

4. Consultation

4.1 Overview

This Chapter summarises the community and stakeholder involvement and feedback received during the development of the Project.

Communication and involvement with stakeholders has taken place during the following three phases of the Project:

- initial concept development (2006 to early 2007)
- preparation of the Project Application and Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report (between June 2007 and February 2008)
- preparation of this Environmental Assessment (between February 2008 and March 2009).

A consultation strategy (refer Section 4.2) was prepared as part of the Project development to encourage stakeholder and community involvement, and to foster interaction between stakeholders, the community and the Project team. The strategy included a level of flexibility to accommodate ongoing evaluation of the communication activities. Further consultation will take place during the public exhibition of the Environmental Assessment (refer Section 4.6).

4.2 Consultation strategy

A consultation strategy was developed at the start of Project development to encourage stakeholder and community involvement, and to foster interaction between stakeholders, the community and the Project team, and to ensure that stakeholders and the community were informed of the Project, had the opportunity to provide input and understood the outcomes on completion of each phase. The strategy included a level of flexibility to accommodate ongoing evaluation of the communication activities. Further consultation will also take place during the exhibition of the Environmental Assessment (refer Section 4.6).

The objectives of the consultation strategy implemented during the Project Application and environmental assessment phases was to ensure that stakeholders and the community were informed of the Project, had the opportunity to provide input and understood the outcomes on completion of each phase.

The specific communication objectives were to:

- raise awareness of the Project, the Project components and the environmental investigations
- identify stakeholder issues of interest and concern for consideration during project design development and preparation of the Environmental Assessment
- facilitate two-way information flow
- provide opportunities for stakeholders and the community to express their views about the Project
- understand and access valuable local knowledge from the community and stakeholders

- facilitate a process where the community feels satisfied with the communication and consultation process, even if they are not satisfied with the outcome
- ensure a comprehensive and transparent consultation process
- work in cooperation with the relevant government agencies.

4.3 Consultation prior to preparation of the Environmental Assessment

4.3.1 Concept development phase

Stakeholder consultation was initiated during the initial design stages for the Project. Stakeholder consultation has been ongoing during the subsequent development of the concept design and the Environmental Assessment, which included consultation with the Growth Centres Commission (GCC, now part of the Department of Planning), the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA), Blacktown City Council (BCC), Sydney Water, RailCorp, the Ministry of Transport (MoT) and the Department of Planning (DoP). Consultation was also undertaken with the Heritage Branch of the DoP in relation to the heritage values of the Riverstone Station complex.

The proposal to relocate Schofields Station was announced by Minister for Transport and the Minister for Planning on 26 February 2008. The Schofields community were notified the next day about the proposed relocation of Schofields Station via a newsletter sent to Schofields residents (refer Section 4.4).

4.3.2 Project Application and Preliminary Environmental Assessment phase (June 2007 to February 2008)

Consultation conducted during preparation of the Project Application and Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report (PB 2008) built on earlier consultation undertaken during the concept development phase. Details of the consultation activities undertaken during this phase are provided below.

Government stakeholder meetings

Meetings with government stakeholders were conducted to help identify the appropriate approvals pathway and the key issues for the Project. During this phase of the Project, regular meetings were held with the GCC, RTA, BCC, Sydney Water, RailCorp, the MoT and the DoP.

Planning focus meeting

In February 2008, a Project Application and Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report for the Project (PB 2008) was lodged with the DoP and posted on the Department's website.

A planning focus meeting was held on 11 March 2008 at the DoP. During this meeting, a description of the Project and detail on the scope of the proposed environmental investigations was provided, and key issues identified. Details of the attendees and issues raised at the planning focus meeting are summarised in Section 4.5.1.

4.4 Consultation during preparation of the Environmental Assessment (February 2008 to March 2009)

The objective of this consultation phase was to identify stakeholder and community issues to be addressed during the environmental assessment. The level of consultation required during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment was detailed in the DGRs (refer Table 4-1 and Appendix A), which prescribed an appropriate and justified level of consultation with the following stakeholders:

- Local, State or Commonwealth government authorities (including the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC), Department of Primary Industries, Department of Water and Energy, GCC, BCC, and Hawkesbury City Council)
- service and infrastructure providers (including RailCorp, and the RTA)
- the public (including adjoining and affected landowners and businesses).

Consultation activities undertaken during preparation of the Environmental Assessment are described below. A summary of the key issues identified from the consultation activities is outlined in Section 4.5, with an analysis of the issues raised provided in Table 4-1. A full list of issues raised by each of the stakeholders is provided in Appendix C.

Schofields residents newsletter

In February 2008, a newsletter was distributed by the NSW Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation (TIDC) to all residents of the Schofields village, outlining the details of the Project, particularly as they relate to the relocation of Schofields Station. The newsletter notified the community of the opportunities to become involved in the Project, including the TIDC freecall 1800 number, and email and website details.

Schofields community meeting

Project team representatives from TIDC and Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) attended a community meeting held by BCC for Schofields residents on Sunday 3 May 2008 at the Schofields Town Hall. This meeting was organised and facilitated by Council for the community, however, project team representatives attended the meeting to gain an appreciation of community concerns and to provide further information to the community.

Community newsletter

A community newsletter was distributed in May 2008. The newsletter was distributed to approximately 11,000 residents and business owners along the rail corridor, including the suburbs of Vineyard, Riverstone, Schofields, Marsden Park, Rouse Hill and Quakers Hill. The newsletter was also distributed to approximately 2,000 community members, based on contact details obtained during previous consultation undertaken by the GCC. The newsletter introduced the community to the Project, provided a description of the proposed works and the environmental assessment process, and informed the community of the key issues to be addressed in the Environmental Assessment. The newsletter also invited community members to attend Project information sessions and provided contact details for further information.

Community information sessions

Two Project information sessions were held at the Riverstone Senior Citizens Hall on 29 and 31 May 2008. Project team representatives from TIDC and PB were in attendance, as were representatives from, Heggies Pty Ltd (noise impact assessment subconsultant) and the GCC. The purpose of these sessions was to provide community members with further Project information. Approximately 150 community members attended the information sessions over the 2 days. Community members were also invited to make written submissions on the Project, which were used to identify community and stakeholder issues for consideration during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment. A summary of the issues raised is provided in Table 4-1.

Other communication tools

A freecall 1800 Project information telephone line (1800 648 490) and email address (mail@tidc.nsw.gov.au) were established and maintained throughout the environmental assessment process. Both of these were provided on the newsletters discussed above, as was a postal address to which letters could be directed. Further Project information was also made available on TIDC's website (www.tidc.nsw.gov.au).

4.5 Community and stakeholder issues and concerns

The purpose of the consultation undertaken was to identify community and stakeholder issues for consideration during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment. The issues raised are analysed in the following section, including issues raised during the planning focus meeting, meetings with government agencies and community groups, agency letters received on behalf of the DoP, and enquiries received via written communication and the 1800 Project information line.

4.5.1 Issues raised by government agencies

Table 4-1 lists the government agencies consulted during preparation of the Project Application and Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report, and Environmental Assessment, and summarises the issues raised by each of these stakeholders. A full list of issues raised by each of the stakeholders is provided in Appendix C.

Table 4-1 Summary of issues raised by Government agencies

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Where addressed in Environmental Assessment
BCC	▪ Adequate parking at Quakers Hill Station	No works are proposed to be undertaken at Quakers Hill Station as part of this Project
	▪ Capacity of the proposed new Westminster Street Bridge	Sections 3.2.11 and 6.2.2
	▪ Ongoing consultation throughout project development and construction	Chapters 4 and 12
	▪ Provision of access across rail corridor at existing Schofields Station	Chapter 6 and Section 8.3.4
	▪ Impact of relocating Schofields station	Section 8.3.4

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Where addressed in Environmental Assessment
MoT	- Impacts to existing pedestrian/cycle movements - Increased pedestrian/cycle demand - Car parking - Pedestrian safety issues - Traffic models - Preserve North West Metro corridor	Section 8.2 Following the cancellation of NW Metro Plans by NSW Government this issue is no longer relevant.
RTA	- Bus service plan for NWGC (short, medium and long term scenarios) - Further consultation - Integrated transport - Parking provisions - Road network impacts - Traffic, intersections and parking - Riverstone Station pedestrian bridge - Bus integration with future community - Vehicular/pedestrian connection at Schofields Station - Joint consultation (MoT/RTA) - Consultation about Schofields Station - Construction Management Plan - Vineyard Station future grade separation	Sections 8.2.2 and 8.3.4. Chapter 4 Sections 3.2, 8.2 and 8.3 Chapter 4 Chapters 6 and 12 Not relevant to the Project.
Hawkesbury Council	- Increased patronage on Richmond Line - Integration with North West Rail link (NWRL) (now the North West Metro)	Section 3.2.11 Following the deferral of the North West Metro by NSW Government this issue is no longer relevant in the short term.
DECC	- Vineyard Station car park alternatives - Traffic and transport - Vegetation offsets - Minimise/mitigate biodiversity impact - Noise and vibration - At-source noise mitigation - Water quality impacts and fluvial processes - Waste and resource management - Aboriginal cultural heritage	Chapter 2 Sections 3.2 and 8.2 Section 8.6 and Chapter 12 Sections 3.4 and 8.4 Section 8.7 Section 9.5 Sections 3.8 and 8.8

Stakeholder	Issues raised	Where addressed in Environmental Assessment
GCC	▪ Contaminated land	Sections 3.11 and 9.3
	▪ Water/energy consumption	Section 9.5
	▪ Sustainability measures at new stations	Chapter 11
	▪ Growth Centres Biodiversity Certification	Chapter 2, and Sections 3.6 and 8.6
	▪ Exhibition of the Environmental Assessment	Chapter 4
	▪ Ongoing consultation	
	▪ Transport including pedestrians and cyclists	Chapter 6, and Sections 8.2 and 8.3
	▪ Pedestrian/cyclist opportunities including 'rail trails'	
RailCorp	▪ Safety and crossings	Chapter 6, and Sections 8.2, 9.6 and 9.7
	▪ Station operation during construction	
	▪ Disabled access	
	▪ Rail infrastructure requirements	
Department of Water and Energy	▪ Riparian corridor and watercourse impacts	Section 8.7
	▪ Water quality impacts	
	▪ Groundwater impacts	
Heritage Office of the DoP	▪ Indigenous cultural heritage	Sections 3.8 and 8.8
	▪ Non-Indigenous heritage	Sections 3.5 and 8.5
NSW Department of Primary Industries	▪ Dredging and reclaiming activities	Not relevant to this Project
	▪ Impacts to marine life/ threatened species	Section 8.6
	▪ Activities that block fish passage	Section 8.7
	▪ Removal of noxious weeds (permit requirement where relevant)	Section 8.6
	▪ Land acquisition impacts on primary producers	Section 8.1
DoP	▪ Concurrent closure of Meatworks crossing and Garfield Road level crossing	Chapter 6
	▪ Environmental assessment to be revisited should Stage 2 be deferred for a significant period	

Additional consultation was undertaken with relevant government agencies on 3 December 2008 to provide these stakeholders with an update of the design development of the Project during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment.

4.5.2 Issues raised by community

The two community information sessions held by TIDC provided the opportunity for members of the community to register their opinions and/or concerns regarding the Project. Table 4-2 provides a summary of the issues raised during these sessions. A detailed list of issues raised is provided in Appendix C.

Table 4-2 Summary of issues raised by community and stakeholder groups

Issues raised	Where addressed in Environmental Assessment
The development of the additional Nirimba Station should proceed instead of the relocation of Schofields Station.	Chapter 5
There has been insufficient consultation about the relocation of Schofields Station. Instead, development of the new Nirimba Station should proceed.	Chapters 4 and 5
Relocation of Schofields Station will cause unnecessary impacts to residents, particularly those who rely on public transport and will now have to walk further to the new station. It was noted that many residents in the area are elderly.	Section 8.3
The relocation of Schofields Station will impact on the viability of Schofields village centre and the businesses that rely on commuters for their business trade.	Section 8.3
The relocation of Schofields Station will reduce property values in the area.	Section 8.3
The relocation of Schofields Station will benefit new residents around the new station location. The Project has not considered the impacts on existing residents.	Section 8.3
Schofields Station has heritage value to the community.	Sections 3.5 and 8.5
Access to the new Schofields Station should be provided on the western side of the rail corridor (i.e. from Bridge Street).	Chapter 6
Concern about the new railway line being built in a 1:100-year ARI flood zone.	Section 8.7
Concern that the distance to the new Schofields Station will cause many commuters to drive to the station, which will increase greenhouse gas emissions.	Sections 8.3 and 9.4
Residents should be consulted about construction impacts, particularly noise and traffic impacts.	Chapter 4 and Chapter 12
There would be increased noise and visual impacts as a result of increased train services.	Section 8.4 and Chapter 9.1
Westminster Street bridge is already at capacity. The bridge should be reconstructed to provide four lanes or an alternative considered.	Sections 3.2 and 8.2
Preservation of heritage value of Riverstone Station.	Section 8.5
Additional railway station between Riverstone and Vineyard (in the vicinity of Loftus Street).	Section 2.5.5

4.5.3 Management of submissions

All submissions received during preparation of the Environmental Assessment were entered into an *issues* database. The names and contact details of persons making the submission, the date the submission was received, and a summary of comments addressing each issue were also included in the database.

All feedback received was recorded on feedback forms and entered into the database. The database enabled the consultation team to:

- distribute information to the public
- record information received from the community
- collate information received for consideration in the development of the Environmental Assessment
- monitor the 'extent or reach' of the consultation plan.

All information obtained during the consultative process will be used in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*.

4.6 Consultation: the next steps

4.6.1 Exhibition of the Environmental Assessment

Consultation during the public exhibition of the Environmental Assessment is proposed to occur for a minimum of 30 days between April and May 2009. The objective of this consultation phase is to ensure that the community and stakeholders are aware of the exhibition of the Environmental Assessment, and are provided with information to allow them to make informed comments in their submissions on the Environmental Assessment for the Project.

During the exhibition period, community members and other stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback on the Project through face-to-face discussions, telephone calls to the 1800 project information line and individual written submissions. Details on how the community can be involved in the consultation process during exhibition of the Environmental Assessment are provided below.

Notification of exhibition of the Environmental Assessment and community information sessions

Community members and other stakeholders will be notified of the exhibition of the Environmental Assessment and community information sessions prior to the exhibition period via letters, a community newsletter and newspaper advertisements.

Letters

Letters will be sent to potentially affected property owners advising them of the exhibition of the Environmental Assessment. The letters will provide property owners with details of the exhibition, including dates of exhibition, venue and opening hours. The letter will also invite property owners to attend community information sessions that will take place during the exhibition period (refer section below), and to write a submission in response to the Environmental Assessment. Contact details for making a submission will also be provided.

Community newsletter

A newsletter will be distributed to local residents, government agencies, councils and other relevant stakeholders. The newsletter will provide details of the exhibition and the community information sessions, including dates and venue opening hours. The newsletter will also invite members of the community to write a submission in response to the Environmental Assessment and will include contact details for making submissions.

Newspaper advertisements

Advertisements will be placed in local and state newspapers to announce the exhibition of the Environmental Assessment. The advertisements will provide details of the exhibition and the community information sessions, including dates and venue opening hours. The advertisements will also invite members of the community to write a submission in response to the Environmental Assessment and will include contact details for making submissions.

Exhibition locations

The Environmental Assessment will be publicly displayed between April and May 2009. Public displays will include a copy of the Environmental Assessment, posters incorporating details of the Project, and Project update newsletters. Displays will be located in the Blacktown and Hawkesbury council areas (located within the Schofields and Riverstone communities), the TIDC office and the DoP, and will be accessible during working hours. Community members will be able to review the Environmental Assessment at the public display and online. Contact details for making a submission will also be available at exhibition venues.

Community information sessions

Community information sessions will take place during the public exhibition of the Environmental Assessment. The information sessions will provide members of the community with the opportunity to engage with members of the Project team about the Environmental Assessment, view details of the Project, seek advice in completing a submission and request further information.

Community information sessions will be staffed by members of the Project team. Copies of the Environmental Assessment, posters and newsletters will be available at all venues.

1800 project information line

Details of the freecall 1800 project information line (1800 648 490), project email (mail@tidc.nsw.gov.au) and web site will be included in all documents to allow members of the community to find out more information about the Project, the exhibition period and how to make a submission.

Making a submission

Written submissions on the Environmental Assessment and/or Project can be made to the DoP by anyone with an interest in the Project. Submissions should be sent to the DoP by the closing date and should be addressed to:

Quakers Hill to Vineyard Duplication Environmental Assessment
Department of Planning
22–33 Bridge Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

4.6.2 Consideration of submissions received during exhibition

Following the public exhibition of the Environmental Assessment, TIDC will review all submissions received by the DoP and prepare a Submissions Report. The report will include consideration of:

- the Environmental Assessment (including an outline of the consultation activities that occurred during the environmental assessment phase)
- all submissions and responses to the issues raised
- any new information concerning the Project
- any proposed modifications to the Project
- a summary of mitigation measures and other commitments, should the Project proceed.

Assessment of submissions made in response to the public exhibition of the Environmental Assessment is an integral part of the approval process, and can result in modifications and improvements to the design of the Project in accordance with Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. If significant changes are proposed in response to submissions, the DoP may require TIDC to prepare a Preferred Project Report, which may be made available to the public for further comment.

4.6.3 Consultation during construction of the Project

Should the Project be approved, TIDC would continue to consult with community members, government agencies and other stakeholders during the pre-construction and construction phases of the Project. The freecall 1800 project information line (1800 648 490), project email (mail@tidc.nsw.gov.au) and project website (www.tidc.nsw.gov.au) would be maintained throughout construction.

Community members would receive advanced notification of scheduled construction works, alternative access arrangements, traffic detours and public transport disruptions throughout construction. Notification would be undertaken in accordance with the Project Communications Plan that would be developed prior to the commencement of construction. Commitments relating to further consultation are detailed in Chapter 11.