



Transport
Roads & Maritime
Services



Sportsmans Creek new bridge

Early Feedback Summary

AUGUST 2013

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November 2013 update

This document explains consultation progress as at August 2013. The next steps have since been updated in keeping with section 6.5 of the Recommended Option Report. An updated flowchart is also provided in section 8 of the Recommended Option Report.

BACKGROUND

The existing Sportsmans Creek bridge is located at the southern approach to Lawrence, on Bridge Street which connects to the Grafton-Lawrence Road. The bridge comprises three timber beam approach spans and two timber Dare Truss spans, which were built in 1911.

Geometry and design limitations of the existing bridge mean it is unable to be safely upgraded to cater for the haulage requirements of local surrounding agricultural industries, two-way traffic and pedestrian access.

Therefore, as part of the NSW state-wide Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) Timber Truss Bridge Conservation Strategy (which will conserve six other Dare Truss bridges throughout NSW), Sportsmans Creek bridge will be demolished and replaced with a new structure.

The new Sportsmans Creek bridge project is part of the 'Bridges for the Bush' initiative – a NSW Government commitment to improve road freight productivity by replacing or upgrading bridges.

Project investigations will focus within the study area (see Appendix A). The project team will take into account impacts on surrounding roads, land and neighbourhoods.

The objectives of the project are:

- Enhance road safety for motorists, residents, cyclists and pedestrians
- Improve traffic efficiency within Lawrence
- Improve road transport productivity, efficiency, maintainability and reliability
- Support local and regional economic development
- Allow for safe removal of the existing bridge, in support of the Timber Truss Bridge Conservation Strategy
- Minimise the impact on the natural, cultural, social and built environment
- Consider community members' views
- Deliver value for money.

The project is fully funded as part of the 'Bridges for the Bush' initiative and the new bridge is expected to be constructed by 2016.

A shortlist of preliminary options for the new bridge is expected to be displayed for public feedback by the end of 2013, with a preferred option to be determined in early 2014.

RMS is committed to informing and consulting all stakeholders to ensure a strategic solution is found that meets the needs of the Lawrence community and local industries.

EARLY FEEDBACK SUMMARY

This report summarises feedback from the Lawrence community about significant issues to consider when planning for a new bridge crossing. The feedback was assembled from:

- Discussions at two community drop-in sessions held on Thursday 18 July 2013 (11am-2pm and 4pm-7pm) at the Lawrence Public Hall
- Feedback forms (submitted by Thursday 25 July 2013)
- Stakeholder meetings.

RMS invited the community to attend the drop-in sessions through a letter drop to Lawrence residents (carried out by the Lawrence Post Office), newspaper advertisements and a media release published in local newspapers: Daily Examiner, Clarence Valley Review and Coastal View. The letters featured the RMS logo and project name, to increase the likelihood of them being distinguished from promotional mail. Letters were also sent to property owners within the study area (see Appendix A) whose postal address was outside of Lawrence.

Related project information including the letter to the householder, study area map and project process flowchart were made available on the RMS website. Feedback forms were welcomed until Thursday 25 July 2013 (Appendix C).

Based on feedback received, this report provides preliminary information to help guide the development and selection of a shortlist of options as well as future public participation activities. Once a shortlist of options has been selected they will be displayed for community feedback.

The community can contact the project team at any time by:

Phone: 1800 035 016 (toll free)

Email: sportsmanscreeknewbridge@kbr.com

Post: Sportsmans Creek new bridge project
Reply Paid 633
Brisbane QLD 4001

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Thirty-eight community members signed in at the drop-in sessions including residents and business representatives from within and outside the study area. Twenty-two attended the morning session and sixteen attended the evening session.

Attendees spoke with members of the project team either one-on-one or in small groups to better understand the project, ask questions and give feedback.

Individual meetings were held with the owners of the Lawrence General and Liquor Store (General Store) and Lawrence Tavern (Tavern) to discuss potential impacts on their businesses.

The project team also presented to members of the Lawrence Historical Society on the project's objectives, including the demolition of the existing bridge.

Twenty-two formal feedback forms were returned, with some submitted on the day of the drop-in sessions and others sent by email or post.

A steering committee comprising representatives from Clarence Valley Council and RMS has also been formed to ensure ongoing consultation throughout the project.

PRELIMINARY FEEDBACK

The feedback form distributed at the drop-in sessions asked community members to select the aspects of the project that were most important to them. In response to that question, community members who submitted a feedback form, most frequently identified the following five aspects (see Figure 1):

- Road safety
- Pedestrian safety
- Impact on business
- Impact on the community
- Community facilities and services.

Figure 1 shows the aspects that were selected five times or more.

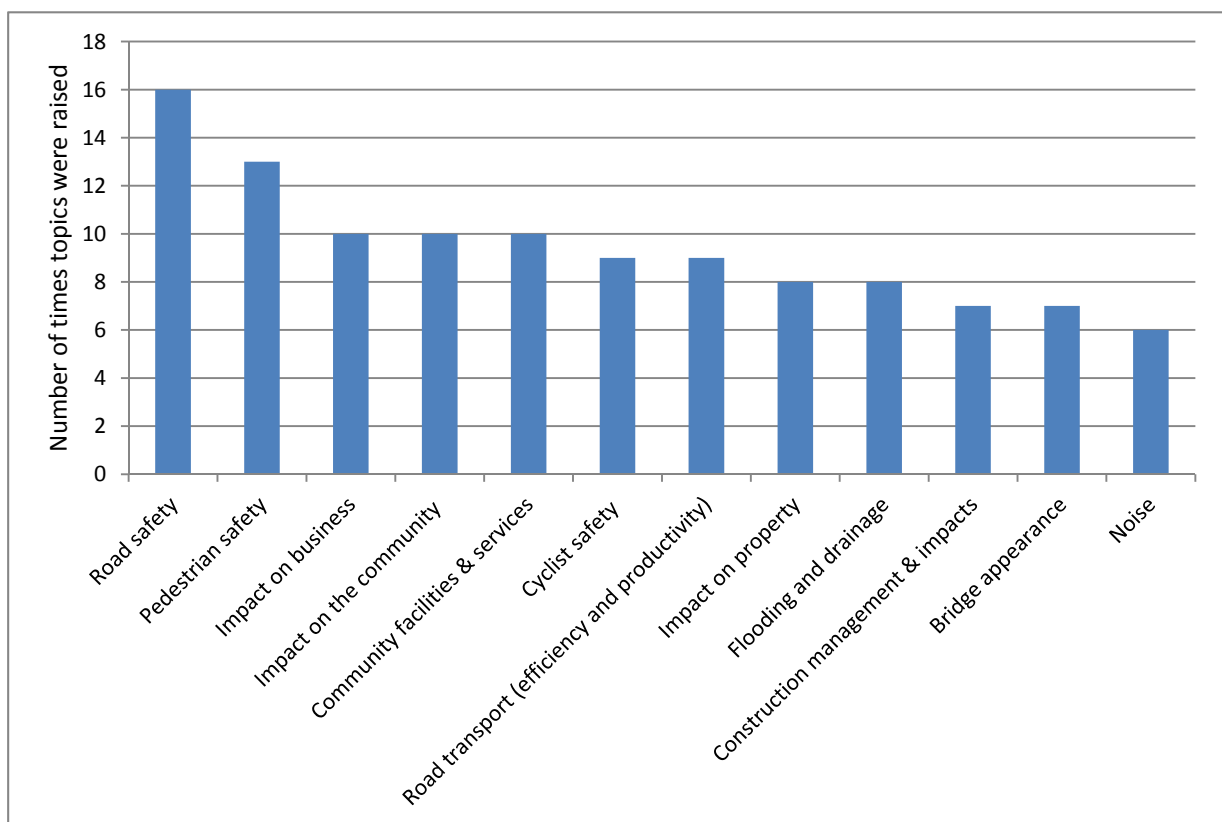


Figure 1: Most important aspects of the project identified on feedback forms completed by community members

All comments recorded within the feedback form in response to various open-ended questions and in discussions at the drop-in sessions were classified by topic. The top five frequently identified topics were:

- Bridge location suggestions
- Flooding and drainage
- Technical specifications for bridge design (e.g. height of new bridge)
- Business and service patronage
- Community facilities and services.

Figure 2 shows the top ten most frequently mentioned topics.

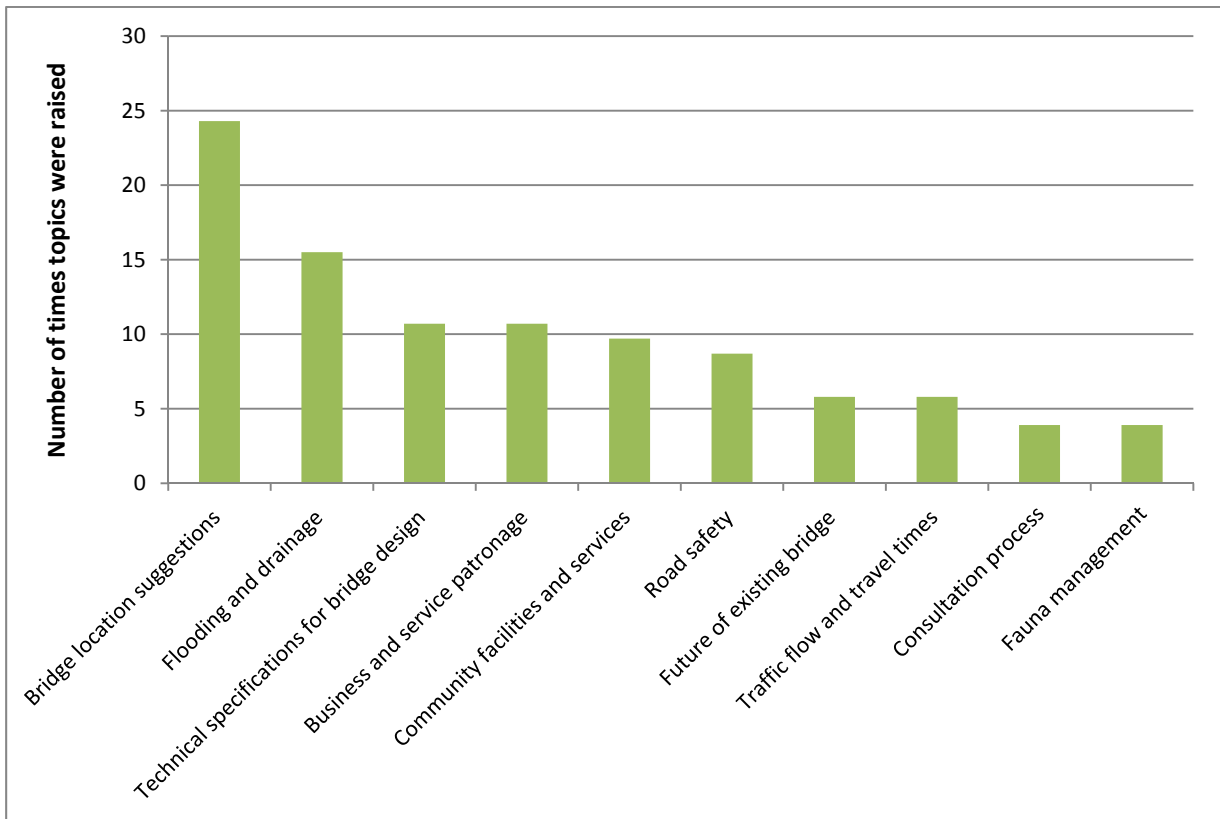


Figure 2: Top ten topics raised in feedback received

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

A summary of the comments made during the July 2013 community consultation is provided below, with topics listed in alphabetical order. These community comments and opinions are currently being considered as the project team develops a shortlist of options for a new bridge over Sportsmans Creek in Lawrence.

• Bridge location suggestions

- Connect the Grafton-Lawrence Road with Rutland Street (most frequent suggestion).
- Connect Grafton-Lawrence Road with Grafton Street but keep dog-leg intersection to slow traffic.
- Do not use the most northern portion of Grafton Street (the section of Grafton Street from Bridge Street to Rutland Street).
- Do not connect with Bridge Street as it is too narrow to accommodate two-way traffic and will reduce noise in the area.
- Do connect with Bridge Street because the residents already experience bridge traffic.
- The location of the new bridge should not impact on local businesses (mainly the General Store and Tavern).
- Locate the bridge to the west of the existing boat ramp to increase access and usage.
- If the bridge is built to the west of Grafton Street, ensure connecting roads are built to the General Store and Tavern.
- Appropriate consideration needs to be made, if the bridge is located anywhere to the west of Grafton Street, to flooding. A raised road would impede and pond waters (potentially increasing flooding of the existing houses).

- **Business/services patronage**
 - Ensure that the General Store and Tavern maintain access to passing traffic.
- **Community facilities and services**
 - When the existing bridge is demolished, the area could be used to install additional community facilities (e.g. jetty, boat ramp).
 - Locate the bridge to the west of the existing boat ramp to increase access and usage.
 - The existing bridge should be retained for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Maintain or replace existing facilities in Flo Clark Park (e.g. boat ramp).
 - Requests for new facilities in Flo Clark Park [N.B. beyond the scope of this project].
 - Together with the new ferry, the new bridge is expected to improve tourism and enhance the attraction of the Lawrence Museum.
- **Construction management and impacts**
 - Maintain access to existing bridge while new bridge is being built.
 - Avoid major road closures during construction.
 - Throughout construction maintain access (by water and land) to existing boat ramps.
- **Fauna management**
 - New road infrastructure should consider livestock movements if intersecting a paddock (e.g. build a tunnel underpass).
 - Dolphins herd mullet under the existing bridge from the main channel 2-3 times a year.
- **Flooding / drainage**
 - Construct any new roads to act as a levee to protect Lawrence residences and businesses.
 - Swampy conditions of land north/west of current bridge.
 - Road connectivity during and after floods – Riverbank Road clears at least three days before the Lawrence-Grafton Road.
 - Flood waters run back up Sportsmans Creek – not down (as observed in the last flooding event in February 2013).
 - Flood waters are deepest in the area surrounding the General Store.
 - The last flood saw significant amounts of water run over Richmond Street and the top on Grafton Street.
 - When roads are closed due to flooding – Lawrence residents go to Grafton via Pringles/Summerland Way.
 - Stone wall supporting the northern approach of the existing bridge may, in some way, protect houses in Bridge Street during floods.
 - The bridge doesn't necessarily need to be flood proof as surrounding/linking roads are normally cut-off/closed anyway.
 - Do not worsen flooding and water-flows through poor bridge and road design.
- **Future of existing bridge**
 - Concerns about the structural integrity of the existing bridge.
 - People asked what would happen to the old bridge and whether any parts would be reused or commemorated.
 - Several people commented that they would be sad to see the old bridge go, but were accepting of the logic behind the decision to do so.
 - The existing bridge should be retained for pedestrians and cyclists.

- The existing bridge is a draw-card for tourists who are regularly seen taking pictures or painting it.
- Maintain access to existing bridge while new bridge is being built.
- **Noise**
 - Demolishing the existing bridge would significantly reduce noise (caused mostly by trucks rattling along the existing bridge) for the properties along Bridge Street
- **Other RMS projects being carried out in the area**
 - Frequently mentioned RMS projects in the area: McFarlane bridge, ferry upgrade, Grafton bridge.
- **Pedestrian/cyclist safety and access**
 - Include pedestrian/cyclist access on the new bridge (incl. easy access to and from each side).
- **Project funding and cost**
 - Will the funded amount for the project be enough to carry out the appropriate studies and build a new bridge?
- **Project history**
 - Repeated references were made to the project's long history, and there was some frustration that the project had not yet been completed.
 - Many had specific memories of participating in previous discussions and provided feedback that the latest 'drop-in' sessions were far more informative and friendly than the previous public meeting format.
- **Project timeframes**
 - General curiosity about how quickly the project might move, and satisfaction with committed funding and construction by 2016.
- **Property access**
 - If the new bridge connects to Grafton Street, consider the impact this might have on property access.
- **Property value**
 - If the new bridge connects to Grafton Street, consider the impact this might have on property values.
- **Road safety**
 - Speeding is regularly observed down the Grafton straight – road infrastructure that connects to the new bridge should include traffic calming devices (e.g. dog-leg in roads or roundabout).
 - Improve road safety around General Store and install safer parking spaces.
 - Ensure exits from the bridge and associated road infrastructure are safe for both pedestrians/cyclists and vehicles.

- **Technical specifications**

- The height of the new bridge must be at least the same height as the existing bridge due to safety concerns, clearance for boats etc. and debris during floods.
- New roads built should have a higher elevation than Bridge Street.
- Construct any new roads to act as a levee, and build up a corresponding levee along Clarence River, to protect properties on Bridge Street.
- New road infrastructure should consider livestock movements if intersecting a paddock (e.g. build a tunnel underpass).
- The new bridge should cater for two-way traffic.
- The new bridge should be aesthetically pleasing, with minimum maintenance required (e.g. concrete if possible).
- The design of the new bridge should fit in with the heritage nature of Lawrence.

- **Traffic flow and travel times**

- The new bridge should cater for two-way traffic.
- Likely that traffic will increase now that the new ferry has been installed and once Macfarlane bridge upgrade has been completed.

- **Visual amenity**

- Maintain the visual amenity of the creek/river for properties located adjacent to/near the new bridge.

NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

The feedback received during the community drop-in sessions and in formal feedback forms will be taken into consideration in developing a shortlist of options for a new bridge over Sportsmans Creek in Lawrence.

An options report, including how the shortlist of options was selected, will be published and displayed for public comment in late 2013. The report will be available online and community drop-in sessions will be held in Lawrence to discuss the shortlist. A process flow-chart for the project can be found in Appendix B.

The community can contact the project team at any time by:

Phone: 1800 035 016 (toll free)

Email: sportsmanscreeknewbridge@kbr.com

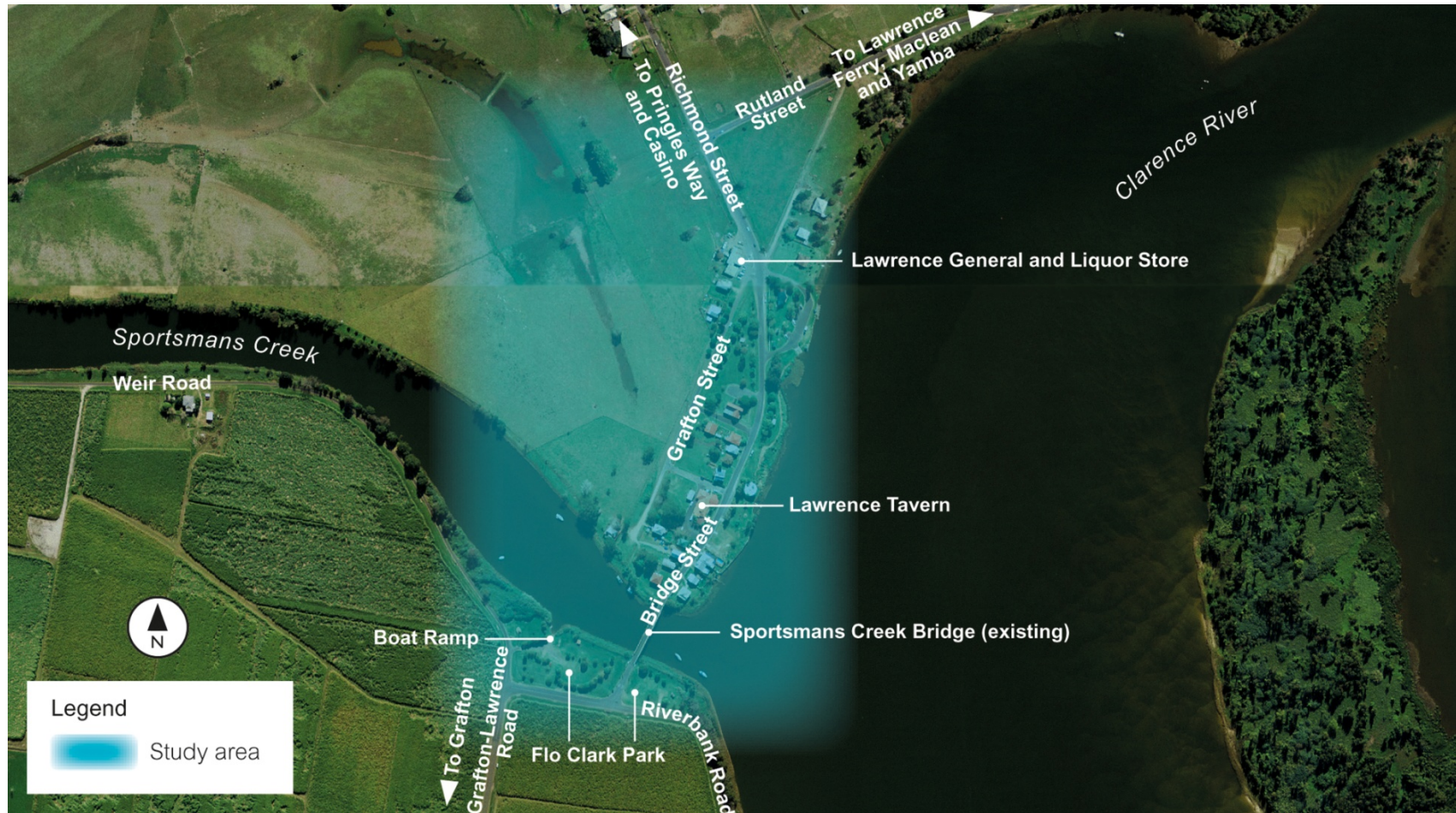
Post: Sportsmans Creek new bridge project
Reply Paid 633
Brisbane QLD 4001

Appendix A

STUDY AREA

Appendix A

Study Area

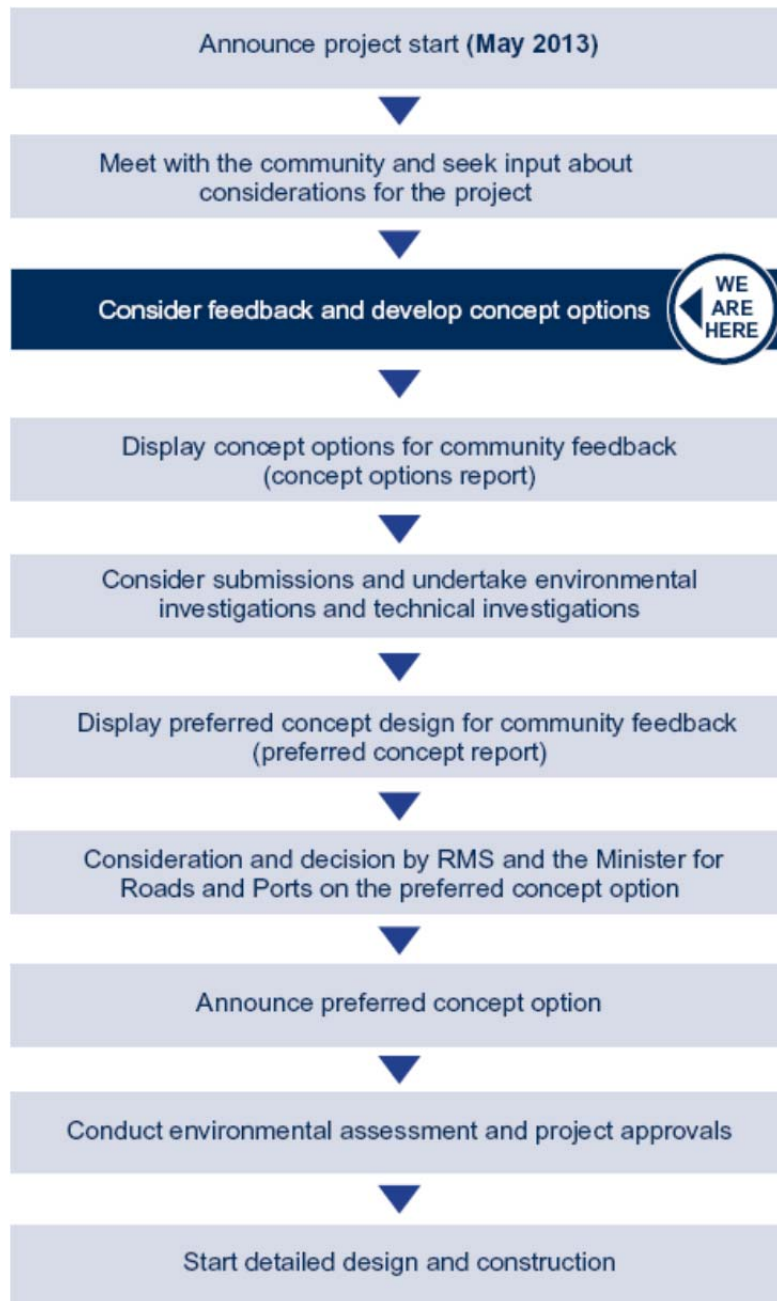


Appendix B

FLOW CHART

Appendix B

Flow Chart



Appendix C

FEEDBACK FORM

Feedback form



Transport
Roads & Maritime
Services

JULY 2013

Sportsmans Creek new bridge

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is working with Clarence Valley Council and the community to develop and assess preliminary options for a new bridge over Sportsmans Creek at Lawrence. To ensure we reflect the interests of the Lawrence community and other stakeholders, we are seeking your input on the project.

Name:

Organisation:

Property address:

Suburb: Postcode: State:

Postal address (if different):

Suburb: Postcode: State:

Phone number:

Email:

How would you like to be kept informed about the project? Email Mail

Please tick one or more of the boxes below that best describes you. This will allow us to effectively collate your feedback:

Property owner/occupier in the project study area	
Resident of Lawrence	
I represent a group (please provide name or group or organisation)	
Commuter	
Pedestrian/cyclist	
Truck driver	
Other	

How did you find out about the drop-in sessions?

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Feedback form



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Do you have any specific proposals or suggestions for locating or designing the bridge? Please tell us what you like about the idea.

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Which aspects of the project are most important to you? (tick all that apply)

Road safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community facilities and services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pedestrian safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flooding/drainage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyclist safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bridge appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel times	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Road transport productivity and efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact on business	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vibration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact on property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact on the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost of project	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact on animals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Construction management and impacts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact on vegetation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please list below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

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Feedback form



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Is there anything you would like the project team to consider when planning for a new bridge?

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Other comments:

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Please submit this form to the project team today or by Thursday 25 July 2013:

Email: sportsmanscreeknewbridge@kbr.com

Post: Sportsmans Creek new bridge project

Reply Paid 633

Brisbane QLD 4001

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