TENTERFIELD HEAVY VEHICLE BYPASS PREFERRED ROUTE
Consultation summary report
JUNE 2015
1. BACKGROUND

The Australian Government committed $3.3 million to identify a corridor for a future New England Highway heavy vehicle bypass at Tenterfield, in northern New South Wales. Roads and Maritime Services has been working with the community and stakeholders to identify the preferred route for the future heavy vehicle bypass.

The New England Highway is a major interstate freight route between Newcastle and Queensland and provides an alternative route to the Pacific Highway. The highway currently passes through the centre of Tenterfield (Rouse Street) which causes traffic and safety issues from the mix of heavy vehicles, through-traffic, local traffic and pedestrians.

The planning process has included:

- A review of previous investigations into a bypass of Tenterfield, carried out by Tenterfield Shire Council (*PEECE Report 2009*)
- The development and public display of 22 preliminary options
- Review and evaluation of feedback on the preliminary route options
- Further investigations and public display of four shortlisted route corridors
- The selection of a preferred option (orange corridor) based on community feedback received throughout the development of the project, a value management workshop and technical investigations.

2. THE PREFERRED ROUTE – THE ORANGE CORRIDOR

The orange corridor starts immediately north of Tenterfield Creek bridge on the southern edge of town, crosses the railway line north of Currys Gap Creek, runs west of the railway corridor and rejoins the existing New England Highway near Cowper Street, at the north of Tenterfield.

Bridges would be built at Douglas Street and Sunnyside Loop Road to maintain local connectivity to the western side of Tenterfield.

The preferred route was chosen as it provides the best overall balance between functional, environmental, social and economic considerations, and was selected based on the following factors:

- The route starts and ends close to the town centre, making it more likely to encourage light vehicles to travel into the centre of Tenterfield, minimising the potential loss of passing trade
- Has the least environmental impact, in particular avoids the Currys Gap State Conservation Area
- Has no direct impact on heritage areas, such as the Railway Museum
- Provides the best value for money
- Minimises private land acquisition
- Provides a western vista of the town, highlighting the railway museum complex and other parts of Tenterfield not currently seen from the existing highway.
Map of the preferred route (the orange corridor)
3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation period for the preferred route corridor started on 12 March and closed on 24 April 2015, with submissions accepted until 7 May 2015. The community and stakeholders were encouraged to provide their feedback at the community information sessions, via post, email or phone contact with the project team.

Table 3.1 below outlines the communication and engagement activities used as part of the preferred route consultation process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication and engagement activities</th>
<th>Dates, location, attendance and distribution</th>
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</table>
| Local media                            | • A media release was issued to coincide with the announcement of the preferred route  
                                              • An advertisement detailing the preferred route, dates for community information sessions and consultation timeframes was published in the Tenterfield Star on 18 and 25 March 2015. |
| Community update newsletter            | • Delivered a four page community update to around 2000 households and businesses throughout the Tenterfield local government area  
                                              • Directly mailed and emailed to stakeholders in the project database. |
| Preferred route report                 | • The *Preferred Route Report (March 2015)* was published on the Roads and Maritime website on 13 March 2015. |
| Community displays                     | • Display posters and copies of the preferred route report were made available at Tenterfield Shire Council reception, Tenterfield Post Office and Tenterfield Motor Registry. |
| Community Information sessions         | • Two information sessions were held at the Tenterfield RSL Pavilion on Tuesday 31 March from 4pm to 7pm and Wednesday 1 April from 9am to 12pm  
                                              • The Tuesday night session was attended by about 20 local residents and stakeholders  
                                              • The Wednesday morning session was attended by about 26 local residents and stakeholders. |
| Meetings with directly affected property owners | • Meetings were arranged and held between affected property owners and Roads and Maritime property managers during March and April. |
| Community information line and email   | • The community and stakeholders were encouraged to contact the project team via phone or email to get further information, ask questions or make a submission. |

Table 3.1
3.2 Overview
A total of four written responses were received from the community and stakeholders raising six separate issues.

3.3 Consultation feedback
Table 3.2 below shows topics raised in submissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission number</th>
<th>Issue raised</th>
<th>Roads and Maritime response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>Consider including on and off ramps at the Douglas Street overpass for residents who live in the Mount McKenzie area.</td>
<td>The objective of the bypass is to take heavy vehicles out of the centre of Tenterfield. The inclusion of ramps at the new Douglas Street overpass would encourage more vehicles onto the residential streets of Tenterfield. Local access to Mount McKenzie Road would remain via Douglas Street.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2, 3</td>
<td>The preferred route does not provide a bypass for heavy vehicles going from and to the Bruxner Highway.</td>
<td>Eastern bypass options were investigated as part of the preliminary route options investigations. When assessed these route options were longer in length and would not provide value for money. Traffic studies were also carried out as part of the preliminary route investigations and these studies found that the majority of demand for the bypass comes from heavy vehicles on the New England Highway. Further information about why the eastern options were discounted during the shortlisting process can be found in the <em>Tenterfield Heavy Vehicle Bypass Preliminary Route Options Report</em> (Roads and Maritime Services; May 2014).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No consideration should be given to the <em>Peece Report</em> in the decision for the preferred route.</td>
<td>The route options identified in the <em>Peece Report (2009)</em> were considered during the preliminary assessment phase, along with the other routes identified by the community and project team. A total of 22 route options were assessed against the project objectives and preliminary investigations were carried out. A detailed shortlisting process followed, including community consultation and technical investigations, which resulted in the preferred route being selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The preferred route does not stop cattle trucks from the Sale Markets using the main street of Tenterfield.</td>
<td>The main street of Tenterfield would not be restricted to general access and service vehicles. Access to the Bruxner Highway will be retained for general access vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The preferred route will be a pollutant to the historic Railway Museum and cemetery.</td>
<td>The selection of the preferred route took into consideration the community and heritage value of the cemetery and the Railway Museum. The orange corridor avoids both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
these areas. Environmental impacts including pollution from the preferred route will be considered during the environmental assessment phase if funding is provided in the future.

3 The preferred route will have considerable impact on local wildlife and wildlife fencing and crossings will be needed. At this stage no funding has been provided for further planning or development. If further funding is provided, the next stage of planning would be to carry out a detailed environmental assessment. The environmental assessment would investigate the potential impact on all environmental factors and recommend measures to reduce these impacts, such as wildlife fencing and crossings. The outcomes of the environmental assessment would then input into the detailed design phase of the project.

3 This route was only chosen for financial reasons. In selecting the preferred route value for money was considered along with socio-economic, environmental and technical factors. The orange corridor was found to provide the best overall balance between functional, environmental, social and economic factors.

3.3.1 Submission from NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

A written submission was received from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. The submission supports the preferred route as it avoids areas of high biodiversity, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage, in particular Currys Gap State Conservation area and the historic Railway Museum.

The submission acknowledges that environmental factors will be appropriately assessed during the environmental assessment phase and effectively managed during and post construction, if further funding is provided.
4. IMPACTED PROPERTIES

The preferred route was selected as it minimised property acquisition compared to the other route options. At this time no funding has been provided for further planning or construction of the heavy vehicle bypass and therefore the project is not going through a formal land acquisition process.

Nonetheless directly affected property owners may seek to proceed with the acquisition process prior to the preferred route being built. Contact details are provided in chapter 5 below.

5. NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

The road alignment will be included in the Tenterfield Shire Council’s Local Environmental Plan so that the land is reserved for future road construction and to provide planning certainty for the community.

The feedback received during the preferred route consultation period will be retained and will be considered as part of future development of the project.

Any future development will be communicated directly to the community of Tenterfield through direct mail and the local media.

For further information please visit the Roads and Maritime website at rms.nsw.gov.au

Or contact Roads and Maritime Services by:

- **Phone:** (02) 6640 1300
- **Email:** grafton.regional.office@rms.nsw.gov.au
- **Post:** Tenterfield heavy vehicle bypass
  Roads and Maritime Services
  76 Victoria Street
  Grafton NSW 2460
Joint Media Statement

12 March 2015

Route announced for Tenterfield Heavy Vehicle Bypass

A PREFERRED route has been selected for the future heavy vehicle bypass of the New England Highway at Tenterfield.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss said the decision is an important step in the planning of the project, which aims to improve traffic flow and safety in the Tenterfield central business district.

“The Australian Government has committed $6 million to plan the heavy vehicle bypass and plan an upgrade of the New England Highway at Bolvia Hill,” Mr Truss said.

“NSW Roads and Maritime Services has been working with the community and stakeholders to identify a preferred route for this bypass from four shortlisted corridors.”

Federal Member for New England Barnaby Joyce said the preferred route starts just north of the Tenterfield Creek bridge on the southern edge of Tenterfield and re-joins the New England Highway near Cowper Street, north of Tenterfield.

“The heavy vehicle bypass will improve safety through Tenterfield’s central business district, which is very busy in terms of traffic and pedestrians,” Mr Joyce said.

“This option was selected because it links most closely to the town centre and will encourage light vehicles to continue to travel through the Tenterfield central business district. It also includes overbridges to ensure connectivity with the western side of Tenterfield.”

New South Wales Minister for Roads and Freight Duncan Gay said the New England Highway was a major interstate freight route between Newcastle and Queensland and acts as an alternative route to the Pacific Highway.

“Further planning of the bypass, funding and community feedback on the preferred route will be considered as part of the design concept stage,” Mr Gay said.

Member for Lismore Thomas George said a range of information on the preferred route was available to local residents and business owners.

“The preferred route will now be on public display at the Henry Parkes Memorial School of Arts, on the corner of Rouse and Manners Streets at Tenterfield,” Mr George said.
Preferred route chosen for Tenterfield heavy vehicle bypass

Chosen route aims to improve traffic flow and safety in Tenterfield’s CBD.

The Federal and New South Wales governments have settled on a preferred route for a future heavy vehicle bypass of the New England Highway at Tenterfield.

Both governments want the route to start just north of the Tenterfield Creek Bridge on the southern edge of Tenterfield and re-join the New England Highway near Cowper Street, north of Tenterfield.

The bypass is designed to improve traffic flow and safety in Tenterfield’s CBD, while also ensuring cars still travel through the region’s city centre.

"The heavy vehicle bypass will improve safety through Tenterfield's central business district, which is very busy in terms of traffic and pedestrians," federal MP for New England Barnaby Joyce says.
"This option was selected because it links most closely to the town centre and will encourage light vehicles to continue to travel through the Tenterfield central business district. It also includes overbridges to ensure connectivity with the western side of Tenterfield."

The Federal Government has committed $6 million the project, while NSW has been working with the local community and stakeholders to select a preferred route from four shortlisted options.

The preferred route is now on public display and community information sessions will be held this month and next as part of the consultation process.

"Further planning of the bypass, funding and community feedback on the preferred route will be considered as part of the design concept stage," NSW roads minister Duncan Gay says.

The New England Highway is a major interstate freight route between Newcastle and Queensland and acts as an alternative route to the Pacific Highway.
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<tr>
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<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We have received the information re: this bypass. We have a home at 1037 Mt McKenzie Road. It seems that there is no off ramp on the proposed bypass. Could you please consider an off/on ramp around the Douglas St overpass area to service the considerable number of residents that live in the Mt McKenzie area and the rural subdivision that has been developed in recent years. This would also keep cattle transports from the Mt McKenzie area from using the main streets of Tenterfield.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I write to you to complain about your proposed choice of the Orange Corridor to Bypass Tenterfield. During the period of 2008 to 2012 I was a Councillor on the Tenterfield Shire Council when this matter was bought before council as a notice of motion at official council meetings. A report was compiled by Peece Consulting (Brisbane) on this matter. The report was bought before council on two occasions and the contents of the report were not approved by Council at any time. NO RESOLUTION OF COUNCIL WAS EVER PASSED TO ADOPT AND ACCEPT THIS REPORT. Council minutes will confirm this matter. No consideration of this Peece report should be considered in your decision on the Bypass. In fact the general public had two positive reasons for a bypass. Neither were satisfied by the Peece Report. Neither are met by your decision of an Orange corridor. One was to stop heavy vehicles out of Casino Road turning into the New England H'way. Your Orange Corridor does not solve this dangerous situation. The second reason was to stop cattle trucks with livestock out of Scrub Road and the Rocky River going down the main street with urine and manure flowing onto the street outside of the shops. Your Orange Corridor will not fix this matter as nowhere does it take into account the cattle sales yards and these areas. In other words your Orange proposal is ridiculous and does not consider the welfare and economics of this town and community. If your Orange route does not have on and off ramps into Molesworth street and Douglas Street these problems are compounded. What a serious waste of taxpayers money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I wish to lodge my objection to the 'Orange' route being chosen for the following reasons:
This route is not the preferred route of the community, who previously identified the Eastern side as the appropriate route. Hence, community consultation has been ignored.
This route does not stop heavy vehicles travelling through the town as it does not address the lack of access to the Bruxner Highway East.
This route imposes visual and pollutant issues for the historic Cemetery and Railway Museum.

This route will have significant impact on wildlife which presently enjoy an undisturbed environment from the nature reserve to Tenterfield Creek. Should this route go ahead, RMS needs to commit to fencing the road to avoid the killing of wildlife, and provide an access point to ensure these animals are protected and have access to their waterholes.

This route will destroy a previously undeveloped area in which residents chose to live for the peaceful enjoyment of the environment.

In my opinion, this route was chosen only for financial reasons and does not alleviate the heavy vehicle problem from the east, whilst jeopardising the economic and future development of such an important heritage town.
If you require further information or clarification on matters relating to OEH's statutory interests please contact Conservation Planning Officer, Ms Nicky Owner, on (02) 6659 8254 or by email nicky.owner@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

DIMITRI YOUNG
Senior Team Leader Planning, North East Region
Regional Operations

7 May 2015
Dear Tenterfield Heavy Vehicle Bypass Project Team

Re: New England Highway Tenterfield Heavy Vehicle Bypass – Preferred Route Report

Thank you for your email of 13 March 2015 inviting comments from the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) on the Preferred Route Report for the New England Highway Tenterfield Heavy Vehicle Bypass prepared by Roads and Maritime Services (RMS). I appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

OEH has statutory responsibilities relating to biodiversity (including threatened species, populations, ecological communities, or their habitats), Aboriginal and historic heritage, National Parks and Wildlife Service estate, flooding and estuary management matters. The Preferred Route Report has been reviewed by OEH in the context of these statutory interests.

OEH supports RMS efforts to select a route option that avoids, as far as possible, areas of high biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage significance, including known sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance, the historic rail corridor and heritage museum as well as Curry’s Gap State Conservation Area (SCA). This SCA is known to contain very high biodiversity and Aboriginal heritage values (including grinding grooves).

With respect to hydrological considerations, OEH notes that there is little differentiation between the various corridor options from a flooding perspective, each requiring engineering solutions with the construction of two bridges over major creeks, with all other transverse drainage utilising pipe or box culverts.

OEH acknowledges that a number of constraints exist along the route of the preferred corridor, which will need to be appropriately assessed as part of the environmental impact assessment phase, and effectively managed during and post construction. These constraints include contiguous patches of native vegetation known to contain threatened species habitat (including movement corridors), sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance and creek crossings requiring detailed flood engineering works.

OEH understands that at this time no funding has been provided for further planning or building of the heavy vehicle bypass. Despite this, OEH would be pleased to provide further advice on matters related to its statutory interests in the future, including the provision of guidelines and policy documents to allow for best practice assessment and management of biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage, non-Aboriginal heritage and flooding matters prior to, during and post highway bypass construction.

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ABN 30 841 367 271
www.environment.nsw.gov.au
If you require further information or clarification on matters relating to OEH’s statutory interests please contact Conservation Planning Officer, Ms Nicky Owner, on (02) 6659 8254 or by email nicky.owner@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

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Senior Team Leader Planning, North East Region
Regional Operations

7 May 2015