

3 Project objectives

This chapter presents the objectives of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program and the Sapphire to Woolgoolga project.

3.1 Pacific Highway Upgrade Program

In January 1996, the NSW and Australian governments announced a joint commitment to a 10-year program to upgrade the Pacific Highway between Hexham and the Queensland border. Funding of \$2.2 billion was allocated to improve the standard of the Highway with projects being justified on an individual basis. Following completion of the 10-year program in June 2006, the NSW and Australian governments have agreed to further funding of \$1.3 billion for the three years to mid 2009.

The principal objectives of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program are to:

- Significantly reduce road accidents and injuries.
- Improve transport efficiency by reducing travel times and freight costs.
- Develop a route that involves the community and considers their interests.
- Provide a route that supports economic development.
- Manage the upgrading of the route in accordance with Ecologically Sustainable Development principles.
- Provide the best value for money.

3.2 Sapphire to Woolgoolga project

The Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy is being developed to address the need to upgrade the Pacific Highway between Sapphire and Woolgoolga while planning for future traffic needs within the Coffs Harbour area. The specific objectives for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Proposal are listed in Table 3.1 as they relate to the overarching objectives of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program.

TABLE 3.1 SAPPHIRE TO WOOLGOOLGA PROJECT OBJECTIVES

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	SAPPHIRE TO WOOLGOOLGA PROJECT OBJECTIVES
Significantly reduced road accidents and injuries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide a dual carriageway road with potential to reduce crash rates to 15 crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled over the project length.
Reduced travel times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide a design which would allow sign posting at a minimum of 100 km/h in rural areas and 80 km/h in urban areas. ■ Provide flood immunity on at least one carriageway for a one in 100 year flood event.
Reduced freight transport costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide a design that minimises vehicle operating costs. ■ Provide a design that meets or exceeds B-Double requirements, including at intersections where required.
Develop a route that involves the community and considers their interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Integrate input from local communities into development of the project through the implementation of a comprehensive program of community consultation and participation. ■ Provide a solution at all potential conflict points with local traffic that meets community expectations and maintains local connectivity.
Provide a route that supports economic development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide transport developments that are complementary with land use. ■ Consider delay management strategies to minimise disruption to local and through traffic and maintain access to affected properties and land during construction.
Manage the upgrading of the route in accordance with Ecologically Sustainable Development principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assess and address cumulative impacts. ■ Incorporate best environmental practice. ■ Ensure NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) guidelines for managing environmental issues (biodiversity, noise impacts, water quality, acid sulfate soils, etc) are met.
Provide the best value for money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maximise the use of the existing road asset where consistent with the project. ■ Ensure the project outcomes achieve value for money.