



Upgrade of the Pacific Highway Macksville to Urunga

ROUTE OPTIONS SUBMISSIONS REPORT

- Final
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has been investigating options to upgrade the Pacific Highway between Macksville and Urunga on the mid-north coast of NSW (a distance of approximately 40 kilometres). The project will link the existing highway at Warrell Creek in the south to the completed Raleigh Deviation in the north.

Planning for the project is fully funded by the NSW Government as part of the 10 year Pacific Highway Upgrading Program. There is currently no preferred option for the project.

Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) has been commissioned by the RTA to undertake:

- Investigations leading to identification of feasible route options and then up to the selection of the preferred route, including a preferred route display.
- The finalisation of all project activities and reports following the announcement of the preferred route.
- Community and stakeholder consultation as an integral part of the study.

This Working Paper has been prepared by SKM. Its aim is to describe the community and stakeholder consultation process undertaken, the communities and organisations that contributed to the discussions and the issues raised by the community for consideration in the route selection process for the Upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Macksville and Urunga. The paper also seeks to clarify some issues raised and describe how community concerns and/or suggestions will be addressed in the selection of the preferred route.

Ongoing consultation arrangements are also described for the upcoming stages of the project's development.

1.2 Objectives of the project

The Macksville to Urunga upgrade forms part of the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program. The objectives of this program are to:

- Significantly reduce road accidents and injuries.
- Reduce travel times.
- Reduce freight transport costs.
- Have a community satisfied with the physical development of the route.



- Provide a route that supports economic development.
- Manage the upgrading of the route in accordance with Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles.
- Maximise the effectiveness of expenditure.

The specific objectives of the Macksville to Urunga upgrade are to:

- Achieve safe driving conditions on the highway for travel speeds of 110 kilometres per hour (km/h) in rural areas and 80 km/h in urban areas.
- Integrate input from local communities into the development of the project.
- Provide connections from the upgraded highway to the key centres of Macksville, Nambucca Heads and Urunga.
- Have acceptable roadway capacity for traffic volumes at least 30 years after opening.
- Develop a dual carriageway road that accommodates all vehicles up to and including B-Double trucks.
- Maintain highway access during flood conditions.
- Provide acceptable access to properties.
- Develop delay management strategies to minimise disruption to local and through traffic and maintain access to affected properties and land during construction.
- Develop solutions that facilitate the staged construction of the project.
- Develop solutions for the ultimate grade separation of the Pacific Highway and local road intersections including consolidation of accesses by the use of service roads.
- Provide rest areas within the investigation area.
- Provide transport infrastructure that is complementary with surrounding land use.
- Ensure the project achieves value for money.

1.3 Consultation objectives

The objectives of the community involvement program are to:

- Pro-actively inform the community about the route selection process and opportunities for them to be involved.
- Provide the community and other stakeholders with adequate opportunity to be involved in the development and evaluation of route options.
- Involve the community in detailed planning, environmental and engineering studies of the route options and establish a mutually beneficial two-way flow of information.



- Identify community issues and concerns associated with the project and make provision for these to be effectively communicated within the study team and addressed.
- Ensure that all issues raised by the community are considered and addressed in the development of the study.
- Achieve satisfactory response times to community requests.
- Identify measures to address perceived and actual issues that cause community concern.
- Establish lines of communication with the community that could be effectively carried on from the route selection process to the concept design, environmental assessment and construction processes.
- Facilitate an open and fair process where mutual trust can be developed.

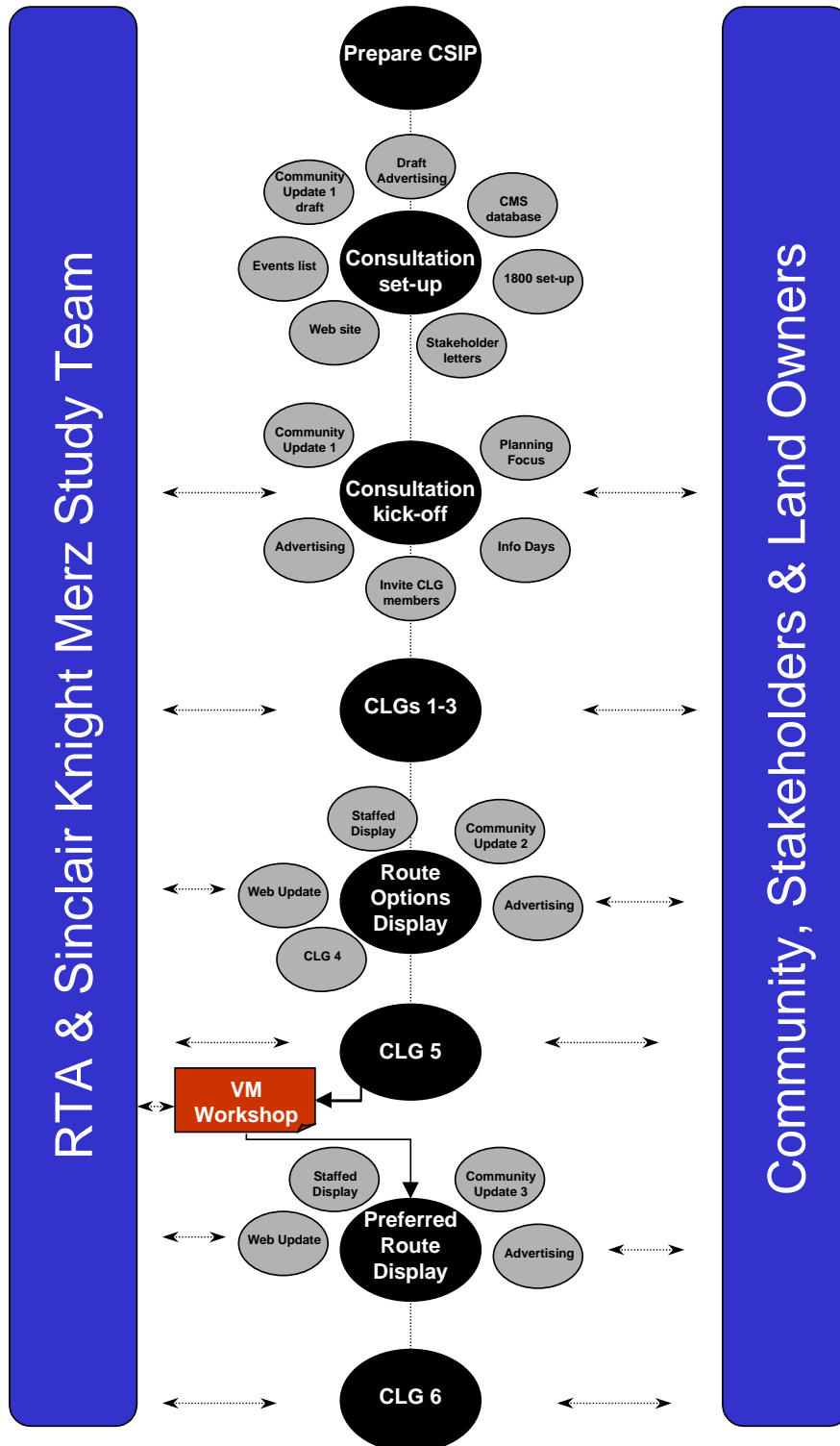
1.4 Consultation initiatives

A Community and Stakeholder Involvement Plan (CSIP) was developed for the project. It involved the implementation of a number of different communication mechanisms to enable an effective two-way flow of information between the study team and the community. The key aspects of the consultation program can be seen in **Figure 1.1**. They include:

- Free call info line (1800 800 612)
- Information displays (staffed and unstaffed)
- Community Updates
- Community Liaison Groups [CLGs] (Macksville, Nambucca/Bellwood and Urunga)
- Consultation with individuals and representatives of the indigenous community
- Briefings with individuals and groups
- Advertising
- Web site updates at www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.htm.



Figure 1.1: Macksville to Urunga Consultation Process





2. Route options consultation

Input from the community has been sought with the identification of constraints that need to be considered in the development of route options during the lead up to the display of the route options for the project. While it is often difficult to obtain widespread community interest in the project prior to the identification and public display of route options, input has been received through the initial displays, the Community Liaison Groups (CLGs) and through individual contacts from members of the wider community.

The level of interest in the project has significantly intensified with the display of the route options, as was to be expected. The resulting interest has indicated good coverage of the study area with the dissemination of route options information and with the receipt of information from the community on the route options.

2.1 Property owners

The route options display is a key phase in the development of the project and in the consultation process. It is the stage where the focus of consultation alters from more general study area issues to issues specific to individual route options. As key stakeholders during this phase it is important that potentially affected property owners are provided with information about the implications of the route options and are made aware of the RTA's Land Acquisitions Policy and the process that it describes, should they eventually be affected by the preferred option.

Potentially affected property owners were divided into two groups:

- Those with potential direct impacts from one or more of the route options;
- Those with potential indirect impacts associated with one or more of the route options.

Different letters were sent to both groups prior to the display of the route options. Addresses for property owners were obtained from existing Council data sets provided by Nambucca Shire and Bellingen Shire Councils. The letter to directly affected property owners also contained a copy of the RTA's Land Acquisitions Policy.

Where possible, most property owners with potential direct impacts were also contacted by telephone with an offer to arrange an appointment with study team members to discuss the implications of the route options for individual properties. Many of these appointments were held on the same days as the staffed displays. Aerial photographs with the route options overlain were provided to potentially affected property owners on request. A further 35 meetings and briefings were held with property owners on-site to discuss additional issues associated with each of the route options. These included meetings with the following community groups:

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- Residents of Leticia Close (13/12/04)
- West of Warrell Creek residents (20/12/04)
- Newry Island residents (16/1/05)
- Old Coast Road residents (27/1/05)
- Ridgewood Drive residents (30/1/05)
- Residents of Warrell Creek village (28/2/05).

Briefings were also provided for both Councils (Mayors and senior Council staff) on the day of the announcement of the route options. A further briefing was held for Nambucca Shire Council and two further briefings for Bellingen Shire Council about the route options proposed.

It should be noted that a number of community members noted that property ownership details, were incorrect or out of date. Remedial action was taken where this was identified. The study team has been in contact with Council in an attempt to obtain improved access to Council's database for any further property related dissemination of information.

2.2 Route options display

The display of route options commenced on 30 November 2004 and concluded on 2 February 2005. The options were displayed in at:

- Nambucca Shire Council Offices, Macksville
- Bellingen Shire Council Offices, Bellingen
- Nambucca Heads Motor Registry
- Nambucca Plaza
- Urunga Post Office
- Bowraville Technology Centre
- Warrell Creek Fire Brigade
- RTA Pacific Highway Office, Grafton.

The November 2004 Community Update (**Appendix A**) accompanied the displays to provide information about the proposed options. Staffed displays were also held at:

- Urunga Post Office (7 December 2004)
- Macksville Senior Citizens Hall (Wednesday 8 December 2004)
- Nambucca Plaza (Thursday 9 December 2004).



These displays were advertised (**Appendix B**) in the following papers and on the web page:

- Nambucca Guardian News
- Hibiscus Happenings
- Bellingen Courier
- The Advocate
- The Mid Coast Observer.

Coverage was also provided about the route options display on regional television news and on ABC radio.

2.3 Community Liaison Groups

The three CLGs were briefed on the route options proposed through the fourth round of CLG meetings held from 7-9 December 2004. Although they had provided input to the identification of constraints, CLG members had not been informed of the route options prior to the commencement of the display process on 30 November 2004. The Records of Meetings of the CLGs can be seen on the project web page at www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.

2.4 Additional investigations

As stated in the November 2004 Community Update, further investigations were carried out during the display of route options. These were to address key areas and issues within the original study area and to augment information collected on the west of Macksville options to provide a similar level of detail to the investigations for the options to the east of Macksville.

These investigations have been completed and reports prepared for stakeholders involved in the Value Management process.



3. Consideration of submissions on the route options

As a result of the route options display, approximately 340 submissions (plus approx. 50 form letters) were received from approximately 260 individuals and organisations (there were a number of examples of multiple submissions from the one author), with a good spread of issues raised throughout the study region. The remainder of this section provides a summary of the issues raised and how these issues have and will be addressed in the subsequent phases of this project. The submissions have been summarised to avoid duplication of issues.

3.1 Route options development process

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	When can a preferred route actually be expected? When can construction be expected to commence and be completed?	An announcement of the preferred route is anticipated in the second half of 2005. A date for construction has not been determined at this time. Following announcement of the preferred option, the project would then need to proceed to the next level of design (commonly referred to as concept design). The proposal would also be the subject of an environmental impact assessment that will examine all the potential impacts of the preferred option in more detail. The assessment will be displayed for community comment prior to seeking approval to construct the project.
2	Concern was raised about the level of investigation carried out in the development of route options, " <i>There is no one we have spoken to who has any recollection of seeing any person conducting any sort of surveys to determine the true nature of the routes. We have the impression that the route is already selected and the consultation process is just a matter of going through the motions. Data collection process has relied on old data with very little field work to support this.</i> "	The study team has been undertaking both desktop studies based on the best available data and field investigations throughout 2004. These were augmented with further investigations during the display of route options in late 2004 and early 2005. These investigations have included field studies along both the east and west of Macksville options and along the options to the west of Urunga. Residents throughout the study area were very helpful in allowing the study team to access properties where there was a need to carry out targeted field investigations. Where access was not granted, every effort was made to conduct the necessary investigations from the roadside or from an adjacent property.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
		<p>Further detailed assessments (including fieldwork) will be carried out on the preferred route during the concept design and environmental impact assessment phases.</p> <p>The preferred route has not been selected at this stage. All route options placed on public display are feasible route options that have been developed for input from the wider community. Community and stakeholder input will be an important component of route assessment process, and will assist the RTA in recommending a preferred route for the project.</p>
3	<p>A need to bypass Macksville was identified in 1991 and a preferred route selected. It is now 2005. Is it not true that the people of Macksville have been told for many years and expected the eastern route to be built? Is it not true that the properties on the eastern route were purchased at lower prices because of this knowledge?</p>	<p>The preferred route for a bypass of Macksville, developed in 1991, was to enable through traffic to be moved away from the centre of Macksville and to connect with the existing highway to the north of the Nambucca River. The current project is significantly different. The current proposal is to develop a strategic approach to a 40 km section of the Pacific Highway from south of Macksville to north of Urunga, which therefore needs to take into consideration more strategic issues. It would be a dual carriageway highway with an ultimate capacity for six traffic lanes. The project objectives differ from those of the 1991 proposal which focussed on local traffic relief. The 1991 proposal never proceeded beyond the identification of a preferred route for the project. The extent to which a local perception has affected property values is beyond the RTA's control.</p>
4	<p>Is it not true that the RTA has already purchased land along the proposed eastern route?</p>	<p>The RTA has not purchased property as part of either this project or the 1991 proposal for an eastern bypass of Macksville. The RTA had purchased a number of properties for the previously approved Warrell Creek project prior to the launch of the Macksville to Urunga project in June 2003. The project is now on hold pending the decision on the preferred route for the Macksville to Urunga project.</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
5	In your letter you speak about improved safety, travel times and traffic congestion and yet there is no thought to impact on the environment - natural, social & economic.	The potential “..... <i>impact on the environment - natural, social & economic</i> ” has been considered for all of the options investigated. These potential impacts were discussed in the November 2004 Community Update, the Draft Route Options Development Report and the Draft Assessment of the West of Macksville Route Options. Additional work has also been carried out during the route options display to provide further detail on these aspects. This information will be available to participants of the Value Management (VM) workshop and for the subsequent evaluation of the route options.
6	It is acknowledged that the reduction in travel time is a compelling factor when determining the best option. However, it is noted that the difference in time between the two extreme options, 4(a) & 4(c) is a meagre 1.2 minutes and half that time in relation to option 4(b), compared with 4(c). Equal weighting should be given to each option when assessing travel time.	<p>Relatively minor differences in travel times for individual vehicles can result in significant transport efficiency and road safety differences between the route options.</p> <p>Travel time is one of many factors that will be considered in the assessment of route options. The weighting of this and all other factors would be conducted as part of the VM process. When there are only minor differences between options for a particular factor, each option is given a similar score.</p>
7	As early as August 7, 2003, it was pointed out by SKM that “... <i>SEPP14 wetlands to the west, north-west and north of Macksville, National Parks west of Bowraville, areas of archaeological sensitivity and areas of significant rugged terrain (Pickett Hill) made it extremely difficult to pursue an option west of Macksville.</i> ”	When developing the original study area, the constraints identified to the west of Macksville focussed on the area directly to the west of Macksville and in relatively close proximity to the town. The routes suggested to the RTA by sections of the community were located to the west of the area considered when developing the original study area. The options developed by the RTA (W6 and W7) avoid the “... <i>SEPP14 wetlands to the west, north-west and north of Macksville, National Parks west of Bowraville and areas of significant rugged terrain (Pickett Hill)</i> ” and endeavour to minimise the impact on “ <i>areas of archaeological sensitivity</i> ”.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
8	Concern was raised about the route selection process and how the community is in “limbo” while waiting for the preferred route to be announced.	The study team is well aware of the uncertainty that the display of route options places on a community. It is for this reason that the study team makes every effort to minimise the time between the release of the route options and the announcement of the preferred option. The process is undertaken in this manner to obtain community input throughout the process. Community input is an important component in the selection of the preferred route.
9	The RTA was approached to consider a western option in 2003 and that in March 2004 approved an investigation for a western route. As affected people, why were property owners not informed of these decisions earlier.	There have been suggestions made to the study team to investigate options further west of the initial study area since the first round of community displays in July 2003. These issues were also raised at a number of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) meetings. A decision was made to investigate whether feasible route options could be developed to the west of Macksville in 2004. When it was clear that there were feasible route options to the west, the community was informed through the route options display process and potentially affected landholders were contacted by letter.
10	Concern was raised about the perception that a limited number of community members could have such an influence on the RTA so as to action a reconsideration of the study area and a consideration of the west of Macksville route options. Concern was also expressed that the resolution from the Chamber of Commerce was not representative of the full membership of the Chamber.	The RTA is committed to assessing suggestions from the community, whether the suggestions come from a group or from individuals. In this instance the RTA responded to suggestions from sections of the community (including the Macksville Chamber of Commerce) by investigating the feasibility of options to the west of Macksville and developed two viable route options which were presented to the community for their information and comment. Further alternative routes have been suggested through the route options display process and the viability of these will also be assessed. The issue of the resolution from the Macksville Chamber of Commerce is an internal issue for members of the Chamber to determine. .



Issue No.	Issue	Response
11	Concern was raised that when purchasing properties, searches were carried out and there was no indication of road reserves or route options.	<p>Where applicable, searches made through the RTA between June 2003 and November 2004 would have been advised that the property was located within the study area for the Macksville to Urunga project. Where applicable, searches made through the RTA subsequent to the release of the route options in November 2004 would have been advised that the property was either potentially directly affected by or adjacent to one of the route options being considered for the project. Searches made through the RTA on properties in the vicinity of Warrell Creek would, where applicable, have been advised that the property was potentially affected by or in the vicinity of the approved Warrell Creek project.</p> <p>Road Reserves are generally only shown on property plans after the plan showing the Road Reserve has been registered and the property acquired by the Road Authority</p>
12	Why is the study area for Section 3 so narrow?	The study area in Section 3 is narrow because of the constraints to the west (physical constraints of Pickets Hill and Mt England) and the railway line to the east of the existing highway. The existing highway in that section is on a reasonable alignment that lends itself to upgrading to dual carriageway.
13	If the western option is chosen, a section of existing dual carriageway to the south of Macksville will no longer be required. Concern was raised that this was a waste of taxpayers' money.	If one of the west of Macksville options were chosen (Option W7), a section of dual carriageway would no longer be required for the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program. However, this section of road would still be available for use as the southern access to Macksville and Nambucca Heads.
14	Concern was raised that the RTA “..... <i>has manipulated the figures for the western and eastern options in order to get their desired outcome.</i> ”	The RTA does not have a preferred option at this stage. The information reported for all options is objective and balanced.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
15	Why was a route not considered to the west of the western-most route in Section 4?	Options further west than option 4a were considered. (See Appendix A of the Draft Route Options Development Report. The topography precludes the economic construction of an efficient high standard dual carriageway highway when moving only a short distance west of Option 4a.
16	Why has the RTA chosen to title this work as the “Macksville Highway Bypass” when in fact the eastern options do not bypass the Macksville township?	The project has been consistently referred to as the Macksville to Urunga Project since the announcement of the study area in June 2003.

3.2 Concept design issues

Issue No.	Issue	Response
<p>Alternative routes</p> <p>A number of alternatives were suggested to avoid individual properties. These suggestions have not been addressed in this report. Minor refinements to the preferred route would be considered in the concept design stage to minimise impacts on properties and/or constraints where practicable.</p>		
1	Suggestion of blending of Options 4b and 4c which would lower project costs and also lead to an option highly compatible with overall project objectives. The River crossing would take place 400m to the east of Option 4b and then swing east and broadly align with the northern element of Option 4c.	This option would impact on SEPP14 wetlands and a listed Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) north of the Kalang River, east of South Arm Road. The impacts on the SEPP14 wetland would render this option unviable. The option is similar to one of the options previously considered and discounted by the project team due to the potential property impacts along South Arm Road and in the vicinity of Riverside Drive. (See Figure 2 in Appendix A of the Draft Route Options Development Report. The proposal is unlikely to result in any significant benefits compared to Options 4b or 4c.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
2	A route closer to the western edge of the area of investigation, west of option 4a, traversing the plantations in the state forest area and crossing the Kalang River to a higher area of land to the north bank and coming back to join the existing Raleigh Deviation to the north of the industrial estate at Raleigh would in our opinion be the best option for most.	Options were considered further west in Section 4 than Option 4a. (See Figure 2 of Appendix A of the Draft Route Options Development Report). The topography precludes the economic construction of an efficient high standard dual carriageway highway when moving only a short distance west of Option 4a.
3	Has the study team considered a coastal east option of taking the highway close to the coast linking the Scotts Head, Stuarts Point, South West Rocks areas (ie going east of Yarrahappini mountain?)	Routes along the coastal strip to the east of the study area would bypass approximately 8km of existing dual carriageway highway south of Macksville. The proposal would necessarily increase the length of the project by approximately 9km at an additional estimated cost of between \$110M and \$130M. The proposal would also pass through or close to the Yarriabini National Park and the SEPP 14 wetlands east of Macksville. These factors make such a route unviable.
4	Concern was expressed that the RTA was only looking at a short-term solution. All towns are growing in population and in popularity as holiday destinations. The three routes suggested in Section 4 would only solve the problem right now and the next few years. Would it not be better to take the highway from somewhere south of Macksville, westwards through the state forest and have it join up with the suggested bypass round Coffs Harbour?	The Preferred Route for a bypass of Coffs Harbour is a coastal route which connects with the existing highway at Englands Road south of the city. The highway is already upgraded to dual carriageway between Englands Road and Lyons Road and between Mailmans Track and the junction with the Waterfall Way at Raleigh. Planning approval has been obtained for the upgrade of the existing highway between Mailmans Track and Lyons road to dual carriageway. Consequently, the most appropriate location for the northern end of the Macksville to Urunga project is the existing junction with the Waterfall Way at Raleigh. The topography west of Option 4a near Urunga and west of Picket Hill and Mount England precludes the economic construction of an efficient high standard dual carriageway highway through these areas. There are also likely to be significant ecological issues associated with extensive lengths of a route located within State Forests. These factors make this proposal unviable.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
5	The next best option for our area is the western option but keep west of Valla, Pickett Hill, Urunga and Raleigh.	As outlined above, the most appropriate location for the northern end of the Macksville to Urunga project is the existing junction with the Waterfall Way at Raleigh. The topography west of Option 4a near Urunga and west of Picket Hill and Mount England precludes the economic construction of an efficient high standard dual carriageway highway through these areas. There are also likely to be significant ecological issues associated with extensive lengths of a route located within State Forests. These factors make this proposal unviable.
6	A route that follows the existing alignment of the Pacific Highway would be a more viable alternative.	As noted in the November 2004 Community Update on page 5, upgrading the existing highway through Macksville, Nambucca Heads and Urunga is not acceptable due to the impact on these townships and no further consideration will be given to this option.
7	A more acceptable variation (to 4b) would be to divert northward from proposed Kalang River crossing, and link up with the 4a green route about 4km from the proposed Waterfall Way interchange. Otherwise option 4b in its present form is unfavourable because of the significant impact on adjacent residential properties.	The proposed variation to Option 4b would be slightly (approximately 0.2km) longer and more expensive than the existing option and have a greater impact on high quality flora and fauna habitat and Endangered Ecological Communities. The proposal is unlikely to result in a significant reduction in the number of properties potentially affected by noise and other amenity impacts. The proposal is unlikely to result in any significant benefits compared to Option 4b.
8	Suggested an alternative route that avoids flood prone areas, hardly interferes with peoples' lives and doesn't destroy their homes (map attached at Appendix C).	The proposed variation to Option 4b would impact on the SEPP 14 wetlands and EEC areas to the north of the Kalang River. The alternative would be slightly longer than Option 4b. These impacts would render the alternative unviable.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
9	Two alternative route options were proposed. One was a connection between Option 4a and 4b and the other was a variation to Option 4b. Both can be seen in Appendix C .	<p>The proposed connection between Option 4a and 4b would be similar in length and cost to the existing Option 4a. The proposal is likely to result in a similar number of properties directly affected and potentially affected by noise and other amenity impacts. The proposal is unlikely to result in any significant benefits compared to Options 4a and 4b.</p> <p>The second option almost parallels Option 4b to the west. It would be longer and more expensive than Option 4b and potentially affect more properties. The crossing of the Kalang River would not be as effectively aligned as Option 4b to minimise property impacts. The alternative does not offer significant benefits over the existing Option 4b.</p>
10	The route known as 4b initially is in an excellent position following along the existing Ainsworth Road. At this point it was recommended that the Highway crosses over to Martells Road higher up the hill. Then go a further kilometre west to Ridge Fire Road 6/4. Here, a sweeping curve is required to connect up to Gossips Road. At this point, this Road should be followed straight down to the Kalang River to connect up with South Arm Road.	The suggested alternative is a refinement to Option 4b. Should this option be identified as the preferred route, the suggested refinement would be further assessed.
Constructability		
9	Option 4c requires 2 bridges, which raise constructability issues.	While there would be constructability issues with an additional bridge crossing for option 4c, these do not negate further consideration of the option.
10	Route 4c will require vast amounts of high quality compactable fill material.	Typically, highways of this significance are placed on fill across floodplains to provide flood immunity for the road. The quantity of fill required for each option has been determined and provided for in the cost estimates. Wherever possible, this fill is proposed to be obtained from other sections of the project.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
11	Major concerns were expressed over the use of the very small bridge that is the only access to Newry Island.	Should option 4c become the preferred route, restrictions would be placed on the contractor to limit the amount of construction traffic that could use the existing bridge to Newry Island. There are a number of options for the construction contractor to implement to minimise the need to use the existing bridge.
12	Both bridgeworks and earthworks required for Western Options are more extensive.	Preliminary analysis indicates that the eastern options would require 490m to 600m of bridging across Warrell Creek and the Nambucca River and 150m to 200m of drainage structures across Gumma Swamp. The analysis also indicates that the western options would require a total of 350m to 570m of bridging across Warrell Creek, Taylors Arm, Blackbutt Creek and the Nambucca River and 250m of drainage structures across the floodplains. Consequently, bridgeworks for the western options are likely to be similar to those for the eastern options. Roadworks for the western options cover a greater length than for the eastern options and are therefore likely to be more extensive. The length of bridging and quantity of fill required for each option has been determined and provided for in the cost estimates. Both eastern and western options are feasible.
13	West of Macksville options can be constructed with greater ease because they can be constructed away from existing traffic.	The west of Macksville options could be constructed with less impact on the existing Pacific Highway traffic. However, construction contractors are very experienced in minimising traffic disruptions along the Pacific Highway and are well aware of the RTA's requirements in delay management and the community's expectations. The west of Macksville options would require more extensive use of the local road network by construction traffic. As their construction cannot be staged, another disadvantage of the west of Macksville options would be that the traffic on the existing Pacific Highway would receive no benefit from the project until the option is constructed in total.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
Costs		
14	How can the objective of maximising value for money be met when the western option is \$100 million more expensive?	As shown in the table on page 3 of the November 2004 Community Update, the overall cost for the western options are between \$530 million and \$558 million whereas the overall cost for the eastern options are between \$520 million and \$555 million. Consequently, the costs of both the western and eastern options are similar.
15	No allowance appears to have been made for the impacts of noise and noise abatement for residences on the western route. The cost of option 4c has not taken into account sound barriers.	Requirements for noise mitigation measures have been considered for all the route options and appropriate provision included in the cost estimates.
16	The SKM report Pg 51 notes that "the (road user cost benefit) analysis shows that investment in either of the west of Macksville options themselves is not economically viable".	As shown in the table on page 3 of the November 2004 Community Update, the upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Macksville and Urunga is economically viable with either the eastern or western options, albeit with a higher BCR for the project for the east of Macksville options. It is not unusual for individual sections of a large project (such as the Macksville to Urunga project), taken in isolation, to be not economically viable even though the overall project is viable.
17	It is totally unjustified to spend an extra \$14 million of taxpayers' money on option 4c when there are cheaper ones available that affect less people.	As shown on page 13 of the November 2004 Community Update, Option 4c is the most expensive option in Section 4. Project cost is an important consideration when assessing route options. However, as identified by the project objectives shown on page 4 of the Update, "value for money" achieved by the expenditure on the project is also an important consideration. A more expensive option may provide greater value for money and overall community benefits than the cheapest option.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
18	What historical data has been used to calculate the maintenance costs of the route options?	<p>1) For the purposes of the RUCBA, the following lengths were used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Base case = 27.3km ■ W6 = 25.2km ■ W7 = 25.0km <p>The base case was made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2.1 km of the northern section of the existing dual carriageway south of Warrell Creek; ■ 5.0km of proposed dual carriageway that makes up the proposed Warrell Creek Deviation; ■ 17.7km and 2.5km of existing highway from the start of the study area south of Macksville to 2.5km north of where the highway meets the Northern Railway Line north-west of Nambucca Heads. <p>W6 was made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2.1 km of the northern section of the existing dual carriageway south of Warrell Creek; ■ 22.6km of new dual carriageway and 0.5km difference in length between where W6 and W7 join the highway just north of Cow Creek. <p>W7 is made up of 25km of new dual carriageway.</p> <p>The present value of annual maintenance costs for the existing highway was</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
		compared to the present value of annual maintenance costs with the project to give an incremental maintenance cost (in present value terms) for the project. This analysis results in a cost of \$6 million/year for both W6 and W7 between south of Warrell Creek and just north of Cow Creek.
19	It seems that if 40-50% contingency has been allowed, then all routes have the potential to have similar costs/benefits depending on a number of variables. How is this addressed in the modelling process?	Contingency values are required in cost estimates to provide for the uncertainties associated with the level of information available at the time and the resulting design assumptions. Contingencies are reduced as the design process continues and more detailed information becomes available. The level of information collected at the route assessment stage is appropriate for the comparison of the options being considered. The contingency allowance at this stage is similar for all options and reflects the level of information available and the resulting design assumptions.
Design		
20	Re 4b - cannot understand why it was necessary to choose the intersection of Short Cut Road and South Arm Road as preferred point to cross to the west of South Arm Road. A crossing point in the area 550 - 700 metres south of Short Cut Road would carry route to western side of South Arm Road without substantial interaction with the residential properties.	Option 4c crosses the intersection of Short Cut Road and South Arm Road to enable the option to avoid SEPP 14 wetlands adjacent to South Arm Road 500m to 800m to the south of that intersection.
21	Council has approved the rezoning of 7 ha of rural land for a chapel, funeral parlour, crematorium and lawn cemetery adjacent to the existing highway in Section 3. Part of this land has been identified as having a possible elevated interchange on it. Can the proposed interchange be positioned/designed to avoid the proposed development.	The proposed interchanges have been located in the vicinity of where an option leaves the existing highway. The location and design of the proposed interchanges would be further developed when the preferred option is chosen. The proposed chapel, funeral parlour, crematorium and lawn cemetery would be considered when locating and designing interchange.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
Geotechnical		
22	Building a road on soft soils would be very costly. The western routes for Macksville and Urunga offer better road building material. Concern was expressed that options on soft soils will see the same perceived settlement problems that the community associates with the Raleigh Deviation.	Constructing a road on soft soils does present difficulties in construction. The issues associated with construction on soft soils (additional construction and maintenance costs and longer construction periods) will be one of issues to be considered during the selection of the preferred route. Proven techniques are available for construction on soft soils. With construction on soft soils, there is always a trade-off between allowing for settlement to occur prior to opening and demands to open a road to traffic as soon as possible.
23	No mention has been made of potential acid sulphate soils.	No specific mention was made of acid sulphate soils in the Draft Route Options Report as it was anticipated that, based on the geotechnical investigations undertaken, these would be encountered on all options. The RTA and its contractors are experienced in the management of acid sulphate soils and this was not seen as presenting a constraint that would affect the decision on route options.
24	If Option 4c is the preferred option, traffic on the road will cause riverbank erosion and vibration to properties. Homes may be structurally damaged.	As with any of the other route options, if option 4c was chosen as the preferred route, it would be subject to detailed assessment through an EIS. This more detailed assessment would determine the potential for both riverbank erosion and vibration effects and develop mitigation measures to address any effects. These mitigation measures would be included in environmental management plans (EMPs) that construction contractors would use to effectively manage potential environmental impacts.
Macksville Bridge		
25	We are told that if the western option is chosen responsibility for the Macksville Bridge will be handed over to Nambucca Council who couldn't afford to maintain it so it will be knocked down.	With either the east or west of Macksville options, the existing Macksville Bridge would have an important role in the movement of local traffic. The RTA would discuss options for ongoing management and maintenance of the bridge with Council.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
Route Alignment		
26	Is there an opportunity for each of the east of Macksville options to be modified so as to interchange with each other?	The potential for connections between options in Sections 1 and 2 were indicated on pages 7 and 9 of the November 2004 Community Update.
27	The RTA shouldn't be planning the route location, it should be made by the people and other government departments and then handed to the RTA who specialise in the building of roads.	The RTA is responsible for and has expertise in the planning, development and maintenance of the State's major road network - including the identification and assessment of routes for the upgrading of the network. The RTA involves other Government agencies, Councils and the community in the development of route options.
Utilities		
28	The trunk line water main to Nambucca Heads is under the route in Section 2.	The proposed route options avoid the trunk water main in Section 2. Following the identification of the preferred route, the potential impact on utilities would be reviewed in more detail during the concept design stage. If there was a potential impact on utilities, the design would be optimised to avoid or minimise the impact.



3.3 Property issues

It should be noted that property impacts was an issue referred to in most submissions. Many submissions indicated the impact that a particular route option would have on their property. These individual property impacts have not been addressed below. The issues below are concerns raised that have broader implications than individual property impacts.

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	If my property is resumed, how will I be compensated?	Land acquisition by the RTA is managed under the RTA's Land Acquisitions Policy. This policy was developed to support the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act, 1991</i> . The aim of the legislation and policy is that people be no worse off financially than if a road requiring acquisition of their land was not proposed. The amount offered for the property is based on the market value of the property at the time of acquisition, unaffected by the road proposal. The property acquisition process is only applicable to properties directly affected by the proposal. The RTA would initiate property acquisitions following approval of the project. Subject to the impact of the proposal on the property, the RTA may purchase all or part of the property. After the announcement of the preferred route, the RTA will consider applications for hardship acquisitions of properties directly affected by the proposal. A brochure providing additional information in regard to the RTA's property acquisition process can be obtained by contacting the RTA.
2	Will the RTA compensate for our loss of future income?	Should the RTA purchase a property that is the site of a business, the RTA would usually also purchase the business. The value of the business (including its income potential) would be reflected in its market value.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
3	If an eastern option is chosen and it results in increased flooding, who will be accountable for compensation to impacted residents?	As part of the options investigation phase of the project, a hydrology and hydraulics assessment was undertaken. The RTA is confident in the findings of this assessment. Prior to construction of the project, more detailed investigations would be undertaken in relation to flooding, including the design of structures crossing the rivers and floodplains.
4	Compensation of market value is not fair. It should be double the market value to compensate for the disruptions caused.	The RTA purchases properties in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act, 1991</i> .
5	If I am not directly affected will I receive compensation for increased noise, air and visual impacts?	The <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act, 1991</i> does not cater for compensation for indirect impacts. However, prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design and undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including the noise, air and visual impacts on adjacent properties, and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts.
6	Market value does not account for improvements to the property.	The amount offered for the property by the RTA is based on the market value of the property at the time of acquisition, unaffected by the road proposal. Market value does take account of improvements made to the property. Consequently, improvements made to the property will be reflected in the RTA's offer.
7	How long would it take in the event that a property be purchased before exchange would take place?	The time between agreement on the purchase price and exchange is similar to sale through a private vendor. There is also usually scope for negotiation of the settlement period.
8	Some residents expressed an interest in hardship acquisition. Is this available?	After the announcement of the preferred route, the RTA will consider applications for hardship acquisitions of properties directly affected by the proposal. A brochure providing additional information in regard to the RTA's property acquisition process can be obtained by contacting the RTA.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
9	Given that the area has been earmarked for development since the concept subdivision plan was submitted to Council in 1996, if option 4c is chosen we will reserve our right to pursue compensation under the Land Acquisition Act for the rezoned value of our land.	The <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act, 1991</i> addresses the issue of land zoned for a different purpose to its current use. The development potential of the property is reflected in its market value, and consequently in the amount offered for the property by the RTA.
10	People to the west of Macksville were told that a major highway upgrade would go east and now stand to be severely affected both economically, environmentally and visually should a western option proceed.	It is likely that there will be a property value impact for land adjacent to the preferred route. Previous work was focused on investigating a bypass of Macksville and identified a route to the east of the township which rejoined the existing highway north of the Nambucca River. The current Macksville to Urunga project is a more strategic investigation that is considering options for the upgrade of the full length of the highway between Warrell Creek and Raleigh. It is appropriate for the study team to investigate all feasible options – including options to the west of Macksville. The potential impacts of the options (including the economic, environmental and visual impacts) have been identified and are summarised in the November 2004 Community Update and described in more detail in the Draft Route Options Development Report and the Draft Assessment of the West of Macksville Route Options. These potential impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.
11	Could you please explain in writing how the RTA would compensate businesses that can demonstrate economic loss/ruin from the options?	Investigations have been undertaken to identify the potential impacts of the proposed upgrade on businesses. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including the impacts on businesses, and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts.
12	What happens to the land already owned by the RTA along the eastern route that the taxpayers have paid for? If the western option is chosen will the land be sold and refunded to taxpayers?	The RTA has not purchased property as part of either this project or the 1991 proposal for an eastern bypass of Macksville. Surplus land previously purchased for the approved Warrell Creek Deviation would be sold back to

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
		the market. Monies from the sale of land would be returned to the government to fund its activities.
13	The Option 4c would sever the water front accesses and significantly reduce the size of many properties. This would not only greatly reduce the values of properties but also change the lifestyles of residents.	The potential impacts of all options (including Option 4c) have been identified and will be considered during the assessment of the options. Under the provisions of the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act, 1991</i> the offer made by the RTA in the case of a partial land acquisition process would take into account the alteration to the change in value of the property as a result of the proposal.
14	Property supports beef cattle business and is already split by Wilson Road. If a west of Macksville option is chosen the property would be split in three. This would require new layout design and fencing to facilitate movement of cattle around the property. Who will pay for this?	Where appropriate, the RTA would negotiate arrangements with the owner to modify the layout of a property affected by the proposal.
15	What is the number of houses that would be impacted by each option?	<p>The number of house directly under the footprint of each options is as follows:</p> <p>Section 1</p> <p>1a 9 1b 6 1c 7 1d 10 1e 9</p> <p>Section 2</p> <p>2a 18 2b 7 2c 14</p> <p>Section 3</p> <p>3a 12</p> <p>Section 4</p> <p>4a 8 4b 6 4c 5</p> <p>West of Macksville</p> <p>W6 16 W7 16</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
16	Property value has dropped since the announcement of the route options. Will I be compensated against the current lower value or for the value of the home prior to the route options going on display?	The value offered for the property is based on the market value of the property at the time of acquisition, unaffected by the road proposal.
17	Brother, Father and uncle are put to rest there. Are you going to pay for the removal of the ashes and their memories?	Whenever possible, the RTA seeks to avoid impacting on sensitive areas such as gravesites. If the RTA is unable to avoid these graves, discussions would be held with the family to identify their preferred course of action.
18	Why put a bypass where all the houses are? Why not put a bypass where the houses are not?	The development of route options is complex with many competing constraints which need to be identified and assessed. These constraints can be broadly grouped into social, economic, environmental and engineering. The options that have been developed have varying degrees of impact on each of these four aspects. The Value Management (VM) and route selection process includes the assessment of the relative importance of the constraints and the identification of the route option that provides the best balance across them.
19	The bypass will impact on 284 residences. People take pride in what they have worked for and will be devastated to lose part of their land.	The 284 residents referred to came from Page 13 of the November 2004 Community Update stated that in relation to option 4c, "284 residents potentially affected without noise mitigation." Potential noise impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.



3.4 Staging

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	The west of Macksville options cannot be staged. Does this mean that the local community must wait longer for funds to construct the more expensive western options if chosen?	In general, smaller, less expensive, projects are easier to fund than larger, more expensive, projects as they require a lower financial commitment from Government. Factors influencing the timing of construction of the project would include the priority for the work, the availability of the required funds and other Government commitments.
2	Isn't it easier to construct a road away from existing traffic? This could be done with the west of Macksville options.	The west of Macksville options could be constructed with less impact on the existing Pacific Highway traffic. However, construction contractors are very experienced in minimising traffic disruptions along the Pacific Highway and are well aware of the RTA's requirements in delay management and the community's expectations. The west of Macksville options would require more extensive use of the local road network by construction traffic. As their construction cannot be staged, another disadvantage of the west of Macksville options would be that the traffic on the existing Pacific Highway would receive no benefit from the project until the option is constructed in total.
3	The idea that the eastern options could be done in stages is a worry. We will get the first stage done, which includes the new bridge, and then traffic will be put back on the existing highway for an extended period of time.	If one of the east of Macksville options was chosen as the preferred option, it would be able to be constructed in stages and enable the benefits of a safer road to be available as soon as practicable. If one of the east of Macksville options was constructed in stages, there would need to be effective traffic management measures in place to ensure that transition from the upgraded road to the existing highway was safe and efficient.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
4	The idea that the eastern options can be staged is incorrect, as fill would be needed from Section 2 to be able to construct Section 1.	Obtaining fill from Section 2 is one option for sourcing construction material for Section 1. If this was to occur, the fill material could be sourced and provided, without construction commencing in Section 2. Fill material for Section 1 could also be sourced from sites south of Macksville. Therefore, the east of Macksville options can be staged, regardless of the source of fill material for Section 1.

3.5 Hydrology/Hydraulics

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	The crossing of Newry Island would directly traverse a floodway for more than 1 km. Any development must therefore impact detrimentally in the event of flooding and would require significant structural foundation work, essentially bridging the island, at substantial cost.	The hydraulic assessment undertaken concluded that, with the proposed bridges and floodplain structures in place, flood levels would be increased by a maximum of 50mm at the edge of the proposed road . This increase in flood level would decrease upstream of the route options
2	The publication identifies that all proposed routes east of Macksville will involve major earthworks to provide a highway road level at least equivalent with the 1 in 100 year flood level. This in turn will establish barriers within the Macksville Flood Plain, which is a recognised storage area. What calculations have been made to show an increase level of "less than 50mm". Importantly, where does this increased level occur? What hydraulic modelling has taken place to confirm such advice? Has the Lower Nambucca Flood Study Committee been involved or have they been requested to comment on this? What consideration has been give to the "extreme flood event" in	<p>The hydraulic modelling of the options assessment was based on the 100 year annual recurrence interval (ARI) flood event from the "<i>Lower Nambucca River Flood Study</i>" (NSWPWD, 1994). The flood study produced a hydraulic model which was calibrated (or fine tuned) to accurately replicate historically recorded floods. The hydraulic model differentiated between flood flows in the Nambucca River, flood flows through the town of Macksville and flood flows across the Gumma Swamp floodplain. It quantified the expected flows in each of these locations and the timing of these flows.</p> <p>As stated in Section 3.7.2 of the Draft Route Options Development Report,</p>

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
	<p>excess of the 1 in 100 year flood level? What would the impact of such an extreme event be? What acknowledgment will be made that the new highway route will in fact increase flooding in Macksville and will the RTA be accepting some responsibility for damage in the event of such major flood events?</p>	<p><i>“The aim of the hydrology/hydraulic study and the options assessment has been to identify the possible impacts of the route options on flood levels for the 100 year ARI flood event and to formulate designs that will minimise this impact.”</i> The existing flood model for the Lower Nambucca River was used for these investigations. The terrain data in the existing model was adjusted to simulate the route options (including proposed bridge openings) and the model was then re-run using the same 100 year ARI flood event used for the previous modelling. The impacts of the route options on flood levels were then determined by comparing these results with the results of the previous modelling with the floodplain in its existing condition. The same 100 year ARI flood event had to be used for both modelling runs to enable the impact of the route options to be identified.</p> <p>All options to the east of Macksville include a bridge over the Nambucca River and major drainage structures across Gumma Swamp. The flood modelling undertaken concludes that flood levels immediately upstream of the route options to the east of Macksville would increase by less than 50mm as a result of the construction of any of the proposed options. This increase in flood levels would reduce to a negligible level in the Macksville CBD.</p> <p>The Lower Nambucca Flood Study Committee has not been directly involved in the study. However, Council’s technical staff and a number of long term residents of the Nambucca Valley have been consulted. Information provided from these sources has confirmed that the flood study used for this assessment accurately replicates historically recorded floods.</p> <p>The purpose of the flood investigations was to identify the potential impact of the route options on existing flood levels. The 1 in 100 year ARI flood event</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
		<p>is an appropriate flood for this comparative assessment.</p> <p>As part of the options investigation phase of the project, a hydrology and hydraulics assessment was undertaken. The RTA is confident in the findings of this assessment. Prior to construction of the project, more detailed investigations would be undertaken in relation to flooding, including the design of structures crossing the rivers and floodplains.</p>
3	<p>What effect does global warming have on the outputs of the flood model?</p>	<p>The purpose of the flood investigations was to identify the potential impact of the route options on existing flood levels. The 1 in 100 year ARI flood event is an appropriate flood for this comparative assessment. While the flood model for the Nambucca River simulates rainfall, elevated ocean water levels and entrance channel scouring conditions, it does not include a simulation of the risks of global warming. Attempts to simulate the risks of global warming in the modelling for the route options would invalidate the comparison with the previous modelling with the floodplain in its existing condition.</p>
4	<p>The bottom part of Irvines Road, near Rodeo Drive, floods in heavy rain. This would be the only access after the highway is built if the west of Macksville options are chosen. What will the RTA do to maintain access?</p>	<p>Local access along both Rodeo Drive and Irvines Road would be retained with the west of Macksville options. These options would not impact on the access available along these roads during flood events.</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
5	Flooding issues are not restricted to the east of Macksville options. They are also an issue for residents west of Macksville.	A flood assessment has been carried out for the west of Macksville options. This assessment concludes that increases in the 1 in 100 year ARI flood level immediately upstream of the west of Macksville options would be less than 50mm and would decrease further upstream of these options.
6	The Nambucca Valley Conservation Association suggested that if the east of Macksville options were preferred that construction across the floodplain be carried out on piers rather than using compacted soil mounds.	All options to the east of Macksville include a bridge over the Nambucca River and major drainage structures across Gumma Swamp. The hydraulic modelling of the options assessment was based on the 100 year annual recurrence interval (ARI) flood event from the " <i>Lower Nambucca River Flood Study</i> " (NSWPWD, 1994). The flood modelling concludes that flood levels immediately upstream of the route options to the east of Macksville would increase by less than 50mm as a result of the construction of any of the proposed options. This increase in flood levels would reduce to a negligible level in the Macksville CBD.
7	Why was the floodplain option [ed. east of Macksville options] ever considered. If structures such as fencing and garden sheds are considered a risk in flood prone areas, how can the RTA build a major roadway in the same area?	All options to the east of Macksville include a bridge over the Nambucca River and major drainage structures across Gumma Swamp. The flood modelling undertaken for the options concludes that flood levels immediately upstream of the route options to the east of Macksville would increase by less than 50mm as a result of the construction of any of the proposed options. This increase in flood levels would reduce to a negligible level in the Macksville CBD.
8	Concern was expressed that the flood modelling was based on data that was several years old. How will the results of the current estuary management strategy be factored in. Will there be any independent review of SKM's flood study?	The purpose of the flood modelling was to identify the potential impact of the route options on existing flood levels. The flood modelling for the assessment of the route options was based on the 100 year annual recurrence interval (ARI) flood event from the " <i>Lower Nambucca River Flood Study</i> " (NSWPWD, 1994). Council's technical staff and a number of long term residents of the Nambucca Valley have been consulted in regard to flooding of the Nambucca River. Information provided from these sources has confirmed that the flood study used for this assessment accurately

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
		replicates historically recorded floods. Based on these consultations and a review of the results of the flood study, the RTA is confident that the model provides an accurate representation of historic floods and also provides accurate predictions of the impact of the route options on the theoretical 1:100 year flood event.
9	Concern was expressed about the effect of acoustic mounds on flood flow.	Acoustic mounds/barriers can, and will, be located so as not to exacerbate flood impacts.
10	We live in Kings Point west of Macksville. The current Nambucca Flood Study shows a 1cm rise in flood water that will enter our home in 1 in 100 year flood. Kings Point is a floodway, evacuation will be a problem. Residents do not have flood insurance.	As stated on response no. 2 above, the upgrade options to the east of Macksville would have a negligible impact on flood levels in the Macksville CBD and at locations further upstream, including Kings Point.

3.6 Timing

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	Concern was expressed about the timing for construction. It was seen that there was a need for an early decision on the preferred route and the urgent completion of construction. Most of this concern related to the community concern about the condition of the Macksville Bridge.	A preferred route is proposed to be announced before the end of 2005. A date for construction cannot be determined at this time.



3.7 Noise

It should be noted that many of the submissions that raised noise as an issue compared the upgraded highway to the existing highway. This is not a valid comparison as there are no noise mitigation measures on the existing highway and the vertical and horizontal alignments are significantly different. Noise on the existing highway is also exacerbated by the need for vehicles (especially heavy vehicles) to slow down and/or accelerate when passing through towns and other built up areas and to travel at the same speed as other traffic on the highway. Noise mitigation measures have the potential to enable reductions in noise, even with greater traffic numbers.

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	The east of Macksville options do not separate the traffic noise from residents enough. There will still be significant traffic noise affecting Macksville. As there will be far more noise pollution with this upgrading, we respectfully ask that buffers be put in place to lessen the impact on properties along the route.	The potential noise impacts of all the options have been identified and are shown in the November 2004 Community Update. Potential noise impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise impacts , and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts.
2	Is there no proposal for noise mitigation? If it is implemented who will pay or how much would it cost? This aspect might not have been costed and therefore the document does not give an accurate cost of the options.	Requirements for noise mitigation measures have been considered for all the route options and appropriate provision included in the cost estimates for the project.
3	Noise mitigation costs would be higher for 4c option.	The potential noise impacts of all the options have been identified and are shown in the November 2004 Community Update. Potential noise impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Requirements for noise mitigation measures have been considered for all the route options and appropriate provision included in the cost estimates for the project.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
4	Route will have a significant visual and acoustic impact on the yet to be developed stages of the Kingsworth Estate to the East.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise and visual impacts, and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts. Should the east of Macksville options be chosen as the preferred route, the RTA would assess the potential visual and acoustic impacts on the yet to be developed stages of the Kingsworth Estate.
5	If one of the eastern options is chosen we will either be forced from our home or severely impacted by noise and pollution. How would the effect of this be measured?	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise and air quality impacts, and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts. The effect of noise is predicted using a calibrated mathematical model. This assesses the existing noise environment and uses noise monitoring to validate the model. The model can then be used to predict the potential impact of the upgraded road at adjacent residences. Predictions are compared to the DEC's Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise (ECRTN). If the criteria are exceeded, mitigation measures will be investigated.
6	My wife has Fascio-scapular humeral muscular dystrophy and osteoarthritis which are both exacerbated by stress and noise which would occur if Option 4b was chosen as the preferred route.	The potential noise impacts of all the options have been identified and are shown in the November 2004 Community Update. Potential noise impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise impacts, and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
7	Concern was expressed about the aesthetic appearance of noise walls. Obviously planting should be incorporated with type of barrier.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise and visual impacts, and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts.
8	We are concerned about the period of time until noise level monitoring is carried out and because of the above we wish to initiate noise mitigation works to lessen the impact. Would there be any funding available to assist with this work? When removing trees to construct the new highway we will be subjected to increased noise from the existing highway disturbing our sleep and impacting on our outdoor entertaining.	Funding is not available for property owners to initiate their own noise mitigation measures. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise impacts, and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts.
9	Option 4c will affect 284 residents compared to 85 and 86 in 4b and 4a. We believe the number affected is grossly underestimated	The table on page 13 of the November 2004 Community Update refers to the number of residences (or residential buildings) potentially affected without noise mitigation. The potential number of noise affected residences was determined by modelling the noise impact of each of the upgrade options 10 years after opening. Noise contours were developed and a count carried out of residences within the 50 and 55dBA contours. The project team is confident that the number of residences (or residential buildings) identified as being potentially affected without noise mitigation on page 13 of the November 2004 Community Update is not an underestimate.
10	During construction, noise levels due to excavation etc. will be a problem.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise impacts during construction, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The identified management measures would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
11	Concern was expressed that noise impacts could negatively impact on the welfare and husbandry of animals associated with agricultural ventures.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise impacts, and the measures proposed to mitigate these impacts.

3.8 Air quality

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	A number of submissions noted that some houses are not connected to town water and rely on tanks for water supply. They expressed concern about the effect that air pollutants would have on the water quality in the tanks.	Most emissions from vehicles are not soluble in water. The emissions of concern for water quality would be sulfur dioxide (SO ₂) and lead (Pb). SO ₂ represents a minor component of vehicle emissions and is expected to decrease as the Commonwealth Government continues to mandate a program of low sulfur content fuels. Pb emissions have nearly become a thing of the past with leaded fuel being replaced by lead replacement fuels. Particle pollution in high quantities has the potential to increase the turbidity of water but is unlikely to in this case as the background particle levels in the study area are quite low.
2	If either western route is adopted then it will add significant kilometres and fuel consumption. Have the greenhouse implications been assessed for each of the options?	The length of the project with a west of Macksville option is between 41 and 45.1km in length compared to that with an eastern option of between 40.8 and 43.4km. These differences in lengths are relatively minor, with both options likely to result in significantly lower fuel consumption than the existing route due to better vertical and horizontal alignments and the ability for vehicles (especially heavy vehicles) to travel at constant speeds.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
3	During construction the predominantly north-easterly winds will create a dust problem with the eastern options.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including air quality (dust) impacts during construction, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The identified management measures would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.
4	There was general concern about the potential effects of vehicle emissions on health (specifically implications for asthmatics and the carcinogenic properties of diesel emissions). There was also concern that the higher speeds would result in higher emissions.	<p>Vehicle emissions contain a variety of substances that have the potential to impact on health if exposure is high. This does not usually occur in the ambient environment, especially away from major cities. While a detailed assessment of air quality impacts would be undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment of the preferred route, it is likely that all route options would have similar air quality characteristics. Most of the pollutants with localised effects (carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, benzene and 1, 3 butadiene) disperse to acceptable levels within 10m of the road edge. Regional pollutants, such as particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide and ozone only become an issue when there is a high background level of these pollutants, as is the case in major cities. It is therefore, unlikely that the pollutants associated with the upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Macksville and Urunga would have a noticeable impact on health in the study area.</p> <p>In general, nitrogen dioxide emissions increase with speed. However, emissions such as carbon monoxide, reactive organic carbons (eg 1, 3 butadiene and benzene) and particulate matter, decrease with speed. In addition, all options are likely to result in significantly lower fuel consumption, and consequently lower emissions, than the existing route due to better vertical and horizontal alignments and the ability for vehicles (especially heavy vehicles) to travel at constant speeds.</p>

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
5	Route 4c will impact air quality close to residential areas much more than the other options.	Potential air quality impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.

3.9 Water quality

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	Because Option 4c runs along the riverbank it has the potential to more easily pollute the waterway from oil, hazardous chemical spillages and other catastrophes.	Potential water quality impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including water quality impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.
2	The section north of the proposed bridge across the Taylor's Arm branch of the Nambucca River to Coronation Road on the options west of Macksville is a distinct and separate part of Nambucca River catchment as all streams flow into the 100 acre swamp, identified on the map as SEPP 14 wetlands.	Potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
3	Concern was expressed about what steps will be taken to ensure wetland areas in the vicinity of Option 2c are not affected and water quality is maintained.	Potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.
4	Pollution of dams was raised as an issue of concern.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on dams and other waterbodies, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.
5	Bellwood Swamp SEPP 14 wetlands are approximately 800 metres away from the east of Macksville options. The surrounding area off Old Coast Road is small hills and valley all draining into the wetland. If construction were to go ahead sedimentation problems will exist.	Potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
6	The pollution from the proposed amount of traffic as well as the construction of a 4-lane bridge over Deep Creek will impact greatly on the river and aquatic vegetation. It will also impact on the quality of the water and therefore the survival of many aquatic fish and birds.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route and refine the concept design. This assessment and refined design will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on watercourses, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities. It is anticipated that risks to water quality will decrease as a result of the upgrade. Water quality control measures can be designed into the proposal along the roadway and at bridge crossings. It should be noted that the existing highway has limited environmental protection measures.
7	There was concern that studies to date on detention basins have not been satisfactorily addressed.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route and refine the concept design. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential water quality impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The refined concept design will include details of the proposed detention basins which would be designed and sized in accordance to DEC criteria. The measures identified to manage the water quality impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.
8	Concern was expressed about the effect major excavation may have on bore water quality.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on groundwater quality, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
9	When an option directly affects a source of water supply (eg a dam) what will the RTA do to maintain water supply?	The RTA would re-construct the water supply source if the road directly affected the source. This would either be part of the property acquisition process or would be addressed during the EIS preparation. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on dams and other sources of water supply, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts.

3.10 Biodiversity

It should be noted that a number of submissions provided valuable lists of species observed in the study area. These were passed on to the study team’s ecologists for consideration in their investigations of the potential biodiversity impacts of each of the route options. The responses in **Section 3.10** provide an indication of how the issues below were considered.

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	Option 4c could affect the swamp wallaby which has been declining in number for the past 10 years. Option 4c would also disrupt the habitat patterns of the Glossy Black Cockatoo. Option 4b would also affect the habitats of a number of bird species.	This information has been passed on to the study team’s ecologists for consideration in their investigations of the potential biodiversity impacts of each of the route options. Potential biodiversity impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
2	Concern was expressed that the November 2004 Community Update underestimated the potential impacts of Option 4a on the habitat of the Glossy Black Cockatoo.	The habitat for the Glossy Black Cockatoo is much more widespread than indicated in the November 2004 Community Update. The information available at the time has been augmented by further field investigations during the display of route options. Potential biodiversity impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.
3	The black necked stork and its young were seen on Newry Island in December 2003. This is significant because none nested in the usual area off Hillside Drive. This is significant as very few nested anywhere in NSW in 2003. Option 4c has the potential to impact upon this species.	This information has been passed on to the study team's ecologists for consideration in their investigations of the potential biodiversity impacts of each of the route options. Potential biodiversity impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.
4	We are concerned that both 4b and 4c will have a detrimental effect on the SEPP 14 wetland areas adjacent to South Arm Road as both of these options are in close proximity to this highly fragile ecosystem.	Potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
5	The area along the Old Coast Road is a wildlife corridor and the option runs very close to a SEPP 14 wetland.	Potential impacts on wildlife corridors and SEPP 14 wetlands will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on wildlife corridors and SEPP 14 wetlands, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.
6	With respect to Option 1a, it is difficult to take your publication seriously when you identify high quality flora and fauna habitat on the western side of the highway just south of Macksville Town Centre. This land is a fully maintained golf course with fairways adjoining the existing road reserve. What actual environmental studies have been undertaken to confirm your statements on flora and fauna habitat values and have these been independently reviewed?	The area referred to in the submission is the Macksville Golf Course. There are some well established habitats on the golf course that sustain fauna and avifauna. These observations have been investigated on the ground with confirmation that the original assessment is correct.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
7	The options would affect the dolphins that visit the river with their young and the mangroves which are a natural breeding ground for crabs and fish alike.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route and refine the concept design. This assessment and refined design will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on watercourses, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities. It is anticipated that risks to water quality will decrease as a result of the upgrade. Water quality control measures can be designed into the proposal along the roadway and at bridge crossings. It should be noted that the existing highway has limited environmental protection measures.
8	What Eight Part Assessments have been carried out on these habitats?	No 8-part tests have been carried out on any of the route options at this stage. The purpose of the 8-part test is to assist in deciding if an assessment for a proposal should involve a Species Impact Statement (SIS). Eight-part tests would be carried out, prior to construction of the project, as part of an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
9	<p>The land in the vicinity of Option 4a has a fairly high concentration of Forest She Oak (<i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i>). This will also reduce the feeding sites of the Glossy Black (red tailed) Cockatoo. The back of the property has an area of original rainforest which is fenced off where only the native wildlife are allowed. Endangered species on property: Brush tail phascogale, Koala, Brolga, Jabiru, Ospreys. Other animals, gliders, possums, wallabies, kangaroos, wombats, Bandy Bandy snakes, whistling kites, owls, buzzards, eagles. Other bird life, Brush turkey, ducks, cockatoos, parrots, rosellas, dove, pigeons, pheasant, bower bird, butcher birds, pee wees, honey eaters, wrens.</p>	<p>This information has been passed on to the study team's ecologists for consideration in their investigations of the potential biodiversity impacts of each of the route options. Potential biodiversity impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.</p>
10	<p>Concern was expressed for the endangered animals that use the Congarinni Koala Colony Area Corridor and Stock Route habitat and the effect that the proposed west of Macksville routes would have on these areas. Other animals in the Congarinni area include Sugar Gliders, Brush tail possums, ringtail possums, bobuck possum. Wedgetail eagles use the area, catbirds, satin bower birds, regent bower birds, dollar birds and many more species.</p>	<p>This information has been passed on to the study team's ecologists for consideration in their investigations of the potential biodiversity impacts of each of the route options. Further information on these and other species were also obtained through more detailed field investigations during the display of the route options. Potential biodiversity impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
11	<p>The impact of Option 4c on the Kalang River hasn't been highlighted enough in the draft proposal. The oyster industry is precious in this town and it should not be put at risk. The impact on the riverbank flora and fauna will be far greater than projected on the mangroves, birdlife and fishing/oyster populations. Estuary cod are now found in Kalang River along with Jabiru nesting.</p>	<p>The study team is aware of the importance of the oyster industry in the study area. Potential impacts on flora and fauna and water quality will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on flora and fauna and water quality, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.</p>
12	<p>The 100 acre swamp gained recognition as a wildlife sanctuary in the early 1960s. Research suggests that much attention was given to the area due to the presence of migratory birds, and other wildlife such as Osprey, Scrub Turkey, Jabiru, Echidna, Wallabies and reptiles. In 2002 help was sought from NPWS to commence the process of having the wetland listed as a wetland of international significance under the Ramsar Convention of 1971. The swamp is a shallow estuarine wetland and is one of the most significant fish nursery and bird roosting sites for the Nambucca Catchment.</p>	<p>The study team has carried out field investigations to assess the potential effects of the west of Macksville options on the 100 acre swamp. While the route does not directly affect the SEPP 14 boundary of the swamp, it is in close proximity and does affect the recently categorised Ecologically Endangered Community (EEC) section of the swamp. Potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands and Ecologically Endangered Communities will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on SEPP 14 wetlands and Ecologically Endangered Communities, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.</p>

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
13	The W7 option would have very little impact on State Forests where the eastern options would have a substantial impact on State Forests that are being managed and continually being logged. The eastern options will have a substantial impact on high quality flora and fauna habitat.	The potential flora and fauna impacts and impacts on State Forests have been assessed and are shown in the November 2004 Community Update. These impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.
14	Surely people and their homes are more important than birds and animals as these can be easily relocated in bushland nearby. Will the same consideration be given to human habitat and health as has been given to flora and fauna?	The development of route options is complex with many competing constraints which need to be identified and assessed. These constraints can be broadly grouped into social, economic, environmental and engineering. The options that have been developed have varying degrees of impact on each of these four aspects. The Value Management (VM) and route selection process includes the assessment of the relative importance of the constraints and the identification of the route option that provides the best balance across them.



3.11 Indigenous/Non-indigenous heritage

It should be noted that a number of submissions identified heritage items observed in the study area. These were passed on to the study team’s archaeologists for consideration in their investigations of the potential archaeological impacts of each of the route options. The responses in **Section 3.11** provide an indication of how the issues below were considered.

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	Indigenous land would not be affected if Option 4c is avoided.	The study team is aware of the importance that the local Aboriginal community places on Newry Island. Potential impacts on areas and sites that are significant to the local Aboriginal community will be considered during the assessment of the route options.
2	A bridge on the options west of Macksville is in close proximity to a river island with high indigenous significance. There is also a heritage listed site of significance on the southern side of the Taylors Arm River bank, right under the proposed bridge.	The study team is aware of the heritage items referred to. Should an option to the west of Macksville be identified as the preferred route, the alignment of the route would need to be reviewed to avoid and/or minimise direct and indirect impacts on these areas.
3	The objection of the Unkya LALC is in accordance with Gumbaynggir Aboriginal Sites of Significance, which are located along the proposed west of Macksville options. A total of 3 significant and sensitive indigenous sites would be affected.	It is noted that the Unkya LALC objects to the west of Macksville options. The study team is aware of the significant indigenous sites referred to. Should an option to the west of Macksville be identified as the preferred route, the alignment of the route would need to be reviewed to avoid and/or minimise direct and indirect impacts on these areas. Potential impacts on areas and sites that are significant to the local Aboriginal community will be considered during the assessment of the route options. The VM workshop is one of the key inputs into the assessment of the preferred route. A member of the Unkya LALC has been invited to attend the workshop.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
4	Concern was expressed that assessments had been undertaken without consultation with the indigenous communities.	There has been extensive consultation with individuals and representatives of the Aboriginal community in association with the archaeological investigations throughout the route identification and assessment process. Additional consultation with the community also has been undertaken during and after the display of the route options - especially in regard to the options to the west of Macksville. This consultation is ongoing.
5	Is it possible to redesign the route to avoid the Cow Creek Reserve and indigenous heritage sites in that area?	There is the potential to realign the route to minimise the potential effect on the Cow Creek Reserve. This would be done during the concept design and environmental impact assessment phase.

3.12 Land use

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	Concern was expressed that the west of Macksville options would impact on the future development of land, currently held for Future Urban Development. This is regarded as one of the most important avenues to bring future investment into Macksville with associated employment opportunities.	Should one of the west of Macksville options be preferred, there may be further refinement to the alignment to reduce or avoid the impact on land available for future urban development. This is an effect that requires consideration along with the other impacts associated with each option. The options to the east of Macksville would also have an effect on land able to be subdivided. One of the benefits of the project is that it will enhance transport connections to larger centres such as Coffs Harbour, enabling better connectivity with the employment available there.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
2	There is currently a fire easement trail that is on the register of trails with Bellinghen Bushfire Management Committee. This trail will no longer be able to be used if route option 4a proceeds.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design of the preferred route. The refined concept design will include details of access arrangements – including arrangements for bushfire management. The RTA would liaise with the Bushfire Management Committee in regard to access arrangements for bushfire management.
3	What town planning strategies are proposed for the future development of areas in the vicinity of the route options as well as maintenance of the existing rural residential properties affected?	The identification of the preferred option will provide Nambucca and Bellinghen Councils with additional certainty for future landuse planning, enabling them to revise their respective planning instruments to effectively integrate land use planning with an upgraded Pacific Highway.
4	With the projected population growth for coastal areas it would be good management and common sense to have the highway go west of the coastal towns and villages.	<p>The development of route options is complex with many competing constraints which need to be identified and assessed. These constraints can be broadly grouped into social, economic, environmental and engineering and include existing and potential future landuse. The options that have been developed have varying degrees of impact on each of these four aspects. The Value Management (VM) and route selection process includes the assessment of the relative importance of the constraints and the identification of the route option that provides the best balance across them.</p> <p>The key to expansion of towns is to be able to provide effective connectivity across the upgraded highway. This enables land uses less sensitive to a highway development to be planned in the vicinity of the highway and for these to act as a buffer to more sensitive land uses. These connections would be refined through the concept design and environmental impact phase of the project and be developed in consultation with Councils and the local community.</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
5	We are concerned that the choice of route option 4c will result in the restriction of development in the Urunga area.	See response no. 4 above.

3.13 Socio-economic impact

Many issues raised relating to socio-economic impacts were specific to individual properties. The issues were valid and have been considered, however, where there was duplication, these were summarised into one issue. Additionally some issues made recommendations on refinements to specific options or raised issues about particular options that were more relevant to the future environment impact assessment process. These have not been addressed below as the focus of this report is to provide information that will assist in the assessment of route options.

Issue No.	Issue	Response
Agricultural		
1	Concern was expressed that more weight should have been given to the impact that the various options may have on genuine rural enterprises.	The development of route options is complex with many competing constraints which need to be identified and assessed. These constraints can be broadly grouped into social, economic, environmental and engineering and include agricultural landuse. The options that have been developed have varying degrees of impact on each of these four aspects. The Value Management (VM) and route selection process includes the assessment of the relative importance of the constraints and the identification of the route option that provides the best balance across them.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
2	Crossing Newry Island in two places would have a significant impact on the ecosystems and commercial oyster farming of the Kalang River.	Potential impacts on ecosystems and water quality will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential impacts on ecosystems and water quality, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.
3	The W7 route traverses through a dairy and would make it unsustainable as it traverses through prime flat pasture land. Most of the western option goes through Nambucca Valley's best farm lands and rural residential developments.	The development of route options is complex with many competing constraints which need to be identified and assessed. These constraints can be broadly grouped into social, economic, environmental and engineering and include agricultural landuse. The options that have been developed have varying degrees of impact on each of these four aspects. The Value Management (VM) and route selection process includes the assessment of the relative importance of the constraints and the identification of the route option that provides the best balance across them. If the preferred route impacts on an agricultural property to the extent that the property becomes unviable, the RTA would consider purchase of the whole of the property.
4	Running cattle on some properties will not be possible if Option 4b is preferred.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design of the preferred route and endeavour to minimise property impacts. If the preferred route impacts on an agricultural property to the extent that the property becomes unviable, the RTA would consider purchase of the whole of the property.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
Amenity		
5	Construction of Option 4b will impact on the amenity for residents in South Arm Road by affecting the tranquil, healthy, stress-free lifestyle. People bought land a substantial distance west of Urunga to get away from highway noise, and paid good money for this country lifestyle. People along the highway in Urunga bought there knowing that there is a highway near them.	<p>The development of route options is complex with many competing constraints which need to be identified and assessed. These constraints can be broadly grouped into social, economic, environmental and engineering and include amenity impacts. The options that have been developed have varying degrees of impact on each of these four aspects. The Value Management (VM) and route selection process includes the assessment of the relative importance of the constraints and the identification of the route option that provides the best balance across them.</p> <p>As noted in the November 2004 Community Update on page 5, upgrading the existing highway through Macksville, Nambucca Heads and Urunga is not acceptable due to the impact on these townships and no further consideration will be given to this option.</p> <p>Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including amenity impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. Existing landforms would be used along with effective landscape treatments to minimise the amenity impacts on adjacent residences.</p>
6	Living so close to the highway would cause us great stress and hardship due to the noise and headlights from the endless stream of traffic .	<p>Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including noise impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. Existing landforms would be used along with effective landscape treatments to minimise the visual impact and the chance of headlight spill to adjacent residences.</p>

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
7	Concern was expressed about noise, dust and loss of morning sun as a result of Options 1a or 1b.	<p>Potential noise impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential noise and dust impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.</p> <p>The potential for the proposal to block the morning sun would depend on the design in the vicinity of the property and would be considered as part of the concept design for the preferred option.</p>
8	Concerned that riding horses along Irvines Road will no longer be a relaxing past-time if either of the west of Macksville options are preferred.	The local road network will still be operational with either of the west of Macksville options. There may be some localised changes to these roads where overpasses/underpasses and/or service roads are required, but horse riding adjacent to Irvines Road should still be possible
9	Option 4c affects a far larger number of residences. For the many people who have purchased land adjacent to the Kalang River on Riverside Drive, the effect this proposal would have on lifestyle and emotional hardship is immeasurable.	The number of residences potentially affected by the route options have been identified and are shown in the November 2004 Community Update. Potential amenity impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including amenity impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
10	The impact on lifestyle during construction would be significant and future subdivision would also be impossible.	<p>Potential impacts on existing and future landuse will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential construction impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. These measures would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.</p> <p>Properties directly affected by the proposal would be acquired in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act, 1991</i>. The aim of the legislation and policy is that people be no worse off financially than if a road requiring acquisition of their land was not proposed. The amount offered for the property is based on the market value of the property at the time of acquisition, unaffected by the road proposal. The development potential of the property is reflected in its market value, and consequently in the amount offered for the property by the RTA.</p>
11	The most compelling reason not to go through our community, is that this community has been formed almost exclusively in the last 20 years from people who were aware that the Newee Creek area was a location that would afford them isolation and privacy that they had specifically sought as well as proximity to all 3 towns in the Nambucca Valley. Everybody in the Newee Creek community has elected not to live in an urban area to avoid the hustle and bustle of the town, the noise of traffic and to get some space and privacy.	<p>The RTA understands that Newee Creek area, along with other areas along the various route options are small, tight-knit communities of people who have chosen to live in areas away from urban development but in proximity to centres such as Macksville, Nambucca Heads and Urunga. It is acknowledged that the proposed highway options would impact on these areas. These potential impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options.</p> <p>Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential construction impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts.</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
<i>Economic</i>		
12	The decision on the preferred route should be based on creating a highway which is away from towns and which provides a good interchanges to access areas of the coast both east and west of the highway. If the highway is too far from existing location it will be more detrimental to local economy.	The comment is noted. Access arrangements have been considered in the development of the route options.
13	Option 4a only requires the building of one bridge over the Kalang River. It will not interfere with the existing oyster industry and associated local employment. The Raleigh Industrial estate will benefit from closer proximity to the route.	Options 4a and 4b both require one bridge across the Kalang River. Potential water quality impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including water quality impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities. The benefits to the Raleigh Industrial Estate are associated with its proximity to the northern interchange, which is similar for all options.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
14	The west of Macksville options are likely to affect a greater area of prime agricultural land.	The west of Macksville options would affect a greater area of agricultural land than those in the east of Macksville options. The development of route options is complex with many competing constraints which need to be identified and assessed. These constraints can be broadly grouped into social, economic, environmental and engineering and include agricultural landuse. The options that have been developed have varying degrees of impact on each of these four aspects. The Value Management (VM) and route selection process includes the assessment of the relative importance of the constraints and the identification of the route option that provides the best balance across them.
15	The west of Macksville routes will alienate Macksville and Nambucca Heads even more where travellers have to drive further off W6 and W7 to get to these towns. This is likely to impact on tourism and employment. Business people from Macksville have noted that, with the eastern options, travellers will be offered a scenic glimpse of Macksville and the Nambucca River as they cross the new bridge. There will also be a handy interchange should they wish to break their journey for a meal, shopping or a rest by the river. A western route offers no such enticements. Macksville businesses will find it difficult or impossible to attract passing trade.	The west of Macksville options have greater potential to affect the levels of “passing trade” that currently access Macksville. The eastern options also have the potential to reduce passing trade commerce, but less effort would need to be made by motorists to leave the highway and access the town and then rejoin the highway at the next interchange point. Businesses that rely on passing trade (ie service stations, fast food outlets etc) would be most affected by a bypass of Macksville. The effect on the town would be reduced by appropriate signposting and minimised if businesses in Macksville could adapt to the changed conditions and adjust their commerce to ventures less reliant on passing trade.
16	Concern was expressed about the effect of the east of Macksville options in section 2 on a commercial recording studio north of the existing highway.	If the east of Macksville options were preferred, the vibration impacts of that route on the recording studio, would be assessed during the preparation of the environmental impact assessment and mitigation measures proposed.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
17	The eastern options are far cheaper, impact on less properties and could be constructed in stages. The eastern options are also considerably shorter in distance and the savings on transport costs over future years would be substantial.	One of the project objectives is to ensure that the project achieves value for money. This is measured using a number of indicators. One of these is through a benefit/cost analysis (BCA). This takes into account issues such as construction costs, maintenance costs, travel times, travel costs and the associated road user benefits. Benefit/cost ratios (BCRs) are developed for each route option for the project length. As was reported in the November 2004 Community Update, the project with the east of Macksville options is slightly shorter and less expensive and has a marginally better BCR than the project with the west of Macksville options included. Staging opportunities have also been identified and are reported in the Update. These factors will be considered during the assessment of the route options.
18	I am also concerned about the effect on local businesses when the highway leaves Urunga. The Honey Place, three service stations, Lindsays Oyster Barn etc will all suffer when the route in Section 4 moves away from the existing highway as they cannot survive on local business and a few holiday times.	It is expected that the businesses that rely on passing trade would be most negatively impacted by the proposed route options. As noted in the November 2004 Community Update on page 5, upgrading the existing highway through Macksville, Nambucca Heads and Urunga is not acceptable due to the impact on these townships and no further consideration will be given to this option. The effect on the town would be reduced by appropriate signposting and minimised if businesses in Urunga could adapt to the changed conditions and adjust their commerce to ventures less reliant on passing trade.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
19	Loss of farm income as macadamias are a long term crop and any loss of trees would have a long term impact on income. Similarly, any loss of land for an earmarked road option would have an impact on future earnings.	Properties directly affected by the proposal would be acquired in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act, 1991</i> . The aim of the legislation and policy is that people be no worse off financially than if a road requiring acquisition of their land was not proposed. The amount offered for the property is based on the market value of the property at the time of acquisition, unaffected by the road proposal. Should the RTA purchase a property that is the site of a business, the RTA would usually also purchase the business. The value of the business (including its income potential) would be reflected in its market value.
20	Many people in Urunga earn their living from industries supported by the Kalang River; this option [ed 4c] is a huge socio – economic issue for us. The oyster industry, the tourist industry in the form of the River Rat Cruises and even the restaurant industry who benefit from the clean pristine environment all have much to lose, so too the flow on effect from those incomes to other businesses in the town.	Potential water quality impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route. This assessment will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including water quality impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts. The measures identified to manage these impacts during construction of the project would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) that assist in the environmental management of construction activities.
21	RUCBA shows that investment in either of the west of Macksville options themselves is not economically viable.	As shown in the table on page 3 of the November 2004 Community Update, the upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Macksville and Urunga is economically viable with either the eastern or western options, albeit with a higher BCR for the project for the east of Macksville options. It is not unusual for individual sections of a large project (such as the Macksville to Urunga project), taken in isolation, to be not economically viable even though the overall project is viable.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
Severance		
22	If the bypass is to impact on our farm then we need a guarantee that access and connectivity between the two sections of our property will be provided. This must be of sufficient height to allow both stock and tractors to pass through.	A number of submissions from residents throughout the study area raised the issue of severance on their property and maintaining access to all areas of the property. The RTA would liaise with property owners affected in this way and develop design solutions to maintain access across the upgraded highway during the refinement of the concept design for the preferred route.
23	Option 4c does not bypass Urunga but divides it in two. With the upgraded highway will we still be able to drive to Urunga without travelling extra distance?	The existing highway is further east than Option 4c. With Option 4c the existing local road network would be maintained with underpasses and overpasses across the upgraded highway being put in place to enable connectivity to continue. There may be a need to rationalise some of these crossings, but adequate connections would be provided to maintain access the proposal.
24	Route 4b impacts on Ridgewood Estate and separates it from Urunga.	Ridgewood Estate would still be connected to Urunga through the existing local road network. The concept to maintain connectivity is discussed in response No. 23.
25	The east of Macksville routes would have Macksville township on one side of the highway and the growing area of Gumma on the other.	If any of the east of Macksville options were preferred Macksville would be on one side of the highway and Gumma on the other. However, access would still be maintained along River Street with underpasses and overpasses across the upgraded highway being put in place to maintain connectivity between Macksville and Gumma.
26	We are part of a very close knit community and really value the neighbourliness and friendship we find in our area. What value is put on the destruction of a neighbourhood community?	As stated previously, the local road network connections would be maintained, although there may be some opportunity to rationalise crossings of the upgraded highway. Provision of these connections should enable connectivity within the community to continue.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
27	The bus routes for the Nambucca Valley currently run up and down the Pacific Highway with School Children from Macksville to Nambucca Heads and return 5 days a week. If the upgrade is located along the east of Macksville options the community will be split by another big road through the middle meaning the school buses would have to deal with larger amounts of merging traffic coming off the interchange.	After the preferred option is identified, further input would be sought from local bus companies to enable adequate design considerations to be included in underpasses/overpasses, service roads and interchanges to enable the safe and efficient movement of school buses and their passengers. However, it is anticipated that bus services for the Nambucca Valley would generally continue to use the existing highway to access local centres.
Social impacts		
28	Social development of the area would either stagnate or go backwards if the west of Macksville options go ahead and cut straight through a large portion of the rural residential belt. It is vital for the social future of the whole area that this attractive rural residential belt close to the main centres of population can be preserved in its current state.	Planning for social development of the area would require change should either of the west of Macksville options be preferred. This would also be the case for options to the east of Macksville if any of those were chosen. The identification of the preferred route will provide Council with additional certainty for future landuse planning, enabling them to revise their respective planning instruments to effectively integrate land use planning with an upgraded Pacific Highway.
29	Quiet, emotional value, perfect rural lifestyle, all time and income have been spent solely on this property. Children have grown up on this property which has provided a great sense of stability and security.	This long term attachment to individual properties came through in submissions from across the study area. All route options will affect people with a deep connection to their properties. The development of route options is complex with many competing constraints which need to be identified and assessed. These constraints can be broadly grouped into social, economic, environmental and engineering. The options that have been developed have varying degrees of impact on each of these four aspects. The Value Management (VM) and route selection process includes the assessment of the relative importance of the constraints and the identification of the route option that provides the best balance across them. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an



Issue No.	Issue	Response
		environmental impact assessment of the preferred route and refine the concept design. This assessment and refined design will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, including potential lifestyle and amenity impacts, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts.
30	Concerned about the effect a 4-lane highway would have on our health; physical, emotional and mental.	In terms of physical health, the RTA has identified the potential impacts of the route options on issues such as noise, air quality and water quality. These potential impacts will be considered during the assessment of the route options. Emotional and mental health effects of a major highway upgrade can differ significantly between individuals and can be most severe during the route options development process as a result of uncertainty. The study team is making every effort to minimise the time between the announcement of the route options and the decision on the preferred route to minimise the period of uncertainty.
31	Concerned that if the west of Macksville options are preferred, a large number of professionals (eg Veterinarian and Medical Practitioner) would be lost to the wider community.	All of the options are likely to affect residents – including a number of professional residents. Some will choose to move from the area, while others will choose to move within the area. A route selection process cannot be dependent on key members of the community on one route potentially moving out of that community.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
Tourism		
32	Experience dictates that Macksville could never be described as a “popular tourist destination”. The majority of visitors to the area are there because of some kind of family connection. This situation would be unlikely to change no matter which side of the highway a bypass is constructed. Nevertheless, the town would at least be visible from an eastern route and may attract some interest or indicate that a meal, fuel or similar is available. A western route would take travellers so far away from the town that they would be unlikely to even consider back-tracking but would be more likely to stay on the bypass until they reach a more easily accessible destination.	Refer to response No. 15.
Visual		
33	What measures would be in place to minimise headlight spill to residents?	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design for the preferred route. This refined design would consider issues related to headlight spill. Where practicable, existing landforms and landscaping treatments would be used to minimise headlight spill.
34	Noise mitigation would create significant visual pollution.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design for the preferred route. This refined design would include the design of noise mitigation measures. Where practicable, existing landforms and landscaped noise mounds would be used to mitigate noise impacts. Where noise barriers are required, landscaping would be provided to minimise the visual impact of the barriers.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
35	Option 4c requires extensive fill embankment across Newry Island and adjoining flood plains. This will be an unsightly and overriding characteristic of the landscape. As it is close to residential areas, the impact on residents' quality of life will be permanent and significant.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design for the preferred route. This refined design would include the design of measures to minimise the visual impact of the proposal. Where embankments are used, they would be subject to the RTA's urban design and landscape strategies and designed so as to minimise the visual impact of such embankments.
36	Views (in vicinity of Option W7, Letitia Close, Riverside Drive, South Arm Road, in the vicinity of Options 4b and 4c were mentioned) will be destroyed if the proposal goes through.	A number of submissions were received from across the study area indicating that the proposal would have negative impacts on the visual environment of their area. All options have the potential to visually transform a locality. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design for the preferred route. This refined design would include the design of measures to minimise the visual impact of the proposal.



3.14 Transport/Safety issues

A number of submissions raised concerns about access to and from individual properties. While these are important issues, they relate to all route options. When a preferred route is announced, it will be designed in more detail and at that stage, individual property access issues will be addressed.

Issue No.	Issue	Response
Access		
1	Concern was raised in submissions about how residents west of the upgraded highway would access the townships of Macksville, Nambucca Head and Urunga. There was a perception that local roads would be cut at the point where they intersect with the upgraded highway.	The local road networks would remain providing connections for communities west of the upgraded highway to townships to the east. Local roads would cross the upgraded highway via overpasses or underpasses. There may be a need to rationalise some of the crossings but access along the local road network would be maintained.
2	Concern was raised in submissions about how residents would gain access to the road network from their properties when the proposed options affected their current access arrangements. There was a perception that access from properties would be cut.	There would be no access from individual properties onto the upgraded highway. This is to enable high speed traffic to travel without the potential for conflict with slower traffic accessing or exiting driveways. Access to and from properties would be via the existing local road network and/or service roads provided as part of the project.
3	There was concern that the options west of Macksville had no direct access to Macksville.	For the options to the west of Macksville, interchanges connecting to the existing highway are proposed south of Warrell Creek and west of Nambucca Heads. Access to Macksville would be along the existing highway between these two interchanges.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
4	Our two girls (9 and 7) currently catch the bus to and from school with the Heelis Bus Company. The pick-up in the mornings is at the corner of Old Coast Road and Mattick Road. The drop off in the afternoon is on Old Coast Road just before Mattick Road (currently dirt Road). This is the School bus route from Newee Creek to Macksville that currently travels along Old Coast Road. What would happen to the Bus Route and how would we be expected to deal with this?	After the preferred option is identified, further input would be sought from local bus companies to enable adequate design considerations to be included in underpasses/overpasses, service roads and interchanges to enable the safe and efficient movement of school buses and their passengers. However, it is anticipated that bus services for the Nambucca Valley, especially school bus services, would generally continue to use the existing highway and local road network to access local centres and residents.
5	The west of Macksville option allows access to locals to the new section of the highway south of Warrell Creek and north at Cow Creek Road, such access to be along the existing Pacific Highway, which will presumably be downgraded to the status of a local road. While through traffic will enjoy time savings, local traffic will experience increased travel times in the local area.	Local traffic should also enjoy travel time savings as the through traffic would be diverted to the upgraded highway east or west of Macksville. This will result in a significant proportion of the existing traffic moving off the existing highway. This would include tourists not wanting to stop at Macksville. The advantages to local traffic are expected to be substantial, especially in peak holiday periods. The other advantage to local traffic is that there would be less potential for conflict with heavy vehicles as a large proportion of these are likely to use the upgraded highway.
Emergency Vehicles		
6	If there is a five-car accident parallel to Macksville in the middle of the western option how much life saving time is lost when the ambulance has to travel all the way to Warrell Creek to gain access to the highway.	Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design for the preferred route. This refined design would include arrangements for emergency services to access the highway. These arrangements would be identified in consultation with the relevant emergency services.



Issue No.	Issue	Response
7	<p>The other issue to be considered by the Urunga Rural Fire Service is that of severe bush fires. Much of the land that the proposed new routes travel through is very dense bushland and state forest and a large fire would have a significant impact on the Pacific Highway. As many new sections of dual carriage way have long sections of safety barricades along their length, access to fire trails can be severely limited and again this can be a threat to life and property without adequate access to forest roads and fire trails. Although we have not stated a preferred option we hope the planning committees will consider these issues so that our volunteers can continue to serve the community in a prompt and efficient manner.</p>	<p>Consultation would occur with emergency services about access arrangements to enable bush fire safety to be maintained, and where practicable, enhanced. This would occur during the concept design phase. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would refine the concept design for the preferred route. This refined design would include arrangements for access roads and fire trails to cross the proposal. These arrangements would be identified in consultation with State Forests and the Rural Bushfire Service.</p>
8	<p>The mix of dual carriageway and older style road does not necessarily lead to better road safety.</p>	<p>When completed, the Macksville to Urunga project (including the Warrell Creek project if an option to the east of Macksville is selected as the preferred route) would connect the existing dual carriageway highway in the Allgobera area to the dual carriageway at Raleigh. This project, together with the Bonville (Pine Creek) project will provide a continuous dual carriageway from Eungai Rail to Sapphire north of Coffs Harbour.</p> <p>As the total cost of the Macksville to Urunga project is in excess of \$500 million (see page 3 of the November 2004 Community Update), it may be necessary to stage construction of the project.</p>
9	<p>Concern was raised that the upgraded sections of the Pacific Highway attract more heavy vehicles, somewhat reducing the safety benefits of an upgraded design.</p>	<p>The upgraded sections of the Pacific Highway are designed to enable the safe running of B-double trucks and all other smaller classes of vehicles. A dual carriageway highway significantly improves road safety as it almost completely removes the risk of head-on collision..</p>



3.15 Consultation process

A number of submissions raised the issue of members of the Macksville CLG having additional knowledge to the rest of the community about the route options being proposed. While members of all CLGs were briefed on the process being undertaken and participated in assisting to identify community and environmental constraints, no CLG members had been advised of the route options prior to the commencement of the display at the end of November 2004. The CLGs are not a decision making body and did not have prior knowledge of the route options.

It should be noted that a number of community members and CLG representatives were named in submissions. It is not appropriate for these names to be reproduced in this report.

Issue No.	Issue	Response
1	No environmental, ecological or wildlife stakeholder groups are represented within the CLGs, nor concerned residents.	The Nambucca Valley Conservation Association is represented on the Nambucca CLG and the representative also attends some of the Macksville meetings. Invitations for groups or individuals to nominate for the CLGs were advertised in the local papers at the commencement of the project. The study team has been open to nominations throughout the project. No other environmental groups have expressed an interest to be involved. The majority of CLG members are from the general community and some are potentially affected residents. At the time of the route options display, the CLG members agreed that additional members should be sought to ensure wider representation from the community. The new CLG members were briefed in a workshop to bring them up-to-speed on the issues discussed at previous meetings. They then attended the most recent round of CLG meetings in March 2005.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
2	Aerials are more than one year old.	Aerial photography was flown specifically for this project in 2003. It is the most up-to-date available in the study area. Route options investigations have been progressing for the past 12 months. The photography enables the photogrammetric generation of contours at a better resolution than topographic maps and provides a useful base for presentation material. As with all photography, it is accurate at the time of flying and has been very valuable for this study. The aerial photography has been supplemented by other investigations and field inspections.
3	Maps on the internet are hopeless.	Maps on the internet were stylised representations of the route options and the key constraints. The file sizes of maps based on the aerial photography are too large to download off the net for home personal computers not equipped with broadband connections. Privacy issues also needed to be considered with information able to be downloaded off the internet. Upon request, more detailed maps were provided to individuals.
4	It is a gross procedural injustice that people affected by the western option have not been given equal representation in the Community Liaison Group.	<p>The RTA is committed to assessing suggestions for route options from the community. There have been suggestions made to the study team to investigate options to the west of Macksville since the first round of community displays in July 2003. These issues were also raised at a number of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) meetings. A decision was made to investigate whether feasible route options could be developed to the west of Macksville in 2004. When it was clear that there were feasible route options to the west, the community was informed through the route options display process and potentially affected landholders were contacted by letter. In summary, by investigating suggestions for route options to the west of Macksville, the RTA has demonstrated that it is receptive to proposals from the community.</p> <p>Representation of communities to the west of Macksville on the CLG would not have influenced the decision to investigate options in this area or their</p>

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
		<p>location. As discussed above, the original Macksville CLG members did not have any knowledge of the location of route options until after the route options display commenced in November 2004. Following the display of the route options, representatives of the communities to the west of Macksville have joined the CLG. Although it is not a decision making or voting group, communities to the east and west of Macksville now have approximately equal representation on the CLG.</p>
5	<p>Concern was expressed that the study team could not notify affected residents more than one day before the route options were displayed.</p>	<p>While it is appropriate to give priority to advising potentially affected property owners, there is also a need to provide timely information to the wider community. Letters were posted to potentially affected property owners (those directly affected and those within 400m of a route option) shortly before the route options were displayed. The vast majority of these were contacted by phone during the first week of the route options displays and face-to-face appointments made with the study team in the second week of the display. Further on-site meetings were subsequently held with affected residents and community groups. This effort and the considerable response from the community suggests that the consultation process was comprehensive.</p>



Issue No.	Issue	Response
6	Timing of the staffed displays and closure time for submissions is insensitive given the time of the year. Not everyone has easy web access. Many of Urunga's population are elderly and do not have web access.	The staffed displays were programmed for early in the display period to facilitate the provision of information regarding the route options to the community as early as possible. The display period was considerably longer than usual to account for it occurring over the December January period. Upon request, arrangements were made with individuals for the submission of comments after the end of the display period. The study team is aware that not all members of the community have web access and utilised a wide range of mediums to provide information. These included letters, phone calls, advertisements, public displays (staffed and unstaffed), meetings with individuals and groups, the web page and a freecall 1800 number. The purpose of providing the different mediums was to enable a range of different mechanisms to be available for the different needs of the community.
7	Concern was expressed that the consultation process was flawed because there was a perception that the Macksville CLG was dominated by members with interests to the east of Macksville and that "at the eleventh hour" were able to suggest an alternative route that affected those in the west. It was a "tick a box" process and not real consultation There was also concern that the CLG was unduly influenced by the Macksville Chamber of Commerce and Nambucca Shire Council.	<p>Membership of the Macksville CLG comprised elected and staff representatives of Nambucca Shire Council, representatives of the Macksville Chamber of Commerce and community members – primarily representing communities located within the Study Area announced in June 2003.</p> <p>The RTA is committed to assessing suggestions for route options from the community. There have been suggestions made to the study team to investigate options to the west of Macksville since the first round of community displays in July 2003. These issues were also raised at a number of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) meetings. A decision was made to investigate whether feasible route options could be developed to the west of Macksville in 2004. When it was clear that there were feasible route options to the west, the community was informed through the route options display process and potentially affected landholders were contacted by letter. In summary, by investigating suggestions for route options to the</p>

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
		<p>west of Macksville, the RTA has demonstrated that it is receptive to proposals from the community.</p> <p>Representation of communities to the west of Macksville on the CLG would not have influenced the decision to investigate options in this area or their location. As discussed above, the original Macksville CLG members did not have any knowledge of the location of route options until after the route options display commenced in November 2004. Following the display of the route options, representatives of the communities to the west of Macksville have joined the CLG. Although it is not a decision making or voting group, communities to the east and west of Macksville now have approximately equal representation on the CLG.</p>
8	Thanks was expressed in some submissions for the quality of the displays and the courteous manner of study team staff.	The comment is noted and appreciated.
9	All of us are angry that due process was not followed in allowing some of the affected residents to participate on the Macksville CLG no. 4.	The Macksville CLG agreed to allow a number of community members who turned up unexpectedly to the meeting to stay as observers. We appreciate that residents of Letitia Close did not attend and respected the membership of the CLG. It should be noted that observers did not participate in the discussions at the meeting.
10	We have never received any communication from the Community Liaison Group. It would seem that any information relayed by this committee will only reflect their own opinions.	The role of the CLG members is to disseminate information to and provide feedback from their communities. The CLG members, who are volunteers, have been encouraged to provide two-way feedback with their communities and the study team has offered assistance in dissemination of information. While many CLG members have been doing an excellent job, it is also apparent from the submissions received, that some communities have concerns in regard to their representation. Additional membership on the CLGs has been arranged where members of the community are unhappy with the level of information they are receiving from existing representatives. In response to submissions raising concern about the level of contact with

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
		their CLG representatives, the study team has requested that the representatives provide a summary of feedback activities with their community at CLG meetings.
11	The first that most local residents heard about this new proposal was by way of letters of resumption on their properties in December 2004.	The letters sent by the study team in late November 2004 were to inform residents that their property may be either directly affected or within 400m of one of the proposed route options. They were not letters to commence the process of property resumption. This process would not be initiated by the RTA until after the project has been approved following the preparation and display of the environmental impact assessment.
12	After all this, one of the three initiators of the proposal, while claiming credit for his idea, is quoted on the front page of the local Guardian newspaper as saying that the RTA is "... just going through the motions" with the western study and that they will ultimately decide on an eastern route.	Many members of the community have their own opinions about the route options and the process, and some of these opinions have been reported in the local press. At this stage, there is no preferred route for the project. All route options announced in November 2004 are viable, and all are still being considered. There are still a number of steps to be undertaken prior to the selection and announcement of a preferred option. An important input into the decision is the VM process whereby community, government, business and environmental stakeholders will assist in assessing each of the options against the project objectives. The technical investigations undertaken and the submissions received from the community are other important inputs into the decision.
13	Concern was expressed that the information available at the community information days was lacking details of any noise mitigation, contaminant detention or flood mitigation.	The issues raised were addressed at a level of detail adequate and appropriate for the development and assessment of the route options. Prior to construction of the project, the RTA would undertake an environmental impact assessment of the preferred route and refine the concept design. This assessment and refined design will identify the impacts of the proposal in more detail, and the measures proposed to manage these impacts - including noise mitigation, contaminant detention and flood mitigation measures.

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Issue No.	Issue	Response
14	<p>The Urunga community has not been fairly represented on the CLG committee. There is also a deficiency in the RTA's monitoring the veracity of the workings of that committee. It states in the Record of Meeting of the 3rd meeting that the representatives were to report back to their constituents and provide feedback to the management team, this is a specific requirement and yet it was not done. If an appointed member decides not to do what is requested and properly inform the community, how is this ever detected by the RTA? Is the fact that the management team informed the CLG, sufficient to meet the consultation requirements of the process? We feel we have been grossly unrepresented during the route selection of this project. There can be no claim that the community has had adequate input during the process so far and the CLG members should be questioned as to how they are disseminating the information from the study team, to the community, because it certainly is not publicly.</p>	<p>The role of the CLG members is to disseminate information to and provide feedback from their communities. The CLG members, who are volunteers, have been encouraged to provide two-way feedback with their communities and the study team has offered assistance in dissemination of information. While many CLG members have been doing an excellent job, it is also apparent from the submissions received, that some communities have concerns in regard to their representation. Additional membership on the CLGs has been arranged where members of the community are unhappy with the level of information they are receiving from existing representatives. In response to submissions raising concern about the level of contact with their CLG representatives, the study team has requested that the representatives provide a summary of feedback activities with their community at CLG meetings.</p>



4. Next steps

No preferred option has been selected for the project at this stage. The information provided by the community, along with the investigations undertaken and the recommendations of the Value Management Study will assist in the selection of the preferred route.

4.1 Value management process

The Value Management process will include a workshop with representatives from a range of government, council and community interests. These include:

Government

- RTA (including SKM Project team)
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR)
- Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)
- Department of Primary Industries (DPI)

Councils

- Nambucca Council
- Bellingen Council

Community Interests

- Road Users (2 representatives)
- Macksville Community Liaison Group (4 representatives)
- Nambucca/Bellwood Community Liaison Group (1 representative)
- Urunga Community Liaison Group (4 representatives)
- Representatives of the four Local Aboriginal Liaison Groups (LALCs)
- Representatives from the four Chambers of Commerce.

4.2 Announcement of the preferred route

It is anticipated that the preferred route would be announced in the second half of 2005. Affected property owners would be notified by letter, and meetings would be offered to provide additional information on the implications and timing of future acquisition actions. The preferred option announcement would be advertised and community displays prepared to provide detailed information on the preferred option and the reasons why it was preferred over other options. Information would be provided on the project web page and a community update prepared to provide additional information. All those on the project database would receive a copy of the community update and it would be made available in other venues to enable the general community



to be informed. Briefings would also be undertaken with Councils, Community Liaison Groups, other interest groups and individuals requiring further information.

Information would also be provided on the steps following the announcement of the preferred option. This information would focus on the next phase of the project - concept design and the preparation of an environmental impact assessment. It has not yet been determined when this phase would commence.

4.3 Ongoing consultation

Consultation would continue through the preparation of the environmental impact assessment and concept design. Many of the same avenues would be used but the focus would be on the preferred option and its refinement to minimise impacts. Those on the project database would continue to receive information on the project unless they requested to be taken off mailing lists.

CLGs are likely to continue, with membership reviewed to focus more on the preferred route. More regular progress updates for the project are proposed to provide ongoing information to the wider community.

The environmental impact assessment consultation process culminates in the exhibition of the assessment report, which is a statutory responsibility under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*. This would be widely publicised and the report made available for viewing and purchase at a number of accessible locations in the study area and at other locations.

