



# Community Update No 5

JUNE 2004

## Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Southern and Northern Sections

The assessment of the feasibility of options within Coffs Harbour City Council's preferred corridor for a highway bypass of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga is complete. This Community Update presents a summary of the findings. Full details of the feasibility assessment are on display for community comment until Friday 25 June 2004.

### Overview

The Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy was launched in September 2001. Community Updates presenting key stages of the strategy's development were released in March 2002, December 2002 and February 2004.

In late 2003, Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) adopted its preferred corridor for a western bypass of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga. The Council resolution to adopt a preferred corridor stated 'that the western bypass diverge from the existing highway at or near Englands Road to Red Hill, and thereafter by the best available option to Grafton with the intention that south and western Boambee and the Orara Valley be excluded from further consideration'.

**In response to a request from Council, the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has assessed the feasibility of options within Council's preferred corridor in terms of the functional, environmental and socio-economic performance of each option.**

### Features of Council's preferred corridor

Council's preferred corridor is located within the Bucca Valley and the coastal range to the west of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga. The corridor crosses the Sherwood Nature Reserve west of Woolgoolga and includes private property and the Orara East, Lower Bucca and Wedding Bells State Forests.

Mt Coramba (elevation 590m above sea level) and associated ridges are located in the southeast corner of the corridor, and the Sherwood Road ridge (reaching elevations of up to 465m above sea level) crosses the northern end of the corridor. From the south, access to Council's preferred corridor would need to be gained from the Coastal Ridge Way (CRW). To the north, a connection back to the Pacific Highway would need to pass through one of two low points in the Sherwood Road ridge.

### Potential route options

Route options identified and developed in Council's preferred corridor include the previously identified Coastal Ridge Way / Option A proposal as well as three options that traverse the western side of the Bucca Valley. The route options comprise:

- Coastal Ridge Way / Option A
- Western Bucca Valley / Option A
- Western Bucca Valley / Corindi River
- Western Bucca Valley / Sherwood Creek

Figure 1 (on page 3) shows the potential route options together with major land use constraints.

### Assessment findings

The four potential route options identified would all require construction of the Coastal Ridge Way from Englands Road through to the Ulidarra National Park. Previous studies have identified that while this route would minimise the impacts on existing residential communities, it has major biophysical impacts, poor functional performance, high cost and provides poor value for money.

The terrain within the CHCC preferred corridor section restricts the development of route options. The four options avoid Mount Coramba by passing through the Bucca Valley. However, they all need to pass through one of two low points in the Sherwood Road ridge at the northern end of Council's preferred corridor.

The table below provides a summary of the four route options in terms of functional, cost, socio economic and biophysical issues. For comparison purposes, the table includes a summary of the Coastal Route Options (Inner Bypass of Coffs Harbour, upgrade of the existing highway between Korora and South Woolgoolga, Woolgoolga Bypass and upgrade of the existing highway between Arrawarra Creek and Halfway Creek). The details shown in the table for all options are for the full length between Englands Road, south of Coffs Harbour, and Halfway Creek (see Figure 1).

| FEATURE  | COUNCIL'S PREFERRED CORRIDOR ROUTE OPTIONS   |                                     |                                     |                                      | FEATURE  | COASTAL ROUTE OPTIONS                      |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
|  | COASTAL RIDGE WAY/ OPTION A  | WESTERN BUCCA VALLEY/ OPTION A      | WESTERN BUCCA VALLEY/ CORINDI RIVER | WESTERN BUCCA VALLEY/ SHERWOOD CREEK |  |  |
| <b>DESIGN</b>  |  |                                     |                                     |                                      | <b>DESIGN</b>  |  |
| Total Route Length   | 55km   | 52.1km                              | 46.8km                              | 51.3km                               | Total Route Length   | 52.7 to 53.8km                             |
| Highest point above sea level                                | 242m   | 242m                                | 242m                                | 242m                                 | Highest point above sea level                                    | 97m  |
| Highest embankment   |  |                                     |                                     |                                      | Highest embankment   |  |
| – no viaducts  | 48m  | 48m                                 | 48m                                 | 70m                                  | – no viaducts  | 23m  |
| – with viaducts  | 30m  | 30m                                 | 30m                                 | 40m                                  | – with viaducts  | N.A.                                       |
| Deepest cutting  |  |                                     |                                     |                                      | Deepest cutting  |  |
| – without tunnels  | 81m  | 81m                                 | 81m                                 | 150m                                 | – without tunnels  | 60m  |
| – with tunnels   | 45m  | 45m                                 | 45m                                 | 45m                                  | – with tunnels   | 29m  |
| Tunnels  |  |                                     |                                     |                                      | Tunnels  |  |
| – number of tunnels  | 5  | 4                                   | 4                                   | 7                                    | – number of tunnels  | Up to 3                                    |
| – total length   | 2.38km   | 1.82km                              | 1.82km                              | 5.42km                               | – total length   | Up to 1.32km                               |
| Maximum grade of new alignment                               | 6%   | 6%                                  | 6%                                  | 6%                                   | Maximum grade of new alignment                                   | 6%   |
| Longest uphill section                                       | 11km   | 11km                                | 11km                                | 11km                                 | Longest uphill section   | 2km  |
| <b>TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT</b>                                 |  |                                     |                                     |                                      | <b>TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT</b>                                     |  |
| Traffic function   | Poor   | Poor                                | Poor (lower than Option A routes)   | Poor (lower than Option A routes)    | Traffic function   | Good                                       |
| <b>PRELIMINARY ESTIMATED COST (\$2003)</b>                   |  |                                     |                                     |                                      | <b>PRELIMINARY ESTIMATED COST (\$2003)</b>                       |  |
| <b>Bypass / highway upgrade</b>                              |  |                                     |                                     |                                      | <b>Bypass / highway upgrade</b>                                  |  |
| Englands Road to Bucca Road                                  | \$860M   | \$670M                              | \$670M                              | \$670M                               | Inner Bypass of Coffs Harbour                                    | \$280M to \$425M                           |
| Bucca Road to Arrawarra Creek                                | \$305M   | \$240M                              | N.A.                                | N.A.                                 | Korora to South Woolgoolga                                       | \$145M                                     |
| Arrawarra Creek to Halfway Creek                             | \$115M   | \$115M                              | N.A.                                | N.A.                                 | Woolgoolga Bypass  | \$120M to \$135M                           |
| Bucca Road to Halfway Creek                                  | N.A.   | N.A.                                | \$395M                              | \$980M                               | Arrawarra Creek to Halfway Creek                                 | \$115M                                     |
|  |  |                                     |                                     |                                      | Provision for future grade separated interchanges <sup>(1)</sup> | \$50M to \$80M                             |
| <b>Total for bypass / highway upgrade</b>                    | <b>\$1,280M</b><br>(\$23M / km)  | <b>\$1,025M</b><br>(\$20M / km)     | <b>\$1,065M</b><br>(\$23M / km)     | <b>\$1,650M</b><br>(\$32M / km)      | <b>Total for bypass / highway upgrade</b>                        | <b>\$710M to \$900M</b><br>(\$14-17M / km) |
| Upgrade bypassed sections of existing highway <sup>(2)</sup> | \$180M   | \$180M                              | \$180M                              | \$180M                               | Upgrade bypassed sections of existing highway <sup>(2)</sup>     | Nil  |
| <b>Total for option</b>                                      | <b>\$1,460M</b>  | <b>\$1,205M</b>                     | <b>\$1,245M</b>                     | <b>\$1,830M</b>                      | <b>Total for option</b>  | <b>\$710M to \$900M</b>                    |
| <b>ABILITY TO STAGE CONSTRUCTION</b>                         | Limited  | Limited                             | Very limited                        | Very limited                         | <b>ABILITY TO STAGE CONSTRUCTION</b>                             | Good                                       |
| <b>ECONOMIC VIABILITY</b>                                    | Very poor (BCR 0.30) <sup>(3)</sup>  | Very poor (BCR 0.44) <sup>(3)</sup> | Very poor (BCR 0.49)                | Very poor (BCR 0.25) <sup>(3)</sup>  | <b>ECONOMIC VIABILITY</b>  | Fair (BCR 1.4 to 1.8) <sup>(3)</sup>       |
| <b>SOCIO ECONOMIC</b>  | Low adverse  | Low to moderate adverse             |                                     |                                      | <b>SOCIO ECONOMIC</b>  | Moderate to high adverse                   |
| <b>BIOPHYSICAL</b>   | Very high adverse due to impact on Sherwood Nature Reserve <sup>(4)</sup> (does not apply to Western Bucca Valley / Sherwood Creek route); protected zones in State Forests <sup>(4)</sup> ; threatened species and wildlife corridors |                                     |                                     |                                      | <b>BIOPHYSICAL</b>   | Low to moderate adverse                    |
| <b>INDIGENOUS HERITAGE</b>                                   | High adverse   | High adverse                        | High adverse                        | Probable adverse                     | <b>INDIGENOUS HERITAGE</b>                                       | Low adverse                                |

(1) Provision for two future grade-separated interchanges in Korora to South Woolgoolga section.

(2) Provision to duplicate 19.5km of existing Pacific Highway between Sapphire and Safety Beach to cater for future local traffic volumes. Does not include cost of any upgrading of Bucca Road to provide an appropriate standard link road between the existing highway and the route options in Council's preferred corridor.

(3) Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) – Present value of road user benefits divided by present value of costs.

(4) Would generally require the concurrence of the Minister for the Environment, and the passage of an Act of Parliament.

## Conclusions

The assessment of potential route options within Council's preferred corridor has shown that options through this area:

- present significant engineering challenges as a result of locating the options outside the coastal plain and into the steep and hilly terrain associated with the coastal ridge
- provide poor functional performance
- are high cost and provide poor value for money
- have significant adverse impacts on native flora and fauna
- have significant impacts on a landscape of Aboriginal importance.

**While route options within Council's preferred corridor have the lowest socio-economic impacts, the feasibility assessment has shown that they also have major adverse impacts and are not considered to be viable options for the Highway Planning Strategy.**

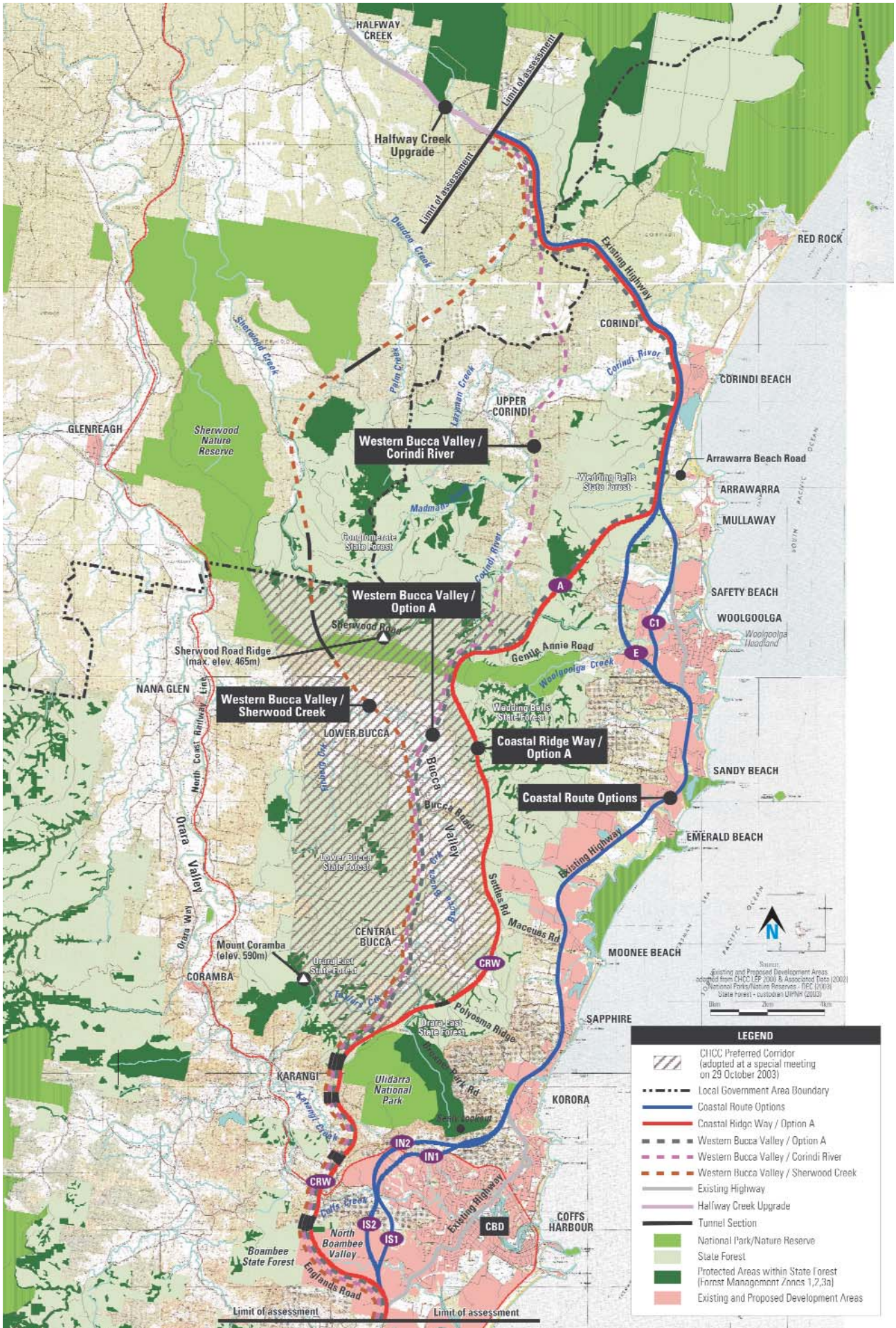
## What happens next

**The RTA's assessment of the feasibility of options within CHCC's preferred corridor is on display until Friday 25 June 2004.**

Community comment on the findings of this assessment and previously displayed options will be considered as part of the options evaluation process. The evaluation will include review of the Coastal Route Options recently displayed for comment.

Following the identification of viable options, a Value Management Study will be carried out to assist selection of the preferred option for both the Coffs Harbour and Sapphire to Woolgoolga sections. Recommendations from the study will be considered as part of the evaluation of options.

Figure 1: Land use constraints



The preferred option will be announced and placed on display later in 2004.

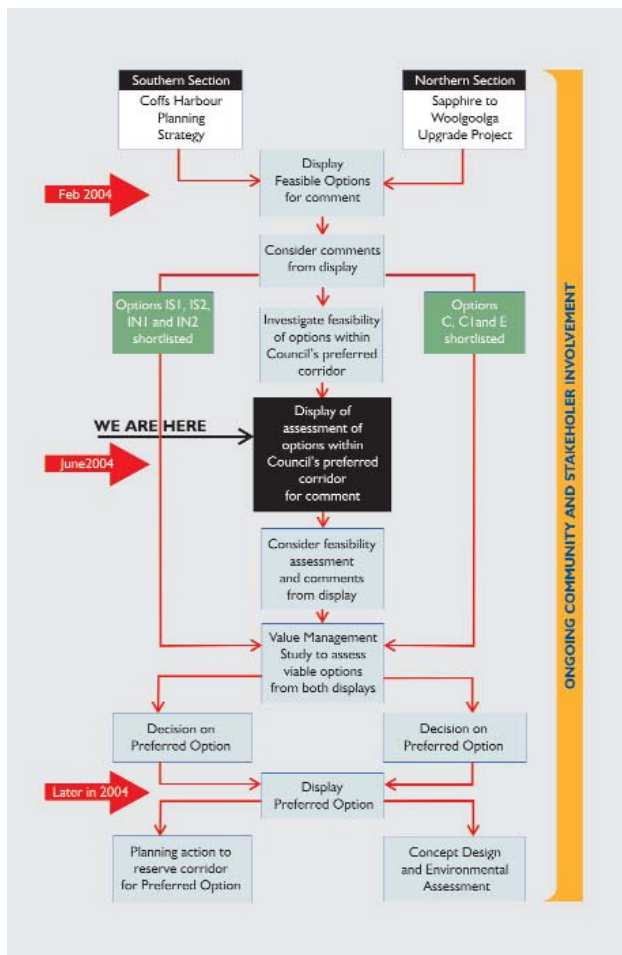
After the preferred option for the Coffs Harbour section of the strategy is identified, planning action will be taken to reserve the required corridor.

Once the preferred option for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section of the strategy has been identified, a concept design will be progressed and placed on display for public comment. An environmental impact assessment (EIA) will be prepared before seeking planning approval to construct the project. The EIA will provide information on the likely ecological and social consequences of any route selected as the preferred option.

Under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, the EIA is required to demonstrate that feasible alternative options have been investigated and that the preferred option best meets the project objectives.

The flow chart (Figure 2) illustrates the Coffs Harbour highway planning process.

**Figure 2: Planning process**



## Have your say

The report outlining the assessment of the feasibility of options within CHCC's preferred corridor is on display until Friday 25 June 2004 at the following locations.

## Display locations

### Coffs Harbour

- Coffs Harbour City Council, corner Coff and Castle Streets. (Mon-Fri 8am-5pm)
- Palms Shopping Centre – upstairs opposite Big W. (Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm, Sat 8.30am-4pm)
- RTA Motor Registry, 34 Gordon Street. (Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm, Sat 9am-12.30pm)

### Woolgoolga

- Public Library, Ganderton Street. (Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm, Sat 9.30am-noon)

### Toormina

- Public Library, 46 Minorie Drive. (Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm, Sat 9.30am-noon)

### Sapphire

- Sapphire Service Station, Pacific Highway, Sapphire. (6.30am-10pm, seven days)

### Corindi Beach

- Yarrawarra Cultural Centre, 170 Red Rock Road. (Mon-Fri 9am-4pm)
- Corindi Beach General Store. (7am-6.30pm, seven days)

### Lower Bucca

- Lower Bucca Community Centre, Bucca Road. (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm)

### Halfway Creek

- Shell Service Station. (Mon-Sat 6.30am-7pm, Sun 7am-7pm)

### Grafton

- RTA Pacific Highway Office, 21 Prince Street. (Mon-Fri 8.30am-4.30pm)

## How to comment

Comments and submissions on the report are welcome and should be sent by 25 June 2004 to:

**Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy**  
**Reply Paid 478**  
**COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450**

## Detailed report available

A report outlining the assessment of the feasibility of options within Coffs Harbour City Council's preferred corridor has been prepared. The report outlines in greater detail the features of the corridor, the potential route options and their key issues and impacts. The report is available on the project website or by phoning the Project Information Line (see details below). Copies of the report are also on display at the following locations:

- Coffs Harbour City Council
- Palms Shopping Centre, Coffs Harbour – upstairs opposite Big W.
- RTA Motor Registry, Coffs Harbour.
- Woolgoolga Public Library.
- RTA Pacific Highway Office, Grafton.

➔ For further enquiries:

➔ [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific)

➔ 1800 63 63 63 (freecall)

➔ **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE TO:**  
 Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy  
 Reply Paid 478, COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450



# Coffs Harbour Highway Planning

Southern and Northern Sections

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## Have your say

This form provides an opportunity for you to comment on the options within Coffs Harbour City Council's preferred corridor identified in this brochure. If you wish to comment, please fill in this form and return it by mail to:

**Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy**  
**Reply Paid 478**  
**COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450**

or Fax to: **(02) 6652 7088**

Comment forms should be received by 25 June 2004

**What are your comments on each of the options within Council's preferred corridor?**

Coastal Ridge Way/Option A route

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Western Bucca Valley/Option A route

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Western Bucca Valley/Corindi River route

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Western Bucca Valley/Sherwood Creek route

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Please fill out your contact details below.

(Mr/Mrs/Ms): \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (home)

All information in representations received may be published in subsequent assessment documents. Where the supplier indicates at the time of supply of information that it should be kept confidential, the RTA will attempt to keep it confidential but there may be legislative or legal justification for the release of the information, for example under the Freedom of Information Act 1989 or under subpoena or statutory instrument.