



June 2020

Coffs Harbour bypass project

Submissions Report and Amendment Report- Frequently asked questions

Where can the reports be viewed?

The reports are published online via www.pacifichighway.nsw.gov.au/coffsharbourbypass and are available at the display office located at 11A Park Avenue, the local libraries and Coffs Harbour Council Chambers.

What is the purpose of the Submissions Report?

The purpose of the Submissions Report is for TfNSW to provide responses to the 186 community and agencies' submissions that Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) received during the exhibition of the EIS in September 2019.

What were the key issues raised by the community groups, organisations, individuals and businesses in the Submissions Report?

The key issues raised included:

- Construction delivery including the need for a construct only contract so the community can be certain the design will not change.
- Whether tunnels would allow the transportation of dangerous goods.
- Noise and vibration including the need for additional noise walls in the design, particularly at Coachmans Close, Korora and North Boambee Valley sections of the project.
- Requests for an independent noise audit be undertaken including a review of baseline monitoring and requests for further noise measurements where information gaps were perceived.
- General construction noise and vibration impacts around construction noise levels and mitigation measures as well as vibration impacts and its effects on residences.
- Support for the inclusion of tunnels, a lowered alignment compared to the 2018 concept design and the use of low noise pavement.
- The design of the Coramba Road interchange, noting that a 'donut' design or similar would be preferred to reduce the overall footprint and impacts on residents of Roselands Estate and more broadly across West Coffs.
- Access and various quality of life impacts on surrounding property values.
- Quality of life related impacts resulting from the project's noise and vibration, dust and visual impacts.



How have the responses been prepared?

Where possible, the responses have been prepared based on the EIS assessments. Where this has not been possible, we've done additional environmental and design investigations.

Due to the additional investigations, some of the EIS environmental management measures have been revised or new, improved measures prepared in response to the community and agencies' concerns.

Proposed design and construction improvements to the project are outlined in a separate Amendment Report.

What are the new environmental management measures in the EIS that have now been revised due to the submission process?

The new environmental measures due to the submission process include:

- Further consultation regarding how the project will tie in with Council's existing proposed pedestrian and cycle network
- Further design and road safety investigations regarding the Korora Basin Road and Old Coast Road intersection including Old Coast Road Bridge No. 2, and alternative access arrangements for Boambee Palms and Holiday Park, Lindsay Transport and other properties with access to the existing Pacific Highway between Englands Road and Sawtell Road
- Additional consideration of when building condition surveys will be undertaken during construction to manage any potential future vibration impacts
- Requirements to minimise potential impacts on key fish habitat/aquatic ecosystems during construction
- Requirements to further minimise visual impacts from ancillary sites during construction on nearby residents
- Requirements for temporary signage during construction to identify any revised access changes to tourism businesses
- Further management practices and procedures to manage impacts on water quality during construction
- Initiatives to reuse water during construction
- Design investigations to manage impacts to groundwater during construction of the Gatelys Road tunnel.

A number of existing environmental management measures have also been updated to refer to best management practice guidelines or to ensure intended environmental and community outcomes are clear, particularly regarding the management of construction and operational noise impacts.



What is the response to the ‘construct only’ contract?

TfNSW will consider and select the most suitable procurement method for project construction delivery. To facilitate this decision, TfNSW is in the process of developing a procurement strategy.

Before tenders are advertised, the community and industry will be briefed on the procurement strategy.

It is important to note that the overall design and function of the project will not change whatever the form of the contract. The EIS and application to build the Coffs Harbour bypass is based on the three tunnels and TfNSW would be in breach of the project approval if these tunnels were not included in the contract.

The inclusion of the three tunnels at Roberts Hill, north of Shephards Lane and west of Gatelys Road will therefore be a key contractual requirement under any form of the contract chosen to deliver the project.

What is the response to dangerous goods vehicles in tunnels?

The Coffs Harbour bypass will be built to meet current standards in relation to road and fire safety. All tunnels greater than approximately 100 metres in length are required to meet these standards irrespective of which vehicles and what goods travel through them.

Current policy is that vehicles carrying certified dangerous goods are generally not allowed in tunnels.

Transport for NSW is working with relevant Authorities and industry groups to develop a State wide policy on how to best accommodate dangerous goods on the road network in the future. This includes working towards an agreed evidence-based, customer and safety focussed approach to determining if dangerous goods should be permitted in a tunnel.

With completion of the bypass Dangerous Goods vehicles will still need to access Coffs Harbour which is a major regional centre and a destination for dangerous goods vehicles which provide essential services to the area.

What is the response to additional noise walls?

A feasible and reasonable assessment was undertaken in accordance with relevant NSW Noise Mitigation Guidelines to determine noise mitigation for the project. Along with low noise pavement and earth mounds, eight noise walls ranging in height between 4.5 and five metres have been recommended:

- South of Englands Road interchange on the eastern side of the project next to the proposed Elements Estate subdivision
- North and south of North Boambee Road on the eastern side of the project next to Bishop Druitt College, the Lakes Estate and Highlands Estate subdivisions



- North of Coramba Road interchange on the eastern side of the project next to Roselands Estate
- At Shephards Lane on the eastern side of the project
- Within Mackays Road valley on the southern side of the project
- Opposite Kororo Public School between the highway and proposed service road
- North of Kororo Public School on the eastern side of the project to the James Small Drive intersection with the proposed service road
- North of Pine Brush Creek on the eastern side of the project to the northern tie-in with the existing Pacific Highway.

What is the response to requesting an independent noise audit?

The noise assessment that supported the EIS has undergone significant review and evaluation from both external and TfNSW noise specialists. There will be further noise testing which will undergo a high level of scrutiny during:

- Detailed design, the operational noise mitigation measures, including noise barriers and at-property treatments, would be confirmed.
- At-property operational noise mitigation measures will be implemented during the pre-construction and early construction phases of the project. At-property treatments will be prioritised for those properties likely to be most affected by construction noise impacts.
- During the initial twelve months of operation of the project, an operational noise review will be carried out to confirm the operational noise impacts identified in the EIS and detailed design.

The above process is consistent with other State significant infrastructure projects and the project will most likely be required to submit regular construction compliance reports relating to noise and vibration management.

What is the response to concerns of construction noise impacts?

We will be going beyond the requirements to minimise noise construction impacts. Where possible, at-property operational noise mitigation measures will be implemented during the pre-construction and early construction phases of the project with priority given to properties that are the closest to the construction footprint. Residents who are eligible would be contacted during the pre-construction phase of the project following project approval.

Ancillary facilities will be located as far as practical and designed to ensure primary noise sources are at a maximum distance from residences (where reasonable and feasible), with solid structures (sheds, containers, etc.) placed between residences and as close to the noise sources as is practical,

TfNSW will also consult with property owners close to the proposed ancillary sites before they are built.



What is the response to a design change at Coramba Road interchange?

TfNSW will investigate alternative designs for the Coramba Road interchange, including a 'donut' style interchange during detailed design. The investigation will consider issues raised in the submissions and would be guided by the standards developed during the concept design and EIS phase. Any changes to the design of the Coramba Road interchange design would need to be consistent with the function of the interchange described in the EIS.

Some flexibility has been provided in the concept design to:

- Allow for refinement during detailed design to consider alternative construction techniques
- Allow for refinement in response to submissions received following the exhibition of the EIS
- Minimise environmental impacts
- Respond to improved technologies or materials
- Improve value for money.

What is our response to further baseline noise monitoring?

The noise monitoring survey for the project was conducted at 21 locations across Coffs Harbour and is considered representative of the noise environment throughout the project. Locations were chosen taking into account their close proximity to construction and operational noise impacts as well as areas raised by the community to be particularly sensitive to noise. All monitoring for the project was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements issued by DPIE and relevant Australian Standards.

Notwithstanding above, additional noise monitoring will be undertaken as part of the detailed design process prior to construction commencing as part of the preparation of the noise Mitigation Report which will confirm noise mitigation treatments for the project. This report will be made publically available.

What is the response to concerns that the project will reduce existing property value?

We recognise that neighbouring property owners near the project may be impacted. A number of measures have been provided to manage the types of impacts that could affect these properties such as noise and visual impacts.

Future property values are difficult to forecast as they are subject to many variables, including specific attributes of the property, local amenity and accessibility, demand and supply factors and other wider changes in the property market.



What is the purpose of the Amendment Report?

The purpose of the Amendment Report is to outline the proposed design and construction changes to the project and assess the environmental impacts of these changes. Where necessary, the report includes additional or revised environmental measures to manage and/or minimise potential environmental impacts as a result of the design and construction changes.

What are the proposed design and construction changes?

The proposed design changes to the project include:

- Englands Road interchange
- North Boambee Valley vertical alignment
- Coramba Road bus stop
- Coffs Creek flood mitigation
- Korora Hill interchange
- Kororo Public School bus interchange and Luke Bowen footbridge
- Pine Brush Creek and Williams Creek realignment
- New and revised operational water quality basins.

The proposed construction changes to the project include:

- Additional blasting
- New and revised ancillary sites
- Revised traffic management
- New and revised construction sediment basins.

What are the environmental impacts of the proposed design and construction changes?

While the design and construction changes have aimed to avoid or reduce potential environmental impacts, a number of impacts on the environment and community during construction and operation would still be experienced. Key additional impacts relate to traffic and transport impacts, construction and operational noise impacts and biodiversity impacts. As described in the EIS, the project will require a range of mitigation measures to manage these impacts. The Amendment Report has proposed additions or revisions to the mitigation measures to manage potential impacts associated with design and construction changes where required.

What happens next?

After the Amendment Report and the Submissions Report are submitted to DPIE and made public, DPIE will review the reports to reach a decision on the project approval. The NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will then determine if the project is approved and identify any conditions of approval which will apply.



Following the NSW decision, the Australian Minister for the Environment would then need to issue a separate approval for the project.

If both NSW and Australian Government Ministers approve the project it will be constructed and operated in accordance with the mitigation measures described in the EIS, Submissions Report, Amendment Report and the Minister's Conditions of Approval. Early construction work will start at the end of 2020.

Why was this route chosen?

The preferred route was selected in November 2004 after three years of investigation and consultation between Roads and Maritime, Coffs Harbour City Council, local residents and other government agencies. The preferred route has been publicly available since that time.

In 2013 the preferred route was included in Coffs Harbour City Council's Local Environment Plan.

Multiple options were considered including an upgrade of the existing highway and options further west of Coffs Harbour (Coastal Ridge Way and far western options) as put forward by the community and Council.

Options further west did not progress as the preferred option because they were not considered viable when compared to the preferred option. This is due to:

- Longer travel times which would attract less traffic off the existing highway
- Poor value for money due to high building and operating costs
- Significant engineering challenges, environmental impacts and impact on a landscape of Aboriginal cultural significance
- A reduction in benefits associated with the significant investment on the Pacific Highway both north and south of the Coffs Harbour urban area due to bypassing the recently open to traffic new alignment from Korora through to Halfway Creek.

The route of the preferred option has not changed since 2004. This has provided planning certainty for Coffs Harbour City Council and the local community.

The upgrade of the existing highway was not considered as a suitable option due to the socio economic impacts it would have on the city of Coffs Harbour. It was also potentially more expensive than the preferred route.