

## 5. Community consultation

This section outlines the outcomes of public displays as well as stakeholder interviews relevant towards the concept design development, and details of how stakeholder representations have been included in the development of the concept design.

A community information session was held at the Yarrawarra Community Hall on 28 February 2007. During this community meeting, the 20 per cent concept design was tabled so as to provide opportunities for community members to comment on access rationalisation for the project. No specific actions from this community meeting resulted in modifications to the concept design. The minutes of the meeting are included in Appendix C.

### 5.1 Issues outstanding from route selection stage

A number of issues remained outstanding from the route selection stage of the project. The response to each of these issues is also provided in Table 5-1.

**Table 5-1 Response to outstanding issues from the route selection stage**

| Issue  | Response  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Access to highway</b></p> <p>The community expressed their expectation that access to the highway will be made safer and easier, particularly around the area of Corindi. Concerns were also expressed about restricted access onto and off the highway.</p>   | <p>Local access to properties has been maintained throughout the project via the provision of access roads and at-grade intersections. Road users may have to travel up to 2.5 km in the opposite direction in some situations.</p>                                     |
| <p><b>Access to properties</b></p> <p>Various opinions were raised regarding access to private properties. Many said that they currently experienced difficulty in accessing properties. Most submissions were strongly in support of a local road to improve safety and functionality for local traffic.</p>                  |   |
| <p><b>Access to surrounding towns and amenities</b></p> <p>Providing good access and connections to towns and amenities, such as the shops, and beach, were raised as important issues.</p>  |   |
| <p><b>Flooding protection</b></p> <p>The community generally expressed support for the Orange Option as this option has the shortest floodplain crossing and is located further upstream away from flood prone areas. There were also concerns regarding flooding of the existing highway at Corindi and Blackadder Creek.</p> | <p>A detailed flood study has been carried out for the Corindi Floodplain. Impacts on the properties within the floodplain have been identified. The highway has been designed to be above the one in 100 year flood level. Refer to Section 10 for further details</p> |

| Issue   | Response  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Areas of environmental significance</b></p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the impacts on Wells Crossing Flora Reserve and Newfoundland State Forest. Some respondents were in favour of forestry land being used for the highway.</p>   | <p>Detailed environmental investigations have been carried out and have been taken into consideration in the development of the concept design. Refer sections 16 and 17 for further details</p> <p>Further detailed environmental investigations will be carried during the environmental assessment process. Any construction works will be carried out in accordance with strict environmental guidelines.</p>   |
| <p><b>Impacts on ecology</b></p> <p>A number of submissions expressed concern about the impact upon native species and their habitat. There was some support for the Blue Option (Refer Section 0) as it reduces the need to remove native vegetation and minimises the effect on wildlife movements. There was some opposition to the Orange Option due to the amount of clearing required and the impact on wildlife.</p>   | <p>Further detailed environmental investigations will be carried during the environmental assessment process. Any construction works will be carried out in accordance with strict environmental guidelines.</p>  |
| <p><b>Indigenous heritage</b></p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the impacts on cultural heritage.</p>   | <p>Detailed environmental investigations have been carried out and have been taken into consideration in the development of the concept design. Refer Section 19 for further details.</p> <p>The design does not impact on any known items of significance to indigenous heritage.</p>  |
| <p><b>Noise</b></p> <p>Concerns were raised about noise disturbance currently experienced from the highway, particularly from heavy vehicles at night. Many respondents expressed a desire to have noise levels reduced around Corindi and Corindi Beach.</p> <p>In most submissions, support was expressed for the Orange Option in Section B, as it would move the highway away from Corindi village and therefore potentially reducing noise impacts on the village. There was also some support for the Green Option.</p> | <p>A detailed noise assessment will be carried out as part of the environmental assessment will consider traffic noise for the indicative design in accordance with the requirements set out in the Department of Environment and Conservation's document Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise. This document includes criteria for residences, schools, hospitals, and churches. This assessment will include monitoring of existing noise levels and modelling of predicted future noise levels. Refer Section 18 for further details.</p> |
| <p><b>Property acquisition and impacts</b></p> <p>A number of submissions expressed concern regarding the acquisition of private property and whether those impacted would receive adequate compensation.</p>   | <p>Any property acquisition will be carried out in accordance with the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991</i>. An assessment of impacts to the land and the functionality of the remaining land will be carried out and would be used to determine whether partial or full acquisition is required. Refer Section 22 further details.</p>   |

| Issue  | Response   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Safety</b></p> <p>The community raised road safety as an important issue. There is an expectation that the highway would be made significantly safer by the upgrade. In general, the community would like to see a reduction in the number of accidents and fatalities. There was support for Section B of the Orange Option as it removes bends, takes the highway away from residential and tourist areas and separates local and through traffic, thereby improving safety.</p> | <p>The improvement of road safety, the reduction in the severity and incidence of road accidents and improving traffic flow to reduce travel times are objectives of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program.</p> <p>Throughout the design, safety issues have been considered. A Stage 2 Road Safety Audit of the project has been carried out. Refer Section 27 for further details.</p> |

## 5.2 Issues raised following the preferred route display

Stakeholders, following the announcement of the preferred route, raised a number of issues.

The response to each of these issues is provided in Table 5-2. The heading “Issue” identifies the issue raised by the stakeholder, the heading “Comments” identifies the stakeholder comments in relation to the issue, then the response from the RTA has been provided in the column titled “Response”.

**Table 5-2 Response to issues raised following the preferred route display**

| Issue                          | Comments   | Response   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Environmental impacts          | Concerned interchange will impact paperbark trees in wetland area. (Located approximately 300m south of the Arrawarra turnoff and on the western side of the highway).   | The interchange is not part of the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing Project. Environmental Impacts of the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Project are to be fully assessed during the Environmental Assessment.   |
| Inadequate public consultation | Stakeholder believes there has been inadequate public consultation in relation to the widening of the highway in Section B and part of Section C.  | Public consultation regarding the wider Preferred Route Corridor near Ch 9500 carried out in accordance with RTA guidelines. The project team held face-to-face meetings with landowners impacted by the wider Preferred Route Corridor. During the Concept Design Stage, the wider Preferred Route Corridor was refined once a specific alignment was chosen. |
| Environmental impacts          | Stakeholder believes western option in Section B passes through timbered country and appears to have a substantially higher impact on flora and fauna as well as habitat fragmentation, than the route previously identified in the public consultation process. | The selection of the western option in Section B was made following a review of various issues during a Value Management Workshop. During this workshop a range of stakeholders considered environmental, community and engineering design issues in the selection of the Preferred Route.   |

| Issue                  | Comments  | Response   |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Agricultural issues    | Section B could be extended to Range Road at the top of Dirty Creek Range and section C extended to this same point as this seems a more logical start / finish of these sections. Section D could then become Section C and Section E become Section D.  | The section extents for the project are for descriptive purposes only and would not impact the design or construction of the project.  |
| Agricultural issues    | The next phase should include an assessment of former and current banana plantations intersected by the final route as these plantations may be affected by the soil borne panama disease. Soils associated with banana plantations should be managed in such a manner so as to prevent the spread of potentially infected soil to other properties by way machinery and earth works. (NSW DPI can provide further advice as required). The final alignment should also take account of the location of any known cattle tick dip sites. The location and status of known dip sites is available from the Cattle Tick Program of NSW DPI. | This issue has been noted.<br><br>Detailed environmental investigations have been carried out and have been taken into consideration in the development of the concept design. Refer Section 16 and 17 for further details.<br><br>Agricultural and environmental issues will be further investigated during the environmental assessment process.   |
| Impacts on environment | The preferred route appears to be a fish friendly route as it avoids impacts to Solitary Marine Park and that wetland and creeks have also mostly been avoided.   | Comment noted.   |
| Impacts on environment | As the location of this highway upgrade is adjacent to the Solitary Island Marine Reserve and links creeks to many valuable wetlands a high level of consideration must be planned for to prevent any poor outcomes. Close scrutiny of any impacts to water quality, associated with disturbance of acid sulphate soils or high sediment loads associated with heavy machinery operations or the design of structures that may impact be detrimental to the adjacent aquatic vegetation or fish passage must be given.  | Detailed environmental investigations have been carried out and have been taken into consideration in the development of the concept design. Refer Section 16 and 17 for further details.<br><br>Further detailed environmental investigations will be carried during the environmental assessment process. Any construction works will be carried out in accordance with strict environmental guidelines. |

| Issue  | Comments  | Response  |
|--|---|---|
| Impacts on environment                             | <p>The Preferred Route Report identifies that threatened species like Oxleyan Pygmy Perch or Eastern Fresh Water Cod may be present in the final alignment. The presence of “threatened species” or their habitat may influence the final design of waterway crossings.</p>   | <p>All significant watercourses are designed to be “fish friendly”. Impacts upon threatened species would be assessed during the Environmental Assessment. Refer Section 17 and 21 for further details.</p>   |
| Impacts on natural resources                       | <p>Concerned about future access to potentially affected pits such as Taylor’s pit or to alternative, suitable, nearby resources.</p>   | <p>Current local access has been maintained throughout the project. Refer Section 24 for further details.</p>   |
| Access   | <p>Undertake occasional logging and export of gravel from site, the only access is via northern access point (not allowed through post office lane).</p> <p>There are two east-west tracks for logging at present. Need at least one underpass with clearance for trucks.</p>   | <p>An underpass has been provided at Ch 8200, which will allow stock movements and vehicular access to properties on the western side of the proposed highway. This access will be linked to the existing highway.</p>  |
| Highway design and layout of interchanges          | <p>Need potential for parallel replacement gravel tracks for logging trucks to get to/from underpass. Underpass could also allow movement of cattle/fauna.</p> <p>Cattle move freely across property as all lots are run as one property. Probably need cattle underpass at northern limits of property, probably combined with drainage/fauna culverts.</p> <p>Another cattle underpass likely in vicinity of proposed Redbank creek bridge (eg bridge wider for cattle/small vehicle/fauna underpass).</p> <p>Need to look at optimising mix of cattle/fauna/drainage culverts.</p> | <p>An underpass has been provided at Ch 8200, which will allow stock movements and vehicular access to properties on the western side of the proposed highway. This access will be linked to the existing highway.</p> <p>This underpass will be linked with an access road, which will run parallel to the proposed highway on the western side between Ch 6600 and Ch 9000.</p> |
| Impact on services - Corindi Sewer treatment works | <p>Coffs Harbour City Council utilises the complete Corindi Sewerage Treatment Works site on Kangaroo Trail Road for irrigation of treated effluent. Any loss of irrigation area could not be sustained as part of the treatment plan process.</p> <p>Council may require that the RTA provide, via acquisition, suitable land to be used by Coffs Harbour City Council as a compensatory alternate disposal area.</p>  | <p>Ongoing discussions with council, since the preferred route display, have identified that alternate schemes may be put in place, however this is to be confirmed. Discussions with Coffs Harbour City Council regarding the impacts on the Corindi Sewage Treatment Plant should be ongoing.</p>   |

| Issue             | Comments  | Response  |
|-------------------|---|---|
|                   | Council would require, as an alternative, that the RTA completely fund the construction of a suitable pipeline to facilitate the transfer of treated effluent back to the Woolgoolga STP for integration with the established reuse system.   |   |
| Highway alignment | <p>Why has a far western alignment option not been used?</p> <p>Why didn't the route go further west of our property?</p> <p>Why didn't the route go through the state forest to the south?</p> <p>Why not impact upon the inefficient Coffs Harbour sewage treatment site?</p>       | <p>The study area for the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing project is restricted by connection to the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Project at the southern end and the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road Project at the northern end.</p> <p>The concept design aims to minimise impacts to state forest as well as the existing Corindi Sewage Treatment Plant.</p> |
| Highway alignment | RTA indicated that the highway may be towards the western edge of the bulge in the preferred route. This is preferable, as it would minimise the impact on the flat land in the centre of the property, and may avoid the waterhole near the southern edge of the property            | Comment noted.  |
| Property impacts  | Requested that the watercourse be kept in its natural position. The watercourse only flows following heavy rain. These flows fill the two waterholes on property. The waterholes are relied upon for irrigation. Preference for the two waterholes to be retained if at all possible. | The existing alignment of watercourses has been wherever possible to minimise environmental impacts.  |
| Highway alignment | Would prefer the highway to be on the western edge of the corridor, to minimise impact on his land, and also to avoid the Smallwood's house, on the adjacent property.  | Comment noted.  |
| Highway alignment | <p>Further west that the highway goes the better. The house on the property is only 3 years old, having been burnt down previously. If the western alignment is chosen, then the house would be avoided.</p> <p>No issues with the refined orange option.</p>                         | Comment noted.  |

| Issue             | Comments   | Response   |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Highway alignment | <p>The further west, the better. Why is the highway not 5km further west?</p> <p>The alternative orange is far preferred, as it does not impact their home.</p>  | <p>The study area for the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing project is restricted by connection to the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Project at the southern end and the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road Project at the northern end.</p>   |
| Noise impacts     | <p>Concerned about increase in highway noise given the location in relation to their property.</p>   | <p>A detailed noise assessment, as part of the environmental assessment process, will consider traffic noise for the proposed design in accordance with the requirements set out in the Department of Environment and Conservation's document Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise. This document includes criteria for residences, schools, hospitals, and churches. This assessment would include monitoring of existing noise levels and modelling of predicted future noise levels. Refer Section 18 for further details.</p> |
| Noise impacts     | <p>Concerned about the construction noise impacts on property.</p> <p>Concerned about the operational noise impacts on property, particularly with trucks ascending and descending the steepest gradient over the Dirty Creek Range.</p> <p>Concerned about noise reverberating off the Range and affecting residents along the eastern side</p> | <p>A detailed noise assessment, as part of the environmental assessment process, will consider traffic noise for the proposed design in accordance with the requirements set out in the Department of Environment and Conservation's document Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise. This document includes criteria for residences, schools, hospitals, and churches. This assessment would include monitoring of existing noise levels and modelling of predicted future noise levels. Refer Section 18 for further details.</p> |
| Property impacts  | <p>There are fewer residents affected by the proposed deviation if it were to go on the western side of the ridge or follow the top.</p>   | <p>Comment noted. Property impacts and impacts on residents have been considered in the development of the concept design. Refer Section 22 for further details.</p>   |
| Pollution         | <p>Concerned about impacts of pollution and runoff during construction and associated with regular highway usage during rainfall events, in addition to any potential spillages.</p> <p>Pollutants would directly affect catchment and prevent stakeholder the opportunity to become organically certified.</p>                                  | <p>Further detailed environmental investigations will be carried out during the environmental assessment process. Any construction works would be carried out in accordance with strict environmental guidelines. Refer Section 21 for further details.</p>  |
| Health issues     | <p>Airborne particulates especially diesel contribute to chronic chest conditions and aggravates asthmatics, this would dramatically increase given the stakeholder's proximity to the ridge and climb associated.</p>   | <p>Detailed environmental investigations have been carried out and have been taken into consideration in the development of the concept design.</p> <p>Further detailed environmental investigations including impacts on air quality will be carried during the environmental assessment process.</p>   |

| Issue  | Comments   | Response  |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Habitat loss and fragmentation/<br/>Environmental impacts</p> | <p>Greatly concerned having read the working papers and have determined that the entire refined route has (most likely) been accepted with little to no environmental assessment.</p> <p>One days worth of vehicle based survey and a random meander on foot during the day in summer (1 Feb 2006) to determine native veg attributes, structure, condition, habitat etc. is insufficient and highlights the lack of value placed upon the environment.</p> <p>An error identified is the Vegetation community listed on property as Dry Ridgetop Forest on Rich Soil (6). This is more like Moist Floodplain Forest (4).</p> <p>The proposed highway is 10m elevation with water ponding most of the year, and potentially an Ecologically Endangered Community.</p> <p>Concerns regarding the 41 ha of native vegetation that will be destroyed.</p> <p>There are numerous large hollows on and within close proximity to property, with hollow dependent species such as the spotted tail quoll and the glossy black cockatoo.</p> <p>Measures to be taken and highway plans to incorporate methods and/or structures for wildlife movement through affected vegetation or preferably find a route that less high value habitat will be lost.</p> | <p>Detailed environmental investigations have been carried out and have been taken into consideration in the development of the concept design. Refer Section 16 for further details.</p> <p>Further detailed environmental investigations including impacts on native vegetation will be carried during the environmental assessment process.</p> <p>Fauna crossings have been provided throughout the project, and compensatory habitat will be determined during the environmental assessment process.</p> |
| <p>Visual amenity</p>  | <p>Visual amenity will be impaired, presently the ridgeline and slope is pleasantly vegetated. The highway will result in a view of trucks and other vehicles pluming their way up and down the coast.</p>   | <p>Further detailed environmental investigations including impacts on visual amenity will be carried during the environmental assessment process. Refer Section 13 for further details.</p>   |
| <p>Highway alignment</p>   | <p>Prefer to see the route move further west, either along the ridge or within the upper catchment on the western side of the Dirty Creek Range, or follow the Green option from the northern end of section B.</p>  | <p>Comment noted.</p>   |



| Issue                 | Comments   | Response   |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Consultation process  | Urge RTA to consider concerns and to find ways to mitigate or remove them in the final alignment.  | The project team has taken all comments and suggestions for the community consultation process into account in the development of the concept design.  |
| Highway alignment     | Happy to wait and see what happens - The western option would be preferable, however, understand that the RTA may have greater concerns and different reasoning.   | Comment noted.   |
| Environmental impacts | Would like to see wildlife corridors across the highway and parallel to the highway allowed for in the design. High fences along the highway would also be a definite requirement.   | Regular fauna crossings and fauna fencing have been provided along the full length of the highway.   |
| Highway alignment     | Very happy with the alternative option, as displayed, as it does not directly affect any of the blueberry farm assets.<br><br>The highway does pass very close to the packing shed, believes there to an optic fibre cable immediately adjacent to the packing shed. | Comments noted.  |
| Consultation process  | Need a definite decision to allow for alternative plans. Would like to be informed as soon as possible with regard to any changes in the design, or any refinement of the preferred route.   | The community consultation process for the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing Project will continue throughout the development of the concept design.  |
| Highway alignment     | Would prefer to see the highway built on the western edge of the preferred route so as to avoid their land. The land towards the western edge is less fit for road building, being all hills and ridges and heavily forested.  | Comment noted.   |
| Property acquisition  | If the RTA were to choose the eastern option, expectation that RTA purchase the full block of land.  | Any property acquisition will be carried out in accordance with the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991</i> . An assessment of impacts to the land and the functionality of the remaining land will be carried out and will be used to determine whether partial or full acquisition is required. |

### **5.3 Emergency services and state forests consultation on access**

Consultation with the Rural Fire Service (currently located at Lemon Tree Road) and State Forests NSW regarding access requirements is ongoing.

Preliminary discussions have been held with the Rural Fire Service, regarding the potential movement of the existing facility at Lemon Tree Road to a location at Kungala Road, to provide better access north bound and south bound, for the future arterial upgrade.