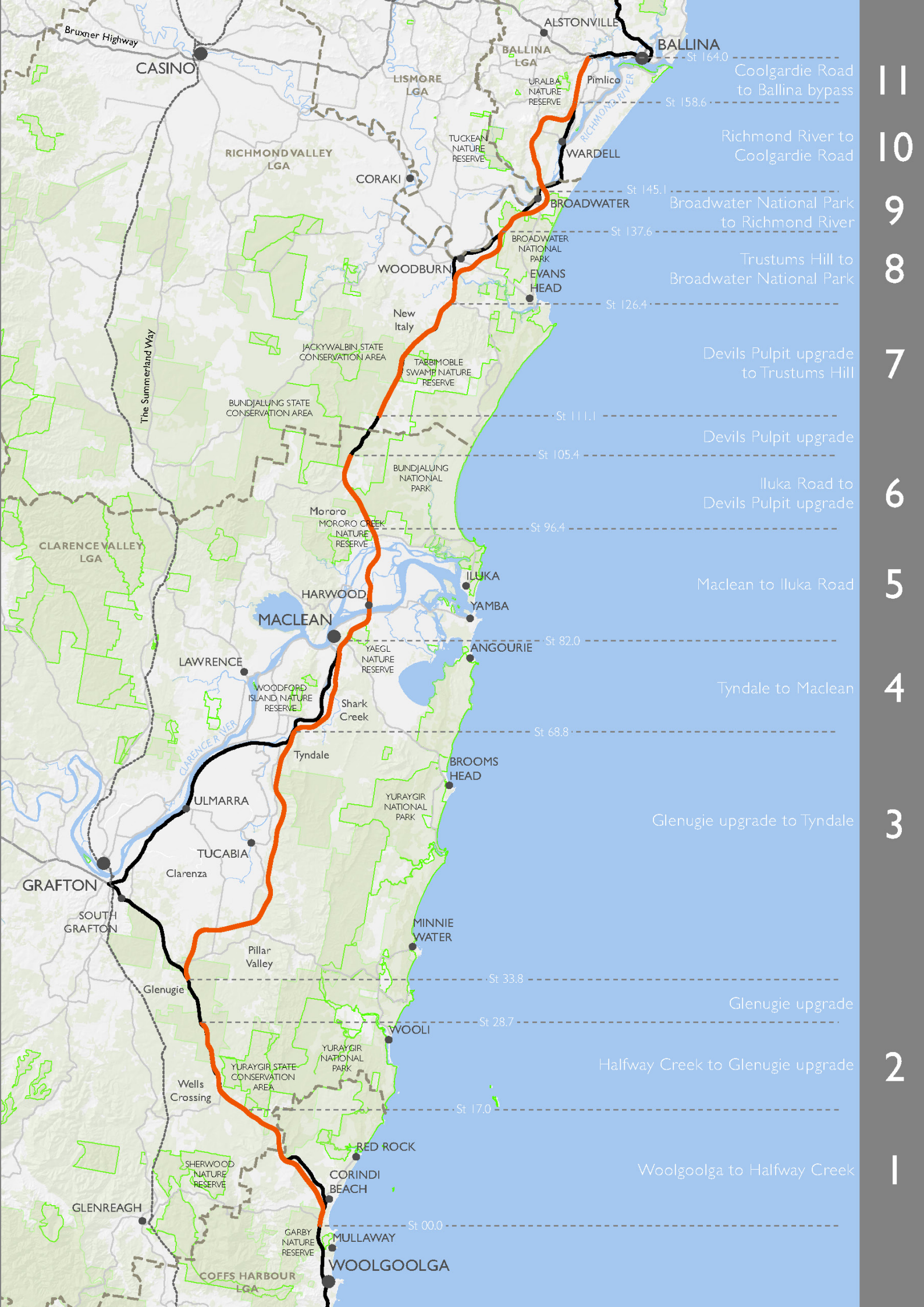


NSW Roads and Maritime Services

WOOLGOOLGA TO BALLINA | PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE SUBMISSIONS / PREFERRED INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

Chapter 1

November 2013



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1. Introduction and background

1.1 The project

1.1.1 Project overview

NSW Roads and Maritime Services (Roads and Maritime) is seeking approval for the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade project (the project), on the NSW North Coast. The approval is sought under Part 5.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The location of the project in the NSW North Coast region is shown in Figure 1-1 and an overview of the project is shown in Figure 1-2.

Since 1996, both the Australian and NSW governments have contributed funds to the upgrade of the 664 kilometre section of the Pacific Highway between Hexham and the Queensland border, as part of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program.

Both governments have a shared commitment to finish upgrading the highway to a four-lane divided road as soon as possible. The NSW and Federal Government have expressed a desire to finish upgrading the highway to a four-lane divided road as soon as possible. However, the actual timing of construction, opening to traffic and completion is dependent on funding negotiations between the Australian and NSW governments.

The project would upgrade around 155 kilometres of highway and represents the last priority (known as 'Priority 3' in the upgrade program) in achieving a four-lane divided road between Hexham and the NSW/Queensland Border. The project therefore forms a major part of the overall upgrade program and when constructed, would complete the four-lane divided road program.

The project does not include the Pacific Highway upgrades at Glenugie and Devils Pulpit, which are located between Woolgoolga and Ballina. These are separate projects, with Glenugie now complete and Devils Pulpit under construction. Altogether, these three projects would upgrade 164 kilometres of the Pacific Highway. The project does, however, include a partial upgrade of the existing dual carriageways at Halfway Creek.

1.1.2 Project features

Roads and Maritime is seeking project approval for a motorway standard of upgrade, however the project would be built initially to a combination of motorway (called class M) and arterial standard (called class A).

The project would include:

- Around 155 kilometres of motorway standard highway, comprising a four-lane divided carriageway (two lanes in each direction) that can be upgraded to a six-lane divided carriageway in the future, if required.
- Bypasses of Grafton, South Grafton, Ulmarra, Woodburn, Broadwater and Wardell.
- The following interchanges to provide access to and from the upgraded highway at:
 - Corindi (Range Road).
 - Glenugie (Glenugie/ Eight Mile Lane).
 - Tyndale (Sheeys Lane/ Bensons Lane/ Bondi Hill).
 - Maclean (Goodwood Street).
 - Harwood (Yamba Road / Watts Lane).
 - Woombah (Iluka Road).
 - Woodburn (Trustums Hill Road).
 - Broadwater (Evans Head Road).
 - Wardell (Coolgardie Road).



Figure 1-1: Location of the project



- The project
- Upgrade completed to dual carriageway
- Upgrade under construction
- Existing Pacific Highway
- Project interchange

Figure 1-2: Project overview

- Forty bridge crossings of waterways or floodplains, including major bridges over the Clarence and Richmond rivers.
- Fifty-five overpasses and underpasses to maintain access along local roads crossed by the project.
- Viaducts located where the project would cross low-lying or flood-prone areas.
- Service roads and access roads to maintain connections to existing local roads and properties.
- Structures to help wildlife cross above or below the project, including three median crossings for arboreal mammals, eight dedicated culverts and four land bridges.
- Rest areas located at around 50-kilometre intervals at:
 - Pine Brush, Tyndale (for northbound and southbound traffic).
 - North of Mororo Road (for southbound traffic).
 - North of Richmond River (for northbound and southbound traffic).
- Checking stations for heavy vehicles near Halfway Creek.

A more detailed description of the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade is found in the Pacific Highway upgrade: Woolgoolga to Ballina Environmental Impact Statement (Roads and Maritime, 2012).

1.2 Statutory context

Roads and Maritime Services formed the opinion that the project would be likely to significantly affect biodiversity, Aboriginal heritage and hydrology and would require an environmental impact statement (EIS). An application was made to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure for the project to be approved under Part 5.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). Subsequently, the project was declared as critical State Significant Infrastructure under section 115V of the EP&A Act, by virtue of clause 16 and Schedule 5, clause 1(c) of *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011*, as it is considered to be essential for the State for economic, environmental or social reasons.

In accordance with clause 16 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011*, the project is also State Significant Infrastructure under section 115U of the EP&A Act and is permissible without consent under Part 4 of the EP&A Act. The project is therefore being assessed under Part 5.1 of the EP&A Act.

On 23 November 2011, the Director-General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure notified Roads and Maritime of the environmental assessment requirements for preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) by (or on behalf of) Roads and Maritime. The Director-General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure issued supplementary environmental assessment requirements from the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population (now the Department of Environment) and Communities on 11 July 2012 following consultation with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The Director-General and Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities requirements have been outlined in Appendix A and Section 2.1.2 of the EIS (Roads and Maritime, 2012).

1.3 Environmental impact statement exhibition

The EIS was exhibited across more than 40 locations for 55 days from 12 December 2012 to 4 February 2013. Due to heavy rains and flooding in the Clarence area in late January 2013, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure extended the time to make submissions on the EIS for the project. The closing date for feedback was extended by two weeks to 18 February 2013. This meant the EIS was on exhibition for 69 days in total.

The exhibition was advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald on Wednesday 12 December 2012. It was also advertised in key local media between Woolgoolga and Ballina including Coffs Coast Advocate, Grafton Daily Examiner, Yamba Clarence Valley Review, Maclean Coastal View, Ballina North Coast Advocate, Lismore Northern Star and the Woolgoolga Advertiser.

The environmental impact statement was exhibited at the locations identified in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Locations of DP&I EIS exhibition

Responsible Agency	Location of EIS
Department of Planning & Infrastructure Information Centre	22-33 Bridge Street, Sydney
Department of Planning and Infrastructure	website: http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities	John Gorton Building, King Edward Terrace, Parkes, Canberra
Ballina Shire Council	Corner Cherry and Tamar Streets, Ballina
Ballina Public Library	8 River Street, Ballina
Richmond Valley Council, Casino Administration Office	Corner Walker Street and Graham Place, Casino
Richmond Valley Council, Evans Head Administration Office	Woodburn Street (corner School Lane), Evans Head
Evans Head Library	Woodburn Street, Evans Head
Clarence Valley Council	2 Prince Street, Grafton
Clarence Valley Council	50 River Street, Maclean
Grafton Library	Civic Centre, 2 Prince Street, Grafton
Maclean Library	Stanley Street, Maclean
Coffs Harbour City Council	Corner Coff and Castle Streets, Coffs Harbour
Woolgoolga Library	Ganderton Street, Woolgoolga
Nature Conservation Council of NSW	Level 2, 5 Wilson Street, Newtown, Sydney
Roads and Maritime Services	2 Prince Street, Grafton
Roads and Maritime Services	Level 9, 101 Miller Street, North Sydney
Roads and Maritime Services	website www.rms.nsw.gov.au/pacific

1.3.1 Exhibition support and activities

Affected property owners and other interested stakeholders were notified at the start of the exhibition period through a community update newsletter, issued in December 2012. Six thousand copies of the newsletter were sent out to directly impacted property owners, adjacent property owners, local businesses and community groups, local schools and other services, and people who have expressed an interest in the project. The newsletter provided information on the EIS, how to make a submission, display locations of the environmental impact statement, dates of community information sessions and the project website details. In addition to the newsletter, the EIS exhibition was promoted via the 500+ W2B call list, the 2000+ stakeholder email list, Roads and Maritime and Department of Planning websites, Ministerial media releases and local media coverage.

Between January to March 2013, letters and emails were sent to all of the above providing an update on the EIS, notification of the extension of submissions, and information on the refinements to the Maclean interchange.

Roads and Maritime also exhibited the EIS at a range of other locations in addition to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure exhibition locations. These are shown in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2: Other locations of EIS exhibition

Responsible agency	Location of EIS
Evans Head Motor Inn	38 Woodburn Street, Evans Head
Clarence River Visitor Information Centre	Cnr Spring Street and Pacific Highway, Grafton
Lismore City Council	43 Oliver Avenue, Lismore
CWA Hall Maclean	40 River Street, Maclean
Coffs Harbour Library	Duke Street, Coffs Harbour
Coffs Harbour Caravan Holiday Park	210 Eggins Drive, Arwarra
Bailey Centre Service Station	150-156 Pacific Highway, Coffs Harbour
Nature Conservation Council of NSW	Level 2, 5 Wilson Street, Newtown, Sydney
Roads and Maritime Services Motor Registry Ballina	Ballina West Shopping Centre, 12-13 Pacific Highway, Ballina
Roads and Maritime Services Motor Registry Coffs Harbour	32-34 Gordon Street, Coffs Harbour
Roads and Maritime Services Motor Registry Grafton	3 King Street, Grafton
Roads and Maritime Services Motor Registry Maclean	50 River Street, Maclean
Broadwater Sunrise Caravan Park	74-92 Pacific Highway, Broadwater
Broadwater BP Service Station	171 Pacific Highway, Broadwater
Chatsworth General Store	9 Chatsworth Road, Chatsworth
Corindi Beach Post Office	89 Pacific Street, Corindi
Red Rock Post Office	1 Rudder Street, Red Rock
The Creek Restaurant	4974 Pacific Highway, Halfway Creek
Harwood Hotel	2 Morpeth Street, Harwood
Iluka Community Hall	54 Spencer Street, Iluka
New Italy Museum Complex	8275 Pacific Highway, New Italy
Tucabia Village Store	Corindi Street, Tucabia
Tucabia Community Hall	Clarence Street, Tucabia
Plantation Motel	2 Sheehys Lane, Tyndale
Tyndale Caravan Park	2848 Pacific Highway, Tyndale
Wardell Community Hall	59 Richmond Street, Wardell
Wardell Post Office/General Store	40 Richmond Street, Wardell
Woodburn Memorial Hall	River Street, Woodburn
Woodburn Bowling Centre	Richmond Street, Woodburn
Yamba Library	River Street, Yamba

Responsible agency	Location of EIS
Yamba Community Centre	Treelands Drive, Yamba

1.3.2 Stakeholder and community meetings to support exhibition period

EIS consultation with stakeholders and the community was held during January and February 2013. This included community information sessions, staffed displays and one-on-one meetings with property owners and key stakeholders.

Dates and locations of additional stakeholder and community meetings are provided in Table 1-3.

Table 1-3: Stakeholder and community meetings

Date	Activity	Location
11 December 2012	Grafton Chamber of Commerce	Grafton
12 December 2012	Clarence Valley Council	Macleans Chamber
14 December 2012	Richmond Valley Council	Casino
14 December 2012	Lismore City Council	Lismore
14 December 2012	Ballina Shire Council	Ballina
14 December 2012	Rous Water	Lismore
16 January 2013	Emergency service workshop	Corindi Trust Community Hall Corindi Beach
17 January 2013	Emergency service workshop	Woodburn Memorial Hall Woodburn
18 January 2013	Emergency service workshop	Macleans Civic Hall Macleans
9 February 2013	Corindi Beach residents	Corindi
14 February 2013	Rous Water	Rous Water Lismore
25 March 2013	Clarence Valley Council	Macleans Chamber
25 March 2013	Grafton Chamber of Commerce	Townsend Baptist Church
26 March 2013	Clarence Valley Council meeting – flood modelling	Macleans Chamber
26 March 2013	Cane Industry	Harwood Mill
December 2012-March 2013	95 Individual stakeholder meetings	Various locations

1.3.3 Community information sessions and staffed displays

Nine EIS community information sessions and seven EIS staffed displays were held across January-February 2013.

Community information sessions included a formal presentation on the EIS. Both community information sessions and staffed displays provided opportunities for the community to meet with members of the project team and ask questions.

Dates and locations of the community information sessions are outlined in Table 1-4.

Dates and locations of the staffed displays are provided in Table 1-5.

Table 1-4: Community information sessions

Date	Activity	Location
Tuesday 15 January 2013	Wardell community information session	Wardell Memorial Hall Wardell
Tuesday 15 January 2013	Harwood community information session	Harwood Community Hall Harwood
Wednesday 16 January 2013	Corindi Beach community information session	Corindi Trust Community Hall Corindi Beach
Wednesday 16 January 2013	Tyndale community information session	Plantation Motel Tyndale
Thursday 17 January 2013	Woodburn community information session	Woodburn Memorial Hall Woodburn
Thursday 17 January 2013	Townsend community information session	Townsend Baptist Church Townsend
Friday 18 January 2013	Maclean community information session	Maclean Civic Hall Maclean
Friday 18 January 2013	Grafton community information session	Grafton Community Hall Grafton
Saturday 19 January 2013	New Italy community information session	New Italy Museum New Italy

Table 1-5: Staffed displays

Date	Activity	Location
Saturday 9 February 2013	Corindi staffed display	Corindi Trust Community Hall Corindi Beach
Saturday 9 February 2013	Maclean staffed display	Maclean Civic Hall Maclean
Monday 11 February 2013	Harwood staffed display	Harwood Community Hall Harwood
Monday 11 February 2013	Woodburn staffed displays	Woodburn Memorial Hall Woodburn
Tuesday 12 February 2013	Tucabia staffed displays	Tucabia Community Hall Tucabia
Tuesday 12 February 2013	Tyndale staffed display	Plantation Motel Tyndale
Wednesday 16 February 2013	Grafton shopping centre display	Shoppingworld Grafton Grafton

1.4 Purpose and content of the document

During and following the exhibition of the EIS, 145 submissions were received. The Director-General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure provided copies of the submissions to Roads and Maritime. In accordance with section 115Z(6) of the EP&A Act, the Director-General required Roads and Maritime to provide a response to the issues raised in these submissions. The Director-General also identified that if there are any proposed changes to the project to minimise its environmental impact, a preferred infrastructure report may be required.

This submissions and preferred infrastructure report identifies the issues raised during exhibition of the EIS and provides responses to those issues (Chapter 2). It includes information regarding additional studies carried out since the exhibition of the EIS (Chapter 3), a description of changes to the project and a preferred infrastructure report (Chapter 4). Revised environmental management measures for the project are also included (Chapter 5).