volumes – local traffic versus through traffic
- heavy vehicle diversions from Belmore Street under the 'Grey' option (ie, enforcement of alternate route)
- investigations into each route's suitability for managing heavy vehicles
- heavy vehicles compromising use of the foreshore
- new road connections to bridge
- next steps regarding announcing chosen option, and construction timeframes
- ability for consultation outcomes influencing both State Governments' current position

- *lack of objectivity of previous surveys*
- *potential future bypass*
- *consideration of councils' preference*
- *results from previous plebiscites*
- *potential impacts to water treatment plant, Club Mulwala RSL and Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort*
- *impacts to Gulai Road and the railway line*
- *retaining the weir crossing*
- *previous planning work.*

3.4 Media coverage

Eight local media articles were identified during the consultation period. **Table 4** shows the outlet, date, overarching sentiment and brief content description.

A selection of the media clippings are shown in **Figure 5**.

Table 4 Summary of media coverage

Channel	Date	Title	Sentiment	Content
Shepparton News/Yarrawonga Chronicle	16/06/2021	Minister's bridge process outlined	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive quote from Minister Toole
Yarrawonga Chronicle online	17/06/2021	Feedback needed again for new bridge	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive quote from Minister Toole • Positive quote from Minister Allan • Promoted consultation channels
Yarrawonga Chronicle	23/06/2021	Lake Mulwala Bridge route have your say (Four-page wrap-around)	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moira Council sponsored wrap-around • 'Green' focused
The Border Mail	14/07/2021	Lake Mulwala bridge forum conducted by Transport for NSW and Victorian Department of Transport	Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct quotes from Teams Live event

Channel	Date	Title	Sentiment	Content
Riverine Herald	21/07/2021	Feedback needed for new bridge	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive quote from Minister Toole • Positive quote from Minister Allan • Promoted consultation channels
Riverine Herald/ Yarrawonga Chronicle	28/07/2021	Last chance to have your say on a new bridge	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive quote from Minister Toole • Positive quote from Minister Allan • Promoted consultation channels.



Figure 5 Media coverage

3.4.1 Social media

Throughout June and July, there were three sponsored posts about the consultation period on the NSW Roads Facebook page. Posts were geo-targeted to Facebook users in the local area, not just those who Follow/Like the NSW Roads Facebook page. Post performance was as follows:

- *sponsored post #1 (18-24 June): Reach 5,832, link clicks 99*
- *sponsored post #2 (20-26 July): Reach 13,144, link clicks 959*
- *sponsored post #3 (24-30 July): Reach 10,292, link clicks 841.*

Several community members commented on the posts, queried timelines for the new bridge and made requests to retain the current bridge, however, these were not treated as submissions.

Figure 6 shows the sponsored Facebook posts in order.

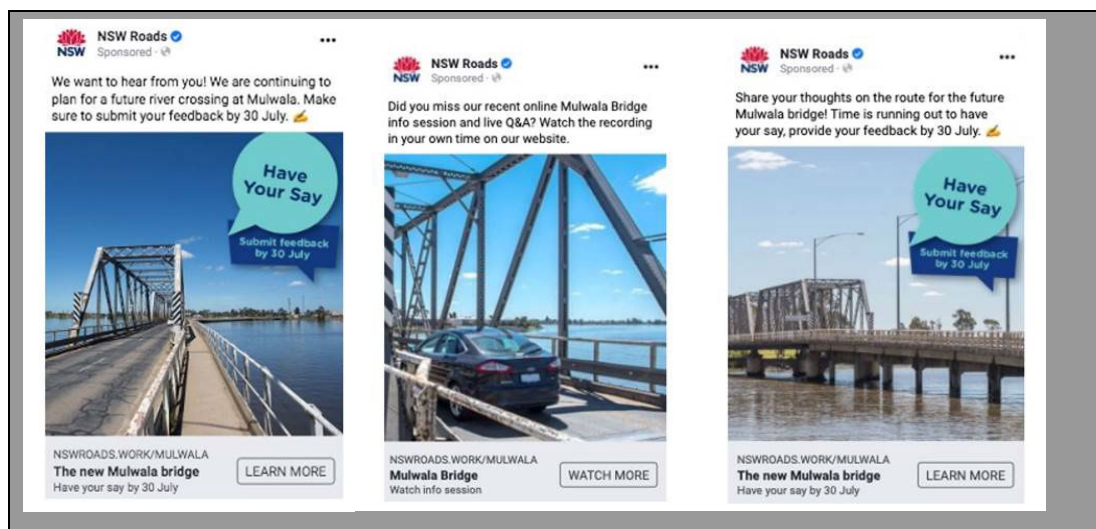


Figure 6 Sponsored Facebook posts

3.5 Feedback and Transport's responses

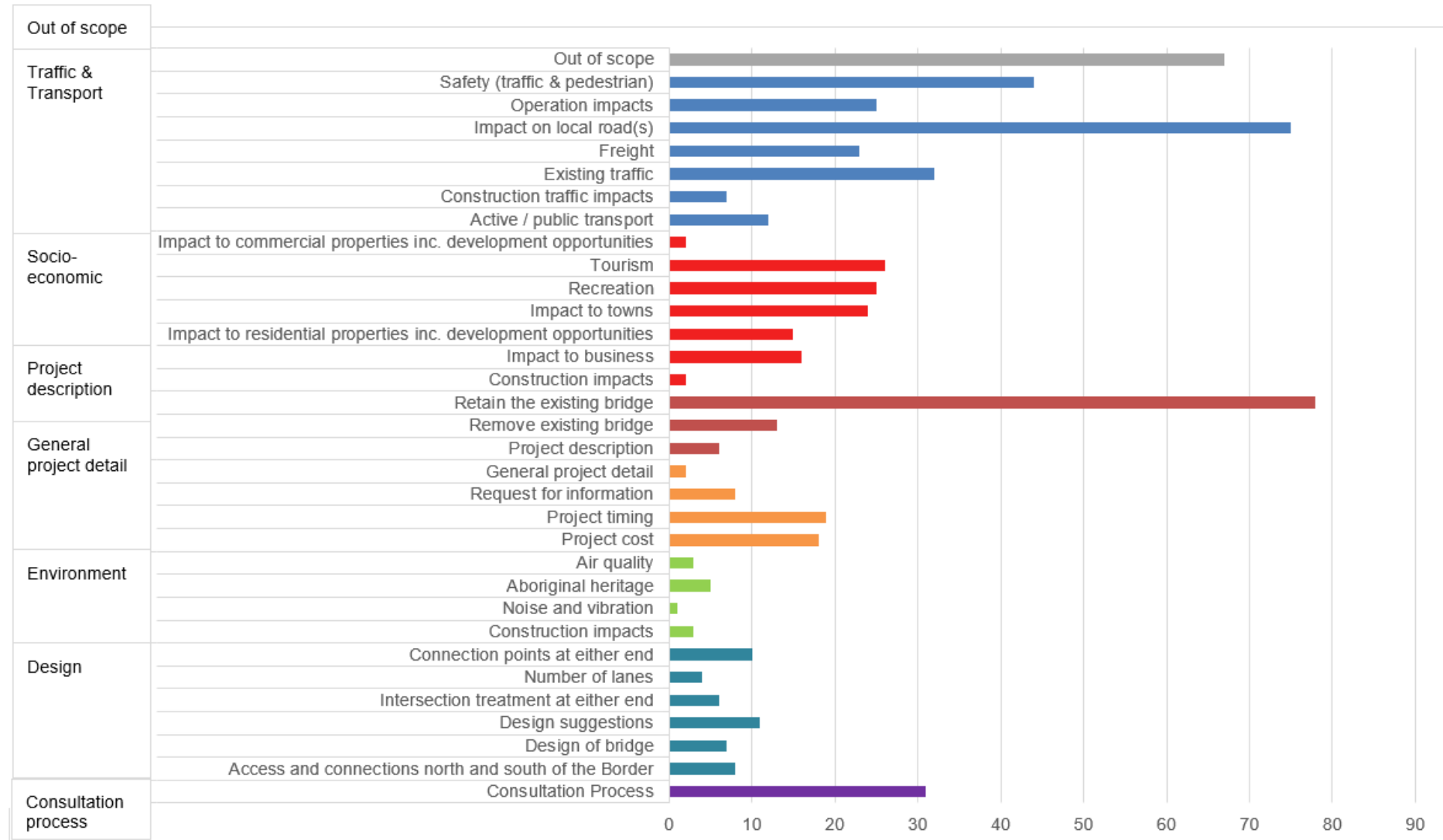
Transport received 285 submissions which were broken down into comments and categorised into the following broad themes. Each category contains a number of sub-issues for more in-depth categorisation and issue identification.

Themes included:

- *traffic and transport*
- *socio-economic*
- *project description*
- *general project detail*
- *environment*
- *design*
- *consultation process.*

Figure 7 shows the number of comments for each sub-category.

Figure 7 Number of submission comments for each sub-category



Of the 285 submissions, 211 indicated support for the 'Green' route, 60 for the 'Grey' route, and 14 no preference (**Figure 8** below).

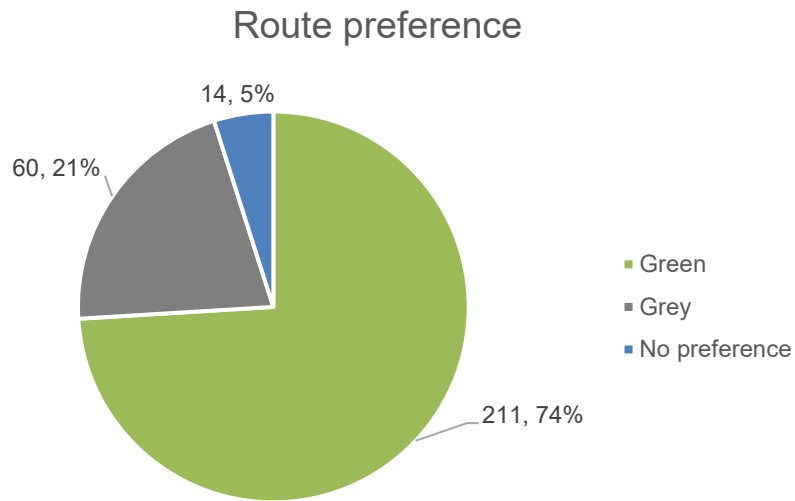


Figure 8 breakdown of route preference

'Traffic and transport' was the issue category that received the most comments (199) with a majority relating to removing through traffic and reducing congestion on Belmore Street, Yarrawonga.

During the submission period, the community was able to make a submission by email, mail, phone, online or via the Have Your Say engagement portal. The majority of submissions were made by email. **Figure 9** below provides a breakdown of the submissions by communication channel.

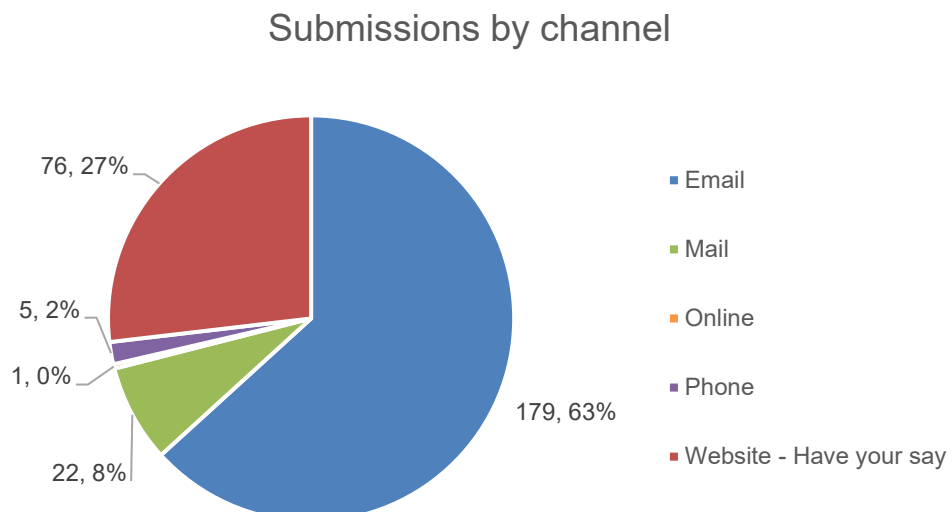


Figure 9 Source of submissions by communication channel

3.5.1 Comments supporting the 'Green' route

Submissions in support of the 'Green' route were based around traffic, safety, recreation and tourism. Submissions that preferred the 'Green' route referenced

reduced congestion on Belmore Street because of heavy vehicle traffic being diverted away from Belmore Street and Yarrawonga town centre. Submissions also stated this would improve safety outcomes for pedestrians, particularly elderly community members, and transport users. Submissions also indicated an increase in future traffic at Mulwala and Yarrawonga with more residential development. It was believed the 'Green' route would better accommodate this increase than the 'Grey' route. Several submissions also referred to the 'Green' route increasing community safety as it diverts freight carrying explosives away from the town centres.

The 'Green' route was also preferred because removing the current bridge would increase usable space on the foreshore and provide opportunities for recreation areas, in turn increasing tourism in the area. Several submissions mentioned the 'Green' route aligns with the objectives of the Foreshore Master Plan. Submissions in support of the 'Green' route also stated the bridge would be safer and enable better access for heavy vehicle traffic because the alignment would be straighter and shorter than the 'Grey' route.

3.5.2 Comments supporting the 'Grey' route

Submissions in support of the 'Grey' route were based around local business, tourism, and accessibility. 'Grey' route support related to heavy vehicle traffic being diverted away from the town centres without impacting local businesses. Submissions indicated the 'Grey' route would support local businesses in Yarrawonga and Mulwala as it funnels transport users, including tourists and pedestrians, through the town centres. Submissions also supported the 'Grey' route's provision to divert heavy vehicle traffic via Irvine Parade rather than Belmore Street. Several submissions indicated the 'Grey' route provides a direct connection between Yarrawonga and Mulwala. This direct connection particularly benefits active modes of transport, as the 'Green' route is further away from the town centres, potentially making it more difficult for the elderly and people with disabilities to access these areas.

Concern was raised by several submissions that the 'Green' route would increase traffic on residential streets, in particular Piper and Orr streets, resulting in increased traffic noise and congestion.

3.5.3 Transport responses to feedback

Transport has analysed and categorised all submissions received during the consultation period. **Table 5** describes key issues and themes for each category, and Transport's response.

Table 5 key comments and Transport's responses

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
Consultation Process	31	<p>Key issues raised during the consultation process include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty using the mapping tool to provide feedback • inconsistency and lack of detail of how the 'Green' option has been mapped • information provided in options material is misleading favouring the 'Grey' option • the consultation process has been lengthy and fatiguing • there are misconceptions about the current bridge being retained if the 'Green' option progresses influencing support of the 'Green' option. <p>Positive feedback was received for the flyer released in 2021.</p> <p>Suggestions for a community feedback session to discuss the submissions received.</p>	<p>During the consultation period, Transport provided a range of communication tools and activities to generate awareness about the alignment options and offered multiple avenues for the community to share its feedback, including social media posts, information line, email, project website, mapping tool and online community information session. This range of methods was adopted to enable an inclusive consultation process.</p> <p>Due to opposing points of community feedback from both councils, the NSW and Victorian governments and length of time since announcement of the preferred option, Transport needed further consultation to better understand issues, concerns and what is valued about the 'Grey' and 'Green' options.</p> <p>The current bridge is at the end of its serviceable life and will be removed following construction of the new crossing regardless of the option chosen.</p> <p>The objective of recent consultation is to help confirm a preferred corridor for a new bridge. Further refinement and exact placement of the crossing on either the 'Grey' or 'Green' route will be developed as the project</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
			progresses. Transport will contact the community as more information and design options are available.
Design – access north and south and connection points	18	<p>Key issues for access and connection points include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a roundabout at the southern end of the bridge may have safety and access issues for heavy vehicles, particularly B-doubles • comment the 'Green' option would require a roundabout near the rail line for Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort users • the 'Green' route is a shorter and more direct approach for future connections with Corowa, Barooga and Tocumwal roads • the 'Green' route allows for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ future expansion and continuation north through Mulwala, along the rail line ○ larger vehicles to be removed from Melbourne Road ○ connection to Murray Valley Highway via Burley Road. <p>Feedback about the 'Green' route included it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a better alignment with Melbourne Road (instead of Gulai Road) • provides more direct access to the Murray Valley Highway, Mulwala, and the Golf Club • could be extended through to Bayly Road. 	<p>Transport has noted feedback regarding access north and south for both the 'Green' and 'Grey' route.</p> <p>Safety is the number one priority when designing any new infrastructure. Specialist road designers plan road connections, intersections and roundabouts taking in to account vehicle sizes, movements, sight distances, topography, environmental considerations and safety specifications. During concept design for the preferred route, intersection treatments will be investigated where required based on traffic modelling and standards.</p> <p>If the 'Green' route is chosen, there would effectively be a direct link on the western part of Irvine Parade onto the 'Green' route bridge. If the 'Grey' route is chosen, that road connection would extend east along Irvine Parade. A new intersection would then be established at the southern edge of the bridge to enable both light and heavy vehicles to safely turn onto Irvine Parade, linking to the new access road to the Murray Valley Highway.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<p>Feedback about the 'Grey' route included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concerns it passes residential areas with sharp bends and the need for a roundabout • concerns about heavy vehicles turning onto the 'Grey' route from Irvine Parade • it is more direct 'point-to-point', and directly links the main streets of the towns providing access to shops • maintaining a direct route between Melbourne Street, Mulwala and Belmore Street, Yarrawonga was important • it diverts heavy vehicles away from the main street, while still providing access between the two town centres. 	
Design - of the bridge	7	<p>Feedback about the bridge design included it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should be designed to accommodate trucks, cyclists and pedestrians should: • consider aesthetics and environmental (foreshore) surroundings • be a visual asset to the foreshore area of Mulwala and Yarrawonga. 	<p>Transport has noted feedback regarding the design of the bridge and will consider urban design and the surrounding environment during development of the concept design through environmental assessment. During the concept design phase, Transport will consult with councils and the community regarding urban and landscape design of the bridge.</p>
Design - suggestions	11	<p>Design suggestions included that the Mulwala side of the 'Green' route follow the railway line:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to the northern boundary and potentially to the Riverina Highway through to Barooga-Corowa Road 	<p>Transport notes design suggestions, however, additional connections and alignments are out of scope.</p> <p>Transport will continue to engage with the community during the design development phase of the project.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> from north of Mulwala Canal through to Benalla Road in Victoria towards Oakland through to Savernake Road intersection north of Mulwala. <p>It was also suggested to divert traffic away from town through the open land at the rear of Club Mulwala.</p>	
Design – Intersection treatment at either end	6	<p>Feedback about the intersection treatments at either end of the bridge, included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the 'Green' route would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encroach on the rail corridor impact the Mulwala Water Plant require relocation of the power network reduce connectivity for residents east of Belmore Street a suggestion to install a roundabout at the intersection of Burley Road and Murray Valley Highway, to improve traffic flow the need to improve congestion at Irvine Avenue intersecting with Murray River Highway the entrance and exit to the 'Green' route is more "streamlined" the 'Grey' route would require a complex interchange on the Yarrawonga side, and a bend in the road. 	<p>The location and type of intersection treatments will be developed during concept design. The treatment required at intersections will be based on current and future traffic modelling and safety standards.</p> <p>During concept design phase, there will be further opportunities for the community to provide feedback.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
Design – number of lanes	4	<p>Feedback received during consultation included that the bridge should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be two lanes wide as there had historically been two bridges (weir crossing and current bridge) • accommodate future capacity and not interfere with oncoming traffic • accommodate future road trains, agricultural equipment, and pedestrians. 	<p>Transport is aware of the constraints and safety implications related to the current bridge. The proposed bridge design will accommodate and facilitate the safe movement of current and future vehicle and traffic volume requirements.</p> <p>Vehicle sizes and movements and active transport infrastructure will be considered during the design phase of the new crossing. The community will be given the opportunity to give feedback as the project progresses.</p>
Environment	12	<p>Key environmental issues raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preference for the 'Green' option because it would not impact known Aboriginal heritage areas • the importance of preserving Aboriginal heritage areas • the 'Green' option has better environmental outcomes, specifically improved air quality from less heavy vehicles travelling through Belmore Street and the shopping precinct • operational traffic noise associated with the 'Green' option. 	<p>Transport will carry out appropriate environmental investigations as part of the concept design phase of the project and an environmental assessment will be prepared for the preferred option.</p> <p>Transport will complete investigations to identify any potential impacts to Aboriginal objects, places or cultural values in line with Transport's Aboriginal Cultural policy and relevant legislation. Transport will work to avoid and minimise impacts to Aboriginal objects and place, and items of heritage significance to ensure the long-term protection, conservation and management of identified items. Potential impacts on heritage items of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal significance will be assessed, and mitigation measures identified to manage any potential impacts.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
			Potential air quality and noise impacts associated with the preferred corridor during operation, and any mitigation measures required to manage these will be identified as part of the environmental assessment carried out on the preferred route.
General project detail	47	<p>A number of issues were raised in relation to general project detail, including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long history of the project, costs and desire to keep the current bridge due to community significance • need for more transparency regarding project costs for people to make an informed choice • need to be built soon to accommodate future population increases • length of the consultation process • objection to removal of the current bridge. 	<p>Transport has noted comments about the project relating to cost, timing and historical significance of the current bridge.</p> <p>At this preliminary stage without more detailed design, detailed cost estimates are not available. Transport does not expect a substantial difference in cost between the two options, however the 'Green' route has some unknown costs, particularly on the Mulwala side due to lack of previous investigations. These need to be further investigated before project estimates can be prepared.</p> <p>In 2018, the NSW and Victorian governments carried out the Murray River Crossings Investment Prioritisation Assessment to help inform and prioritise future investment decisions by ranking each crossing over the Murray River in order of investment priority. Mulwala Bridge was ranked eighth highest. The Investment Prioritisation Assessment can be found at: roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/01d</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
			documents/murray-river-bridges/murray-river-crossings-investment-priority-assessment-2018-01.pdf.
Project description – construction impacts	14	<p>Several submissions raised concerns about the project's construction impacts. Key comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route would have fewer construction impacts on business, traffic and the community the current bridge can remain open during construction of the 'Green' route to limit traffic impacts the construction impacts of building the 'Green' route, including noise concerns construction of the 'Grey' route would require closure of the current bridge, causing traffic impacts and the Weir Bridge would not be able to handle traffic volumes if reopened during construction concerns construction of the 'Grey' route would result in similar situation to traffic during COVID-19 border closures. 	<p>Transport understands the community's concerns about potential construction impacts from building a new bridge.</p> <p>Regardless of which route is chosen, traffic will be catered for during construction.</p> <p>Once the preferred option is determined, Transport will carry out an environmental assessment which will include identifying the potential community and environmental impacts during construction. The outcomes of this assessment will inform the proposed mitigation measures to minimise disturbance to residents, the community and the environment during construction and operation.</p> <p>Transport will plan construction to minimise traffic impacts and ensure traffic flow.</p>
Project description	6	<p>Key issues raised regarding the description of the project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> heavy vehicles can use Irvine Parade, Yarrawonga as an alternative to Belmore Street, Yarrawonga 	<p>Both the 'Green' route and 'Grey' route aim to reduce through traffic and congestion on Belmore Street, Yarrawonga. The 'Grey' route will direct vehicles to stay on Irvine Street, removing trucks from Belmore Street. The 'Green' route removes trucks from</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> those who prefer the 'Green' route have made this preference on the misconception that the current bridge will be retained the 'Green' route aligning with the rail freight corridor and how it makes sense to follow the rail alignment the project description doesn't align with the map of the 'Green' route the description suggests the water treatment plant, Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club, and Club Mulwala carpark will be impacted by the 'Green' route, however the map does not reflect this. 	<p>Belmore Street by diverting all through traffic away from Yarrawonga town centre.</p> <p>The existing Mulwala Bridge will be removed following construction of the new bridge. As part of this process, the community will be consulted about an appropriate way to recognise the history of the current bridge and its importance in connecting the Mulwala and Yarrawonga communities.</p> <p>The consultation map is designed to show an indicative route, with more detail provided in the project description. The 'Green' route has impacts to the water treatment plant and local businesses including reducing car parking at Club Mulwala RSL and acquisition of land from Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort. Further design work is required once a preferred option has been selected to determine the level of impact to surrounding areas.</p> <p>Should the 'Green' option be chosen, significantly increased traffic volumes traveling past the currently uncontrolled Gulai Road railway level crossing may result in the need for traffic lights and Gulai Road realigned for a straighter railway crossing approach. This would be required for road safety and would in turn impact Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club's 13th hole fairway.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
Project description – remove current bridge	13	<p>Comments in support of removing the current bridge included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bridge is too expensive to maintain and unsafe due to its deteriorated condition even if the bridge was used by pedestrians and cyclists, maintenance would still be expensive repurposing the bridge for markets would increase rubbish pollution in Lake Mulwala. 	<p>Transport understands community concerns about the safety and ongoing maintenance of the current bridge.</p> <p>The current Mulwala Bridge will be removed as it is at the end of its lifespan and cannot continue to be economically maintained.</p> <p>Transport will continue to carry out essential maintenance on the current bridge to ensure it remains safe and fit-for-purpose until a new bridge is open to traffic.</p>
Project description – retain current bridge	78	<p>Submissions against removing the current bridge include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the bridge can be repurposed for recreational activities such as markets, fairs, marathons, fishing competitions and fireworks, cultural value and tourism opportunities the bridge can be retained for cyclists, pedestrians and local traffic, which would reduce future maintenance costs due to less wear and tear from heavy vehicle traffic importance of the bridge's historical and cultural value, and significance to the area the cost of demolishing the bridge could be reallocated for maintaining the bridge 	<p>Transport acknowledges the current Mulwala Bridge is a valued piece of infrastructure by the community and an important piece of Mulwala and Yarrawonga's history. Transport is committed to working with the community to find a way to recognise the value of the current bridge in an appropriate way.</p> <p>No matter which option is built, the existing Mulwala Bridge will be removed as it is at the end of its lifespan and cannot continue to be economically maintained.</p> <p>Investigations show removing traffic from an aging structure only has a marginal impact on ongoing maintenance costs. The weight of the structure itself is the contributor to maintenance requirements so putting a load limit and reducing traffic volumes wouldn't significantly reduce costs which are</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' option allows the current bridge to remain open during construction of the new bridge a local may wish to purchase the bridge or a community trust could be set up to fund future maintenance of the bridge significant money has been spent to rehabilitate the bridge and demolishing it would be a waste of money it would be better to repurpose the bridge and have the local councils look after it. 	<p>increasing over time. The purpose of this project is to have one bridge to cater to all traffic movements.</p> <p>Although the existing Mulwala Bridge will be removed, Transport needs to go through an important process before this takes place. As part of this process, further consultation will be completed to decide on an appropriate way to recognise the history of the current bridge and the importance it has played in connecting the two communities socially, culturally and economically.</p>
Socio-economic – impact to business	16	<p>Key issues raised for the 'Grey' route include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive impact for businesses if route remains close to the business precinct concern of the impact to businesses on the corner of Irvine and Belmore streets <p>Key issues raised for the 'Green' route include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> noted support by businesses and recreational groups bringing benefits to the Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club minimal impact during construction for businesses on both sides concern of the impact to local businesses with the loss of passing traffic 	<p>Transport understands Yarrawonga and Mulwala are connected and are important centres for the community. Transport acknowledges concerns regarding potential impact to local businesses.</p> <p>Once a preferred option is determined, Transport will prepare a socio-economic assessment to consider possible impacts and benefits of the preferred option.</p> <p>Transport will work closely with businesses as the project progresses.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traffic congestion would increase along Belmore Street and would make it difficult to access local businesses • the preferred option needs to consider the local needs that are unique to the area. 	
Socio-economic – impact to residential properties including development opportunities	15	<p>Key issues raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the 'Green' route would impact residential areas, affect property values and the rental market • the 'Green' route provides a better opportunity for future planning and forecast growth of the two towns and takes a longer-term view • given growth in the area, the 'Green' route would take increased traffic away from Belmore Street • the 'Green' route would take traffic away from Yarrawonga's residential areas, with specific mention of residents in Melbourne Street from the Holiday Park to the current crossing • the new development area would be on the eastern side of Yarrawonga and this will experience an increase in traffic • the 'Grey' route is more direct and would have less impact on existing streets and is the best option for private landholding interests 	<p>Once a preferred option is selected, Transport will contact potentially impacted property owners to discuss specific issues for consideration during project development.</p> <p>Some property acquisition is expected to be required to build the 'Green' route.</p> <p>Transport is committed to working with the community to minimise property impacts where possible.</p> <p>Once a preferred option is determined, Transport will prepare a socio-economic assessment to consider possible impacts and benefits of the preferred option.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Grey' route impacts Irvine Street and streets that run off it, and would require land acquisition in Mulwala urgent action is needed to build the bridge to ensure safety and viability of the community as the population in the area is rapidly growing and more people are travelling to the area. 	
Socio-economic impact to towns	24	<p>Key issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Grey' route will provide better access (including pedestrian access) between the towns and will reduce impacts to businesses and residents the 'Green' route is the best option as it would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> divert traffic away from the main streets in Mulwala and Yarrawonga reduce traffic in residential and urban areas reduce the number of trucks in the towns reduce the impact on the lake end of Irvine Parade the 'Green' route would benefit and facilitate the future growth of the towns and would serve the area better by catering for future traffic volumes, heavy vehicles and population growth the 'Green' route protects the towns' assets such as town centres, the river and lake by keeping traffic away and improving 	<p>Transport has noted comments and concerns about operational impacts of the project on the towns.</p> <p>Transport recognises the need to support regional economic development, tourism and freight. Consideration of impacts of both options will help determine a preferred route selection. Key issues and benefits raised by the community for both options will be considered when choosing a preferred route. A socio-economic assessment will be completed during concept design of the preferred option.</p> <p>Regardless of option chosen, a new bridge will cater for the same traffic type and growth.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<p>safety for the elderly and children, and enabling future growth around these areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route enables implementation of the Yarrawonga and Mulwala Foreshore Plans, improving recreational areas, economic prosperity through tourism development opportunities and social growth in the community <p>Comment that in towns like Echuca, Tocumwal, Cobram and Corowa, all new bridges have been built away from business and shopping areas.</p>	
Socio-economic – recreation	25	<p>Key issues raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Grey' route is best for pedestrians and tourists as it is the shortest and most direct route to Belmore Street the 'Grey' route will enhance the lakeside area by reducing traffic noise, enabling further amenities for locals and tourists and implementation of the Foreshore Plan the 'Green' route provides the opportunity for the area around the current bridge to be reclaimed, the foreshore area and other areas to be established or extended, and areas on either side of the river to be developed the 'Green' route does not impinge on the foreshore area or restrict development and allows for recreation and tourism opportunities with 	<p>Transport notes community support to enhance the amenity and liveability of the two towns. The foreshore area and Foreshore Plan will be considered as the project develops.</p> <p>Transport will consult with both councils to ensure future place-making opportunities and recreational areas are not compromised.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<p>reference to the front of Club Mulwala and Miss Ross Hill Park area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route allows for the Foreshore Plan to go ahead allowing the area to be developed to its full potential. 	
Socio-economic – tourism	26	<p>Key issues raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route will provide the opportunity for the foreshore area (on both sides of the lake) to be developed by freeing up land for larger passive recreational areas and enabling more tourism activity the 'Green' route supports Moira Shire Council's Foreshore Plan the 'Green' route will improve the leisure and tourism appeal of the towns and the lake end of Belmore Street can be developed for tourism the 'Green' route allows for recreational and tourism opportunities in front of Club Mulwala and Miss Ross Hill Park area the 'Green' route will require tourists to drive into town, worsening traffic flow the 'Green' route directs traffic away from the town while the 'Grey' route will be convenient for tourists to walk to town and would help take traffic from the town centres the 'Grey' route encourages people into Mulwala, encouraging tourists to 	<p>Transport understands tourism activity is key to the local economy and will continue to work with both councils to consider options to enhance the amenity, liveability and connections to Yarrawonga and Mulwala.</p> <p>Transport will consider future plans and potential use of the foreshore area, access to the towns and recreational areas as the project continues to develop.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		stop in town and will have more tourism benefits.	
Traffic and transport – impact on local roads	75	<p>Submissions regarding positive or negative impacts on local roads during operation of either the 'Green' or 'Grey' route included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Grey' route would worsen congestion on Belmore Street and local roads during peak tourist times the 'Grey' route would not relieve congestion in the main street of Mulwala where there are two roundabouts the 'Grey' route has better connectivity between the two town centres and less impacts on the local road network the 'Grey' route allows heavy vehicles to use Irvine Parade to avoid Belmore Street, while local traffic access between the two towns is maintained existing congestion on Belmore Street and interaction between heavy vehicles, through traffic, parking traffic, shoppers, tourists and pedestrians. the 'Green' route would reduce congestion on Belmore Street, by redirecting trucks, harvesters, farming equipment and through traffic away from the town centre the 'Green' route would improve access to the explosives factory 	<p>Transport notes the community's concerns about current safety and congestion issues along Belmore Street and the common perception the 'Green' route better addresses current and future safety and congestion issues in the Yarrowonga town centre. Improving traffic flow and enhancing safety will be key considerations of whichever route is chosen. Both routes present opportunities to manage congestion in the town centres.</p> <p>Transport understands safety and congestion on Belmore Street is a key issue for the local community. Interim measures to improve road safety along Belmore Street are currently being investigated, before the construction of the new bridge. Any planned improvements will be carried out in consultation with Moira Shire Council.</p> <p>Following the selection of a preferred alignment, further studies will form part of the design phase to consider changed traffic patterns and potential mitigation measures.</p> <p>Significant upgrades to connecting infrastructure may be required and would be further investigated in concept design.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route would improve traffic flow, meet future traffic demands and make the Yarrawonga shopping precinct safer the 'Green' route will allow through traffic to bypass both towns, while still providing access to the towns. It could also accommodate a future bypass of Mulwala's main street the 'Green' route would also remove traffic from Melbourne Street, and benefit Mulwala's future as a tourist town the 'Green' route would have less traffic impacts on local streets including Irvine Parade and Hunt Street heavy vehicles and farm machinery coming through the town centre is a safety concern, and the 'Grey' route would increase congestion and wear and tear on local roads the 'Green' route would increase traffic on other residential streets including Piper, Orr and McNally streets the 'Green' route requires Mulwala residents to use Piper Street to access the town centre, and people east of Belmore Street can use the Murray Valley Highway to access the 'Green' route and the golf club 	<p>Transport notes connectivity between the two town centres was a key theme for supporting the 'Grey' route, particularly safe and direct walking and cycling access. Previous traffic modelling also reflects most traffic movements are local, with very little through traffic. Traffic studies have identified 88 per cent of vehicles crossing the lake started in one town and finished in the other. A further 10 per cent started in one town, crossed the lake and continued beyond the other town and only about two per cent of traffic crossing the bridge did not start or finish their journey in either town.</p> <p>Transport acknowledges comments about the 'Green' route's connectivity to a potential future bypass, however there are currently no plans for a bypass to be built at Mulwala.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route would create 'chaos' in West Yarrowonga streets during peak tourist periods the 'Green' route would increase traffic on Gulai Road and impact Mulwala residents accessing the golf club. 	
Traffic and transport – operation impacts	25	<p>Comments about operational impacts of the 'Green' route, included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the entrance and exit on the Yarrowonga side of the 'Green' route would impact traffic the route's reliance on Gulai Road to access Mulwala, and that an incident on Gulai Road could affect emergency services access to Mulwala and the explosives factory. Under the 'Grey' route, the weir bridge could provide emergency access into Mulwala concerns about Mulwala residents' access to the golf club and Club Mulwala, and suggestion to have a signalised intersection at this location route will bypass the town centre, and keep heavy vehicles away from shopping, cafes and pedestrian areas in central Yarrowonga. It was acknowledged there would be increased traffic on Piper and McNally streets, but this is preferred to traffic along Belmore Street route would improve traffic movement and efficiency 	<p>Transport acknowledges comments about positive and negative operational impacts of both routes.</p> <p>Transport notes concerns about relying on Gulai Road for accessing Mulwala, under the 'Green' route, as well as increased traffic on Piper and McNally streets.</p> <p>Transport acknowledges feedback about encouraging local and tourist traffic into the economic town centre, and that connectivity to Belmore Street is important, as is diverting through traffic away from Belmore Street. It is also recognised a key factor driving support for the 'Green' route is improving traffic conditions along Belmore Street and amenity around the foreshore area.</p> <p>The potential operational impacts identified through consultation and from previous planning studies will be considered when confirming the preferred alignment.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> route provides access to Belmore Street via Piper Street, McNally Street, or Murray Valley Highway allows heavy vehicles and through traffic to keep moving and is the better option to manage the large influx of tourists during peak periods. <p>Concerns raised about the operational traffic impacts associated with the 'Grey' option included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Grey' route directs traffic to the weir-end of Belmore Street, which is not the community's preference current traffic issues will be transferred from Belmore Street onto Melbourne Street increased traffic on Belmore Street and environmental impacts from increased heavy vehicle movements on Irvine Parade. <p>Comments were made supporting access improvements provided by the 'Grey' route. These included the 'Grey' route would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> steer local and tourism traffic into the centre of town and allow continued safe access for heavy vehicles provide better access to Belmore Street and the eastern side of town give motorists the option to take the bypass road 	

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> serve the interest of most users now and into the future. 	
Traffic and transport – freight	23	<p>Comments made supporting the 'Green' route and freight connectivity included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it provides ease of truck movements and is safer for freight and wide loads it would take heavy and freight vehicles away from Yarrawonga's shopping and tourist precinct, and Belmore Street it is a more direct route for heavy vehicles crossing the Murray River from either direction, providing better freight connectivity it would redirect hazardous materials away from Yarrawonga and Mulwala town centres vehicles carrying explosives may not be able to use the 'Grey' route because of the sharp bend and the danger this poses. 	<p>Transport acknowledges safety and amenity concerns raised about current heavy vehicle usage of Belmore Street, and potential worsening over time.</p> <p>Transport notes comments the 'Green' route will redirect heavy vehicles away from the town centre and Belmore Street. Under the 'Green' route, there would be no lake crossing between Belmore and Melbourne streets, meaning trucks, cars, cyclists and pedestrians would all cross the lake to the west of the town, near the Weir wall and railway line.</p> <p>Concerns about the 'Grey' route's suitability to accommodate large machinery and heavy vehicles will be considered as part of the concept design. Road and bridge designs will be developed in line with design standards to cater for current and future traffic and vehicle needs.</p>
Traffic and transport – active transport	12	<p>There were a number of submissions received relating to active transport. Key issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Grey' route provides better connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists accessing both towns 	<p>Transport fully supports the importance of safe and accessible walking and cycling connectivity between the two town centres.</p> <p>Irrespective of the chosen route, the current bridge will not be retained. Under the 'Green' route, pedestrians and cyclists will need to</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Grey' route would be unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians due to heavy vehicle traffic exiting onto Irvine Street under the 'Grey' route, pedestrian and cyclist access from the existing path in Melbourne Street across the new bridge and roadway would be unsafe the 'Green' route would inconvenience pedestrians as access along Gulai Road is dangerous, and the 'Green' route would require upgraded pedestrian and cyclist access under the 'Green' route, the small increase in distance for cyclists and pedestrians would not deter people as not everyone is walking the full route between main streets. <p>Multiple comments were received requesting new infrastructure provide safe and accessible pedestrian and cyclist access, irrespective of what option is progressed.</p>	<p>cross the lake to the west, near the weir wall and railway line. The 'Grey' route would maintain direct pedestrian and cyclist access between the town centres.</p> <p>Whichever route is chosen, the new bridge will include provision for cyclists and pedestrians.</p>
Traffic and transport – existing traffic	32	<p>Key issues raised regarding existing traffic included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belmore Street is particularly busy during peak hours and summer holidays, due to tourists and the agricultural industry. Congestion issues will worsen with the predicted population growth and new housing development in the area 	<p>Traffic studies have identified about 88 per cent of vehicles crossing the lake represent local traffic movements. A further 10 per cent of traffic started in Yarrawonga or Mulwala and continued out of the local area after crossing the lake. Only about two per cent of traffic crossing the bridge did not start or finish their journey in Yarrawonga or Mulwala.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is not enough parking in town, and many shoppers may go elsewhere because of congestion the 'Green' route would reduce congestion through the Yarrawonga town centre. It would remove traffic from the lakefront streets of Yarrawonga, the main intersection at Belmore Street, and reduce heavy vehicle movements along Melbourne Street the 'Grey' route won't solve the current issues along Melbourne Street, including reduced speed limits, and the need to pass schools and recreational, residential and commercial areas congestion on the current bridge, and the 'Grey' route will worsen congestion and safety risks when crossing the bridge into Mulwala. <p>Comments about usage of the current bridge include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> residents use the current bridge because of its access to the two town centres few people used the Weir bridge (now closed), which is close to the proposed 'Green' route. It was noted it was mostly used for local traffic movements, not passing traffic, and the 'Grey' route better serves this purpose. There are minimal through heavy vehicle movements, as there are better alternatives 	<p>Traffic studies will be reviewed once further funding is available, however, Transport does not expect overall travel patterns to change significantly from previous investigations.</p> <p>Both the 'Green' route and 'Grey' route aim to reduce through traffic and congestion on Belmore Street, Yarrawonga. The 'Grey' route provides an alternative freight route via Irvine Street, removing trucks from Belmore Street. The 'Green' route removes trucks from Belmore Street by diverting all through traffic away from Yarrawonga town centre.</p> <p>Victoria's Department of Transport is currently working with its road safety and traffic engineers and will carry out consultation with Moira Shire Council to investigate a short-term measure to improve road safety along Belmore Street. Until Irvine Parade is upgraded, there is an expectation there would be more heavy vehicles moving down Belmore Street as the weir bridge is closed for normal vehicle traffic.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mulwala residents use the current bridge more frequently to access the Yarrawonga town centre. <p>Comments about traffic counts and modelling included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> traffic modelling shows most traffic is between the two towns, and there is no need for a bypass as there are no major towns further north traffic counts would favour the 'Grey' option, which better services local traffic movements suggestion to carry out new traffic counts on both bridges (before weir bridge closing), to better understand current traffic volumes and heavy vehicles will get larger in the future. 	
Traffic and transport – safety (pedestrian and traffic)	44	<p>The key issues raised relating to pedestrian and traffic safety included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route has pedestrian safety issues due to increased vehicle movements on Piper, Orr and McNally streets the 'Green' route reduces vehicle movements and heavy vehicles on Belmore Street and Yarrawonga and Mulwala town centres. This would increase safety for pedestrians in the town centres and improve tourism for the area 	<p>Safety is the number one priority for all Transport projects.</p> <p>Transport notes the key safety concerns raised for both alignments. Safety will be fully considered and further investigated during further development of the preferred alignment. The preferred option will be developed with safe access for pedestrians and will consider both current and future traffic needs.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route is a more accessible route for emergency services to access Mulwala and Yarrawonga the 'Green' route is safer for vehicles carrying hazardous materials, as the route is more direct and easier for heavy vehicles to manoeuvre. It also takes heavy vehicles carrying hazardous materials away from Yarrawonga and Mulwala town centres the 'Green' route is the safest option as it is straighter than the 'Grey' route the 'Green' route would create a blind spot to the right for northbound traffic, near the Water Treatment Plant and Club Mulwala car park. Concern was raised about traffic turning right and whether this section of the route had room for a complex intersection the 'Grey' route would result in increased traffic at Yarrawonga and Mulwala town centres, which puts pedestrians at risk the 'Grey' route passes a school and does not relieve the existing safety issue for pedestrians in the main street of Mulwala the 'Grey' route will not include repair to footpaths along Gulai Road the 'Grey' route is safer and a more direct route between Yarrawonga and Mulwala for drivers and pedestrians. It is also more accessible for disabled members of the community 	

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the new bridge route needs to accommodate future increases in commercial traffic in the area. 	
Out of scope	67	<p>Comments and suggestions considered out-of-scope included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Green' route could connect to a future bypass previous consultation showed more support for the 'Green' route than the 'Grey' route and further consultation is not required concern about members of the community influencing the decisions of others and misconstruing the proposed bridge options that Irvine Parade intersection with Telford Street needs to be considered to ease traffic flow to build a second lane next to the current traffic bridge for heavy traffic the old train station and surrounding land could be used as a rest stop area for trucks and road users to extend the 'Green' route to Corona Road to construct a road connecting Barooga Road to Benalla Road to bypass both towns to keep the Weir bridge open during construction of the new bridge to connect the new bridge route to the Murray Valley Highway 	<p>These comments have been classified as out-of-scope in this instance as they are not within the project description or are outside the influence of the Transport project team for the Mulwala Bridge replacement. Transport has noted the feedback and will share the comments with other Transport teams and, where possible, will also share the feedback with other government agencies that may be able to consider the feedback in future planning.</p>

Issue category	Number of submissions	Issues raised	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to extend the 'Green' route further north to detour heavy traffic away from Bayly Street and Melbourne Road intersection • that the closure of the Weir bridge would be detrimental socially and financially • the 'Green' route passes Club Mulwala, which may encourage gambling. 	

4 Conclusion

4.1 Promotion and participation summary

The consultation period was promoted through multiple channels with broad reach, to ensure maximum exposure within Mulwala and Yarrawonga. Nearly 7000 properties received the community consultation newsletter. The three sponsored posts on the NSW Roads Facebook page received nearly 30,000 impressions and 1899 clicks were recorded through to the project website. The *Yarrawonga Chronicle*, in which paid advertising occurred, claims monthly combined print and digital readership of 39,750.

During the consultation period, 242 incoming interactions were received via the project information line, email and postal address, 929 participants viewed the online engagement tool page, over 150 comments were left on the interactive map, and there were almost 4000 website homepage page views. Thirty-eight participants dialled-in to the online information session, and about 3500 people viewed the recorded session online. Of the more than 10,000 interactions, Transport received 285 submissions providing feedback about the 'Green' and 'Grey' route options.

Figure 10 below provides a summary of participation numbers during consultation, and how the community chose to interact with the project.

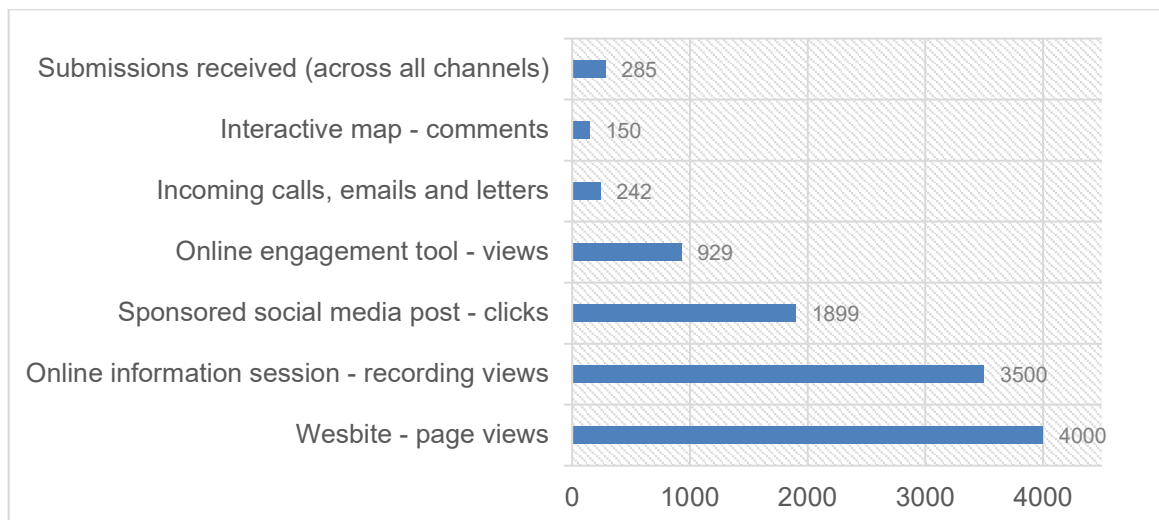


Figure 10 Consultation interactions and participation numbers

4.2 Consultation feedback analysis

Of the 285 submissions, 74 per cent indicated preference for the 'Green' route. The perceived benefits of the 'Green' route primarily related to reduced traffic congestion and heavy vehicle movements along Belmore Street, and associated safety and amenity improvements (including to the foreshore area). Many supporters of the 'Green' route also requested the current bridge be retained. Of all sub-categories used to classify submission comments, 'retain the current bridge' was the most raised (78 comments), ahead of 'impact on local roads' (75), 'safety' (44) and 'existing traffic' (32).

As Transport continues to communicate, the current bridge is not able to be retained as it has reached the end of its serviceable life. It will be replaced by either the 'Grey' or 'Green' route. It is uncertain if some 'Green' route support is dependent on

retaining the current bridge, and if route preference would change understanding the current bridge will be removed regardless of the preferred option alignment.

'Grey' route support focussed on the connectivity between the two town centres, including pedestrians and cyclists, and local traffic movements between frequently accessed destinations. This is supported by traffic modelling showing most traffic movements are between local destinations (as opposed to through traffic). The 'Grey' route was also supported as it continues to direct local and tourist traffic towards the town centres, to the benefit of local businesses.

The relatively low number of submissions (285) in relation to the reach of promotion, and number of interactions (see section 4.1), may indicate some people have no strong preference, are yet to decide their preferred option, are experiencing consultation fatigue, or their information needs were met by the materials/responses provided.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the consultation findings, Transport is:

- *noting the strong preference for the 'Green' route within the 285 submissions received during consultation, and the key reasons for this support*
- *continuing to work closely with Victoria's DoT, and both local councils, about addressing the key issues to emerge from consultation, and next steps*
- *continuing to build community awareness and understanding:*
 - *of the need to remove the current bridge, and that Transport will work with the community to find a way to recognise its historic significance in an appropriate way*
 - *that improving traffic flow and enhancing safety will be key considerations of whichever route is chosen. Both routes present opportunities to manage congestion in the town centre.*
- *continuing investigations into interim measures to improve safety and congestion on Belmore Street, in consultation with Moira Shire Council*
- *continuing to provide:*
 - *community updates as the project progresses, noting community feedback about perceived repetition of route consultation and eagerness to see progress*
 - *opportunities for consultation, where the community can influence negotiable aspects of the project.*

4.4 Next steps

This community consultation summary will be used to confirm the preferred option for the location of the future bridge. Transport will consider all feedback and comments on both bridge options and seek confirmation from the NSW and Victorian governments on the outcome.

Transport will provide a further update to the community in 2022.

Timeframes for design and construction of the new bridge are yet to be determined, and depend on future budget allocation. This is expected to occur within the next five to 10 years, as per the Murray River Crossings Investment Prioritisation Assessment.

Appendix A – Live information session Q&A

Table 6 Community questions and Transport's responses from online community information session (July 2021)

Questions	Answers
Maintenance and retention of current bridge	
Why are you wasting money doing so much maintenance work on the bridge now, when do you plan on building a new bridge?	<p>Maintaining and repairing Mulwala Bridge now will ensure it is able to continue to safely operate and service the community while we continue planning for a replacement bridge.</p> <p>By proactively carrying out this work now, we will minimise bridge closures needed for future routine scheduled maintenance.</p> <p>This means we can hopefully reduce the number of future scheduled closures and minimise the need for lengthy detours.</p>
The future population of both towns is expanding. There would be a function for both bridges and the Weir crossing. Why not retain both, considering the funds now being put into the current bridge?	<p>NSW and Victorian Governments share maintenance responsibilities for 31 current Murray River crossings.</p> <p>The current bridge will require increasing maintenance as it ages further. This would impact ongoing maintenance funds from all other Murray crossings. Transport for NSW will continue to carry out essential maintenance on the current bridge until a new bridge is open to traffic.</p> <p>No matter which option is built, the current bridge will be removed because it is at the end of its lifespan and can't continue to be maintained.</p> <p>Although the existing Mulwala Bridge will be removed, there is an important process we have to go through before this takes place. As part of this process, we will consult with you, the Mulwala and Yarrawonga communities, about an appropriate way to recognise the history of this century-old bridge and the importance it has played in connecting the two communities – socially, culturally and economically.</p> <p>We will let you know when we start this process because your knowledge – your stories, your photographs and your memories – will play an invaluable role in ensuring this bridge's significance is remembered for years to come.</p>
Will the Government agree to keep the existing Yarrawonga Mulwala Bridge once a new bridge is built?	
The current bridge would provide many possibilities for tourism enterprises and community functions after the new bridge is built. The history of the current bridge would be best recognised by its retention and use for decades to come. It is an iconic structure, a great attraction to our town. Why would it not be retained, and value-add to the current expenditure on its structural integrity?	
With the new bridge in operation, surely the expenditure to maintain the current bridge for light-weight purposes only would be far less?	

Questions	Answers
Why is this proposed bridge so far down the preference list of other crossings?	The Murray River Crossings Investment Prioritisation Assessment, published in 2018, considered bridge condition and traffic and freight volumes using the connection between NSW and Victoria. Bridges higher up the priority list include much older timber truss bridges which are in poorer condition compared to Mulwala Bridge. After recent maintenance work, Mulwala Bridge is estimated to have a lifespan beyond that of other Murray River bridges, and is considered able to meet transport needs between Yarrawonga and Mulwala for the near future.
Cost	
I would like to know about the cost involved in these options. How much will it cost?	At this preliminary stage, we do not consider there to be substantial differences in cost between the 'Green' or 'Grey' options. The bridge over the lake will be a similar cost for both options. However, the 'Green' route has some unknown costs, particularly on the Mulwala side. These need to be further investigated before more robust project estimates are prepared.
Traffic studies, heavy vehicle and Belmore Street	
What is the proportion or percentage of traffic that runs between Mulwala and Yarrawonga as opposed to the amount or percent of traffic that goes through to Murray valley Highway?	<p>Previous traffic studies considered traffic traveling between the two towns. Traffic cameras tracked vehicles at key points in both towns including across both crossings. If a vehicle was not recorded as travelling away from either town after a given time, it was considered to have had a destination in either Mulwala or Yarrawonga. The traffic study identified around 88 per cent of vehicles crossing the lake started in one town and finished in the other, representing local traffic connections. A further 10 per cent of traffic started in one town, crossed the lake and continued beyond the other town. Only around two per cent of traffic crossing the bridge did not start or finish their journey in either town.</p> <p>Traffic studies will be reconsidered once further funding is available, however Transport for NSW (Transport) does not expect overall travel patterns to have changed significantly from previous investigations.</p>
How will heavy vehicles be diverted away from Belmore Street if the 'Grey' option is chosen? And has research been conducted into how forcing these machines and trucks into the bottleneck of Belmore Street?	<p>The 'Grey' route would directly join an upgraded Irvine Parade. This would provide a more efficient alternative route to travelling along Belmore Street. Intersection arrangements are still to be confirmed, however the main road would travel around the corner, with an access to Belmore Street providing for vehicles wishing to travel there.</p> <p>We are currently working with our road safety and traffic engineers and will carry out consultation with Moira Shire to investigate an interim measure to improve road safety along Belmore Street. Until Irvine Parade is upgraded, there is an expectation there would be more heavy vehicles moving down Belmore Street once the weir bridge is closed for normal vehicle traffic.</p>
Apologies I worded heavy machinery question poorly - more thinking in terms of 'Grey' route forcing heavy machinery and trucks onto Belmore Street, which would be unsafe for many reasons, and increase wear and tear on the main shopping area.	

Questions	Answers
How much research has been done into the suitability for each route regarding heavy machinery and B-double/triples?	As part of the design so far, we have considered the requirements for both of these vehicles. Whichever bridge option is chosen, it will be designed to satisfy agricultural equipment and B-double vehicles. Both bridge options would be wider and better accommodate those vehicles than the current bridge.
In response to the heavy vehicle information, thank you. I would add feedback that this would compromise foreshore use? (With big trucks etc turning down nearby). Just feedback!	If the 'Grey' route is chosen, it may affect the amenity of the Yarrawonga foreshore, but we would work with Moira Shire to ensure we minimise the vehicle movement impacts on any foreshore redevelopment.
Which bridge route does the new road connect to?	<p>On the Yarrawonga side, the Victorian government is interested in establishing a new link to either the 'Green' or 'Grey' route from the Murray Valley Highway, which would take vehicles out of Belmore Street. Some preliminary planning work has gone into establishing a new link from the Murray Valley Highway east of the railway line up to Irvine Parade.</p> <p>If the 'Green' route is chosen, there would effectively be a direct link on the western part of Irvine Parade onto the 'Green' route bridge.</p> <p>If the 'Grey' route is chosen, then that road connection would extend east along Irvine Parade. A new intersection would then be established at the southern edge of the bridge to enable both light and heavy vehicles to safely turn onto Irvine Parade and then the new access road down to the Murray Valley Highway.</p>
Rules and regulations	
Could a load limit be set on the current bridge to maintain it for car traffic?	Based on Transport and the Victorian Department of Transport's (DoT) investigations of a number of bridges, removing traffic from an aging structure only has a marginal impact on ongoing maintenance costs. The weight of the structure itself is the contributor to the maintenance requirements so putting a load limit and reducing traffic volumes wouldn't significantly reduce the maintenance costs which are increasing over time. The purpose of this project is to have one bridge to cater to all traffic movements.
Decision making, feedback and next steps	
What is the next step, when will the Governments announce the chosen option and construction of the new bridge begin?	<p>We will work on the community feedback summary report once the consultation is closed. We will consider your feedback and comments on both bridge options. We will advise the NSW and Victorian governments of the outcome and seek endorsement of the preferred route.</p> <p>This process can take many months but we will keep you informed as this important project progresses.</p>
When can we expect an announcement on the preferred route from this process?	
Will you release the feedback we have provided so far?	

Questions	Answers
What is the Government's position on the route for a new Yarrawonga-Mulwala Bridge? Will the Victorian/NSW Government change their mind on the bridge route?	<p>The current position of both NSW and Victorian governments is for a 'Grey' route. This consultation process is to confirm the community's preference and further consider the position of both councils.</p> <p>Once the submission period closes, we will review all your comments and prepare a consultation summary report which will be used to help inform the preferred option for the location of a future bridge.</p>
There was a question about not having a proper questionnaire available for people without propaganda before the questionnaire, where they haven't had the opportunity to see if Green is really the most popular choice?	<p>The community feedback period is the community's opportunity to provide comments on their issues and concerns. This is the chance for residents of Yarrawonga, Mulwala, or broader, who don't feel they have had an opportunity to provide their opinion on which bridge best suits their needs. We are open to all feedback.</p> <p>Please make sure you send your comments through by Friday 30 July via the project website, or email and regular mail.</p>
Bypass	
Will you be building a bypass?	There are no plans for a future bypass to be built at Mulwala.
Councils	
Does the fact Moira and Federation Councils are both in favour of 'Green' route carry weight in the final decision?	The Australian, NSW and Victorian governments will be involved in the funding of this project and both councils' views will form part of the decision-making. It will certainly be one of the key factors that is taken into consideration when the bridge route is chosen.
Can the survey page be updated to mention the 2017 plebiscite results?	The previous plebiscites into the community's bridge route preferences have been noted and are part of the reason Transport and DoT have reopened the options back up for community comment. We would like to better understand the community's preference and reasons behind those decisions. As the plebiscites were council surveys, they were not managed by Transport or DoT.
Impacts to local businesses and pre existing assets	
Can you please explain the impacts to the water treatment plant Club Mulwala RSL and acquisition of land from Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort?	<p>The 'Green' route travels over underground pipes connecting to the water treatment plant, including to ponds to the west of the railway line. The water treatment plant's access would be severely limited by the 'Green' route. There are also likely to be more impacts to the water treatment plant's infrastructure during construction.</p> <p>The current rear exit from Club Mulwala would be impacted and changed. The level difference between the club carpark and proposed 'Green' road alignment would require land from the existing car park to install drainage and build road embankments.</p> <p>Should the 'Green' option be chosen, significantly increased traffic volumes traveling past the currently uncontrolled Gulai Road railway level crossing may result in the need for traffic lights and Gulai Road realigned for a straighter railway crossing approach. This would be required for road safety and would in turn impact the 13th hole fairway.</p>

Questions	Answers
If 'Green' route is chosen, what are the impacts to Gulai Road and the railway line?	<p>For the 'Green' route, Gulai Road east of the railway line would be the only access to properties on the southern end of Melbourne Street. Traffic lights would need to be installed for this access as well as for railway level crossing safety.</p> <p>For the 'Grey' route, Gulai Road would continue in its current form with reduced traffic resulting from no vehicles crossing the weir.</p>
Weir crossing	
The Weir crossing should stay open until the new bridge is complete. So many times, TWO crossings are needed, if there's a traffic hold up or urgent maintenance on the traffic bridge.	<p>There are ongoing discussions with Murray Darling Basin Authority and the Catchment Management Authority. The weir crossing is scheduled to close later this year, and both authorities have been very flexible in ensuring the bridge will stay open until the ongoing maintenance work is finished. This work will ensure the current bridge can provide years of future service.</p> <p>In case of emergency or traffic incidents at Mulwala Bridge, all vehicles will be diverted across the existing weir crossing. However, it is important to get vehicles off the weir crossing as soon as possible.</p>
When we are talking about the weir crossing being reopened on occasion, does that mean that in busy agricultural periods (e.g. harvest) the weir could be reopened?	<p>The current load limits on the weir do not facilitate the movement of heavy vehicles. All heavy vehicles should use the main bridge to travel across the weir, even during the harvest season.</p> <p>The weir will only be reopened for incident response or for emergency services situations.</p>
In one instance, we hear that the weight of the structure itself is the cause for maintenance, and the traffic weight is negligible. On the other hand, we hear that traffic weight is a concern on the Weir structure. When you consider the weight of the water that the Weir adequately handles, that is not reasonable. Please explain these inconsistencies.	<p>The construction of the weir is very different from the way traffic bridges are built.</p> <p>The weir was constructed primarily to be a dam, not a transport route and it has been modified over the years to provide a second link between the two townships either side of the border.</p> <p>In order to extend the life of the weir crossing and effectively operate as intended, the subject matter experts' advice to the Catchment Management Authority and Murray Darling Basin Authority has been to remove vehicle traffic from the weir crossing. By removing vehicles from the weir, the maintenance team can carry out the necessary work required for its efficiency and safety, without compromising on the safety of workers.</p>
Previous work	
What has happened to all of the previous planning work?	<p>Previous planning work has not been lost. There are minor changes in traffic flow and traffic make-up since those planning studies were carried out. We will revisit some of those traffic studies, traffic movement and traffic surveys to develop an appropriate design once the funding is announced for the detailed planning and development of a new bridge.</p>

