



FIGURE 6.1
PREFERRED COASTAL ROUTE

- effectively meet the objectives of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program including substantial road safety improvements and travel time savings for both through and local traffic
- have good functional performance while providing opportunities to separate through and local traffic
- enable good construction staging opportunities that could be provided within funding program limitations
- provide acceptable value for money when implemented on a staged basis
- have relatively minor biophysical impacts compared to other broad corridors – these impacts are anticipated to be at a level that can be effectively managed
- have minor heritage impacts compared to other broad corridors
- could be designed to minimise severance of existing or future communities
- have reasonable physical separation from existing and proposed residential areas so that with sensitive urban design, acceptable visual and traffic noise control mitigation measures could be achieved
- allow for planned urban growth to be realised including opportunity for modifications to adjacent existing and proposed land use controls to encourage compatible development

For the southern section of the Coffs Harbour deviation, it is acknowledged that the recommendation of Inner Bypass option IS1 over option IS2 is contrary to the outcomes of the Value Management workshop held on 2-3 August 2004. However, the workshop recommendation of IS2 over IS1 was subject to the resolution of a number of issues, including the feasibility of tunnels. Concern was also expressed that the additional cost of IS2 over IS1 (\$65M) may not merit the benefits achieved by this option.

Further consideration and analysis has determined that the significantly higher construction cost of Option IS2 (\$65 million more than Option IS1) cannot be justified when consideration is given to the larger engineering risks or uncertainties associated with the 560 metre tunnel through Roberts Hill ridge, the associated high recurrent operational and maintenance costs over the life of the project and the comparatively modest social and environmental benefits that IS2 could provide over IS1.

The preferred coastal route would be designed as a four-lane highway that can be progressively upgraded to six lanes with long -term access control via grade-separated interchanges. The other key design principle adopted for the preferred coastal route is the development of a comprehensive service road / local road system to enable effective separation between local traffic and through-traffic as well as integrated urban design treatments to ameliorate potential noise and visual impacts.

6.3 Strategy implementation

Implementation of the Strategy would commence after approval and announcement of the recommended preferred highway route. This process would require different actions for the two sections of the preferred route recognising the current priorities for project delivery. The main actions that would be required for each section of the preferred route are outlined below.

6.3.1 Southern (Coffs Harbour) section

As noted in the preceding assessments, the deviation from Englands Road to Korora (option IS1 / IN2) does not represent a good economic proposition in the short term due to its high cost and moderate road user benefits. As such, funding for this section is not expected to be available in the short to medium term. This situation exists for all options in the southern (Coffs Harbour) area of the Strategy and is not unique to the preferred IS1 / IN2 option. In recognition of the dynamic nature of land use change and urban development in the North Boambee valley and West Coffs Harbour, the recommended short-term action is formal reservation of land to accommodate the future road corridor and replanning development of these areas. Such reservation would require the completion of relevant State and local statutory planning processes under an appropriate environmental planning instrument. This would be determined

in consultation between the RTA, DIPNR and CHCC. A refined concept design for the recommended deviation route would be developed to assist in the definition of suitable road reservation boundaries. Interim works will also be required to manage the existing highway through Coffs Harbour until the preferred option is constructed.

The proposed next steps for the implementation of the Coffs Harbour section of the Strategy are to:

- undertake planning action to reserve land for the preferred option
- refine the concept design for the preferred option to further reduce impacts and identify future road reserve boundaries
- prepare a package of works to manage the existing highway through Coffs Harbour until the preferred option is constructed

CHCC, with assistance from RTA and DIPNR, will need to review planning of the North Boambee Valley and West Coffs Harbour Area to encourage compatibility between the development of these areas and the road proposal.

6.3.2 Northern (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) section

Because of the single carriageway condition of the existing highway north from Sapphire and the expected traffic growth and the development plans in that area, upgrading of this section of the highway to dual carriageway standard (including a bypass of Woolgoolga) is a high priority and funding is available to advance concept development and project approval. The immediate implementation actions are for concept design development and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to secure projects approval from DIPNR under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

7. References

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