



**Transport**  
Roads & Maritime  
Services

# New Bridge at Tabulam

Early Feedback Summary

**NOVEMBER 2013**



# Roads and Maritime Services

## Tabulam New Bridge Early Feedback Summary

November 2013

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The proposed new Bruxner Highway bridge at Tabulam is part of the 'Bridges for the Bush' initiative – a NSW Government commitment to improve road freight productivity by replacing or upgrading bridges throughout the State.

The existing bridge over the Clarence River at Tabulam is one of 48 timber truss bridges in NSW managed by Roads and Maritime Services. These bridges make up about one percent of the bridges maintained by Roads and Maritime, however they require around 20 percent of the bridge maintenance budget annually. To address the long term management of these structures, Roads and Maritime completed the state-wide Timber Truss Bridge Conservation Strategy. The strategy, undertaken in consultation with the Heritage Council of NSW, aims to establish a balance between infrastructure provision and heritage conservation.

The existing bridge cannot be upgraded to meet the future operational requirements for the Bruxner Highway, including local industry haulage, two-way traffic and pedestrian access. Therefore, as part of the strategy, the bridge over the Clarence River at Tabulam is proposed to be removed and replaced with a new, modern structure.

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 to:

- Enhance road safety for all road users
- Improve traffic efficiency
- Improve road transport productivity and reliability
- Support local and regional economic development
- Remove the existing bridge structure
- Involve all stakeholders and consider their interests
- Minimise impacts on the natural, cultural, social and built environment
- Provide value for money.

Roads and Maritime is committed to consulting with the Tabulam community and all stakeholders to ensure a solution is found that meets the needs of the Tabulam community, local industries and road users.

## 1.2 Early feedback summary

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

- Questions and discussions at a community drop-in session held on Thursday 15 August 2013 (3pm-7pm) at the Tabulam Community Hall.
- Feedback forms

Roads and Maritime invited the community to attend the drop-in session through a general mail out to Tabulam residents, newspaper advertisements and a media release. The letters were Roads and Maritime branded to assist in distinguishing from promotional mail. Letters were also sent to a range of key stakeholders; both from within the study area and beyond.

Related project information including a letter to the householder, study area map and project process flowchart were made available on the project website. Feedback forms were welcomed with all feedback forms received considered (Appendix B).

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 the community. This is expected to occur before the end of 2013.

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

**Phone:** 1800 810 680 (toll free)

**Email:** [community.input@ghd.com](mailto:community.input@ghd.com)

**Post:** New Tabulam bridge project  
PO Box 576  
Grafton NSW 2460

## 2. Summary of community feedback

### 2.1 Community participation

Fifty nine community members signed in at the drop-in session, including residents and business representatives from within and outside the study area. It is estimated that over 60 people attended the session as some people did not sign the register.

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.

Thirty six feedback forms were returned, with some submitted on the day of the drop-in session and others sent by email or post following the session.

The following eight groups / organisations were represented by individuals who completed feedback forms:

- Upper Clarence High Country Tourism Association
- Tabulam State Emergency Service (SES)
- Tabulam & District Chamber of Commerce
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Motorcyclists Australia (MA)
- NSW Farmers Association
- Bonalbo Show Society
- West of the Range Historical Society.

Respondents to the feedback forms identified themselves as belonging to the following seven stakeholder groups:

- Resident of Tabulam (26 respondents)
- Business owner (10 respondents)
- Representative of a group (eight respondents)
- Pedestrians/cyclists (three respondents)
- Driver of heavy vehicles (five respondents)
- Other (five respondents)
- Not identified (one respondent).

It is noted that several respondents identified themselves as belonging to more than one stakeholder group.

Following the drop-in session, there were a number of phone calls and emails requesting further information about the project or for contact details to be added to the database.

Two petitions opposing the removal of the existing bridge have also been received by the project team.

## 2.2 Preliminary feedback

To assist the community in providing feedback to the project team, a feedback form was provided to attendees at the 15 August 2013 community information drop-in session (see Appendix B). These feedback forms were either returned to the project team at this session or in the weeks following it. The results of the preliminary feedback provided to the project team through these feedback forms are outlined below.

The **first** question on the feedback form asked community members to identify issues for the project team to consider when planning for a new bridge.

Respondents most frequently identified the following four considerations:

- Road / pedestrian safety
- The historical nature of the existing bridge
- Local flooding issues
- The location and design of the proposed new bridge.

The **second** question on the feedback form asked community members to select the aspects of the project that were most important to them. Respondents most frequently identified the following four aspects of the project (see Figure 1):

- Road safety
- Impact on community
- Pedestrian safety
- Heritage.

Figure 1 below depicts the aspects of importance that were selected most frequently by at least five respondents.

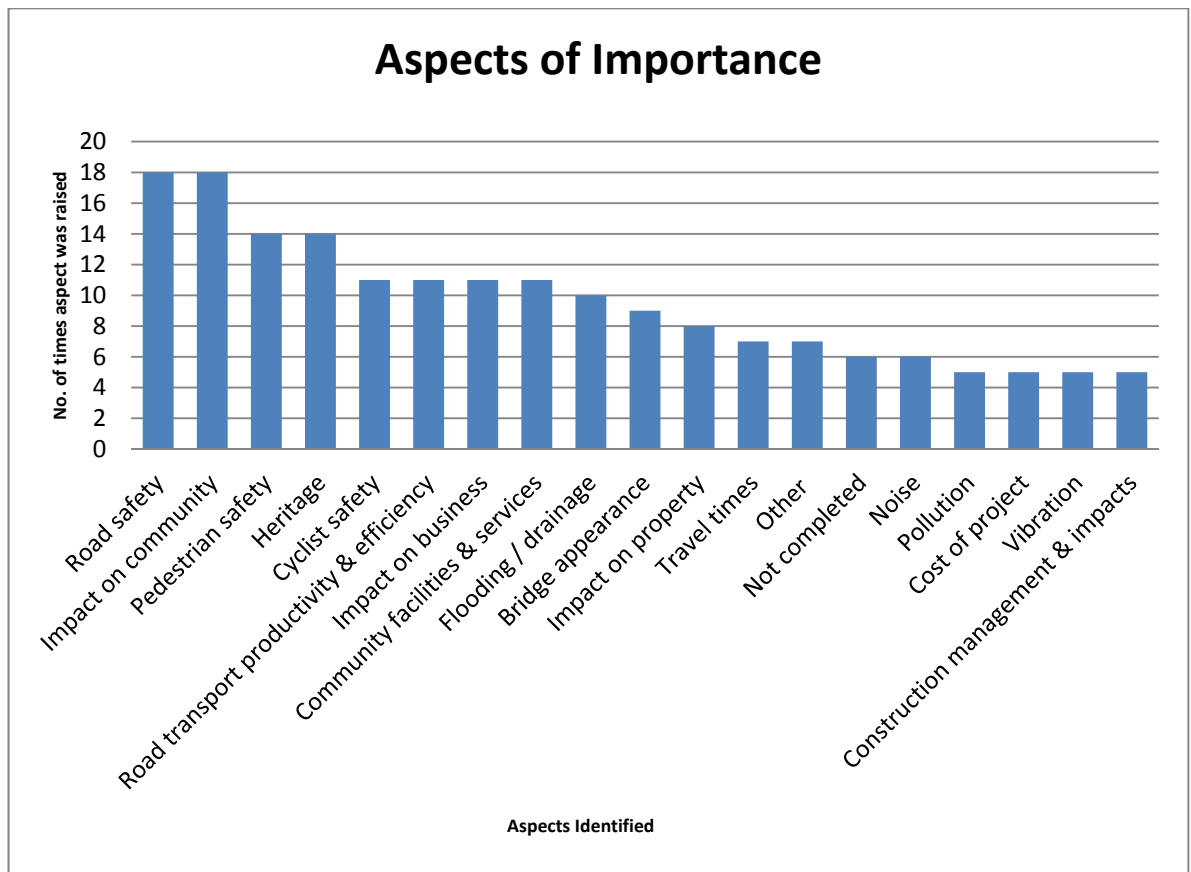


Figure 1: *Most important aspects of the project identified on feedback forms completed by community members*

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

- New bridge location and design suggestions
- The historical nature of existing bridge and its preservation
- Increasing traffic volumes and condition of current local road network.

### 2.3 Summary of comments

A summary of the comments made during the August 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 route options for the new Tabulam Bridge over the Clarence River.

#### **Bridge location / design suggestions**

- New bridge should be constructed in a location close to the Tabulam business district.
- New bridge should be constructed in a similar location to the existing bridge.
- New bridge should be constructed in a location that is upstream of the existing bridge. It should be constructed with no piers in the river.



- Existing bridge should be retained. New bridge should complement existing bridge visually. New bridge should use the same approach roads through Tabulam.

#### ***Historical nature of existing bridge***

- Existing bridge should be retained.
- New bridge should be constructed and existing bridge retained.
- Existing bridge should be retained for its heritage/tourism value and for use by non-motorised traffic (e.g. pedestrians/cyclists).
- The proposed demolition and removal of the existing bridge marks the removal of another local heritage structure of note. The bridge should be preserved in some manner.
- A memorial to the bridge should be constructed.
- Instead of retaining the old bridge, it could be demolished and a section placed in the local play area next to the Light Horse Brigade monument.

#### ***Impact on business***

- There is a concrete plant located on the western side of the bridge that has been significantly affected by previous bridge closures.
- Any changes to the route of the Bruxner Highway through Tabulam (away from business) may have a negative effect on local businesses due to the diversion of passing trade.

#### ***Increasing traffic volumes / condition of current local road network***

- There is likely to be an increase in heavy vehicles if a new bridge is constructed. This is likely to affect the local road network.
- If the new bridge is constructed for the purposes of allowing heavy vehicles and B-Doubles to use the Bruxner Highway, it is a legal requirement that all other sections of the Bruxner Highway also be upgraded.
- There are a number of elderly people in the areas surrounding Tabulam that are frequent bridge users.
- The roads through the ranges need to be made safer. These roads need to be able to be used by heavy vehicles and B-doubles. A rail system should be considered.
- The new bridge will likely encourage higher traffic volumes on the Bruxner Highway, including heavy vehicles and B-Doubles.
- Local roads are in need of maintenance.

#### ***Project delivery timeframe***

- Construct the new bridge as soon as possible.

## 2.4 Petitions

The project team also received two petitions opposing the removal of the existing bridge. The first was received with 162 signatures, and the second as an online petition with 197 comments as of October 2013.

Roads and Maritime acknowledges the heritage significance of the existing bridge and the opposition to its removal by the signatories of these petitions.

All feedback received from the stakeholders and the community, including the petitions, is being considered as planning progresses.

### 3. Next steps and further information

The feedback received during the community drop-in sessions and in feedback forms will be taken into consideration in developing a shortlist of options for a new Bruxner Highway bridge over the Clarence River at Tabulam.

A route options development 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 Tabulam to discuss the shortlist. A process flow-chart for the project can be found in Appendix C.

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

**Phone:** 1800 810 680 (toll free)

**Email:** [community.input@ghd.com](mailto:community.input@ghd.com)

**Post:** New Tabulam bridge project

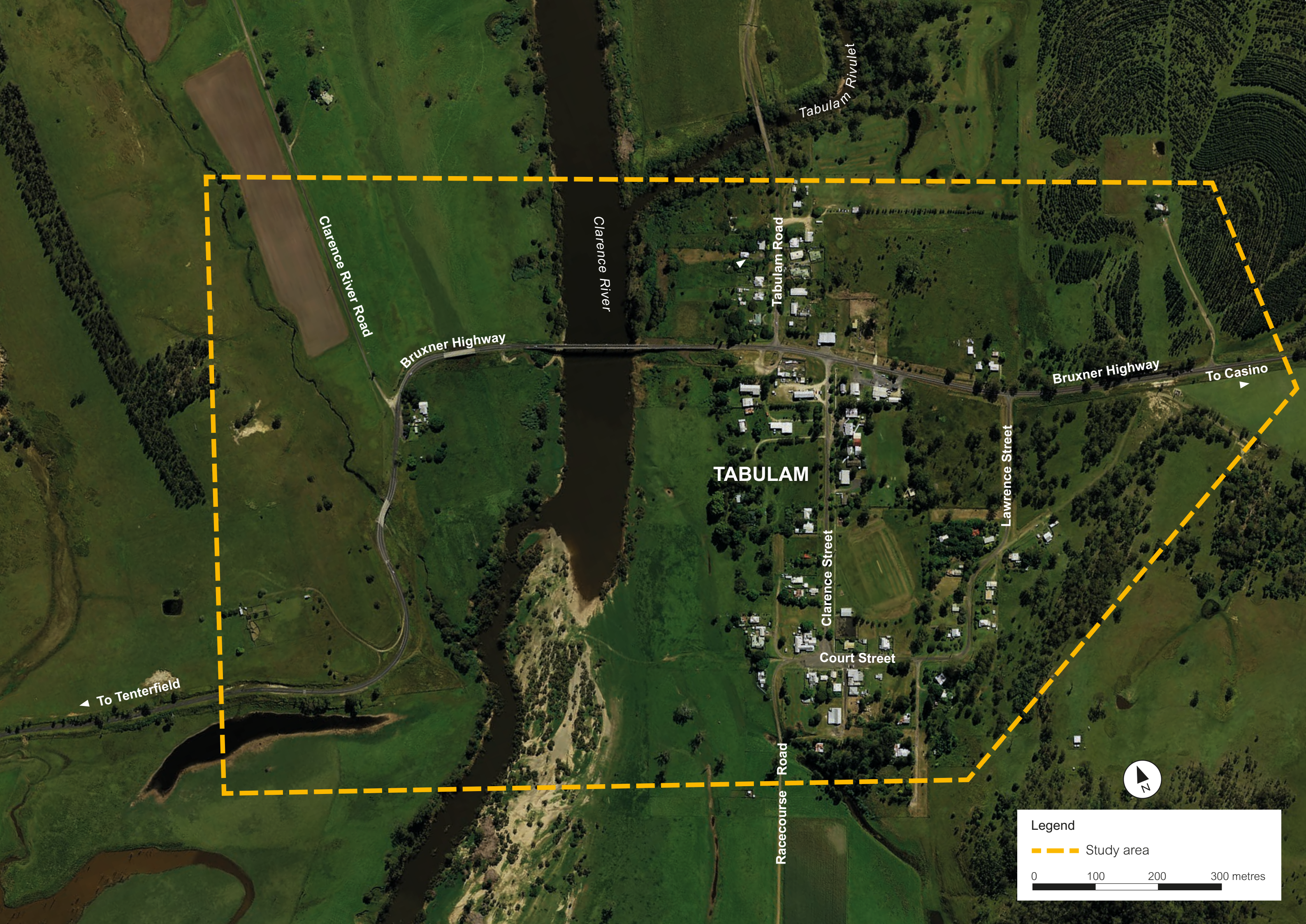
PO Box 576

Grafton NSW 2460

## *Appendices*

## Appendix A – Project study area





Legend

Study area

0 100 200 300 metres



## Appendix B – Feedback form

# Feedback form



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AUGUST 2013

## New Tabulam bridge project

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) has started to develop and assess a range of options for a new bridge location over the Clarence River at Tabulam. To ensure we reflect the interests of the Tabulam 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: .....

Would you like to be added to the project database and receive updates?

Yes ☐ No ☐

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:**

- ☐ Resident of Tabulam
- ☐ Business owner
- ☐ Representative of a group (please provide name of organisation)
- ☐ Pedestrian/cyclist
- ☐ Driver of heavy vehicles
- ☐ Other

**Are there any considerations you would like the project team to be aware of when planning for a new bridge? (eg. areas of significance which should be avoided)**

.....

.....

.....

.....

# Feedback form



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

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

**Other:**

.....  
.....

**Do you have any other comments?** .....

.....  
.....  
.....

Please submit this form to the project team in person at the community drop in session or return by **23 August 2013** via:

**Email:** [community.input@ghd.com](mailto:community.input@ghd.com)

**Post:** New Tabulam bridge project  
GHD Reply Paid 85012  
Sydney NSW 2000

Roads and Maritime Services ("RMS") is subject to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (or PPIIP Act) which requires that we comply with the Information Protection Principles set out in the PPIIP Act.

All information in correspondence is collected for the sole purpose of assisting in the assessment of this proposal. The information received, including names and addresses of respondents, may be published in subsequent documents unless a clear indication is given in the correspondence that all or part of that information is not to be published. Otherwise RMS will only disclose your personal information, without your consent, if authorised by the law. Your personal information will be held by RMS at 31 Victoria Street, Grafton NSW 2460. You have the right to access and correct the information if you believe that it is incorrect.

## Appendix C – Project process flow chart



