

5 The Next Steps

No preferred option has been selected for the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road project at this stage. The information provided by the community following the route options display, along with specialist technical investigations undertaken to-date and the recommendations of the Value Management Workshop will assist in the selection of the preferred route.

5.1 Value management process

A Value Management Workshop for the Wells Crossing to Harwood section of the project was held on 8-10 March 2006. Workshop participants included representatives from a range of government, council, business and community interests, as well as members of the project team. The organisations and groups represented:

- Department of Environment and Conservation
- Department of Planning
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Primary Industries
- Clarence Valley Council
- Grafton Chamber of Commerce
- NSW Canegrowers Association
- NRMA
- Grafton Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Birrigan Gargle Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Grafton CLG
- Tucabia CLG
- Maclean CLG
- RTA
- SKM

A report on the Value Management Workshop is to be provided to all workshop participants.

5.2 Preferred route announcement

It is anticipated that the preferred route will be announced in September 2006. Affected property owners will be notified by letter, and meetings will be offered to provide additional information on the implications and timing of future acquisition actions.

The preferred option announcement will be advertised and community displays prepared to provide detailed information on the preferred option.

Information will be provided on the project web page and a community update prepared to provide additional information. All community members and stakeholders registered on the project database will receive a copy of the community update and it will be made widely available to enable the general community to be informed. Briefings will be undertaken with Councils, the CLGs, and other interest groups requiring further information.

Information will be provided on the next steps of the project following the announcement of the preferred option. This information will focus on the selection of a preferred road alignment and concept design and the preparation of an environmental assessment. It is anticipated that these next activities will occur in the second half of 2006.

5.3 Further consultation

Consultation will continue through the preparation of the concept design and the environmental assessment phase of the project. This phase will focus on the preferred option and an assessment of the environment, potential environmental impacts and measures to avoid, reduce or minimise environmental impacts will be undertaken. Community members and stakeholders on the project database will continue to receive information on the project.

The CLG process will be reviewed following the preferred route display to consider the effectiveness of the groups in disseminating project information and providing broader community feedback. Other possible methods of reaching the community to understand community values and perceptions will also be investigated. The need to hold additional focus group meetings in the next phase of the study will be assessed.