

The background of the cover is a photograph of a white truck with a large, tan-colored trailer driving on a paved road. The truck is in the foreground, moving towards the viewer. In the background, a white car is visible on the road. The road is flanked by dense green trees and foliage. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

# Failford Road to Tritton Road

Upgrading the Pacific Highway

**REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS SUBMISSIONS REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2008**

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# I Introduction and background

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In October 2004, the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) commenced planning for an upgrade of the Pacific Highway from Failford Road to Tritton Road, approximately 25 kilometres south of Taree on the NSW Mid North Coast. This upgrade would replace a 3.3 kilometre length of the existing northbound carriageway. It would raise the standard of this section to be consistent with adjoining sections of the highway, which would improve safety and travelling conditions.

In January 1996 the NSW and Australian governments announced their joint commitment to a 10 year program to upgrade the Pacific Highway between Hexham and the Queensland border. –

Currently 277 of a total of 679 kilometres are double lane divided road. A further 77 kilometres are under construction. The remaining kilometres are either approved for construction or have had a preferred route identified. The Pacific Highway is part of the National Land Transport Network.

The proposed Failford Road to Tritton Road upgrade forms part of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program. A description of the proposal is detailed in Section 3 of the Failford Road to Tritton Road Review of Environmental Factors (REF). The project forms part of the RTA's key requirement to establish a safe and efficient road transport route from Hexham to Queensland border.

## I.1 Stakeholder consultation

The needs and interests of stakeholders and the community are varied. An approach to consultation was adopted for the Failford Road to Tritton Road Pacific Highway upgrade project, which focused on developing good relationships with key stakeholders.

The consultation objectives as documented in the community involvement plan for Failford Road to Tritton Road Pacific Highway upgrade project were to:

- Ensure the local community, government authorities and interest groups are kept informed of the progress of the project.
- Ensure environmental and community impacts are properly addressed.
- Consider and, where appropriate, take action on issues raised by the community and other stakeholders.
- Communicate project milestones and community benefits and likely impacts to the public.
- Advise the community through advertising, particularly if the works have an impact on traffic flow through the area.
- Advise affected stakeholders on when and how they might be affected.
- Advise affected stakeholders how they can obtain further information or communicate concerns and complaints or suggestions.

## 1.2 Consultation during preparation of REF

The community involvement plan for this project involved the implementation of several different communication mechanisms to enable an effective two-way flow of information between the study team and the community. The consultation activities carried out leading up to, and during, the preparation of the REF for this project included:

- A toll free project information line (1800 232 290).
- A community update in February 2005.
- A planning focus meeting in February 2005.
- A public information session in February 2005.
- Establishment of a community liaison group. Three meetings were held with this group at the Nahiic Agricultural Hall, in April, June and September 2005. A subsequent meeting was held at the Forster-Tuncurry Memorial Services Club during the concept design display period.
- Individual meetings with owners of potentially affected properties during July 2005. These included Pacific Blue Metal and several private land owners.
- Briefings with representatives from Great Lakes Council and Greater Taree City Council in July 2005.
- Provision of information on the RTA's website [www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au).

## 1.3 Consultation during public display of REF

The REF, incorporating the refined concept design for the Failford Road to Tritton Road Pacific Highway upgrade, was placed on public display from Monday 26 May 2008 to Friday 27 June 2008. The public display of the REF was widely advertised in local newspapers. Consultation activities carried out during the public display of the REF included:

- Seven formally advertised static displays throughout the display period. These were located at the Nahiic Old Bank Centre, Greater Taree City Council offices, Great Lakes Council offices, Forster RTA Motor Registry, Taree RTA Motor Registry, RTA Hunter Regional Office and RTA Pacific Highway Office.
- Meeting with Great Lakes Council and Greater Taree Council.
- A staffed display. This was held at the Nahiic Community Technology Centre on Wednesday 4 June 2008. The staffed display provided an opportunity for members of the community to individually discuss issues of concern with the project team.
- A letter to affected land owners. This letter advised the land owners of the public display and a CD of the REF was enclosed.
- Individual meetings with affected land owners and businesses.
- A community liaison group meeting held on Tuesday 3 June 2008 at the Nahiic Community Technology Centre.
- An update on the RTA's website [www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au).

The main issues raised with the project team during this consultation include:

- The project would improve road safety.
- Impacts on individuals due to the acquisition of the land necessary for the project.
- Concerns about the additional travel distances required for some residents to access the highway during Stage 1.
- The project should be built to Stage 2 immediately.
- Potential impacts on local businesses due to the extra travel distance to access the highway.



## 2 Summary of issues and responses

The RTA received 15 written submissions on the displayed REF and refined concept design for the Failford Road to Tritton Road Pacific Highway upgrade. Seven telephone calls to the toll free project information line were recorded during the public display period. Each submission was reviewed individually and issues were extracted.

The key issues raised in written submissions are summarised in this Chapter. Table 2.1 lists all respondents and each respondent's allocated submission number. The table also indicates where in Chapter 2 their issues have been addressed. Where submissions raised the same or similar issues, a consolidated response addressing all of these submissions is provided.

Each issue raised within a submission was identified as a broad issue (eg. biodiversity, impact on businesses, etc.). Consideration of each issue was undertaken by the RTA and a response is provided.

**Table 2.1:** List of respondents

Submission No.	Respondent	Section where issues are addressed	Issue No.
1	Individual	2.3	19, 20, 21, 22, 23
2	Individual	2.3	26, 27, 31
3	Individual	2.3	32, 33, 34, 40
4	Individual	2.3	43
5, 12	Individual	2.3	26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 39, 41
6	Individual	2.3	42
7	Individual	2.3	32, 37
8	Community organisation	2.3	26, 27, 38, 45, 46
9	Individual	2.3	26, 38
10	Great Lakes Council	2.2	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
11	Department of Environment and Climate Change	2.1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
13	Department of Primary Industries	2.1	12
14	Community organisation	2.3	44
15	Individual	2.3	24, 25

### 2.1 Responses to NSW government agency submissions

The RTA received written submissions on the REF from the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) and Department of Primary Industries (DPI). The issues raised in these submissions and the RTA responses to them are detailed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Issues raised by NSW government agencies

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Air, noise and water pollution</b>	
1	<p>The 'batch plants, stockpile and compound sites' section does not provide the potential locations for batch plants and compound sites. Whilst the REF indicates that 'appropriate site selection criteria' will be used to locate the batch plant and separate environmental assessments would be undertaken with regard to these areas, DECC recommends that the site selection criteria should be detailed in this REF.</p>	<p>Section 8.7 of the REF states that "<i>the location of the temporary concrete batching plants would be determined using appropriate site selection criteria</i>" developed during the detailed design stage. The exact locations for stockpiles, batch plants and compounds "<i>would be subject to their own environmental impact assessment, as required</i>." Some mitigation and management measures for these temporary sites have been included in the "<i>Safeguards</i>" sections for the relevant environmental issues discussed in Chapter 9 of the REF. (eg: Section 9.4.3, dot point 3.) The RTA would further consult with DECC during the selection of sites for the temporary concrete batching plants and compounds, should these facilities be required.</p> <p>Section 8.7 also provides some details of proposed stockpiles sites and Figure 5 (page 45) also identified a number of potential stockpile site locations and their size within the study area.</p> <p>All stockpile sites would be managed in accordance with the RTA's Stockpile Site Management Procedures, 2001.</p>
2	<p>DECC notes that the proposal does not cross any major creeks, rivers or wetlands but will impact on 17 unnamed water courses. The REF concludes that an unnamed watercourse approximately 1 km north of Failford Road may be impacted by Acid Sulfate Rock based on a visual assessment of water quality. In addition to the testing outlined in section 9.4.3, further assessment of this waterway should be undertaken to clarify this issue.</p>	<p>We note the comment and confirm the commitment contained in Section 9.2.3 of the REF to "<i>Undertake addition targeted geotechnical investigations to identify any areas potentially containing acid rocks during the detailed design stage.</i>"</p> <p>Also as stated in Section 9.4.3 the RTA would conduct further tests for pH on this waterway, and "<i>should the presence of acid water be confirmed (pH less than 6.5) then management strategies would be developed</i>" in accordance with the relevant guidelines.</p>

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Biodiversity</b>	
3	<p>The REF states that the construction project will be longer than 26 weeks. That equates to a background +5dB(A) criterion. DECC notes however that the REF presents criteria for less than 4 weeks and 4 to 26 weeks. DECC does not support the presented criteria provisions. As the construction project will run for greater than 26 weeks the background + 5dB(A) criteria should be applied to all works for the project.</p>	<p>Sections 9.5.2 and 9.5.3 of the REF acknowledge that the construction noise would exceed criteria at various times and places during construction of the proposed upgrade. While these noise impacts would generally occur over a limited periods as construction activities progress along the route, the RTA has assessed the criteria for a range of construction periods in Section 9.5.3 of the REF, including periods greater than 26 weeks.</p> <p>The RTA notes the construction noise criteria proposed by DECC and confirm that that criteria would be considered during the preparation of the noise and vibration management plan detailed in Section 9.5.4 of the REF. This plan would be prepared in consultation with DECC and contain the appropriate management measures to deal with any potential impacts identified during the development of the plan.</p>
4	<p>The predicted operational road traffic noise levels in the REF indicate that the day and night criteria will be exceeded at many locations. However, the REF has applied the 2 dB(A) allowance criteria from in Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise (ECRTN), to justify not applying noise mitigation measures for the majority of these residences. The process in the ECRTN states that the 2dB allowances are to be applied only after all feasible and reasonable mitigation has been applied to seek to achieve the base criteria.</p> <p>It is not clear to DECC that the allowance criteria are being correctly applied. The allowance criteria apply only after it has been demonstrated that the base criteria cannot be achieved using feasible and reasonable noise mitigation.</p>	<p>The RTA has assessed the potential noise impacts of the proposal in accordance with the criteria set out in the <i>Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise</i> (ECRTN), and the RTA's <i>Environmental Noise Management Manual</i> (ENMM). These documents follow an agreed approach to ensuring that all feasible and reasonable mitigation measures are applied in relation to potential noise impacts.</p> <p>As described in Section 9.5.4 of the REF the RTA will develop a noise and management plan for the proposal. This management plan will adopt best management practices as identified in the ENMM. In addition the RTA will investigate the feasible and reasonable noise mitigation measures for the identified dwellings during the detailed design phase.</p>

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Biodiversity</b>	
5	Offset for losses to biodiversity have not been considered. In the consideration of compensatory habitat, the project falls within <i>Section One</i> when discussing offsets using a regional approach. A suitable biodiversity offset package for this proposed upgrade and the Herons Creek to Stills Road upgrade could be considered jointly.	<p>A specific biodiversity offset package has not been discussed within the REF. However, as indicated by the DECC submission, the compensatory habitat for this project may be included in the Section one agreement with DECC signed by Brian Gilligan, DG – NPWS, on 9 January 2003. While it is noted that this project is not specifically referred to in the draft schedule of projects attached to the RTA letter concerning compensatory habitat arrangements dated 8 January 2003 there are substantial compensatory habitat credits available in section one for this upgrade project. Further discussions between the RTA and DECC will occur to formalise an agreement in this matter.</p> <p>There are also several flora and fauna mitigation and management measures that would be implemented for this project that are discussed in Section 9.6.7 of the REF.</p>
6	The proposed upgrade dissects three wildlife movement corridors which provide critical links between DECC estate and other large tracts of remnant native forest. The current Pacific Highway is considered a permeable barrier for fauna movement within the study area. The proposed upgrade will sever this link unless suitable fauna crossing structures are included in the upgrade design. The identification of these corridors has not been discussed with reference to DECC's Key Habitats and Corridors database. This database should be utilised.	<p>Section 3.7 of the "<i>Review of Flora and Fauna Assessment Report prepared for the Pacific Highway Upgrade, Failford Road to Tritton Road, REF</i>", found in Appendix G, identifies the three main wildlife corridors.</p> <p>As indicated in Section 9.6.7 of the REF, the RTA will investigate the potential for fauna mitigation measures during the detailed design phase in consultation with DECC. The RTA has also committed to preparing "<i>a map showing the sensitive areas in and adjacent to the construction site as part of the CEMP</i>". This map would be prepared with reference to DECC's Key Habitats and Corridors database.</p>

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Biodiversity</b>	
7	DECC identified the location of two fauna crossing points. DECC recommends the inclusion of effective fauna crossing structures such as 3.6m box culverts at these two locations.	<p>The suitability of structures, as well as any additional management measures that may be required to facilitate fauna movement, will be further investigated during the detailed design phase in consultation with DECC. This would include the two potential fauna crossing points referred to in the Concept Design Report and DECC's submission. However, it should be noted that the topography and the existing road alignment/grading (which will to a large extent be matched by the new work) makes the installation of large underpass structures such as 3.6m high box culverts at most, if not all, locations within this project impractical. It is however relevant to note that there are a number of existing drainage structures in this section that will be retained and extended, that are possibly already used by fauna or may be suitable for such use. These structures include seven smaller culverts up to 900mm in diameter, as well as a further seven larger structures including two large diameter pipes (1500 and 1800mm) and five multi cell structures ranging from a three cell 1200mm pipe culvert through to a 2 cell 2.7m by 2.1m box culvert.</p>
8	DECC advises that the information obtained during the preparation of the REF appears to reinforce the need for a commitment to the design and placement of glider crossing structure as well as fauna crossing structures for koalas and recommends the identification of and a commitment to the installation of fauna mitigation structures.	<p>As indicated in Section 9.6.7 of the REF, the RTA will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the potential for fauna mitigation measures within the study area. The exact number and nature of the mitigation measures would be subject to further investigation and expert advice, in addition to consultation with DECC during the detailed design phase.</li> <li>• Maintain tall trees, subject to road safety requirements, either side of the road to aid glider crossing.</li> </ul> <p>The consultation with DECC will include discussions of potential glider and koala movement across the site and, as necessary, identification of mitigation measures to be implemented.</p> <p>The RTA would implement relevant mitigation measures during the construction of the project.</p>

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Biodiversity</b>	
9	<p>The loss of tree hollows is identified as a significant impact within the study area. No records were reported on the number of hollows to be removed, nor their locations and attributes, therefore the extent of this impact can not be fully assessed. The lack of systemic fauna surveys in the assessment provides little background information for conducting an impact assessment. Additionally a lack of direct evidence of presence of significant species occupying hollows or other features within the landscape provides less certainty of impacts.</p> <p>DECC recommends a nest box program be utilised to mitigate this key threatening process in conjunction with the salvage and re-instatement of tree hollows.</p>	<p>As indicated in Section 9.6.7 of the REF, the RTA will “<i>undertake additional field investigations during the detailed design phase to assess the potential use of tree hollows within the study area, and identify potential mitigation measures to implement during the construction activities and operation</i>”. This investigation would identify and record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GPS coordinates of the individual trees.</li> <li>• The individual hollow attributes.</li> </ul> <p>These locations would be detailed as part of the sensitive area mapping of the study area and the information used to develop appropriate mitigation measures during the detailed design phase in consultation with DECC.</p> <p>Appendix A and G of the REF provides details of the survey methodologies employed for the assessment, including the date, weather conditions at the time of the surveys, flora and fauna survey type, and limitation to the field surveys.</p>
10	<p>The conclusion reached regarding the definition of the Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest EEC is in error. Abiotic features such as elevation and soil type are simply used to assist in the description of an EEC. EECs are primarily described using the floristic makeup of dominant vegetation species. Given the canopy of the EEC in question is primarily dominated by <i>Casuarina glauca</i> and it is located in a wet low lying area, DECC considers the vegetation in question should be assessed as an EEC. Given this failing, the RTA should review their classification of other potential EECs within the study area.</p>	<p>We note the comments from DECC identifying that they believe the paperbark / brush box / swamp oak / and small fruited grey gum should be defined as the EEC Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest based on species composition. Following consultation with AHA Ecology and ENSR Australia (formally HLA Envirosiences) it has been identified that the paperbark / brush box / swamp oak / and small fruited grey gum community will not be affected by the project , and therefore no additional investigations were necessary in determining the ecological status of this community.</p> <p>The flora and fauna investigations did not identify any EECs present within the study area. Following a review of the assessment the RTA is satisfied that no EECs would be impacted by the proposal.</p>



No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Biodiversity</b>	
11	Fauna exclusion fencing should be considered for use in all three wildlife corridors and particularly in combination with the suggested fauna crossing culverts.	The RTA would consider the need for the inclusion of suitable fauna mitigation measures, such as fauna exclusion fencing, during the detailed design phase. As set out in Section 9.6.7 of the REF, the RTA would undertake further consultation with DECC during the detailed design phase to determine the exact number and nature of any fauna mitigation measures to be implemented.
12	The DPI Aquatic Habitat Protection Unit has reviewed the document and is satisfied with the level of information provided in the REF.	Noted. DPI will be further consulted during detailed design.

## 2.2 Responses to local government submissions

A submission was received from Great Lakes Council. Table 2.3 summarises the issues raised in this submission and the RTA's responses to those issues.

**Table 2.3:** Issues raised by local government

No.	Issue	Response
<b>Refined concept design</b>		
13	The proposal will restrict access from Bullocky Way onto the Pacific Highway. Stage 2 will reinstate northbound access via the proposed service road. This will lead to an increase in the number of vehicles travelling south along Bullocky Way, into the Bullocky Road / Failford Road intersection, and along Failford Road to the Pacific Highway. A traffic count supplied by the report indicates that the number of these vehicles are low. An origin and destination survey was carried out indicating that 60% of all traffic on Bullocky Way is through traffic. The report does not assess the impact of this restricted access, but as the figures are low it is suggested that the impact will be minor.	Noted.
14	The plans indicate that roundabouts in the area will be suitable for B-doubles. Council advises that Bullocky Way has a 5 tonne limit along the entire length, and as such there is no need to cater for B-doubles in this section of Bullocky Way. Council would want to maintain the existing 5 tonne limit along Bullocky Way.	This project does not propose any change to the present load restrictions on Bullocky Way. The term 'suitable for B-Doubles' is a design standard used by the RTA to indicate that a structure or road feature is suitable for all vehicle types such as delivery vehicles and school buses.  Council, with RTA input, defines the status of the road.
15	The report indicates that the Failford Road intersection will operate at a level of service C. As such, the grade separated interchange should be supported. It will also reduce the accident risk at this location.	Council's support for the Failford Road interchange is noted.

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Refined concept design</b>	
16	The report indicates that materials for the project will be sourced from existing quarries in the area, including the quarry on Bullocky Way. Conditions on this development should be consistent with the existing conditions placed on the quarry including hours of operation for truck movements and direction of truck movements.	The project does not propose any changes to the existing conditions placed on the operation of the quarry.
17	The report indicates that road users who currently access Bullocky Way at the northern end from the Pacific Highway will not be able to do so under the Stage 2 proposal. Road users will be required to travel to the proposed grade separated interchange at Failford Road where they can then access Bullocky Way at its southern end. This will be a minor inconvenience to the residents of Bullocky Way and adjacent streets due to the longer travelling distance required to access their properties. However, improved safety for turning vehicles at both intersections is of a higher priority.	Council's support for the improved safety at Failford Road and Bullocky Way is noted.
18	Great Lakes Council has no objections, in principal, to the current proposal.	Noted.

## 2.3 Responses to community submissions

Ten submissions were received from the wider community including two submissions from local business operators.

Table 2.4 summarises the issues raised by the community in written submissions, during meetings and during calls to the project information line. The RTA's responses to these issues are also documented.

**Table 2.4:** Issues raised in community submissions.

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Impacts on local businesses</b>	
19	Removing the U-turn facility at Tritton Road and Possum Brush Road will impact on local businesses. Will the RTA compensate for loss of business?	<p>A key objective of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program and this project is to improve safety for all highway users. One method of helping to achieve this objective is to reduce the potential for conflicts between local traffic and through traffic. The RTA achieves this with the construction of "grade separated" interchanges and service roads and the accompanying reduction of "at grade" intersections and direct access to the highway.</p> <p>The RTA acknowledges that the proposed upgrade will restrict direct access to the highway and some highway users will have to travel further to access the business. However, these changes would result in significant safety improvements for both local and highway traffic.</p> <p>The RTA can only compensate on the basis of property to be acquired, and does so under the terms of the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act, 1991</i>. The RTA does not propose to acquire any land from this property and as a result there is no provision under the Act to provide compensation in this situation.</p>
20	The access to the business in its current condition is unacceptable and should have been addressed in the last upgrade. It is very dangerous and a 'major accident waiting to happen'.	The RTA is not proposing to change the current left in - left out highway access arrangement for this business as part of the project. However, the RTA has indicated that it would review the property access to this particular property during detailed design in consultation with the property owner.

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Impacts on local businesses</b>	
21	Business operator is concerned that increased noise, vibration and pollution may cause increased stress on animals and considers that a full report on the effect on boarding animals is required. He also considers that compensation should be paid if this has an effect on his business.	<p>The RTA has assessed the potential noise impacts of the proposal in accordance with the criteria set out in the <i>Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise</i> (ECRTN), and the RTA's <i>Environmental Noise Management Manual</i> (ENMM). This assessment is based on the impacts on human amenity and does not assess impacts of noise on animals.</p> <p>The RTA does not propose to acquire any land from this property and as a result there is no provision under the Act to provide compensation in this situation.</p>
22	The business operator has asked why the property acquisition boundary stops at the boundary of his business? He has also asked if the acquisition boundary is to be extended, when is this likely to happen?	<p>The concept design for the project does not traverse the business's land and accordingly no land acquisition would be required from this property to allow for the construction of the highway upgrade. However the project would traverse the adjoining properties to the south of the business and some land acquisition at least would be required from those properties for the project. It was decided that the land acquisitions from the adjoining properties would include adequate land to allow for both for the immediate project and the possible provision of a service road in this area in the future. This decision was made to reduce the impacts on property owners associated with multiple acquisitions over a prolonged period of time.</p> <p>The investigation of the design, impacts, and any other acquisition requirements on other properties, such as this business's land, for such a service road would be undertaken at a later date when the need for such a facility arises.</p> <p>Further to this, the previous owners of the business indicated to the RTA that they wanted to maintain their business and avoid the loss of any of their property for road purposes if at all possible. Given that there was no need to acquire land from this property at this time for the current project, the RTA decided to end the acquisition strip at the boundary between this and the adjoining property to the south.</p>

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Impacts on local businesses</b>	
23	<p>The business owner is willing to sell the business to the RTA now for the amount he paid for it in December 2007. However he may be reluctant to consider selling the property at a future date without additional costs to the RTA.</p>	<p>The RTA can only purchase land from properties that have been identified as being directly impacted by, and are therefore required for the purposes of constructing road works. As the current proposal has not identified the need to acquire land from this property, the RTA cannot consider the acquisition of this property at this time.</p> <p>If however, the situation changed, and a need for acquisition from this property was identified during the detailed design phase, then the owners of the property would be further consulted and any such acquisition would be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Property Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991</i>.</p>
24	<p>Concern about the viability of the current business due to the extra travel distance for trucks heading to the business from the north, particularly given the substantial increase in the cost of fuel.</p> <p>Concerned about energy conservation and responsible use of scarce resources as the increase in travel distance will result in an increase in fuel usage by vehicles using the business.</p>	<p>A key objective of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program and this project is to improve safety for all highway users. One method of helping to achieve this objective is to reduce the potential for conflicts between local traffic and through traffic. The RTA achieves this with the construction of "grade separated" interchanges and service roads and accompanying reduction of "at grade" intersections and direct access to the highway.</p> <p>The RTA acknowledges that the proposed upgrade will restrict direct access to the highway and some highway users will have to travel further to access the highway. However, these changes would result in significant safety improvements for both local and highway traffic.</p> <p>Trucks make up a small percentage of the overall traffic movements in this area and on balance, the RTA considers the existing proposal is a better outcome for a wider range of stakeholders, including local residents and road users.</p>
25	<p>The current location of the proposed overpass is not appropriate and the overpass should be relocated to Possum Brush Road as it would not only provide the best fundamental outcome but also provide an access point for the residents, which is the ultimate best result. This also reflects the main aim of the Pacific Highway upgrade which is to improve the efficiency of road freight transport.</p>	<p>Improving the efficiency of road freight transport is just one of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program objectives, along with improvements in safety, efficiency and the effectiveness of the Highway and associated networks for all stakeholders. Given traffic volumes, moving the interchange to Possum Brush Road would increase travel times for a larger volume of traffic. This would necessitate immediate construction of a Stage 2 overpass at Failford Road and tend to focus additional through traffic into Bullocky Way and adjoining residential areas. This would probably also require additional local road upgrades and acquisition.</p>



No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Refined concept design</b>	
26	At least 100 families/drivers need access to the Highway from Bullocky Way on a daily basis and would be inconvenienced if this access was to be denied. We need a slip lane plus an exit from the Highway for those heading south into Bullocky Way.	One of the principal objectives of the project is to improve safety. Given the proximity of the Failford Road interchange and safety issues, the RTA needs to avoid at grade intersections and signposting of two intersections in close proximity to each other. This suggestion is therefore considered inappropriate as it may cause confusion for motorists and risk dangerous traffic movements.
27	We fully support the RTA's proposal for the overpass and linking service road.	The support is noted.
28	I have no objection to the prevention of the left turn out of Bullocky Way once the new 110km/hr southbound carriageway is constructed and commissioned. It would be quite unsafe and therefore irresponsible to allow people to do so.	Noted.
29	I have no objection to Failford residents being forced to use the Failford Road interchange to travel north. This is by far the safest way to head north.	Noted.
30	The use of the southbound exit ramp from the easternmost roundabout to join the Highway in order to travel south is by far the safest way to head south from Failford Road.	Noted.
31	We have no objections to the removal of the 5 tonne weight limit from Bullocky Way to allow trucks entry to the quarry.	Noted, however any decision with regard to weight limit changes on local roads would be the responsibility of Great Lakes Council.
32	The Failford Neighbours Liaison Network supports the closure of Bullocky Way to the Highway in Stage 1.	The support is noted.

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Refined concept design</b>	
33	The Failford Neighbours Liaison Network supports the scrapping of Stage 2.	The RTA notes the comments, however the Stage 2 overbridge is proposed as a long term measure to maintain connectivity following the proposed closure of Bullocky Way. It also provides for future land use development in the area. Stage 2 would be constructed, however it is not proposed to construct this stage until it is warranted by local development and traffic growth.
34	The Council's maintenance costs in maintaining Bullocky Way would be lowered in accordance with the reduction in traffic.	Maintenance of local roads, including Bullocky Way, is the responsibility of Council.
35	The design for the refined Failford Road interchange looks great. I can't think of any suggestion to improve the way the overbridge and the two roundabouts will operate.	Noted.
36	No one knows when and if Stage 2 will ever be completed. It's hard to imagine that the \$6 million cost will ever be met by the State Government to construct the overbridge, when there must be many, many places along the Pacific Highway where the money could be better spent.	The exact timing for commencement of construction of the proposal has not yet been determined. It is expected that the proposal would be undertaken in two stages.
37	I fully understand why the RTA proposes the closure of Bullocky Way, for reasons of safety and to prevent through traffic short cutting, rather than using the overpass at Rainbow Flat and to be located 3km away at Failford Road.	Noted.

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Refined concept design</b>	
38	The complete blocking off of Bullocky Way will have a major impact on residents and also Possum Brush residents who use Bullocky Way to access Forster/Tuncurry. Whereas Failford residents will have an extra 4 km added to their journey to/from Taree, Possum Brush residents will have an extra 8 km.	<p>A key objective of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program and this project is to improve safety for all highway users. One method of helping to achieve this objective is to reduce the potential for conflicts between local traffic and through traffic. The RTA achieves this with the construction of "grade separated" interchanges and service roads and accompanying reduction of "at grade" intersections and direct access to the highway.</p> <p>The RTA acknowledges that the proposed upgrade will restrict direct access to the highway and some residents will have to travel further to access the highway. However, these changes would result in significant safety improvements for both local and highway traffic.</p>
39	Concern that there is no provision for a northbound exit ramp from the roundabout on the western side of the highway to be used by people who turn right out of Failford Road then head towards Taree.	Engineering constraints limit the opportunities for accessing the highway where the ramp is located. The current proposal minimises impacts on Failford cemetery and the community. Preliminary investigation revealed that the predicted traffic levels for this movement are low and the proposed service road is appropriate for these traffic volumes now and in the future.
	<b>Safety</b>	
40	The closure of the intersection of Bullocky Way and the Highway would improve safety and security, and enhance the sense of community.	Noted.
41	Concerned about safety impacts in relation to access for emergency vehicles to the Failford Estate as a result of the extra distance that would need to be travelled, which would have implications for the time taken for emergency services vehicles to reach homes.	The emergency services have been consulted during the development of the proposal. The RTA will review this issue during the detailed design phase due to availability of funding to advance construction of Stage 2. Stage 2 would open up a second access into Bullocky Way.

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Property issues</b>	
42	Our most pressing concern is access to the part of our property on the eastern side of the Highway. Currently we live on the western side of the highway and have access at two points on the eastern side. The existing under-road access is not suitable as the only means of access. I suggest that the property access just north of Bullocky Way be maintained because the 5 tonne limit on trucks on surrounding roads means highway access is imperative. I also suggest that the final road plan include under highway access suitable for farm machinery and equipment. This access will need to be approximately 5 metres, and engineered to remain gravel free.	<p>The suggested upgrading of the existing underpass to a 5 metre high structure would not be achievable due to the significant cost and impacts involved. The alignment and grading of all three carriageways, as well as the local topography, would prevent the inclusion of a structure at this location that would be suitable for use as an underpass for large trucks and farm implements. However, the RTA would be further investigated the access arrangements for this property in consultation with the land owners during the detailed design phase.</p> <p>The RTA would also discuss interim property access arrangements with the property owners during the detailed design stage to ensure access between the two parts of the property is maintained to an appropriate standard. The RTA would also discuss adjustments that may be implemented to the previously installed underpass to improve its serviceability.</p>
<b>Flora and fauna</b>		
43	I am a licensed wildlife carer with Great Lakes Wildlife Rescue and FAWNA and my property is an authorised release site and all the macropods in my care are eventually released onto my land and the common property in Tallow Wood Estate. Tallow Wood Estate incorporated a fauna habitat that is to be maintained and protected by the Community Association. With the closure of Bullocky Way, traffic will increase along Failford Road and the risk is higher for our wildlife to be injured or killed on a busy road. I am hopeful the RTA will provide wildlife fencing along the boundary of the Pacific Highway and along the boundary of Failford Road Tallow Wood Estate.	<p>The RTA would consider the need for the inclusion of suitable fauna mitigation measures such as fauna exclusion fencing during the detailed design phase. As set out in Section 9.6.7 of the REF, the RTA would undertake further consultation with DECC to determine the nature and location of any fauna mitigation measures required for the project.</p> <p>Section 8.3.1 of the REF states that Failford Road is '<i>the most heavily trafficked local road in the study area</i>'. The REF also indicates that the increase in the number of vehicles using Failford Road after the completion of the project will be low.</p> <p>Failford Road will remain the responsibility of Great Lakes Council. However, the RTA would work with Council to identify any need to extend the fauna fencing from the project boundary along Failford Road.</p>
44	Suggest all possible steps need to be undertaken to ensure no koalas are injured during any land clearing activities and that an ecologist performs pre-clearing fauna surveys prior to such work. Protocols should be stipulated to ensure exclusion zones are enforced should a koala be encountered on site at any time of construction. Koalas in Care requests that their contact details are written into the work order documents and that the construction site manager is given their details.	It is current RTA policy to carry out clearing activities in a manner that includes those issues raised in the submission. This also includes consultation with DECC concerning mitigation measures to prevent injury to koalas and other fauna. A specialist ecologist would be employed during clearing operations. The RTA cannot stipulate specific organisation, however a wildlife rescue organisation would be incorporated into the environmental management plans.

No.	Issue	Response
	<b>Communications</b>	
45	We believe the meetings with residents and the community liaison group to be 'politically correct' exercises and that the RTA had their own agenda all the time and were going to do what they felt best.	The RTA carried out extensive consultation during the development of the Project. This included landowner meetings and community liaison group meetings during the stages leading up to the display of the REF and the refined concept design. The information provided by the landowners and members of the community liaison group along with the views expressed by members of the community have been considered during the development of the project. The consultation carried out as part of the development of the concept design and during the display of the REF was open and transparent and in accordance with RTA community consultation guidelines.
46	We believe the complete closure of Bullocky Way at the highway now in Stage 1 has been 'sneaked in'. Many residents were not aware of this change to the original concept plan which showed left in, left out at Bullocky Way. This has been exacerbated by the fact that this change is not shown on the design plans on the internet, the CD supplied, nor in the REF. These still show the concept design as of February 2006.	<p>The concept design displayed in 2006 is different to the refined concept design presented in the REF. The refined concept design was developed by the RTA to incorporate comments provided by community members and stakeholders during the concept design display.</p> <p>The refined concept design was included in the REF and has been available on the Failford Road to Tritton Road project website since the REF went on public display in July 2008.</p> <p>This refined concept design will be further developed into a detailed design following the consideration of submissions on the REF and incorporating measures identified in the conditions of approval.</p>

### 3 Main issues raised in submissions

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The information below provides a summary of the main issues raised in submissions to the display of the REF:

- The community is generally supportive of the refined concept design presented as part of the REF. The only part of the concept design creating some differences of opinion is the proposed closure of the Bullocky Way intersection. One section of the community consider that this closure would improve safety and encourage a sense of community in the Failford Estate while another section of the community object to the additional travel distances associated with the closure of Bullocky Way.
- There is some concern from individual property owners regarding the land acquisition impacts on their property.
- There is some concern regarding potential for noise impacts on both residents and animals.
- There is some clarification requested on mitigation measures proposed to address potential impacts on flora and fauna.
- Two local businesses raised concerns about potential impacts on the operation of their business as a result of the additional travel distances associated with the project.



## 4 Additional commitments

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Consideration of the submissions received during the display of the REF and refined concept design has resulted in the following commitments by the RTA, to be included as part of the proposed upgrade.

- The RTA will further consult with DECC during the selection of sites for the temporary concrete batching plants and compounds, should these facilities be required..
- The RTA will review the access to a business property during detailed design in consultation with the business owner.
- The RTA will discuss interim property access arrangements with a property owner during the detailed design stage to ensure access between the two parts of the property is maintained to an appropriate standard. The RTA will also discuss adjustments that may be implemented to the previously installed underpass on this property to improve its serviceability.
- The RTA will incorporate a wildlife rescue organisation into the construction environmental management plans.

## 5 Other matters

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There are a number of interim staging options available in addition to the two possible stages shown in the concept design included in the REF. One such option could include:

- The construct of the Failford Road interchange and modification of the Bullocky Way intersection to left-in / left-out only, ahead of the construction of the new northbound carriageway.

The benefits of this option would include the early delivery of safety improvements at these intersections by removing traffic conflicts between the Pacific Highway traffic and traffic entering and leaving Failford Road and Bullocky Way.

This option would not impact the functionality of the proposal.

The RTA may investigate other interim staging options during the detailed design stage that do not impact the functionality of the proposal. Such interim options will be based on the available funding and upgrading projects needs at the time.

## 6 References

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Roads and Traffic Authority, 2008. *Review of Environmental Factors: Pacific Highway Upgrade Failford Road to Tritton Road*, Roads and Traffic Authority, Sydney.