

5. Community involvement

5.1 Approach to community involvement

The approach to consultation has been to actively involve the community in each phase of the project.

The process that the RTA has adopted for the development of the Iluka Road to Woodburn preferred concept design is depicted in **Figure 5.1**. It highlights the stages of the project where formal input has been sought from the community and stakeholders and how this has imputed into the development of the preferred concept design. The RTA has maintained an 'open door approach' whereby feedback has been welcomed at any stage of the project and such contributions have also aided the development of the preferred concept design.

The key activities undertaken which were designed to keep stakeholders informed and able to provide input into the project, consisted of:

- **Information releases:** including updates, display advertising and via a project specific internet site. This activity commenced in November 2004, with information updated throughout the route investigation and concept design phases. A community update was released as part of the concept design display in March 2006. Other progress updates have been released on three occasions October 2005, December 2005 and February 2007.
- **Community Information Sessions (CIS):** which are open structured community forum sessions providing a range of opportunities for exchange of information, where study team members provide information and answer questions. The CISs included presentations, display material and community input. There have been three to date, in December 2004, March 2005 and March 2006. The first CIS, (December 14 2004, at Woodburn) was to introduce the community to the project and the second (8 March 2005, at New Italy) to discuss route option planning and the third (April 6 2006, at Woodburn) to discuss the published Concept Design Report. Further CISs will be held at strategic stages during the project planning, design and approval process.
- **Property visits:** involving one-on-one visits to members of the community at their properties.
- **Feedback opportunities:** providing stakeholders with a range of means to obtain information or make submissions, such as a telephone information line with direct contact to the RTA Project Manager and the project Community Liaison Co-ordinator, project website and email address, and project mail address. These have also been available since November 2004.
- **Aboriginal focus meeting:** held in June 2007. In accordance with DECC *'Interim Community Consultation Requirements for Applicants'*, persons with a registered interest as well as members from the Local Aboriginal Land Councils were invited to attend. Items of indigenous heritage were discussed at the meeting and a bus tour of the route was held.

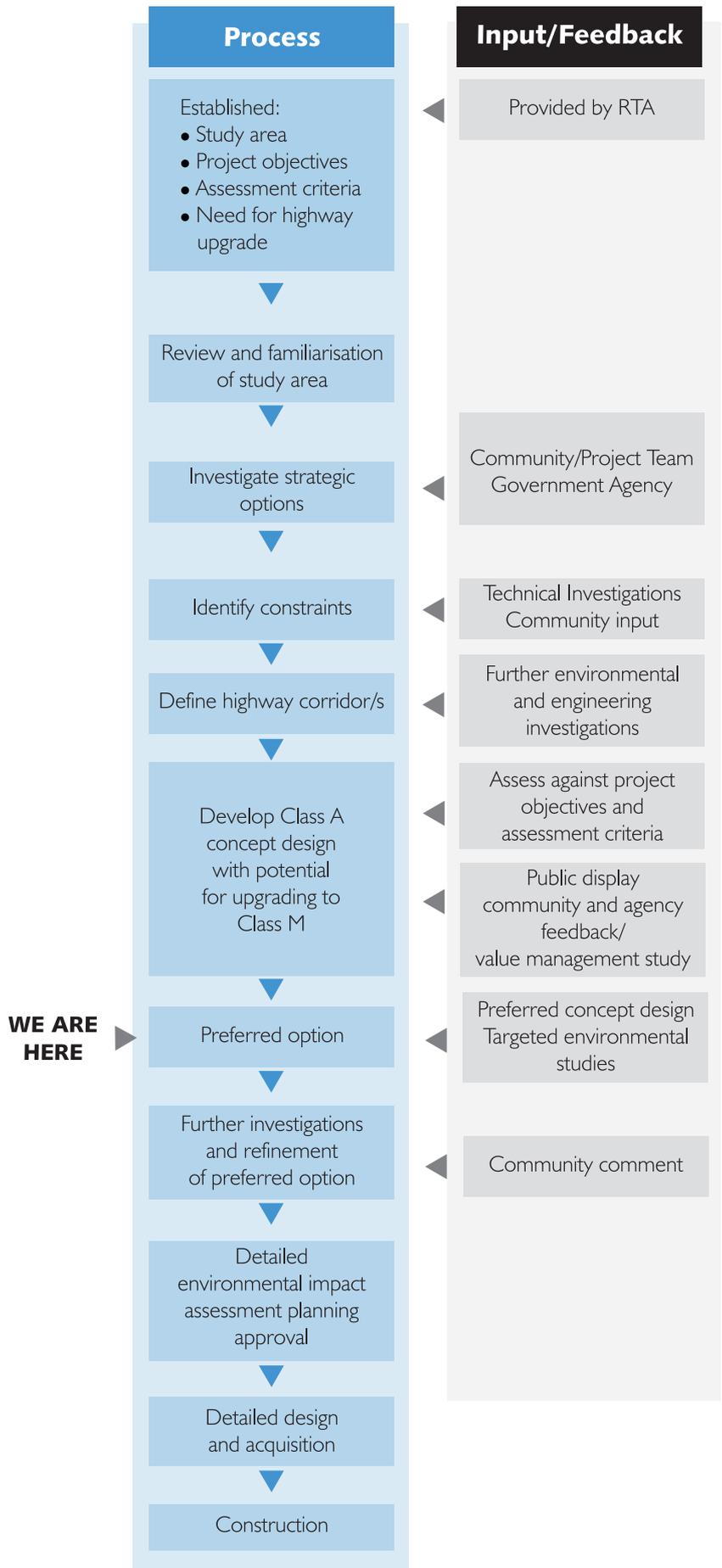


Figure 5.1

Methodology for Development and Assessment of Route

5.1.1 Concept design display

The concept design was on display from 30 March to 28 April 2006. The advertised display locations were:

- RTA Woodburn Community Information Centre.
- New Italy Museum Complex.
- Clarence Valley Council.
- RTA Pacific Highway Office.

Posters were also displayed at:

- Richmond Valley Council (Evans Head office).
- Ballina Motor Registry.

The RTA Woodburn Community Information Centre was staffed with study team members from 7-8 April 2006. Advertisements were placed in newspapers to notify the Concept Design Display.

5.1.2 Submissions to the concept design

The Concept Design Display was a key phase in the development of the project and in the consultation process where specific issues on the concept design were identified. Submissions were invited on the Concept Design Report and a total of 69 were received in direct response to the Concept Design Report and a further 25 general responses were submitted. The issues raised through these submissions are summarised in the Concept Design Submissions Report (2008) and were further considered at the Value Engineering Workshop held in July 2007.

The following is a summary of the key issues identified to date and communicated to the project team by the community:

- Impacts to private property and impacts on property values.
- Access to and from private property, access onto the highway, location of u-turn bays, emergency services access, and accessibility to Woodburn and other centres of population.
- Safety, conflict between local and through traffic, school bus safety and impacts of increasing truck traffic.
- Provision and location of intersections and highway interchanges.
- Protection of items of indigenous and non-indigenous heritage.
- Impacts of the project on New Italy museum, café and driver reviver.
- Timing of construction
- Road noise and noise mitigation.
- Flooding and flood mitigation.
- Environmental impacts, including air quality, water quality, and biodiversity conservation.
- Impacts on land use (eg. agriculture).

5.1.3 Stakeholder consultation

The RTA has also met with interest groups, stakeholders and government agencies to discuss the concept design. These groups include:

- Emergency service providers.
- Clarence Valley Council.
- Richmond Valley Council.
- Department of Primary Industries.
- Department of Environment and Climate Change.
- Department of Natural Resources.

- Bus companies.
- Cane growers.
- Historical groups.

As with the community consultation, the feedback from these groups has been incorporated, where appropriate, into the preferred concept design.

5.2 Amendments to the concept design that form the preferred concept design

A number of refinements were made to the concept design following the public display in April 2006. Where possible, these refinements incorporate suggestions made by landholders, the community and other stakeholders. In addition to this the design has undergone a value engineering study and review to ensure it is consistent with the objectives and design criterion developed specifically for the entire Pacific Highway Upgrade Program.

Design changes that have occurred since the publication of the concept design report in March 2006 are discussed in **Chapter 6**.