

Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing

Upgrading the Pacific Highway

ROUTE OPTIONS SUBMISSIONS REPORT

MAY 2006





Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Purpose of this report	1
1.2	Background	1
1.3	Study area and route options	1
1.4	Pacific Highway Upgrade Program objectives	2
1.5	Project objectives	3
1.6	Consultation objectives	4
2.	Route options consultation	5
2.1	Notifying potentially affected landowners and businesses	5
2.2	Advertisements, media releases and announcements	6
2.3	Flyers	6
2.4	Community update No. 2 – route options display	7
2.5	Feedback forms	7
2.6	Public displays	7
2.7	Website	9
2.8	Community liaison group meetings	9
2.9	Ecological focus group meetings	10
2.10	Council presentations	10
2.11	Management of information requests	10
3.	Participation in consultation activities	11
3.1	Summary of community involvement	11
4.	Consideration of submissions on the route options	12
4.1	Overview	12
4.2	Processing of submissions	12
4.3	Summary of responses to questions asked in the feedback form	12
4.4	Summary of qualitative feedback from the community	18
4.5	Summary of qualitative feedback from potentially affected property owners and businesses	22
4.6	Summary of qualitative feedback from statutory agencies	22
5.	Process for selection of the preferred route	33
5.1	Route corridor selection	33
5.2	Announcement of the preferred route	33
5.3	Public display of preliminary design	33



Table Index

Table 1	Summary of participation in consultation activities	11
Table 2	Summary of community contacts	11
Table 3	Feedback from statutory agencies	23

Figure Index

Figure 1	Key area of interest	13
Figure 2	Key issues to be considered in the selection of a preferred route	14
Figure 3	Which route best addresses the issues?	15
Figure 4	Preferred option by locality of residence	17
Figure 5	Process for selection of the preferred route	34

Appendices

- A Route options display
- B Letter to potentially affected landowners and businesses
- C Newspaper and radio advertisements
- D Flyer
- E Community update and feedback form
- F Website and online feedback form
- G RTA fact sheets
- H Summary of submissions received
- I Responses to submissions



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to assist the RTA in the decision-making process with respect to selection of a preferred route.

The report describes:

- ▶ Consultation activities undertaken during the route options display;
- ▶ Issues raised by the community and other stakeholders for consideration in the selection of the preferred route; and
- ▶ Next stages in the project.

The report aims to outline the community concerns and suggestions raised.

1.2 Background

The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) engaged GHD Pty Ltd (GHD) to undertake route option investigations, selection of preferred route and concept development to upgrade a 27.8 km section of the Pacific Highway between Woolgoolga and Wells Crossing on the north coast of NSW. This project would link to the preferred route for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section and the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road project.

The RTA Pacific Highway Upgrade Program is a commitment by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to improve the condition of the highway, reduce road accidents and improve transport efficiency. The RTA is implementing the program.

1.3 Study area and route options

The project commences approximately five kilometres north of Woolgoolga at Arrawarra Creek and extends for approximately 27.8 km over the Dirty Creek Range to the intersection of the highway with Bald Knob Tick Gate Road at Wells Crossing. The study area consists of a corridor up to three kilometres wide, which mainly surrounds the existing highway, including the recently completed Halfway Creek duplication.

Due to the length of the proposed upgrade, the study area has been divided into five sections from south to north as follows:

- ▶ Section A – Arrawarra Creek (Start Point) to Tasman Street intersection;
- ▶ Section B – Tasman Street intersection to 500 metres south of Barcoongere Way;
- ▶ Section C – 500 metres south of Barcoongere Way to 400 metres south of Falconers Lane;
- ▶ Section D – 400 metres south of Falconers Lane to Lemon Tree Road intersection;
- ▶ Section E – Lemon Tree Road intersection to Bald Knob Tick Gate Road (End Point).



Four route options were placed on public display from Friday 21 October 2005 to Friday 2 December 2005, for community consideration. Public submissions were sought on the route options during the display period.

The four route options are identified as the:

- ▶ Blue Option;
- ▶ Green Option;
- ▶ Purple Option; and
- ▶ Orange Option.

The options are shown as broad corridors (250 metres in width) within which the new highway could be located. It should be noted that the full 250m wide corridor would not be required to construct the proposed upgrade. The 250m corridor has been selected to enable environmental investigations to adequately investigate potential impacts of the proposed upgrade.

Preliminary road alignments within these four route options have also been developed and investigated by GHD. In developing the route options it became evident that there were two distinct common sections within the study area, in which all four route options co-exist. These common sections (or common corridors) occur in the following locations:

- ▶ Common Corridor No. 1 – Section A (as described above), approx. length: 3.5 km; and
- ▶ Common Corridor No. 2 – Section D and part of Section E (as described above), approx. length: 7.8 km.

The location of the four route options, the common corridors and a typical road cross section is shown in Appendix A.

1.4 Pacific Highway Upgrade Program objectives

The Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing project is part of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program. The objectives of the program are to:

- ▶ Significantly reduce road accidents and injuries;
- ▶ Reduce freight transport costs;
- ▶ Provide best value for money;
- ▶ Manage the upgrading of the route in accordance with ecologically sustainable principles;
- ▶ Reduce travel times;
- ▶ Develop a route that supports economic development; and
- ▶ Develop a route that involves the community and considers their interest.



1.5 Project objectives

The objectives of the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing project are to:

- ▶ Develop a dual carriageway road with potential to reduce crash rates to 15 crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometres (MVK) over the project length;
- ▶ Develop a refined design that meets or exceeds B-double requirements, including at intersections, where required;
- ▶ Maximise the use of the existing road reserve, where possible;
- ▶ Integrate input from local communities into development of the project through the implementation of a comprehensive program of community consultation and participation;
- ▶ Satisfy the technical and procedural requirements of the RTA with respect to the design of the project;
- ▶ Provide for transport developments that are complementary with land use;
- ▶ Allow for all connections, modifications and improvements necessary to upgrade the existing highway where it is retained as part of the project;
- ▶ Consider delay management strategies to minimise disruption to local and through traffic and maintain access to affected properties and land during construction;
- ▶ Provide flood immunity on at least one carriageway:
 - Target a 1 in 100 year flood event (1% AEP); and
 - Minimum of at least a 1 in 20 year flood event (5% AEP);
- ▶ Provide intersections designed to achieve at least a level of service C 20 years after opening for the 100th highest hourly volume;
- ▶ Develop solutions that address community expectations for access to the new highway;
- ▶ Retain or replace existing rest areas within the study area;
- ▶ Develop a refined design generally meeting the criteria for a 110 km/h design speed for the vertical alignment and horizontal alignment;
- ▶ Ensure the project outcomes achieve value for money;
- ▶ Provide a strategy for future upgrades to be easily integrated into the project from both engineering and environmental perspectives; and
- ▶ Minimise the need to modify the preferred route option and refined design during subsequent project phases.



1.6 Consultation objectives

The overall aim of the community involvement program is to ensure that the development of the preferred route and detailed concept involves the community and considers their interests.

The objectives of the *community involvement program* are:

- ▶ To integrate input from local communities into development of the project through the implementation of a comprehensive program of community involvement and participation;
- ▶ To develop solutions that address community expectations for access to the new Highway;
- ▶ To minimise the physical and traffic impacts of the route such as traffic noise levels, intrusion, community severance and access patterns;
- ▶ To minimise the physical impacts on heritage (indigenous and non-indigenous); and
- ▶ To provide transport developments, which are complementary with existing and proposed land use.

The objectives of the *community involvement process* are to:

- ▶ Equitably engage the broad community involvement for the full duration of the project;
- ▶ Create broad based community and stakeholder understanding of the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program objectives;
- ▶ Work with community and stakeholders in a timely fashion throughout the project phases;
- ▶ Provide transparent facilitation and information exchange;
- ▶ Effectively manage community/stakeholder expectation, for the duration of the project;
- ▶ Understand and accurately documenting stakeholder and community issues and concerns relative to the project;
- ▶ Integrate community and stakeholder issues into each progressive stage of the project and adaptively to the community involvement plan;
- ▶ Raise community and stakeholder awareness of the route options and the technical considerations and constraints for decision making;
- ▶ Facilitate clear and cooperative communications and relations between the RTA, government agencies and the community; and
- ▶ Identify a process on how any community and stakeholder issues will be managed e.g. following the announcement of decisions related to major milestones.



2. Route options consultation

Community involvement activities undertaken to date have focussed on:

- ▶ Informing the community about the project;
- ▶ Involving the community in the project; and
- ▶ Ensuring that community input and concerns are considered in the development and assessment of the route options.

Described below are the details of the activities that were undertaken leading up to and/or during the route options displays in October and November 2005.

2.1 Notifying potentially affected landowners and businesses

A number of landowners and businesses were identified as being potentially affected by one or more of the route options. The project team notified these stakeholders via letters, telephone calls and meetings.

2.1.1 Letters

Landowners and businesses that fell wholly or partially within one or more of the 250m route option corridors were sent personalised letters together with a copy of the community update on the day of the Minister's announcement. The letter (refer to Appendix B) advised them to visit one of the staffed display locations to obtain more information and offered them the opportunity to arrange a meeting with members of the project team to discuss any concerns they may have.

2.1.2 Phone calls

Potentially affected landowners and businesses whose premises could be directly affected by one or more of the route options were also telephoned on Monday 24 October 2005 and advised that the route options had gone on public display (a message was left, where possible, if there was no answer). They were encouraged to visit one of the staffed display locations and informed that they could arrange a meeting with members of the project team.

2.1.3 Meetings

Landowners and businesses requested meetings with the project team by calling the 1800 number or visiting one of the staffed displays.

Approximately 40 meetings were held with potentially affected landowners and businesses at the staffed display locations and at individual residences/business premises.



2.2 Advertisements, media releases and announcements

The commencement of the route options display period was announced on Friday 21 October 2005 by the Minister for Roads, Joe Tripodi MP. Two newspaper and radio advertisements were run during the route options display period (refer to Appendix C).

Newspaper announcements

The first advertisement announced the route options display for the initial four-week period (advertising occurred in the weeks commencing 24 & 31 October 2005 and the 14 & 21 November 2005).

The second advertisement announced the extension of the display period (a two week extension to the original four week display period) from 18 November 2005 to 2 December 2005.

The advertisements appeared in the following newspapers:

- ▶ Sydney Morning Herald (25 October 2005, and 16 and 25 November 2005);
- ▶ The Daily Telegraph (25 October 2005 and 16 November 2005);
- ▶ The Coffs Harbour Advocate (26 October 2005 and, 1, 16 and 25 November 2005);
- ▶ The Daily Examiner (2 and 9 November 2005, and 25 November 2005)
- ▶ The Advertiser, Coffs Harbour (21 and 28 November 2005); and
- ▶ Coffs Harbour & District Independent Weekly (27 October 2005 and 3, 17 and 24 November 2005).

Two media releases coincided with the advertisements.

Radio announcements

The Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing radio announcements were in a combined advertisement to cover the various projects.

The recorded message played on the 27, 28 October, 9, 10, 11, and 16 November 2005 during morning, breakfast and afternoon drive time slots on the following stations:

- ▶ ABC Mid North Coast 684AM, 756AM, 95.5FM, 93.3FM;
- ▶ 2GF AM 1206;
- ▶ 2GF FM 104.7;
- ▶ Star FM 102.3, 105.1; and
- ▶ 2MC FM 100.7 FM, 106.7 FM.

The stations announced the extension of the display period on the 24, 25 and 30 November 2005, during morning, breakfast and afternoon drive time slots.

2.3 Flyers

A flyer was also prepared to raise awareness about the route options display and encourage people to visit one of the display locations (refer to Appendix D).



Copies of the flyer were hand-delivered to the following locations in the vicinity of the study area for placement on noticeboards and, where applicable, front counters:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ▶ Coffs Harbour Roads and Traffic Authority motor registry | ▶ Blueberry Farms of Australia |
| ▶ Halfway Creek Fire Brigade | ▶ Red Rock Bowling Club |
| ▶ Bus Stop intersection of Pacific Highway and Range Road | ▶ Red Rock Ford Street Bus Stop |
| ▶ Yarrowarra Cultural Centre, Corindi Beach | ▶ Amble Inn (Corindi Beach) |
| ▶ Lorikeet Tourist Park | ▶ Corindi Beach General Store |
| ▶ Arrawarra Beach Holiday Park | ▶ Mullaway General Store |
| ▶ Woolgoolga Mobil Service Station | ▶ Mullaway Caravan Park |
| ▶ Woolgoolga RSL | ▶ Woolgoolga BP Service Station |
| ▶ Woolgoolga IGA Supermarket | ▶ Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre |
| ▶ Mullaway Primary School | ▶ Woolgoolga High School |

2.4 Community update No. 2 – route options display

Community update No. 2 announced the route options display, advised the community of the display locations and how to obtain more information and sought feedback on the route options. More than 1,000 copies were distributed to households and owners of properties in the study area. In addition, copies of the community update were made available at both the static and staffed display locations.

A copy of community update No. 2 is provided in Appendix E.

2.5 Feedback forms

A feedback form was enclosed in the community update (refer to Appendix E). The purpose of the feedback form was to assist community members to provide their comments on the route options and the key issues that should be considered when determining the preferred route.

An online version of the feedback form was uploaded onto the project website on the day of the announcement (refer to Appendix E).

2.6 Public displays

The route options display comprised of the following seven posters:

1. Completing the Upgrade of the Pacific Highway – context of the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing project in relation to the overall Pacific Highway Upgrade Program
2. All options – overview and comparison of key features of the options and cross section of the upgraded highway.



3. Blue Option – features and issues associated with the Blue Option.
4. Green Option – features and issues associated with the Green Option.
5. Purple Option – features and issues associated with the Purple Option.
6. Orange Option – features and issues associated with the Orange Option.
7. Study area characteristics – key features and environmental constraints of the study area in relation to the options.

Copies of the display posters are provided in Appendix A.

2.6.1 Staffed displays

Representatives from the RTA and the GHD project team were available to discuss the route options at the following locations during the display period:

- ▶ Woolgoolga Seniors Centre,
6 Boundary Street, Woolgoolga, Fri 28 October 2005, 10am-4pm and Fri 4 November 2005, 10am-4pm.
- ▶ Red Rock Multi Use Centre,
Red Rock Road, Red Rock, Sat 29 October 2005, 10am-4pm and Sat 5 November 2005, 10pm-4pm.
- ▶ Park Beach Plaza,
Coffs Harbour, Thurs 27 October 2005, 2pm-8pm and Thurs 3 November 2005, 2pm-8pm.

Copies of the following materials were available at the staffed displays (refer to appendices D, F and G):

- ▶ Large scale display;
- ▶ Community updates;
- ▶ Feedback forms;
- ▶ Completing the upgrade of the Pacific Highway community updates;
- ▶ Fact sheets:
 - How is noise addressed?
 - Property acquisition
 - Meeting environmental needs
 - Environmental assessment – Part 3A

Project team members were available to answer questions on the route options and address any individual concerns. The project geographical information system (GIS) was available at the display to show property owners the route options in relation to their property and assist discussion.



2.6.2 Static displays

Small displays were put up at the following locations:

- ▶ RTA Pacific Highway office,
21 Prince Street, Grafton, Mon–Fri 8.30am-4.30pm.
- ▶ Coffs Harbour City Council offices,
Coff Street, Coffs Harbour, Mon–Fri 8am-5pm.
- ▶ Grafton library, 2 Prince Street, Grafton
Mon–Fri 10am-5.30pm and Sat 9.30am-Noon.
- ▶ Woolgoolga library,
Ganderton Street, Woolgoolga, Mon–Fri 9.30am-5pm and Sat 9.30am-Noon.
- ▶ Corindi Beach Post Office,
89 Pacific Street, Corindi Beach, Mon–Fri 9am-1pm and 2pm-5pm.
- ▶ Red Rock Post Office and General Store,
Cnr of Park & Lawson Streets, Red Rock, Mon–Sat 8am-6pm and Sun 8.30am-5.30pm.
- ▶ United service station,
Halfway Creek, Mon–Sun 6.30am-7pm.

Copies of the community update with the feedback form, the route options development report and flyers were left at each display location. These materials were regularly replenished throughout the display period.

In addition, it was recognised that there is a significant Sikh community in and around Woolgoolga, many of whom work in the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing study area. Therefore the 'All options' poster and flyer were translated into Punjabi and put up at the:

- ▶ Blueberry Farms of Australia noticeboard;
- ▶ Guru Nanak temple; and
- ▶ First Sikh temple.

2.7 Website

The project website has been regularly updated since the project commenced. Electronic copies of all communications materials regarding the route options and the route options development report were uploaded onto the website on the day of the Minister's announcement (refer to Appendix F).

Internet users had the opportunity to view the route options development report online or request that a CD or hard copy be mailed to them. They also had the opportunity to complete and submit an online version of the feedback form.

2.8 Community liaison group meetings

As part of the ongoing involvement of the community in the project, a community liaison group (CLG) was formed in December 2004, with the following aims:



- ▶ To create a forum for discussion and exchange of information on topics related to the development phase of the project.
- ▶ To assist the project team to identify local issues related to the project that will input into the route development phase.
- ▶ To act as a two-way communication link between the project team and the community and stakeholders.

Four CLG meetings have been held to date. The fourth meeting occurred in October 2005, where CLG members had the opportunity to go on a bus tour to view the various routes. Commentary on the route options was provided during the bus tour and discussions occurred during the meeting that followed.

2.9 Ecological focus group meetings

As part of the ongoing involvement of stakeholders in the project, an ecological focus group (EFG) was formed in September 2005, with the following aims:

- ▶ To create a forum for discussion and exchange of information on ecological topics related to the development phase of the project;
- ▶ To assist the project team to identify local ecological issues related to the project that will input into the development phase of the project; and
- ▶ To act as a two-way communication link between the project team and the community, ecological interest groups and stakeholders.

EFG members were sought by invitation to ensure the group represented a broad range of environmental interests.

The group has met twice since it was formed. At the meeting in October 2005, EFG members also had the opportunity to go on the bus tour with the CLG members.

2.10 Council presentations

Presentations to Councillors and council officers of both Coffs Harbour City Council and Clarence Valley Council were undertaken during the route options display period.

2.11 Management of information requests

During the display period, the project team received a number of requests for information. This included requests for route options development reports and more detailed maps of the route options from the GIS. Approximately 40 route option development reports were sent to community members on request. Approximately 14 maps were generated and sent to potentially affected property owners and businesses, following meetings.



3. Participation in consultation activities

At the beginning of the project the following contact facilities were established to provide the community with a range of ways to contact the study team, have easy access to information and have an opportunity throughout the project to make comment:

- ▶ Project information line: 1800 154 724
- ▶ Email: communityinput@ghd.com.au
- ▶ Freepost address: Pacific Highway upgrade program
Reply Paid 65079
GHD
10 Bond Street
Sydney NSW 2000
- ▶ Project website: www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific
(click on Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing)

3.1 Summary of community involvement

Tables 1 and 2 below provide a summary of participation in consultation activities and contact made with the project team during the route options display.

Table 1 Summary of participation in consultation activities

Activity	Number of participants
Staffed displays (27, 28 & 29 October and 3, 4 & 5 November 2005)	Approximately 80
Meetings with potentially affected property owners and businesses	Approximately 40

Table 2 Summary of community contacts

Method of contact	Number of responses
Calls to the 1800 number	55
Feedback forms	137
Online feedback forms	2
Emails	15
Letters (Including one letter to the Minister for Roads)	11
Faxes	4 (copies of mailed submissions)



4. Consideration of submissions on the route options

4.1 Overview

In total, 150 submissions were received (145 during the route options display period and a further five in the week after the submission closing date), which comprised:

- ▶ Four written submissions from statutory authorities;
- ▶ Seven written submissions from individuals and organisations (including one letter to the Minister); and
- ▶ 139 feedback forms from individuals and organisations (Six households sent in two feedback forms and one household sent in three feedback forms).

The project team considered all submissions received by 9 December 2005.

The term 'submission' refers to any written correspondence received by the project team. At this stage in the project, submissions related to the route options and issues to be considered in the selection of the preferred route.

4.2 Processing of submissions

Each submission was given a unique identification number. The comments raised were classified against issues headings and entered into a submissions database. Appendix H contains a list of all submissions, with the submission identification number and the classification of the issues raised. Section 4.4 provides a summary of the feedback received.

Where applicable, preliminary responses (based on current knowledge) to the issues, concerns and suggestions have been provided by the project team (Refer to Appendix I).

All submissions were acknowledged, either by email or letter.

4.3 Summary of responses to questions asked in the feedback form

The feedback form gave the community the opportunity to:

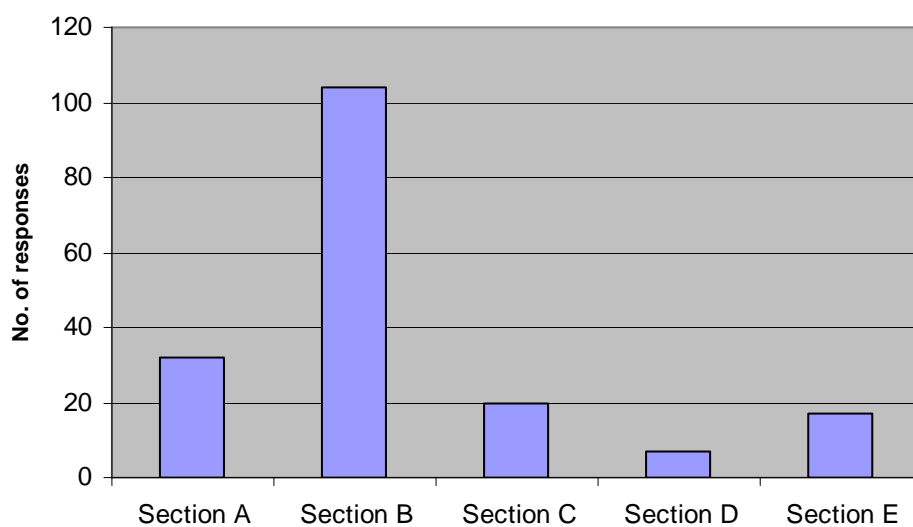
- ▶ indicate which section of the study area they were most interested in;
- ▶ identify and rank key issues to be considered in the selection of a preferred route; and
- ▶ nominate which route they felt best addressed those key issues.

The results are discussed below. The feedback form also gave the community the opportunity to explain their reasons for selecting a particular option or to highlight any other concerns or issues. This feedback is contained in Section 4.4.

4.3.1 Key area of interest

As shown in Figure 1, most respondents were interested in Section B. Some respondents ticked more than one box. This may have been because they live in one section and travel to other sections on a regular basis, for example, to get to work.

Figure 1 Key area of interest



4.3.2 Feedback on issues to be considered in the selection of the preferred route

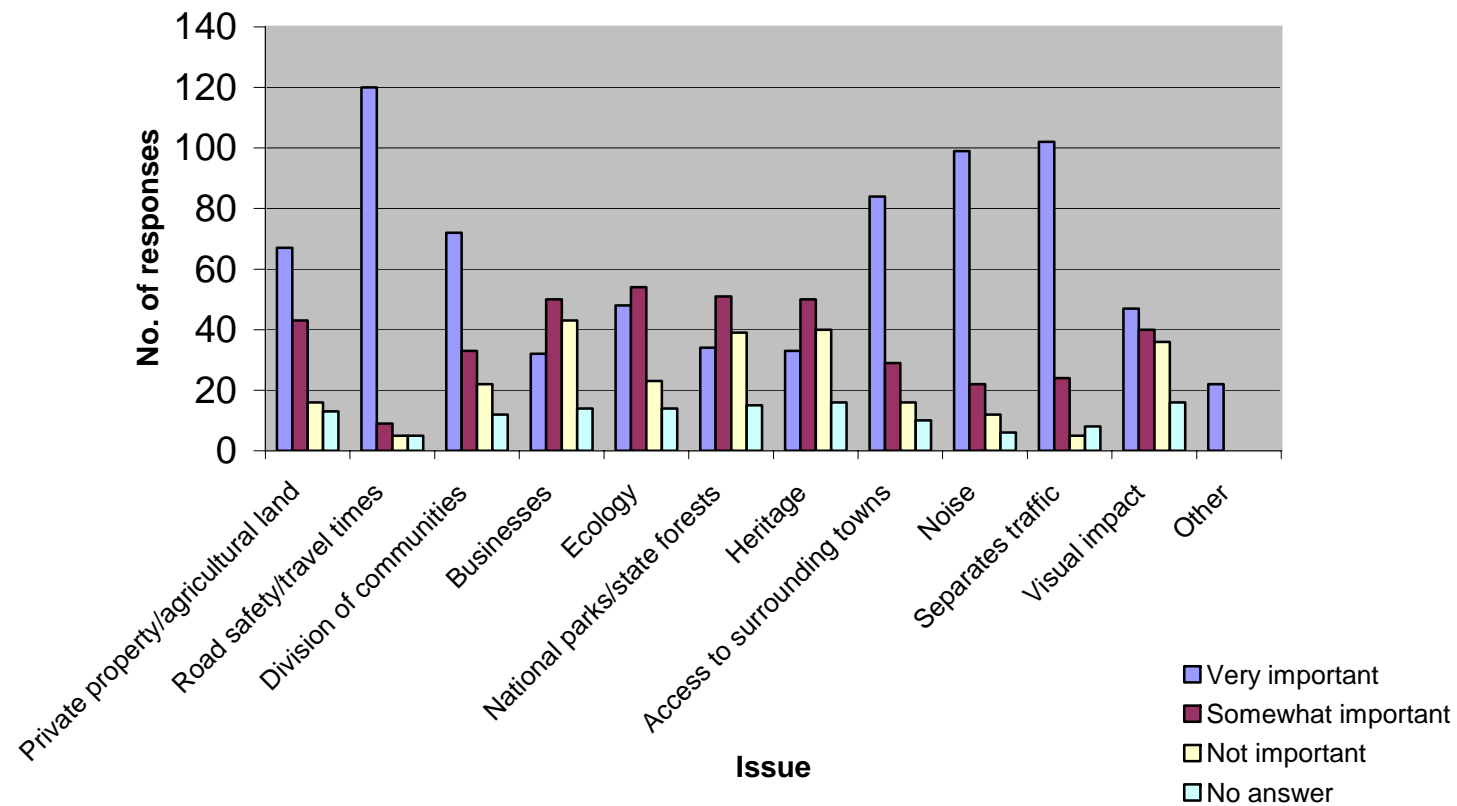
As shown in Figure 2 the top five issues considered most important by the community when deciding the preferred route are:

1. Improvements to road safety and travel times on the highway
2. Separation of local and through traffic
3. Noise impacts from traffic on the highway
4. Maintenance of improvement to access to surrounding towns
5. Does not cause division of communities

Issues raised under the category 'other' included allowing Corindi Beach to expand; reducing hold-ups during floods; preservation of native vegetation; construction cost and timeframe for completion; property acquisition and compensation; less impact on lifestyles and families; access; loss of land; drainage; disruption during construction; and pollution.



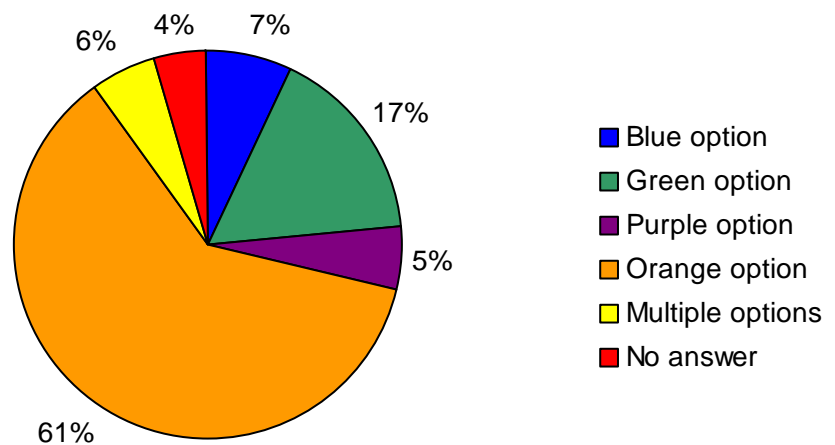
Figure 2 Key issues to be considered in the selection of a preferred route



4.3.3 Which option best addresses the issues?

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of respondents (61%) felt that Orange Option best addressed the issues. However, it should be noted that 76% of feedback forms returned were from people who live in Section B. Section B of the Orange Option offers a bypass of Corindi to the west, so many community members may have selected the Orange Option, purely on this basis. Indeed 56% of respondents selected Section B as their key area of interest as well as selecting Orange as their preferred option.

Figure 3 Which route best addresses the issues?



The display materials indicated that different sections of different options could be joined together and people were invited to refer to specific sections of options on the feedback form. However, many respondents just ticked an option colour. Outlined below are the preferences (in order) for each option based on sections¹:

- ▶ Section A – (1) Orange Option.
- ▶ Section B - (1) Orange Option, (2) Green Option (3) Purple Option.
- ▶ Section C - (1) Green Option, (2) Orange Option.
- ▶ Section E - (1) Orange Option, (2) Blue Option.

Only a couple of respondents commented on Section D.

Where multiple options were selected, it may have been because people had a preference for different options in different sections or that the options were in fact the

¹ Indicates the preferred option in each Section. It should be noted that it was not possible to deduce preferences for each Section from all the responses received. This information is based on information supplied in a limited number of responses, where preferences on particular sections were explicit.

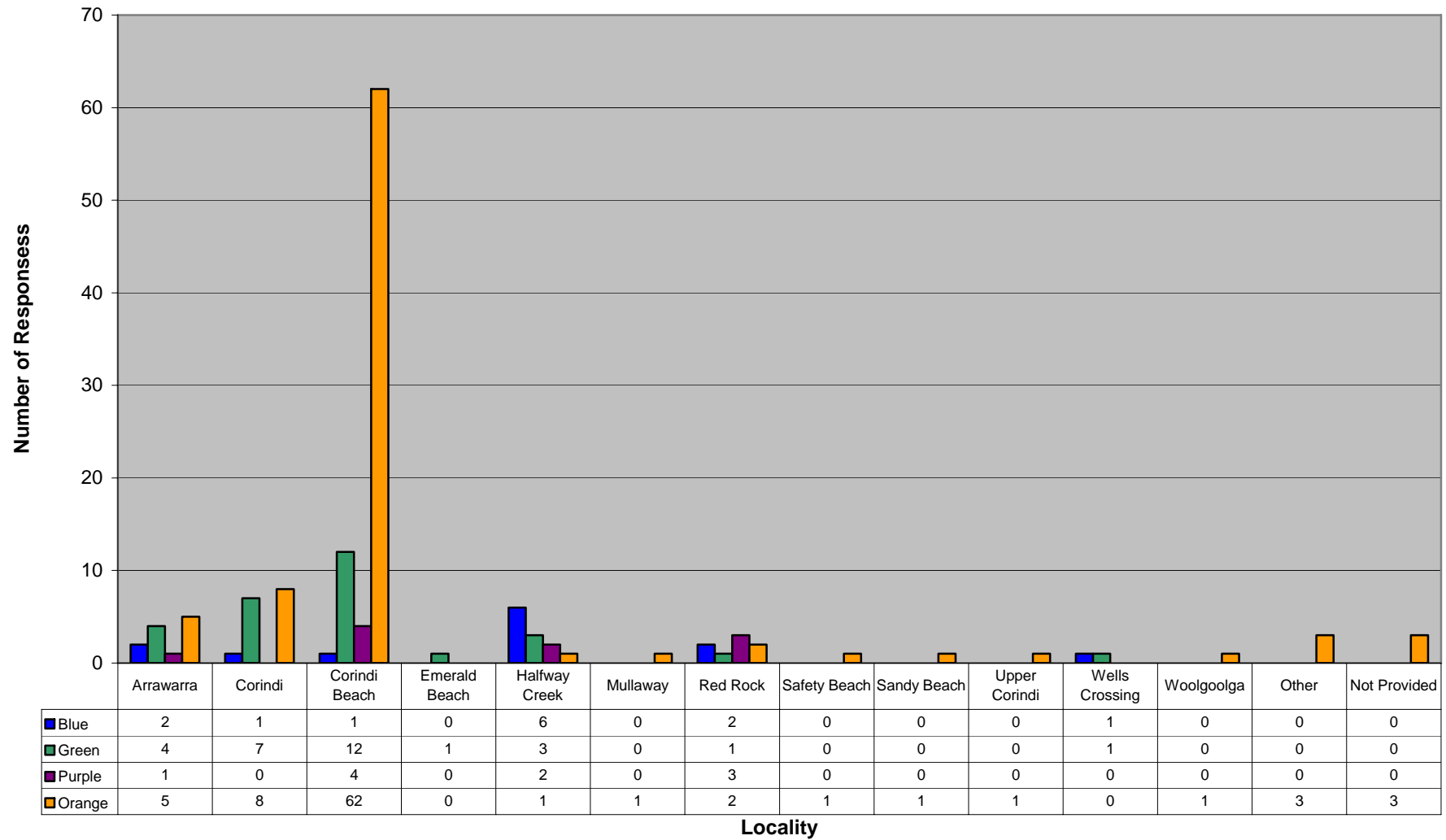


same in the section they were referring to (e.g. Green, Purple and Orange are the same in Section E).

Figure 4 illustrates the option selected by residents of each locality. 'Other' incorporates localities that were not within or in close proximity to the study area. For the purposes of analysis, feedback from non-resident property owners was classified against the locality where their property was located as opposed to the locality where they resided.



Figure 4 Preferred option by locality of residence





4.4 Summary of qualitative feedback from the community

Below is a summary of the main issues that were raised in community submissions. Respondent's comments have been summarised to provide an overview of the key issues, therefore it is not a verbatim record of community comments. Refer to Appendix I for a record of the comments made, grouped under issues headings.

The feedback from the community has been considered in the value management workshop and will be considered further in selecting the preferred route.

4.4.1 A – Access to highway

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.

4.4.2 B – Access to properties

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 access road to improve safety and functionality for local traffic.

4.4.3 C – Access to surrounding towns and amenities

Providing good access and connections to towns and amenities, such as the shops, and beach, were raised as important issues.

4.4.4 D – Air quality

Many respondents were of the opinion that the Orange Option in Section B would keep the pollution away from residential areas. Concerns were also raised regarding the management of pollution during construction and operation.

4.4.5 E – Business impacts

Some respondents were of the opinion that the highway should be routed away from built up areas, although this should not impact upon businesses that rely on passing trade. Concerns were raised over the loss of visibility and direct highway access for businesses and the impact that would have on financial viability.

4.4.6 F – Compensation and property values

Concerns were raised in a number of submissions that adequate compensation should be provided for those affected by the upgrade, including costs to cover re-establishment, loss of income / business, loss of lifestyle / living standards and loss of development potential. The community raised concerns over devaluation of properties, by announcement of the route options and, when selected, the proximity of the



preferred route. Conversely business concerns included devaluation of their asset as a result of being bypassed.

4.4.7 G – Construction impacts

The community appears to be generally in support of the Orange Option, as it has less construction impacts on the local community and highway users, compared to other options.

4.4.8 H – Consultation process

Several complaints were received regarding the consultation process, in particular the adequacy and transparency of consultation, the accuracy of consultation materials and cost of the consultation process.

4.4.9 I – Division of communities

A number of submissions were in favour of the Orange Option in Section B, as it would bypass Corindi and Corindi Beach, thereby avoid division of the community. Many respondents were of the opinion that it would allow for future growth and expansion of the village. Concerns about the Blue, Green and Purple Options included division and/or isolation of the community and loss of access to the village and its amenities.

4.4.10 J – Flooding protection

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.

4.4.11 K – Highway design and layout

A number of submissions were received that related to the highway design and layout. Most of the submissions were in support of the Orange Option in Section B, as the proposed route is further from Corindi Beach. Some submissions were in support of the Blue and Purple Options in Section B as these options use more of the existing road corridor. There was some support for the Green Option, particularly for Section C, as it is more direct and has less bends. There were also many concerns and suggestions regarding overtaking and turning lanes, shoulder widths and the location of the interchange. Suggestions included moving the highway inland, away from the coastal strip.

4.4.12 L – Impacts on areas of environmental significance

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.



4.4.13 M – Impacts on ecology (animal and plant life)

A number of submissions expressed concern about the impact upon native species and their habitat. There was some support for the Blue Option 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.

4.4.14 N – Indigenous heritage

Concerns were raised regarding the impacts on cultural heritage.

4.4.15 O – Local agricultural land

There was some opposition to the Orange Option due to the amount of agricultural land that would need to be acquired for the highway upgrade.

4.4.16 P – Noise

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.

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.

4.4.17 Q – Property acquisition and property impacts

A number of submissions expressed concern regarding the acquisition of private property and whether those impacted would receive adequate compensation.

4.4.18 R – Recreational impacts

There was concern expressed regarding access to community facilities, such as the community hall at Halfway Creek, and the school, sporting fields, the beach and shops at Corindi Beach.

4.4.19 S – Safety

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.

4.4.20 T – Timing of upgrade

Many respondents expressed their desire for the upgrade works to be carried out as soon as possible.



4.4.21 U – Traffic concerns

The submissions received expressed various opinions regarding their preferred route option, especially with regard to traffic. However many were in support of separating local and through traffic and minimising the number of large trucks that travel through Corindi Beach.

4.4.22 V – Travel time

There was support for the Orange Option in Section B because of the potential for travel time savings.

Concerns were also raised that residents of Red Rock would have to travel down past Corindi Beach in order to access the highway to travel north.

4.4.23 W – Visual impact

The visual impact of the upgrade was raised in some submissions. The respondents were divided between whether the Orange Option in Section B would be better or worse in terms of visual impact. However, Blue Option was considered to adversely impact on visual amenity.

4.4.24 X – Other

Submissions were also received relating to a number of other issues and concerns. These are summarised and responded to in Appendix I.

4.5 Summary of qualitative feedback from potentially affected property owners and businesses

Many of the concerns raised during meetings with potentially affected property owners were specific to individual circumstances, however they generally included:

- ▶ Devaluation of property values – concerns over devaluation caused by announcement of the route options and ultimately announcement of the preferred route;
- ▶ Loss of productive land, livelihood and incomes – some have intentions to grow produce such as fruit, vegetables, trees, and keep live produce, on land which is potentially affected by one or more of the route options;
- ▶ Loss of investment – some were concerned over investment they had put into their land and/or property;
- ▶ Loss of heritage – some of the land has been in families for generations;
- ▶ Uncertainty of level of impact – some expressed insecurity of not knowing if, how and when they will be ultimately be affected;
- ▶ Uncertainty about the amount of land to be acquired for the upgrade and the potential that they would not be able to sell land - division of land into small unmarketable parcels;
- ▶ The process, eligibility for and timing of land acquisition;
- ▶ Restriction/modification of access to properties/businesses – concerns over indirect access to the highway and whether they would be consulted over access arrangements;
- ▶ How the options would affect their plans to develop/subdivide their land;
- ▶ Noise, drainage and structural impacts – how these issues would be addressed should highway move closer to their properties;
- ▶ Loss of exposure to passing trade (businesses) – in particular visibility from the highway and ability to access businesses; and
- ▶ RTA not honouring agreements – when the highway was previously upgraded, some said that they were promised compensation measures, but these were not provided.

4.6 Summary of qualitative feedback from statutory agencies

The following statutory agencies provided feedback on the route options:

- ▶ The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC);
- ▶ Coffs Harbour City Council;
- ▶ NSW Department of Primary Industries; and
- ▶ Marine Parks Authority.

Table 3 provides a summary of the comments received.



Table 3 Feedback from statutory agencies

Agency	Issue
Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)	General
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ The route selection process should consider the extent to which any potential impacts can be mitigated, therefore feasibility of mitigation measures should be assessed as part of the process.
	Biodiversity
	<i>All options</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ All options create barriers to fauna dispersal and movement and increased risk of roadkills, especially where they traverse continuous tracts of forest/woodland. The Green Option in Section C has substantial potential to generate these adverse impacts. ▸ All options involve the widening of existing highway strips through Yuraygir Sherwood and Newfoundland Sherwood Regional Corridors. In sections D & E this will affect DEC estate (Yuraygir State Conservation Area), creating significant edge effects. ▸ All options in Sections C & D traverse potential Koala and Yellow-bellied Glider habitat (Tallowwood and other moist eucalypt forest) ▸ Sections B, C and D of all options are likely to impact high conservation value communities (Wet Flooded Gum-Tallowwood) ▸ A significant population of Rufous Bettong occurs in Glenugie State Forest, which will be affected by all options in Section E.



Agency	Issue
Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) cont.	<i>Orange Option</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Orange Option has the potential to generate significant adverse ecological impact because it will bisect designated wildlife corridors and key habitats and adversely affect the ecological integrity of the study area, for instance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Section B – widening of clearing through Corindi River Subregional Wildlife Corridor, potentially degrade the aquatic ecology of the Corindi River, may affect the nominated Swamp Oak EEC– Section C/D – sever the Dirty Creek Subregional Wildlife Corridor, potentially degrade the aquatic ecology of Halfway Creek, impinge on DEC estate (Yuraygir State Conservation Area and Yuraygir National Park)– Section E – degrade the ecological integrity of Wells Crossing Flora Reserve▶ Orange Option may require removal of potential Osprey roost and/or nest trees in patches of fragmented forest and in farmland west of Corindi Beach.
	<i>Blue Option</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Blue Option is likely to have less impact than the other options on biodiversity values in the study area as it follows the existing highway route. DEC favours the route option/s with the least potential to adversely affect the ecological integrity, persistence and long-term survival of native biodiversity and their habitat in the local and regional landscape.
	<i>Orange and Green Options</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Orange and Green Options appear to have the greatest potential to adversely affect key flora & fauna habitats, fauna movement corridors, threatened plants and animals, endangered populations, Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs), landscape structure and function and aquatic ecosystems.



Agency	Issue
Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) cont.	<i>Green, Purple and Orange Options</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ All options other than Blue Option, have the potential to degrade Wells Crossing Flora Reserve through increased edge effects (pest plant and animal incursions, heightened wildfire risk, rubbish dumping), loss of key foraging, breeding and refuge habitat for fauna, habitat fragmentation and increase ease of human access.
	<i>General</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Threatened fauna and flora species, populations, or EECs and high conservation value habitat occur within or near the route options.▸ Secondary koala habitat occurs on the eastern perimeter of the existing highway in Section A and will require protection or compensatory habitat if removed.▸ Potential for occurrence of Emus, which are part of the endangered population in the North Coast Bioregion. Mitigation measures will need to focus on protection of core breeding, foraging, refuge habitats and habitat condition, habitat rehabilitation and mitigation of roadkills.▸ The design, installation and maintenance of adequate underpasses, overpasses and exclusion fencing to facilitate fauna movement through wildlife corridors should be key features of the impact mitigation strategy for the preferred route.▸ Need to consider the landscape ecological impact of the project at a site/local, regional, bioregional and State level.▸ Need to consider the potential impact within the context of the overall Pacific Highway Upgrade Program rather than individual sections.▸ Need to consider cumulative effects of development in the study area on ecosystems and landscape units and impacts on landscape structure and functions.



Agency	Issue
Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) cont.	<p>Heritage</p> <p><i>Preliminary comments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Aboriginal cultural significance of Dirty Creek Range needs to be carefully assessed.▶ A cultural heritage survey of Yuragir National Park identified the importance of the Coast Range to Gumbaingirr people, including Browns Knob and Cabbage Tree Mountain. Other areas of significance in the regional cultural landscape include Station Creek High Dunes Burial Grounds, Green Hills and Red Rock.▶ Need to understand the importance of the indigenous cultural landscape as one large site rather than individual significant sites.▶ Further consultation with DEC's Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) and Northern Aboriginal Heritage Section, the Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Garby Elders at Corindi Beach should be undertaken prior to selection of the preferred route. <p>Air</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ No information provided on air quality that would enable the options to be differentiated. <p>Noise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ DEC favours route options that comply with DEC guideline Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise and have the least impact, particularly on new noise receivers.▶ Blue Option has least impact, especially if linked with Section C of Purple or Orange Option.▶ Section B of the Orange Option would reduce noise levels in Corindi and Corindi Beach, but will result in construction and noise impacts on receivers who currently experience low background noise.



Agency	Issue
Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feasible options for effective mitigation should be carefully considered when determining the suitability of the Orange route. <p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">All options in Section A & B have potential to directly or indirectly degrade the quality of SEPP 14 wetlands, estuarine wetlands (Arrawarra Creek) and the Corindi floodplains.Freshwater wetlands, riparian habitats supporting threatened aquatic flora and fauna and EECs along Halfway Creek may be adversely affected, particularly by Orange, Green and Blue Options.If possible, routes should avoid SEPP 14 wetlands. If potential for impact remains, best practice water quality and aquatic habitat protection measures should be implemented.The additional bridge required in Section B of the Blue, Green and Purple Options could pose a risk to the environment during construction. <p>Corridors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Need to ensure that sufficient corridor can be acquired to permit the installation and maintenance of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, water and fauna during construction and operation.
Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC)	<p>Local access and transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">It is accepted that local road and private accesses to the highway will be rationalised, however intersections, interchanges and U turns should be positioned to avoid long/indirect routes to gain access to the highway.Council supports the development of local access roads connecting communities along the highway.Should be safe and efficient provisions for inter city and school bus services in the design.



Agency	Issue
Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Council considers development of cycleway facilities linking local and regional centres as an important part of the Pacific Highway Upgrade planning. Provision of an off road bicycle path linked to NSW coastline cycleway project should be included. <p>Drainage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Minimise effects on existing drainage and groundwater conditions. <p>Property impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Orange Option may require acquisition of land related to the sewage treatment plant on Kangaroo Trail Road. Needs to be assessed in terms of ongoing and long term operation of the plant.▸ Council does not support any Option which unduly affects the viability or operation of agricultural industries in the area. <p>Plans and policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Consider the CHCC Corindi River Estuary Management Plan in the assessment of the route options.▸ Consider the CHCC settlement strategy and liaise with CHCC in regard to potential impacts of any development potential being identified or realised in the Corindi/Upper Corindi area. <p>Noise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Noise impacts on existing and future residential areas must be considered and appropriate noise minimisation and mitigation measures need to be implemented. <p>Acid sulphate soils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ The option corridors are known to contain potential for acid sulphate soils, which should be addressed.



Agency	Issue
Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) cont	<p data-bbox="533 520 640 549">Heritage</p> <ul data-bbox="533 564 1886 743" style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage liaison with the Garby Elders, Yarrawarra Cooperative and the Local Aboriginal Land Council in order to ensure appropriate respect, identification and monitoring of route options with due regard to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Any identified and preferred route option should identify the necessary Statement of Heritage Impact in accordance with provisions of the Heritage Act 1977. <p data-bbox="533 767 958 796">Wildlife corridors, flora and fauna</p> <ul data-bbox="533 815 1886 1050" style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed options will, to varying degrees, require removal of Endangered Ecological Communities (stands of Swamp Sclerophyll Forest, Swamp Oak Forest, Subtropical Coast Floodplain Forest or River-flat Eucalypt Forest). All options that extend over low-lying areas are likely to contain one or more of these. There are large stands of regrowth <i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>, along the road reserve, which may be affected by widening. This provides preferred habitat for the Glossy Black Cockatoo. The presence of an endangered Emu population needs to be considered for sections B to E.
Department of Primary Industries	<p data-bbox="533 1091 678 1120">Agriculture</p> <ul data-bbox="533 1136 1886 1402" style="list-style-type: none"> Notable agricultural land uses in the study area are limited to extensive grazing, Chiquita's Blueberry Farm of Australia, Benefield's Rose Farm at Halfway Creek and a number of smaller horticultural establishments. There are travelling stock reserves (TSRs) in the study area. Refer to Grafton RLPB for the most appropriate organisation to contact regarding the implications of the route options on TSRs. While all of the options appear to have property specific impacts and locality specific impacts on rural lands and some smaller horticultural operations, none of the route options create discernable or obvious significant adverse impacts on agriculture in this locality.



Agency	Issue
Department of Primary Industries cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Property specific impacts and assessment of smaller agricultural enterprises, property access arrangements and rural residential land uses should be considered in the selection of the preferred route <p>Fisheries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Prefers that the option selected should have the least potential impact on fishing activity, fish (especially threatened species) and aquatic habitat, such as wetlands (especially SEPP 14 wetlands), mangroves and seagrass beds. <p>Minerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ The majority of the study area, north and west of Dirty Creek Range, is covered by a petroleum exploration licence (PEL 426). ▸ From this point north, the land is underlain by the Clarence Moreton Basin, which has potential for coal, oil and gas. ▸ There are a number of construction material quarries along the proposed routes, either side of the existing highway. Many are not operating, but contain material that could be potentially be extracted in the future. The larger ones are Taylors Pit (weathered organics), Feltons Pit (sandstone), Skelly's Ironstone Pit (weathered ironstone), Housegos Pit (weathered ironstone) and Glenugie Peak Ballast Quarry (basalt and gabbro) ▸ Taylors and Feltons Pit are in the path of the proposed options and access to the others would be affected. ▸ Potential for additional reserves of construction material exists along Dirty Creek Range. ▸ Access should be provided onto the highway at Dirty Creek Range.



Agency	Issue
Department of Primary Industries cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Need to establish construction material requirements for the upgrade, likely sources and the potential impact of supplying any of those requirements from existing quarries on the future supply of construction materials in the district. <p>State forests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The following options will impact on conservation and commercial values of forests, and will result in some fragmentation of forests and habitats. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Orange Option appears to impact on Wedding Bells State Forest in Section A – Green and Blue Options impact on Newfoundland State Forest in Section C. – All options impact on the edge of Wells Crossing Flora Reserve in Section E. ▶ Options that maximise use of the existing corridor in sections A & E are preferred. ▶ Green Option is least preferred in Section C. ▶ The routes that impact on Newfoundland State Forest in Section C avoid Special Management Zones within the forest. ▶ Wells Crossing Flora Reserve is established under s25 of the Forestry Act and can only be revoked by Act of Parliament, although provisions of s16A relating to land exchange are applicable.
Marine Parks Authority (MPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Section A & B traverse Arrawarra Creek and the Corindi River, which form part of the Solitary Islands Marine Park. ▶ Section A – all options follow the existing highway so the Marine Parks Authority cannot show a preference for this section.



Agency	Issue
Marine Parks Authority (MPA) cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▸ Section B of the Orange Option has the least impact on the Solitary Islands Marine Park as it follows a furthest from the marine park.▸ No single corridor has a distinct advantage over others in protecting water quality or habitat▸ Less habitat destruction and smallest footprint on the landscape associated with upgrading the existing highway.▸ Water pollution needs to be adequately addressed in the EIS, both in terms of construction and the operational phase. There needs to be some risk analysis of all aspects of the development that have the potential to pollute waters.▸ Construction phase poses the greatest threat to water quality and significant effort needs to be made toward the effective management of stormwater and pollutants.▸ Need to consider measures to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Minimise impacts during construction.– Reduce harm to the SIMP from pollution incidents once the upgraded highway is operational, e.g. detention structures, contingency plans.– Special emphasis should be placed on gully and watercourse crossings, vehicle set down and repair areas, fuel storage and waste disposal.



5. Process for selection of the preferred route

5.1 Route corridor selection

The process for selection of the preferred route is illustrated in Figure 5. Key stages in the process are described below.

5.1.1 Consideration of submissions raised by the community and other stakeholders

All submissions received during the route options display period will be considered in greater detail by the RTA and GHD in recommending a preferred route. The recommendation will be made to the Minister for Roads. Issues raised will also be used throughout the planning phase of the Project in developing the preliminary design for the preferred route.

5.1.2 Reports and ongoing field investigations

The RTA and the GHD Project Team will assess the route options against preliminary environmental and engineering investigations, and selection criteria developed by the RTA and the GHD Project Team, which relate to the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program objectives and the Woolgoolga to Wells Crossing Project objectives. The outcomes of this assessment will assist the RTA in making a recommendation to the Minister for Roads on a preferred route option.

5.1.3 Value management workshop

A value management workshop was held on 5-6 December 2005 and involved various stakeholders, including government agencies, local councils, community representatives, environmental groups, the GHD project team and the RTA. A summary of submissions was considered at the value management workshop.

5.2 Announcement of the preferred route

The NSW Minister for Roads will announce the preferred route taking into consideration the recommendation of the RTA which would be based on the outcomes of the value management workshop held in December 2005, the route assessment process, and public submissions.

5.3 Public display of preliminary design

It is anticipated that the preliminary design for the preferred route will go on public display in mid 2006.

Figure 5 Process for selection of the preferred route

