



Transport
for NSW

Princes Highway upgrade Jervis Bay Road to Sussex Inlet Road

Preferred Strategic Corridor Option
Community Consultation Report



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Executive Summary

Transport for NSW (Transport) is planning to upgrade sections of a 20-kilometre length of the Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet Road (the Project).

The Project is intended to improve the road-based transport for this section of the highway to more safely and efficiently move people and goods along the NSW South Coast. A major upgrade to the Princes Highway was found to best meet the service needs for customers traveling the corridor compared to alternatives such as minor localised infrastructure improvements, a business as usual (or 'do nothing') approach, or other options focused on alternative transport modes. The proposed major upgrade is expected to result in the best safety and traffic efficiency improvements.

The 20-kilometre length of Princes Highway includes a diverse range of local environments, landscapes, and different communities. In order to identify a preferred strategic corridor option that would meet the project objectives and best address the constraints of the study area, Transport undertook a rigorous strategic options development and assessment process.

The selection of the preferred strategic option was conducted through a Value Management Study where each option was assessed against the seven criteria as follows:

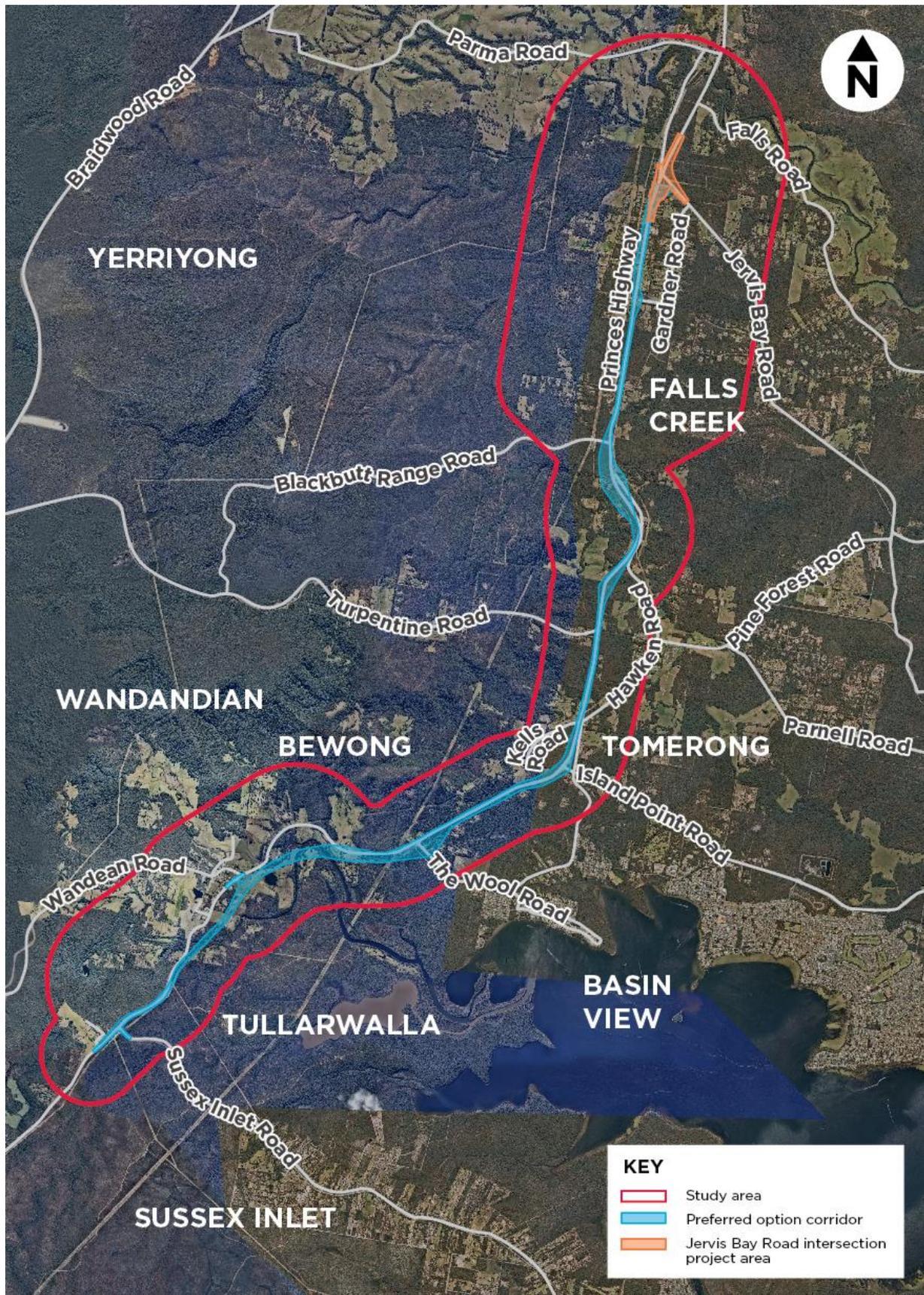
1. Improve network safety for all transport users
2. Improve freight access and efficiency
3. Improve traffic efficiency and connectivity
4. Enable an increase in the use of active and public transport
5. Improve transport network resilience
6. Support sustainability of the region
7. Respect the community and the environment

The preferred strategic corridor option was identified and has the following key features:

- Connects with the proposed design for the Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade
- Improved safety and traffic efficiency by planning for an upgraded highway alignment to include two lanes in both directions
- Improved safety, performance, and accessibility to key intersections, better connecting communities off the highway
- Improved accessibility in and around Wandandian and Bewong and

Improved efficiency and reduced congestion on the highway by bypassing east of Wandandian.

The preferred strategic corridor option was announced on 25 November 2020, and the consultation period was open until 20 December 2020. The aim of the consultation was to inform the wider community of the preferred strategic corridor option and to enable community and stakeholders to provide feedback on the corridor and the wider study area.



Princes Highway upgrade between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet Road

Consultation activities included:

- Door knocking of properties and businesses within the corridor immediately following the announcement. Subsequent follow up with property owners via phone calls and individual face to face meetings
- A dedicated project webpage containing project information and frequently asked questions was published
- Distribution of a project notification to all households in the suburbs surrounding the corridor, i.e., Falls Creek, Tomerong, Bewong, Wandandian and Sussex Inlet
- An online survey that allowed respondents to rank how the option would achieve the project's objectives. The survey also allowed for free text comments and feedback to be submitted.
- A project 1800 number and email address for the community to contact members of the project team
- A Facebook Live Q&A session
- Meetings and briefings with key stakeholder and community groups

 **Transport received 1185 comments within the 248 online survey submissions and 29 email submissions**

Feedback focused on nine categorised issues:

Feedback focused on nine categorised issues including:



1. Safety, traffic and transport



2. Preferred Strategic Corridor



3. General Project detail



4. Socio-economic



5. Environment



6. Bushfire/incident resilience



7. Consultation



8. Out of scope



9. Project need and justification

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Princes Highway is critical to a thriving South Coast NSW.

It helps drive the State's third largest regional economy, is relied upon by over 500,000 local residents and welcomes almost four million tourists each year.

It connects regional centres and essential services and is the main transport corridor for freight to the region.

Since 2011, the Australian and NSW Governments have invested \$2.5 billion upgrading the Princes Highway.

This has transformed and better-connected communities, employed thousands of locals, improved safety, eased traffic congestion and grown regional economies.

The focus is now on the future, with the Australian and NSW Governments committing \$1.5 billion to upgrade the Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road at Falls Creek and the Victorian border.



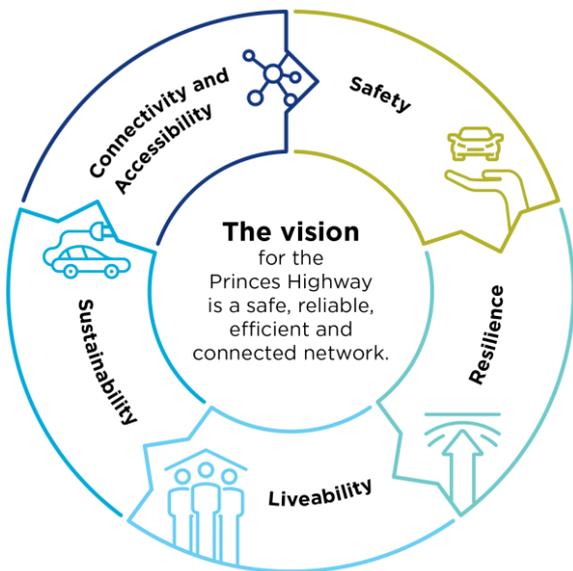
1.2 Princes Highway upgrade overview

Transport has developed a Roadmap to 2040 for the Princes Highway upgrade. It aligns with the Future Transport 2056 and the Regional Services and Infrastructure Plan to map out the vision for the next 20 years and identifies service and infrastructure priorities for the short, medium, and longer term to deliver a safe, reliable, efficient, and connected network.

Transport worked closely with key stakeholders including Local Government, NSW Government agencies, growing, emerging and established industry and carried out socio-economic analysis and transport studies to understand how customers will move in the future and how a highway can better contribute to the places and economies it serves.

Visit princeshighway.nsw.gov.au/roadmap2040 for more information on how the priorities were identified.

1.3 Program vision



The vision for the Princes Highway is a transport network that enables the movement of people and goods and supports sustainable growth of the local economy, employment opportunities and population. It would contribute to the character of the places it serves and be resilient to adapt to natural hazards and climate change, respond to changing land use, and support new technologies, industries, and economic trends.

The roadmap is built on five goals:

- **Safety:** A safer corridor for all customers and communities including local traffic, freight, tourists, and public and active transport users.
- **Resilience:** A corridor that can be efficiently managed and maintained while adapting to changing social, environmental, and economic factors including the ability to quickly recover from natural disasters and respond to changing land use and technologies.
- **Liveability:** A corridor that supports communities by connecting and contributing to providing attractive and healthy places to live, work and play.
- **Sustainability:** A corridor that is socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable and unlocks a wide range of benefits for communities and other customers.
- **Connectivity and Accessibility:** A corridor that has good physical and digital connectivity and accessibility, for access to opportunity and services.

Five of the identified priority projects have already progressed to the design phase including the Jervis Bay Road and Princes Highway intersection, Jervis Bay Road to Sussex Inlet Road upgrade, Milton Ulladulla bypass, Burrill Lake to Batemans Bay upgrade and Moruya bypass.

The 20-year roadmap has not determined the preferred design options or specific features of each priority project identified in the 20-year plan (e.g., speed limits, intersection treatment types, multi-modal options, local road access or preferred corridor alignments.)

The details of each project are being developed by separate project teams following strategic design work and using further environmental and traffic studies and ongoing consultation with local communities and stakeholders.

1.5 Project Overview

The Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet Road is a 20-kilometre section of the highway. It is between the regional centres of Nowra, Milton and Ulladulla and is the main transport corridor for local traffic, freight, tourists, and public transport users. The section of highway provides the only access to regional coastal and inland towns including Huskisson, Vincentia, Tomerong, Sanctuary Point and surrounding villages, St Georges Basin, Bewong, Wandandian and Sussex Inlet.

The proposed upgrade to this section of the Princes Highway would deliver better connected and more mobile regional centres, deliver a more resilient transport network, improve safety, ease traffic congestion, and grow regional economies.

The upgrade would aim to address the 126 crashes, including five fatal crashes and 42 serious injury crashes, on this section of highway in the five years from 2014 to 2018.

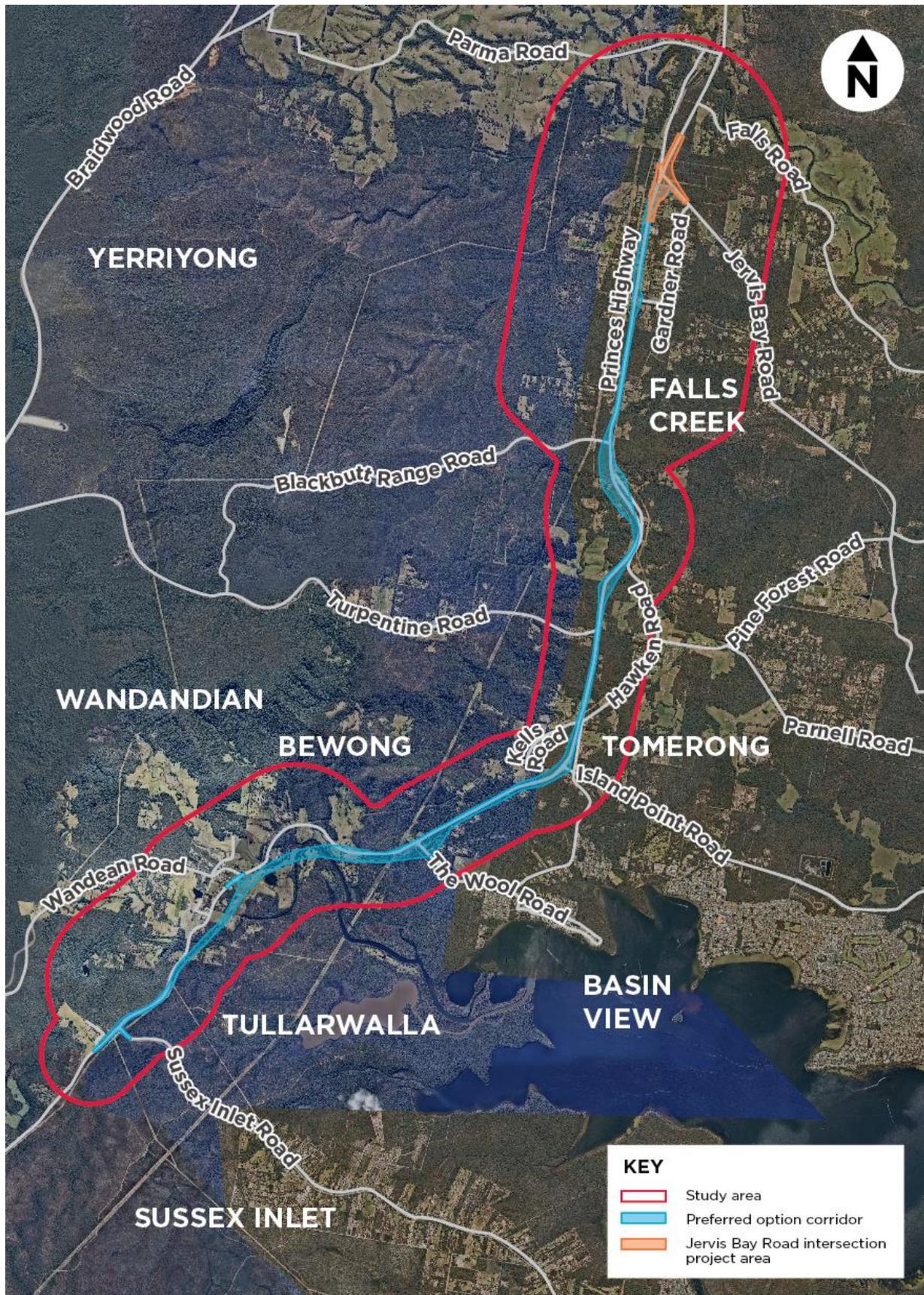
The preferred strategic corridor option as shown in the figure below, has the following key features:

- Greater integration with the proposed Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade
- Improved safety and traffic efficiency via improved curve radii allowing for higher speed environments along the Princes Highway
- Greater safety, performance and accessibility to existing key intersections, including Sussex Inlet Road
- Greater accessibility to Wandandian and Bewong via a diversion from the existing highway alignment to the east of Wandandian.

1.6 Project Benefits

Project benefits

-  **Improve safety**
for all transport users
-  **Better connect**
regional centres
-  **Reduce congestion**
-  **Improve resilience**
-  **Support**
pedestrian, cyclists
and public transport users
-  **Grow regional**
economies including
tourism and freight



Princes Highway upgrade between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet Road

2. Consultation Approach

2.1 Consultation Aims

Transport announced the preferred strategic corridor option on 25 November 2020 and invited community feedback.

The aim of the consultation was to:

- Inform the wider community of the preferred strategic corridor option, its benefits, and the reasons it was identified
- Inform the community of how the project aligns with the Princes Highway upgrade
- Enable community and stakeholders to easily have their say
- Adapt to COVID-19 restrictions, providing a range of digital and traditional ways for the community to engage with the project team
- Gather quality feedback to help inform the future planning for the project
- Gain more insight into identified and potential community issues
- Acknowledge nearby residents and businesses, by contacting nearby properties immediately following the announcement informing them of the preferred strategic option and what it means to be within the project study area.

2.2 Meeting with stakeholder and community interest groups

Shoalhaven City Council

Transport briefed Shoalhaven City Council senior management and Councillors on Thursday 26 November, following the announcement of the preferred strategic corridor option.

Shoalhaven City Council made a written submission. Issues contained in Council's

submission generally aligned with those raised by the community. Transport's response to issues raised can be viewed within Section 3 of this report.

Prior to identifying the preferred strategic corridor option, Shoalhaven City Council participated in a value management workshop in September 2020. This workshop brought together key local, state, and federal government specialists who assessed shortlisted options against the agreed criteria before making a recommendation for a preferred corridor option. A summary of this workshop is available in the Preferred Strategic Corridor Option report, on the project webpage.

Transport recognises council as a critical stakeholder and will continue to meet with Council as the project progresses.

Wandandian Progress Association

Wandandian Progress Association is a body of local citizens that represents the residents and ratepayers of Wandandian. The Association is Shoalhaven Council's designated Community Consultative Body for the Wandandian, Bewong, and Jerrawangala communities.

Transport had contact with the Wandandian Progress Association during the consultation period to assist in answering questions from their members about the project and to encourage members to provide feedback on the preferred strategic corridor. The group offered general support for the project, however, raised some concern for potential impacted property and business owners.

Wandandian Progress Association made a written submission to Transport, and Transport's response is within Section 3 of this report.

Transport recognises Wandandian Progress Association as a key community stakeholder group and will continue to meet regularly with the group as the project progresses.

Properties within the preferred corridor

Transport attempted to contact all owners and tenants of nearby business and residential properties immediately following the announcement in November 2020. Contact was made via door knocking or phone call. Transport contact details were provided where residents were not available and follow up phone calls were made.

Contact with these stakeholders aimed to inform of the announcement of the preferred option, encourage feedback on issues or concerns about the project including local access requirements and inform them that studies may be carried out on or near their property.

2.3 Adapting to COVID-19

To achieve the aims of our consultation period, we were required to change how we engaged community and stakeholders due to COVID-19 restrictions. In response to COVID-19 we:

- Moved planned drop-in sessions online, using a Facebook Live Q&A event to engage with community
- Invited community groups to meet with the project team using teleconferencing facilities
- Ensured face-to-face meetings complied with NSW Health advice
- Focused on digital communications
- Understood many people may not be able or comfortable engaging with us digitally, we placed Have your Say printed forms throughout the community including local libraries
- Accepted feedback via the phone and email.

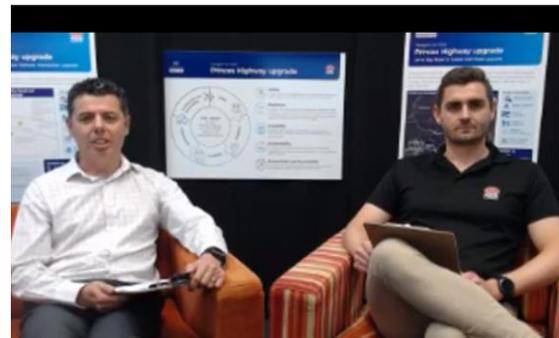
Facebook Live Q&A

On Friday 4 December 2020, Transport hosted a Facebook Live event to address the community's questions and concerns and encourage feedback. Commentary during this event was not considered official feedback. Transport used the event to encourage participants to provide feedback via the available methods including email, online survey, phone, and printed feedback forms.

95 comments were received during the event (or soon after the event's conclusion) including 80 related to the project and 15 not related to the project.

Of the 80 comments about the project, about 80 per cent expressed a neutral sentiment.

An analysis of comments and questions identified several key feedback themes including - alternate corridor suggestion such as use of the powerline alignment, property acquisitions, consultation, public transport, project design, project timing and safety.



Theme	Overview
Alternate corridor suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion that the powerline corridor could be investigated as an alternate option to the preferred strategic corridor.
Property Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to properties • Impacts to property value
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ineffectiveness of consultation • Unanswered phone calls and emails to the project information line • Lack of notification regarding property acquisition
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions for railway to be included in the project
Project Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to speed limits on the highway
Project Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction timeframes, duration, and completion
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts to safety • Impacts to accident reduction
Nowra bypass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions for the construction of a Nowra bypass. Note, this suggestion is out of scope of this project, however the community's feedback will be passed onto the relevant Transport project team.

2.4 Engagement methods



3. Consultation Summary

3.1 Overview

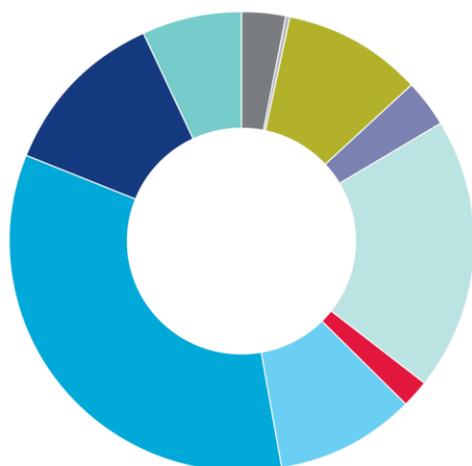
During the consultation period between Wednesday 25 November 2020 and Sunday 20 December 2020, Transport received 277 responses to the online survey and via email.



Face to face meetings were also carried out with Shoalhaven City Council and the Wandandian Progress Association and an online information session for the wider community was hosted on Facebook.

Of the 277 responses, 1185 comments were identified, and these were categorised into nine themes, which included:

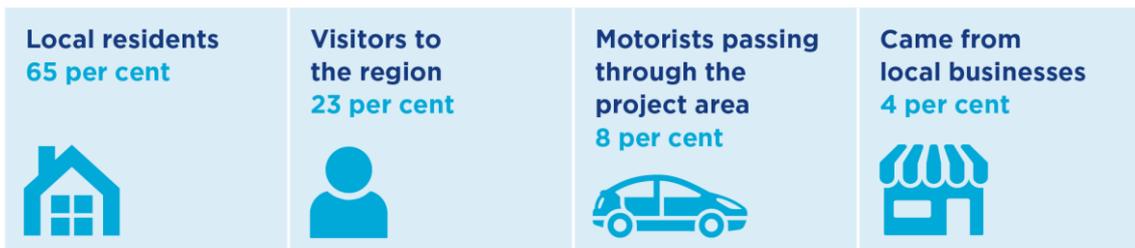
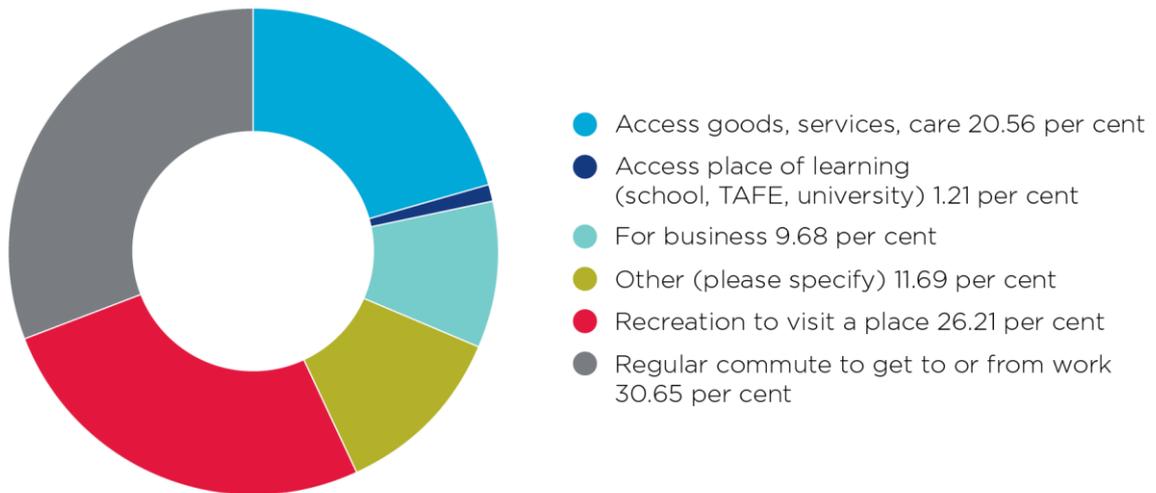
- Feedback focused on nine categorised issues including:
1. Safety, traffic and transport
 2. Preferred Strategic Corridor
 3. General Project detail
 4. Socio-economic
 5. Environment
 6. Bushfire/incident resilience
 7. Consultation
 8. Out of scope
 9. Project need and justification



- Safety, traffic and transport 33.67 per cent
- General Project Detail 12.03 per cent
- Bushfire/Incident Resilience 6.84 per cent
- Consultation 3.29 per cent
- Cumulative Impacts 0.13 per cent
- Environment 9.87 per cent
- Out of Scope 3.29 per cent
- Preferred Strategic Corridor 18.99 per cent
- Project Need and Justification 1.90 per cent
- Socio-economic 9.87 per cent

3.2 Respondents' relationship with the transport network and the project area

An online survey asked respondents about their relationship with the transport network and the project area.



The survey also allowed respondents to leave additional comments about the project.

Comments provided by participants as part of this survey have been analysed as part of Section 3.4.

3.3 Responses to survey questions

- Of the 245 who responded, the following responses were received:
- 65%* agreed the preferred strategic corridor option would improve safety.
- 64%* agreed the preferred strategic corridor option would improve reliability and reduce congestion.
- 63%* agreed the preferred strategic corridor option would improve freight access.
- 63%* agreed the preferred strategic corridor option would improve the resilience of the highway
- 58%* agreed the preferred strategic corridor option would help surrounding villages connect with the highway.

*% figures are based on 'agree completely' and 'somewhat agree' results

A. It would improve safety



- Agree completely (48.16%) ●
- Somewhat agree (17.96%) ●
- Neither agree nor disagree (11.43%) ●
- Somewhat disagree (7.35%) ●
- Disagree completely (15.10%) ●

B. It improve reliability and reduce congestion



- Agree completely (40.00%) ●
- Somewhat agree (24.08%) ●
- Neither agree nor disagree (8.57%) ●
- Somewhat disagree (8.16%) ●
- Disagree completely (19.18%) ●

C. It would improve freight access



- Agree completely (38.27%) ●
- Somewhat agree (24.69%) ●
- Neither agree nor disagree (17.28%) ●
- Somewhat disagree (6.17%) ●
- Disagree completely (13.58%) ●

D. It would improve the resilience of the highway and intersection



- Agree completely (38.78%) ●
- Somewhat agree (24.49%) ●
- Neither agree nor disagree (12.24%) ●
- Somewhat disagree (6.94%) ●
- Disagree completely (17.55%) ●

E. It would help surrounding villages connect with highway



- Agree completely (37.96%) ●
- Somewhat agree (19.59%) ●
- Neither agree nor disagree (14.29%) ●
- Somewhat disagree (7.35%) ●
- Disagree completely (20.82%) ●

The feedback provided in submissions via email and free text comments within the survey are captured in section 3.4.

3.4 Feedback and Transport for NSW's response

Table 3.4 Consultation responses

Summary of feedback	Transport response
<p>Preferred Strategic Corridor</p>	
<p>About 19 per cent of comments about the preferred strategic corridor including the corridor's connection to Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade, planning for two lanes, intersection treatments types, impacts to nearby towns, alternative options to the preferred corridor and design suggestions.</p>	
<p>Comments made about the Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade project in connection to the preferred strategic corridor (less than one per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the intersection upgrade at Jervis Bay Road • Concerns about the proposed dual roundabout within the intersection upgrade design 	<p>Transport has noted community and stakeholders' comments regarding the Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade.</p> <p>Concerns raised about the Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade have been passed on to the relevant project team members.</p> <p>The Jervis Bay Road intersection upgrade project is progressing and more information about this project can be found on the project webpage.</p>
<p>Planning for two lanes (two per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General support for two or more lanes to ease congestion and improve safety, particularly when overtaking • Suggestions for the design to include additional entry/exit points or service roads for access to local villages, including Sussex Inlet • Concerns about the safety of intersections if additional lanes are added and the need to address intersection types as part of the project. 	<p>Transport has noted community and stakeholders' views on the preferred strategic corridor option.</p> <p>The scope of this project includes planning for two lanes in each direction, which may be constructed in stages. More information about the corridor design will be released as the project progresses.</p> <p>Intersection treatment types will be investigated further as part of the next phase of the project.</p>
<p>Intersection treatment types (five per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions on the type of intersection treatments to be considered within the project area. • Suggestions to include grade separated intersection treatments (e.g. flyovers or underpasses) and slip road at major intersections along the preferred strategic corridor. 	<p>Transport has noted community and stakeholders' views on the intersection types within the preferred strategic corridor option.</p> <p>More information about the intersection treatment types will be released as the project progresses.</p>

Summary of feedback

Transport response

Impact on nearby towns (four per cent):

- General comments regarding the preferred strategic corridor and nearby towns/villages:
- Suggestions to bypass all townships and villages to remove traffic from these areas.
- Suggestions the preferred option could improve connectivity between neighbouring villages if connection points are well thought through and designed, including a connection to Sussex Inlet to cater for future growth
- Concerns the preferred option would not improve connectivity of villages surrounding the highway, divide communities
- Comments regarding the preferred strategic corridor near Wandandian including:
 - Concerns about impacts on property and the environment
 - Suggestions to investigate alternative options that reduce property and land impacts:
 - Comments that include support for a bypass of Wandandian that removes through traffic from the area
- Comments regarding the preferred strategic corridor and Bewong included concerns the corridor would move the highway closer to the township and that grade separated intersections (e.g. a flyover) would have significant impacts on the livability and privacy of residences.

Transport acknowledges the concerns of all communities within the corridor and is committed to continuing to engage with the community and stakeholder groups such as the Wandandian Progress Association to gain a deeper understanding of needs and concerns.

The project is in the early stage of planning and the community will have further opportunities to provide feedback on the project.

Support of alternative options (five per cent):

- Suggestions to further investigate options along the existing powerlines near The Wool Road from Bewong to Sussex Inlet.
- Suggestions to utilise the existing highway corridor for northbound traffic and to construct a new two-lane road to the east for southbound traffic with a flyover bridge at Tullarwalla Creek.
- Comments that other corridor options should be considered and general objections to the preferred strategic corridor.

Transport assessed a range of options to identify the preferred strategic corridor.

Transport will consider all feedback as the preferred strategic corridor option is refined.

The community will have further opportunities to provide feedback as the project progresses.

The Preferred Strategic Corridor Option Report contains details of the constraints assessment, strategic options development and assessment process that was undertaken to identify the preferred strategic corridor option.

The constraints were used to guide the development of corridor options, whereby

Summary of feedback

Transport response

the desired outcome was to select corridors (preliminary alignment options) that minimised impacts on the environment and/or project delivery.

The powerline easement option was not shortlisted as a strategic corridor option as it did not achieve the objectives of safety, traffic efficiency, community connectivity and minimising impacts on the environment.

Design suggestions (three per cent):

- Design suggestions included providing access to and the realignment of local roads, upgrades to existing bridges and highway capacity, changes to speed limits, extending entry and exit lanes and general improvements along the corridor.

Transport has noted this feedback and will consider design suggestions as the project progresses.

Safety, traffic and transport

34 per cent of comments were about safety, existing traffic, construction, and operational impacts to traffic. It also included comments or questions about road user safety, active and public transport, and freight.

Existing traffic (six per cent):

- Comments that the existing highway is used by a range of vehicles including cars motorhomes and towing vehicles (caravans/campers, boats, horse floats).
- Comments that there is a need to improve the current traffic efficiency and connectivity
- Suggestions to remove trucks and interstate traffic from the highway, to reduce congestion for local traffic.
- Comments that congestion is caused by intersections types, rather than volume of traffic on highway between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet Road
- Comments that congestion is generally worse on the weekends and during peak holiday periods.

Transport has noted concerns about the existing traffic issued and will consider these issues in future planning for the project.

Transport will also carry out an environmental assessment and will further assess the current and estimated future traffic volumes of connecting intersections and nearby roads. This will include the estimated growth of other transport user groups (cyclists and pedestrians) and types of journeys (commuter, access local goods and services, freight, tourism / recreation).

Construction impacts (one per cent):

- Concerns about the flow of traffic during construction and opinions that construction activities would make the road less safe and more congested.

Transport will identify construction staging options and develop traffic management plans to minimise impacts during construction on the highway and local roads as much as possible.

Summary of feedback	Transport response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns regarding property access to and from the Princes Highway during construction. 	<p>Transport will communicate any potential impacts as the project progresses.</p>
<p>Operational impacts (two per cent):</p> <p>Comments about the highway corridor once operational included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about access to the highway for adjacent residents and surrounding towns Suggestions that a design with less conflict points would allow for safer access, improved travel time and reduced congestion, particularly during holiday periods. Comments that the upgrade would improve highway resilience, provided careful consideration is taken during design and construction 	<p>Transport has noted comments about the operational impacts on the highway upgrade.</p> <p>Concerns about the future operation of the intersections and access roads will be addressed in the environmental assessment and concept design.</p>
<p>Safety (five per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General support for the duplication of the highway to provide overtaking lanes to reduce the risk of conflict between drivers and improve safety along the route. Concerns the existing highway is unsafe due to poor intersection location and design, poor road geometry, driver behaviour and a lack of enforcement and poor active transport (cycling and walking) facilities. Suggestions for the upgrade to be designed to a safe speed, include widening of lanes and use of service roads to connect adjacent residences. 	<p>Transport has noted concerns and suggestions relating to the safety of the intersection, local roads and driveways and will further address these in the environmental assessment and concept design.</p> <p>Transport will also investigate options to design the corridor to ensure it meets road safety standards and contains features designed to improve safety and address road user behaviour, including speed cameras.</p> <p>Transport is developing a whole-of-transport design to ensure all transport users are considered during the development of the project. User groups include drivers of various vehicle classes, cyclists, pedestrians, public and private transport users, and ride share users.</p> <p>Transport has engaged with nearby properties and Emergency Services during the consultation period and will continue to work with relevant stakeholder groups during the development of the project to identify opportunities to improve the management of the transport network during emergencies or a major accident.</p>
<p>Active and public transport (17 per cent):</p>	<p>Transport noted comments and suggestions relating to active transport</p>

Summary of feedback

Transport response

- General support received for any improvements to active transport facilities to improve safety.
- Comments regarding the preferred strategic corridor and active (pedestrians and cyclists) and public transport provisions including:
- Concerns about a lack of detail provided about active and public transport improvements to increase its use along the corridor
- Suggestions to further investigate park and ride facilities adjacent to all key town and village access points along the highway.
- Suggestions to include active transport options along the Old Princes Highway to separate users from high-speed road traffic and to further improve active transport infrastructure and safety by providing highway overpasses.
- Comments that the community would potentially use buses, trains, or ride-share services if improvements were made and that some residents are less likely to trial alternative travel modes.

use of the preferred strategic corridor option.

More information on active and public transport features and how they will connect with the broader active transport network will be shared as the project progresses.

Freight (three per cent):

- Comments that the upgrade would improve freight access and transportation.
- Comments that the upgrade would not improve freight access and transportation due to the frequency of roundabouts at major intersections.
- Suggestions to further improve freight access and efficiency such as providing dual carriageway, widening existing bridges at Wandandian and to maintain large livestock vehicle access to local properties.
- Comments that emissions might be reduced if freight was moved inland away from Princes Highway and mixing local traffic with freight can lead to dangerous driving behaviour

Enabling more efficient movement of freight is a key objective of the project and Transport notes this feedback.

Transport will continue to work with key stakeholder groups to understand the needs of heavy vehicles and freight and ensure these concerns are considered in the development of the project.

Transport will prepare a socio-economic assessment for the proposal as part of the environmental assessment. This will look at the project's impacts and benefits to the regional economy, including higher productivity transport.

Environment

About 10 per cent of comments were about potential environmental impacts including bio-diversity, heritage, visual landscape, water, and noise.

Summary of feedback

Transport response

Biodiversity (four per cent):

- Comments regarding potential impacts of the corridor on the environment (flora, fauna, wildlife, nature corridors and coastal ecosystems).
- Concerns about potential impacts to environmental conservation areas and wetlands, habitat of endangered, threatened, and at-risk flora and fauna and land clearing and its potential impacts to the environment.
- Concerns about speed limits increases and increased risk to wildlife.
- Suggestions to include tunnels and bridges to improve fauna connectivity in the area.

Transport has noted concerns about potential environmental impacts of the project.

As part of the environmental assessment process Transport will undertake a biodiversity assessment consistent with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (BC Act)* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* including field surveys, assessment of potential direct and indirect impacts, consideration of fauna connectivity and other requirements. Mitigation measures will be identified to manage any potential direct or indirect impacts during design, construction and operation of the project.

The environmental assessment will be displayed for community feedback as the project progresses.

Aboriginal heritage (one per cent):

- General comments and concerns that the preferred strategic corridor option would have negative impacts on known Aboriginal heritage sites.

Transport will work with its Cultural Heritage Advisors, native title claimants and holders, local Aboriginal land councils, Aboriginal land owners and the Aboriginal community to understand any potential impacts to Aboriginal objects, places or cultural values in accordance with Transport for NSW's Procedure for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation and Investigation (PACHCI) and relevant state and federal legislation.

Non-Aboriginal heritage (one per cent):

- General comments and concerns about the impacts the preferred strategic corridor would have on the heritage of surrounding communities.

During future stages of the project, 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.

As part of the environmental assessment being prepared for the project, potential impacts on heritage items of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal significance will be assessed, and mitigation measures identified to manage any potential impact.

Water (three per cent):

Transport will assess potential adverse impacts to water quality and flood behaviour using flood modelling

Summary of feedback	Transport response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General comments raised about the impacts on waterways along the length of the corridor including: • Concerns about the potential impact to waterways within the area. Future water quality and endangered fish species and habitat. • Concerns about the preferred strategic corridor's potential impact to existing flood zones and changes to existing flooding behaviour. • Suggestions to consider realigning the preferred strategic corridor to avoid directly impacting rivers in the area and to use tunnels and bridge to assist in flood management 	<p>techniques as part of the environmental assessment for the project.</p>
<p>Noise (one per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns the removal of trees may increase noise and noise pollution within the area • Suggestions for noise mitigation measures to be considered. 	<p>Through design, construction and operation, Transport will work to minimise the adverse noise impacts and identify effective mitigation measures for affected properties and sensitive receivers in accordance with Transport for NSW's Noise Criteria Guideline and Noise Mitigation Guideline.</p> <p>Potential noise and vibration impacts during construction and operation, and any mitigation measures required to manage these impacts in accordance with the <i>NSW Environment Protection Authority Road Noise Policy and Construction Noise and Vibration Guideline</i> will be identified as part of the environmental assessment being completed for the project.</p>
<p>Socio-economic</p> <p>About 10 per cent of comments were about socio-economic impacts. This includes concerns and questions about operational impacts, impacts to nearby businesses and properties.</p>	
<p>Operational impacts (three per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments that the corridor upgrade would increase access to local services and would benefit the residents and businesses of Falls Creek, Vincentia, and Tomerong. • Concerns the corridor may negatively impact on some residents, businesses and tourism. 	<p>Transport has noted comments and concerns about operational impacts of the project.</p> <p>The environmental assessment will further consider the socio-economic factors within the project area.</p>
<p>Impacts to local businesses (one per cent):</p>	<p>Transport will prepare a socio-economic assessment for the project as part of the</p>

Summary of feedback	Transport response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns regarding the impact the preferred strategic corridor would have on businesses in Wandandian and other areas and the local economy. Suggestion for the corridor to follow the existing highway alignment to minimise impacts to existing businesses. 	<p>environmental assessment. This will look at the project's impacts and benefits to nearby businesses.</p> <p>Transport will continue to work closely with businesses to help support them as the project progresses.</p>
<p>Impacts to local property owners (residential) (six per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about potential impacts to residential and rural land, local communities and existing lifestyle and amenity. Concerns about access, security and safety if the highway is moved closer to existing homes. Concerns about property acquisition. Support for the upgrade as it would move the highway away from residents and improve safety. 	<p>Transport acknowledges the community's concerns about potential property impacts and is committed to working with the community to minimise these impacts as the project progresses.</p> <p>Property owners are encouraged to contact the project team directly if more information is required.</p> <p>Support services are available to community members. Community members are encouraged to contact the following organisations if required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifeline Medicare mental health service Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service provided by Beyond Blue
<p>General / Project details</p> <p>About 12 per cent of comments were general comments or questions about the project, project timing, cost, and requests for information about the project.</p>	
<p>General support for the project and the preferred strategic corridor (three per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General support for the preferred strategic corridor, as it provides a solution that would save time, improve safety, and better connect villages within the region. 	<p>Transport has noted this feedback.</p>
<p>General opposition to the project and the preferred strategic corridor (four per cent):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments included opposition to the preferred strategic corridor particularly through the Wandandian and Bewong area. 	<p>Transport has noted this feedback and will consider this feedback during the next design phases.</p>

Summary of feedback

Transport response

Project timing (about one per cent):

- Comments called for the project to be completed as soon as possible, noting that it is long overdue.

In March 2019, the Australian and NSW Governments committed to upgrading the Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and the Victorian Border. The upgrade of the highway between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet Road was announced as a short-term priority project in the 20-year roadmap for the Princes Highway.

Transport has carried out a strategic options assessment and preliminary environmental studies to identify the preferred strategic corridor option.

Transport will use this information to further refine the preferred strategic corridor option and will work on the concept design and environmental assessment for the project. The preferred option will contain more detailed information about the design features, potential benefits, and impacts, as well as investigating opportunities for staged delivery of the proposed upgrade. The preferred option will be published to the community in late 2021.

Project cost (about one per cent):

- Suggestions that the project cost would outweigh the project's benefits and objectives.
- Preferences for the project budget to be utilised in alternative ways.
- Comments that budget constraints should not impact project delivery.

Transport considers a range of factors during the planning phase to assess and identify a preferred strategic corridor option. This includes a cost analysis and assessments into safety, functionality, environmental impact, future growth and future land and transport use. Refer to the Preferred Strategic Corridor Option Report on the [project webpage](#) to see how we have assessed these factors.

Request for information (three per cent):

- Requests for further information on the design features, property and/or land impacts, environmental impacts and other items were received. These included information on:
 - Design features such as connectivity and access arrangements to and from local roads, the location of proposed bridges, safety measures and improvements on local roads

Transport is working on the concept design and environmental assessment for the project which will have more detailed information about the design features, potential benefits and impacts, as well as investigating opportunities for staged delivery of the proposed upgrade. These investigations will consider the service needs of transport users, construction staging requirements and project funding.

More information about the project is available on the project [webpage](#).

Summary of feedback

- Property and land impacts and the acquisition process including how landowners will be notified and compensated.
- Environmental impacts such as the types of environmental studies that have been undertaken and planned into the future.
- Mental health support services available to the community
- Other items such as how will freight vehicles use the highway into the future

Transport response

Transport has responded to individual requests and will continue to engage with the community as the project progresses.

Support services:

- Support services are available to community members. Community members are encouraged to contact the following organisations:
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Medicare mental health service](#)
- [Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#) provided by Beyond Blue

Project need and justification

About two per cent of comments were statements or questions about the project in a strategic context and the need and justification of the project.

Strategic context (less than one per cent):

- Comments relating to the strategic intent of the project, and suggestions that the source of congestion in the area is due to traffic conditions outside the project area.

Transport has noted this feedback. More information on the need for the project is available in Section 1 of this report.

Congestion issues in Nowra and suggestions for a bypass of Nowra are out of scope for this project. However, Transport acknowledges the community's feedback and will continue to assess the future transport needs of the region.

Project need and justification (one per cent):

- Concerns the value management workshop and key result areas (KRA) scoring of the proposed strategic corridor was subjective and lacked transparency.
- Concerns the proposed strategic corridor may not meet the needs of the growing region.

The Preferred Strategic Corridor Option Report contains details of the rigorous strategic options development and assessment process that was undertaken to identify the preferred strategic corridor option. Shortlisted options were assessed against agreed criteria.

The preferred strategic corridor option was identified during a Value Management Workshop. This workshop included subject matter experts from across Transport, external design specialists and representatives from key stakeholder groups such as Shoalhaven City Council and other state government agencies.

Summary of feedback

Transport response

Consultation

About three per cent of comments were about the consultation process and methods.

Comments regarding the survey included:

- Concerns the survey structure placed limitations on respondents who wished to provide feedback on options other than the preferred corridor.
- Suggestions to improve communication materials by including how the project would benefit active transport users, providing clearer maps of the project study area and providing more detail about potential construction and operation impacts within the study area
- Suggestions to better and more widely promote consultation activities such as the Facebook Live sessions, and to extend the length of sessions so all questions can be answered.
- Suggestions to include face-to-face consultation.

Transport thanks the community for their feedback. These suggestions will be considered as we continue to engage with the community.

The project webpage will continue to be updated and contains Frequently Asked Questions to address some of the most commonly received questions. The webpage can be viewed at: nswroads.work/jb2si

The survey was designed to encourage feedback on the preferred strategic corridor option and to capture information about road use. The survey contained free-text fields that allowed for written feedback to be provided.

Feedback was also welcomed via email and/or written submission and phone calls.

During November and December 2020, Transport was required to change how we engage with the community due to COVID-19 pandemic. Social restrictions limited our ability to carry out face-to-face engagement activities including drop-in sessions and town hall meetings. Refer to Section 2 of this report for more information on how we adapted our engagement methods to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The community will have more opportunities to have their say and provide feedback as the project progresses.

Bushfire and incident resilience

About seven per cent of comments were concerned about resilience of the highway during and after bushfires and other incidents

Bushfire/incident resilience (about seven per cent):

- Suggestions to consider the location of emergency services such as Wandandian Fire Service and potential impacts to future bushfire responses within the region.

Improved resilience is one of the key objectives of the project.

Resilience is also one of the five key goals of the 20-year roadmap for the Princes Highway upgrade program.

Transport has engaged with nearby properties and Emergency Services

Summary of feedback

- Concerns barrier separation between carriageways may restrict bushfire evacuations traffic need to be turned around.
- Suggestions that key State and Federal government stakeholders work in collaboration with emergency services and planners to ensure utilities and infrastructure within the road corridor are built to protect road users and nearby properties against fire events.
- Suggestions to include additional lanes, wider shoulders, additional access points and grade separation (e.g. flyovers) at major intersections to act as a fire break and to improve emergency vehicle access.
- Suggestions to align the corridor along the powerline easement to create a fire break for the region.
- Suggestions to include alternative evacuation routes during floods and bushfires.
- Support for duplication of the highway to improve resilience.
- Comments that the preferred strategic corridor would not improve bushfire or incident resilience and that disaster prevention and preparedness should be prioritised.

Transport response

during the project's consultation periods and will continue to work with relevant stakeholder groups during the development of the project to identify opportunities to improve the management of the transport network during emergencies or a major accident.

Out of scope

About three per cent of comments were considered outside the scope of the project. This included comments and recommendations on the local and state road network outside the project area.

Out of scope (about three per cent):

- Comments or requests that are outside the scope of the project include:
 - Suggestions for a bypass of Nowra and upgrades to the road network in the region
 - Suggestions about the Milton Ulladulla bypass project
 - Suggestions for a rail network between Nowra and Ulladulla
 - Upgrades to other local roads in the area.

Transport notes feedback on road and infrastructure requirements that are outside the scope of this project. Where relevant, Transport has shared feedback with the agency responsible for the planning within the region.

4. Recommendations

Following community consultation and completion of the strategic design phase, Transport recommends for the preferred strategic corridor option to progress to the concept design and environmental assessment stage.

Issues and recommendations raised throughout the display of the preferred

strategic corridor option in late 2020, summarised in section 3 of this report, will be considered as the project progresses.

In the most recent consultation, nearby business owners, residential property owners and tenants generally expressed an interest to be informed of potential impacts as soon as possible.

5. Next Steps

Transport thanks all community members and stakeholders who participated in the consultation period of the preferred strategic corridor option for the upgrade of the Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet Road project.

We value all feedback provided as it will enable the questions and concerns of the public to be considered as we progress with the project planning.

We will continue to keep the community informed as the project progresses and provide further opportunities for community consultation.

Transport will continue to plan to identify the preferred option for the project area. The preferred option will include more details on corridor alignment, intersection types and access arrangements. The community will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the preferred option.

Transport will prepare an environmental assessment of the proposed project area. The environmental assessment will include a more detailed description of the proposal and design features, impacts, and benefits and includes studies and investigations for biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage, non-Aboriginal heritage, property and land use, visual impact, traffic and transport, socio-economic benefits and impacts of noise and vibration, flooding and hydrology, and the consideration of cumulative impacts. The environmental assessment will identify the mitigation measures required to manage these impacts during the design, construction, and operational phases of the project.



6. Stay in touch

If you have questions or would like more information, contact the project team:



1800 570 567



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nswroads.work/jb2si