

Upgrading the Pacific Highway Oxley Highway to Kempsey

The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) engaged GHD to upgrade a 38 kilometre section of the Pacific Highway to dual carriageway between the Oxley Highway and Kempsey.

Community involvement case study

GHD worked with the RTA to investigate and identify a preferred route, design the concept and complete an environmental assessment.

The study area is dominated by rural land and forest reserves, with scattered rural residential development and a number of small towns.

Community consultation

GHD engaged the local community and stakeholders, particularly property owners in the immediate area, through a mixture of community information sessions, advertising, community updates and consultation.

More than 70 stakeholders attended the first community information session, and collectively identified 'connectivity of towns' as a key issue, particularly at Kundabung and Telegraph Point. Community members in Telegraph Point were concerned that their township would not survive if the new section of highway were to run through it, because the project's works could deter people from visiting the town.

How community feedback influenced the design

In light of this feedback, GHD developed two new options that would bypass Telegraph Point. These new options were exhibited as part of the route options display.

Of the 199 submissions, approximately 78% of respondents supported bypassing Telegraph Point. Incorporating this feedback into the multi-criteria analysis, GHD developed a modified option — a combination of the two, which ran from Dennis Bridge to the Wilson River — and displayed this for community review and comment.

Following this public exhibition, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, with the support of a number of community representatives, proposed modifying this preferred route to locate it further east, citing the benefits of increased safety, sustained amenity and well being for Telegraph Point, and reduced environmental threats to endangered ecological communities in the Cairncross State Forest.

GHD is currently completing an environmental assessment of the concept design for the proposed preferred route.