



ADDITIONAL CROSSING OF THE CLARENCE RIVER, GRAFTON

Community liaison plan

JULY 2010

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I Introduction

1.1 Overview

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

2 Background

2.1 Communications background

During 2003-04 the RTA, in consultation with the community, investigated seven broad bridge locations in the Grafton area. No formal decision on the bridge location was made at the time.

In July 2008 the Minister for Roads asked the RTA to review all studies including traffic data and cost estimates for the construction of a new bridge. A further traffic study report was published in December 2009.

In February 2010 the community was invited to provide feedback on the preliminary options being proposed. A Community Consultation Report was developed from this feedback which summarised the key concerns and issues raised by the community as well as outlining the consultation process to date.

In April 2010 the Minister for Transport and Roads announced that the RTA would review all the issues highlighted by the Grafton community during the initial stage of consultation. As a result, an issues paper was prepared and made available on the website. The Minister also announced that residents should have a say in the forums they would like to see which is why as an initial step, this community liaison plan is being developed and community feedback invited.

2.2 Purpose of this plan

This community liaison plan describes how the project team, consisting of the RTA, ARUP and technical specialists, will engage with the community to assist with the identification of a preferred option. Community input, along with information from the technical and environmental studies, will assist the project team undertaking the assessment process to determine firstly the short list of options and then the preferred option.

The community liaison plan outlines the consultation process with the community and describes the activities that will be undertaken as well as:

- Outlining strategies for liaison and consultation;
- Detailing communication activities to implement these strategies; and
- Describing how the community liaison process will be monitored, evaluated and reported back to the community.

To this end the project team will:

- Provide information to the community as the concept design options are developed;
- Consult with the community to provide input into these options; and
- Engage with the community and key stakeholders to better understand their issues and concerns and provide feedback.

A range of consultation and communication tools will be used to inform the community and receive feedback. The consultation approach will be flexible and be refined on the basis of community input.

2.3 Key messages

Key messages for the project include:

- The RTA is currently working towards identification of a preferred option for a new crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton;
- It is important to plan now for a future crossing to provide certainty for the future development of Grafton; and
- The preferred bridge location and road connections will be selected by assessing which option represents the most appropriate balance between traffic, social, environmental, engineering and cost factors.

3 Community engagement

3.1 Key stakeholders

The project team will consult with the community and key stakeholders. The key stakeholders include a wide range of interests from the communities of Grafton and South Grafton – its Council, residents, businesses and landowners. At this stage of the process, given no preferred option has been identified, consultation needs to be broad and communication extensive.

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

- Communities within the area directly and indirectly impacted by possible options
- Clarence Valley Council
- Local businesses of Grafton and South Grafton.
- Grafton Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- South Grafton Progress Association
- 2003/2004 Community Focus Group members
- Local Schools (including Clarence Valley Anglican School, South Grafton Primary School, Beautizone Kindergarten, Jack & Jill Pre-School, Gummeyaney Aboriginal Pre School)
- Transport and heavy vehicle operators (including the Australian Trucking Association)
- Emergency Services (including NSW Police, NSW Fire Brigade, NSW Ambulance, SES)
- Tourism Operators (including Clarence Valley Tourism, Clarence River Tourism, Clarence River Historical Society)
- CountryLink

- Australian Rail Track Corporation
- Local environmental groups (including Clarence Valley Environment Centre, Landcare Lower Clarence Catchment)
- Local Aboriginal groups (Grafton Ngerrie Aboriginal Land Council)
- Interest groups and resident groups

3.2 Key issues

Based on feedback received from the consultation with the community in February/March 2010, the key issues that will need to be considered when determining the preferred option include:

- Community involvement in the decision making process
- Development of alternative options
- Cost/benefit and funding of the project
- Social impact and loss of amenity caused by the construction of a second crossing
- Property acquisition and impacts
- Economic impact of the project on the local economy
- Impacts of the project on Aboriginal heritage
- Heritage impacts (including impact on the local residential streets)
- Environmental impact of the project (noise, dust, fauna and flora, emission, health of the river)
- Potential increases in traffic in local streets
- Potential increase in heavy vehicle traffic in local streets
- Safety implications of increase in traffic
- Construction impacts – noise, dust, traffic impacts

3.3 Community contact

3.3.1 Telephone and email contact line

A 24 hour free call information line (1800 633 332) and community email (grafton Regional Office@rta.nsw.gov.au) have been established and will continue to be used. These communication channels will continue to be promoted on information materials to provide the community with a free and readily available means of communicating with the project team.

3.3.2 Contact Management System

The contact management system Consultation Manager will be used to capture and track community feedback. This will ensure feedback is recorded, responded to, and considered in the decision making process.

3.4 Community interaction and participation

3.4.1 Community information sessions

The project team will facilitate community information sessions. These sessions will be open to all stakeholders, local residents, businesses and community organisations, local government representatives and others interested in the project. The information sessions will be held in Grafton at times (am and pm) to maximise community participation. These sessions will be timed around key project milestones including the display of options and display of the preferred option.

3.4.2 Community focus groups

Community focus groups will support the community information sessions. These focus groups will be in a small round table format and can be used to gain community understanding of and input into an issue before options are finalised.

The focus groups will discuss issues identified in the community consultation report – for example traffic, noise and other environmental matters.

3.4.3 Public displays

Once the refined concept options have been determined, a public display will be developed to give the community the opportunity to provide feedback on the options proposed.

3.4.4 Door knocks

Door knocks will target residents and business operators directly affected by options and provide a further opportunity to receive feedback and respond to issues and concerns raised.

3.4.5 One on one meetings

These meetings with key stakeholders will provide an opportunity for the project team to provide an update on the project and to respond to issues and concerns raised.

3.4.6 Value Management Process

The value management process is a facilitated technical workshop with the RTA, Council, other key stakeholders, regulators and community participants, along with project team members to provide input into the decision making process for the preferred option.

4 Community Information

4.1 Advertisements

Newspaper advertisements will be placed in the local 'Daily Examiner' to raise the local community's awareness of upcoming information sessions, focus groups and display periods.

4.2 Letter box notifications

Letter box notifications will support the newspaper advertisements and target communities within the study area.

4.3 Community updates

Community updates will be used to keep the community informed regarding the investigations and consultation process. These updates will be available on the project web site and distributed in the local area. The updates will be developed around key milestones, including: community information sessions, development of refined and preferred options and at the end of the consultation process.

4.4 Project web site

The RTA will manage a dedicated project page on the RTA website <http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/graftonbridge>. The website will provide updates on the project's progress as well as providing access to media releases, reports and other background information.

4.5 Media

The local media will be used to provide the broader community with regular information around key milestones such as open days, focus groups and shopping centre displays.

5 Program of Activities

A program of activities is planned to engage the community in refining of the options to identify a preferred option for a new crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton.

The key stages in the consultation process are summarised below:

- Refinement of the community liaison plan
- Focussed discussions to help inform the community on the development of concept options
- Feedback sought on the display of concept options
- Feedback sought on the identification of the RTA's preferred option

The activities are outlined in detail at Appendix A, 'Community Liaison Activity Plan'. The appendix will be updated during the course of the consultation based on project progress.

6 Evaluation

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the community liaison plan will be undertaken. This evaluation will consider:

- Response time to enquiries received on the 1800 information line are to be within one business day
- Written response to emails and letters shall be within 21 days of receipt of correspondence
- Satisfaction regarding the consultation process and information materials by a quantitative community and stakeholder survey
- Positive media coverage

This community liaison plan is in draft form and will be modified following input from the community. Please provide your feedback via the 24 hour free call information line (1800 633 332) or community email (grafton_regionall_office@rta.nsw.gov.au) by Friday 27 August 2010.

Appendix A: Community Liaison Activity Plan

| Activity | Detail | Indicative Timing |
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| Ongoing communication will be provided through the project web site and information line | <p>Project Web site http://www.rta.gov.au/grafonbridge</p> <p>The project web site will:</p> <p>Provide the link to reports, fact sheets, media releases</p> <p>Community update will be posted on the web site at key milestones including community information sessions and display periods.</p> <p>Provide opportunity for community feedback via email at grafton_regionall_office@rtaw.nsw.gov.au</p> <p>Free Information Line 1800 633 332</p> | On going |
| All community contact will be logged and responses tracked to completion | <p>Consultation Manager, a web based contact data base, will log and track community contact</p> <p>All issues will be tagged enabling specific issues to be monitored</p> | On going |
| Publication of the Community Consultation Report (May 2010) | <p>The Report summarised the consultation process to date and identified the issues and concerns raised by the community</p> <p>The report is available on the RTA web site at http://www.rta.gov.au/grafonbridge</p> | Completed May 2010 |
| Responses sent to participants in the February/March 'Call for Comment' | All respondents receive a written response to their submission | Completed June 2010 |
| Release draft community liaison plan for comment | All respondents receive an email / letter notification of draft CLP. Advertisement in local paper / radio to advise community. | July 2010 |
| Project team to meet with key stakeholders | <p>Project team will conduct a series of meetings with community groups identified, Council and other stakeholders (list provided at Section 3 of community liaison plan).</p> <p>The purpose of these meetings will be to provide a briefing on the project and discuss the consultation process going forward</p> | Ongoing |
| Door knocks | Door knocks if required will target communities directly affected by the options and provide a further opportunity to receive feedback and respond to issues and concerns raised. | September –October 2010 |

| Activity | Detail | Indicative Timing |
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| Series of community focus groups will be conducted addressing key issues identified in the Community Consultation Report | <p>The focus groups will discuss specific issues identified in the Community Consultation Report.</p> <p>The focus groups will be open to the community and be conducted in a local venue. Experts in the field will provide input with the focus groups lead by an experienced facilitator. There will be time during and after the meeting for questions.</p> <p>Feedback from the focus groups will be reviewed by the project team and summarised on the project web site.</p> <p>The following have been identified for possible discussion: community liaison plan, traffic modeling and operational traffic, hydrology and environmental impacts, heritage and visual impacts, noise (operational), safety in design and regional and local development. These focus groups will be promoted to the community via the project web site, media releases and flyers.</p> <p>Community feedback will help inform the development of concept options.</p> <p>Community members who had previously expressed an interest/concern regarding a particular issue will be encouraged to attend.</p> | September - October 2010 |
| Concept Options Community information session | <p>Community Information Session will give the community the opportunity to learn more about the project.</p> <p>The information session will be held in local venues in Grafton and South Grafton over two hours at am and pm times.</p> <p>No formal presentations are planned; but rather an opportunity for the community to see the concept options, ask questions and provide feedback.</p> <p>Background reports, updates and the like will be available for the community to read.</p> <p>The information sessions will be promoted by the community via the project web site, media releases, community updates and flyers.</p> <p><u>Notify directly affected property owners.</u></p> | Late 2010 |

| Activity | Detail | Indicative Timing |
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| Community invited to participate in the 'Call for Comment' - refined concept options on public display <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping centre display • Community open day • Static display | Refined concept options will be on display at a variety of community venues in the local area. Venues being considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTA Motor Registry Office Grafton and Maclean • RTA Regional Office Grafton • Clarence Valley Council Library • Shopping Centre Display 'Shopping World' (manned display) • Grafton Community and Function Centre (manned display) • Coldstream Gallery, Ulmarra • Community Centre, Yamba • Newman's News agency, South Grafton • General Store Coutts Crossing | Late 2010 |
| Responses sent to all participants in the late 2010 Call for Comment | All respondents will receive a written response to their submission. | Early 2011 |
| Project team to meet with key stakeholders including community representatives and Council | Project team will meet again with community groups, Council and other stakeholders - opportunity to be briefed on the project and the next steps. | Early 2011 |
| Value Management Study | Key stakeholders, such as Council, regulators and community participants will work through a value management process to provide input into the preferred option. | Late 2010/ early 2011 |
| Community invited to view the preferred concept option on public display | Opportunity for the community to consider the preferred concept. Format to be similar to the first information session, subject to community feedback. Preferred concept will be on display at a variety of venues. Displays will use the same venues as the earlier subject to community feedback. | Mid 2011 |
| Post consultation feedback | Response letters will be provided to all respondents – web site to announce next steps | Mid 2011 |