

7. Consultation and stakeholder engagement

This chapter summarises the community and stakeholder involvement activities and feedback received during the development of the project to date.

DGRs	Where addressed
Consultation:	
Undertake an appropriate and justified level of consultation with relevant parties during preparation of the environmental assessment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local, State or Commonwealth government authorities and service providers including the Department of Environment and Climate Change, the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of Water and Energy, the Heritage Office, Greater Hume Shire Council and the Australian Rail Track Corporation. Specialist interest groups, including Local Aboriginal Councils. The public, including affected landowners. 	Sections 4.1, 7.3, 7.4
The environmental assessment must describe the consultation process, document all community consultation undertaken to date and identify the issues raised (including where these have been addressed in the environmental assessment).	Chapter 7

7.1 Consultation objectives and strategies

A community consultation and stakeholder engagement plan ('communications plan') was developed and implemented for the project to identify key objectives and outcomes of consultation activities with the community, stakeholders and government agencies.

The project has incorporated consultation with directly and indirectly affected adjacent landowners, interested local and regional individuals and the wider Holbrook community. Consultation also included local interest groups and state government agencies, including:

- Federal Government, state and local elected representatives and government authorities.
- Local community groups.
- Aboriginal Land Councils and individuals, including the Albury and District Local Aboriginal Land Council, and the Wandoo Aboriginal Corporation.

7.2 Consultation strategy

The communications strategy was developed at the commencement of the preliminary environmental assessment phase and has been revised throughout the development of the environmental assessment.

The communications strategy was developed to keep stakeholders updated and involved in the project during each stage of its development. The key objectives of the communications strategy were to:

- Identify local and regional stakeholders.
- Understand stakeholder and community issues, values and concerns related to the project.
- Create an understanding of the project within the local community.
- Keep stakeholders well-informed and involved during each stage of the project.

- Provide opportunities for community input.
- Identify appropriate communication tools (eg advertisements, frequently asked questions (FAQ), newsletters) and when to implement them.
- Incorporate stakeholder and community issues into the development of the concept design and environmental assessment, and identify means of avoiding or mitigating impacts.
- Assist stakeholders and the community in understanding the results of the concept design and environmental assessment.
- Communicate the outcomes expected to result from the project such as increased road safety and amenity in the town.

Consultation was undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for Major Project Community Consultation* (Department of Planning 2007).

7.3 Community and stakeholder consultation activities

A wide range of communication tools were employed to ensure that the community and stakeholders were consulted using a method of communication that best suited them. Table 7-1 provides a summary of the activities conducted to date, and the stakeholder and community groups involved.

Table 7-1 Summary of community and stakeholder consultation activities

Consultation activity	Government authorities	Community groups	Landowners	Interested individuals	Wider community
Aboriginal focus group meetings				✓	
Meetings with local and state authorities	✓				
Individual landowner meetings			✓		
Newsletters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FAQ documents		✓	✓	✓	✓
Advertisements		✓	✓	✓	✓
Public displays		✓	✓	✓	✓
Information sessions		✓	✓	✓	✓
Options assessment workshops	✓				
1800 project information line		✓	✓	✓	✓
Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The following sections describe in more detail the activities undertaken to inform and involve the community and stakeholders about the project.

7.3.1 Aboriginal focus group meetings

The Aboriginal community has been involved in the development of the concept design and the assessment of the project's impact on Aboriginal archaeological and cultural heritage. In order to identify Aboriginal stakeholders, notifications and advertisements were published in regional and local newspapers. Aboriginal land councils and individuals were invited to register their interest for involvement in the assessment of Aboriginal archaeology and cultural heritage. Thirty-four Aboriginal stakeholders were registered to the project, including members of the Albury and District Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Wandoo Aboriginal Corporation. Aboriginal stakeholder engagement was carried out in accordance with the *Draft Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment and Community Consultation* (DEC 2005a) and the *RTA Procedure for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation and Investigation* (RTA 2008d) (the Procedure).

Aboriginal stakeholders were invited to participate in Aboriginal focus group (AFG) meetings. AFG meetings include the involvement of registered Aboriginal stakeholders and representatives of DECCW. The first AFG meeting was held on 20 February 2008 to discuss the results of the preliminary archaeological assessment and Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment undertaken for the preliminary environmental assessment. The methodology for detailed Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment was presented.

The archaeological test excavation methodology (research design) was provided to each of the registered Aboriginal stakeholders for review and comment. Comments received were included in full in the research design.

A second AFG meeting was held on 11 February 2009. Twenty-one Aboriginal stakeholders attended the meeting to discuss the results of the site survey and the methodology for test excavation.

Following detailed site survey, archaeological test excavation and cultural heritage surveys, the draft Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (CHAR) was prepared for the project. The draft CHAR outlined the results of the site survey, test excavations and provided an assessment of impacts and proposed mitigation for archaeological sites and cultural places (see Section 9.2). The draft CHAR was provided to the Aboriginal stakeholders for review and comment. During the review and comment period, a third AFG meeting was held on 24 September 2009.

7.3.2 Stakeholder and agency consultation

Consultation with stakeholders and government agencies has been undertaken throughout project development through regular correspondence and their involvement in workshops and meetings.

Consultation with government agencies was conducted to help identify the appropriate approval pathways, discuss environmental constraints and opportunities and identify key issues for the project. Regular correspondence and meetings were held with Greater Hume Shire Council, DECCW (now incorporating the former Department of Water and Energy (DWE) and the DECC), the Department of Lands, Ministry of Transport, Australian Rail Track Corporation, the Department of Industry and Investment (formerly DPI) and the Department of Planning and Local Government.

7.3.3 Adjacent landowner meetings

Targeted consultation was initiated with landowners adjacent to the project in November 2007. These meetings sought to introduce the project team, transfer local knowledge and information, and provide landowners with information about the environmental assessment process. Regular landowner meetings have occurred throughout the environmental assessment process to:

- Provide affected landowners with up-to-date information about the project.
- Seek advice and comment on design options.
- Discuss implications of the design as they relate to particular properties.

Regular consultation with affected landowners would continue through detailed design and construction.

7.3.4 Newsletters

Two community update newsletters were produced and distributed during the preliminary environmental assessment phase outlining the development of the project. Another newsletter was distributed when the environmental assessment was placed on public display for comment. The newsletters were distributed via Australia Post's unaddressed mailing system to recipients in the Holbrook postcode (2644). The newsletters included:

- Newsletter 1 — project continuation and study team introduction (February 2008).
- Newsletter 2 — announcement of the preferred route (September 2008).

This would be followed by:

- Newsletter 3 — announcement of the exhibition of the environmental assessment and locations to view the report (November 2009).

7.3.5 Advertising in local newspapers

Advertisements were placed in the *Holbrook Happenings*, *Eastern Riverina Chronicle* and the *Border Mail* in February and October 2008, and September 2009. Advertisements sought to inform the community and stakeholders of project development, and notify them of public displays and community information sessions being held.

7.3.6 Public displays

The *Hume Highway Upgrade Holbrook Bypass: Preliminary Environmental Assessment* (RTA 2008a) was placed on public display from 29 September to 28 November 2008. The display provided an opportunity for the public to view the preferred route (refer Section 4.1.2) and provide feedback to the project team.

Posters and community updates of the preferred route and copies of the preliminary environmental assessment were displayed at the Holbrook public library and the Greater Hume Shire Council offices as well as the Henty Field Days on 23, 24 and 25 September 2008.

An RTA display announcing the exhibition of the environmental assessment for public comment has been made available at the Holbrook public library and the Greater Hume Shire Council offices. Copies of the environmental assessment have also been provided at these locations.

7.3.7 Community information sessions

A community information session was held at the Holbrook Community Technology Centre meeting rooms on 4 February 2008. The session introduced the project team, outlined the preliminary investigation assessment process and project timeframe, and provided an opportunity for community members to submit their feedback on the three options provided for comment. It also enabled community members to register interest in the project. The session was attended by approximately 200 community members. A database and distribution list was compiled for future communications.

Following the route selection process, a second community information session took place on 22 October 2008 at the Holbrook Community Technology Centre. This community information session was held to present and seek comment on the preferred western option (Option A) for the proposed Holbrook bypass to the broader community.

A third community information session took place on 2 September 2009, also at the Holbrook Community Technology Centre. The community information session was held to present the concept design prior to public exhibition of the environmental assessment and was attended by approximately 75 to 80 community members.

7.3.8 Economic forum

An economic forum was held over two sessions at the Holbrook Community Technology Centre meeting rooms on 1 October 2009. Members of the Holbrook business community, specifically those who owned or operated a business that was dependent on highway related trade, were invited to attend either of the sessions.

The purpose of the forum was to present the concept design to business community members, provide further information on the environmental assessment, and in particular the potential impacts on the current Holbrook businesses as a result of the project. A representative from the Greater Hume Shire Council was also in attendance to present the Council's initiatives in response to the proposed bypass.

Attendees were invited to engage in some interactive discussion on the potential constraints and opportunities posed by the proposed bypass to their businesses and to the town of Holbrook. The ultimate aim of the economic forum was to encourage Holbrook businesses owners to take ownership of future planning for their business in the post-bypass period.

7.3.9 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

In February 2009, an FAQ document was prepared and distributed to stakeholders and individuals who had previously registered an interest in the project. The FAQs included a summary of questions asked of the project team during stakeholder and community consultation activities, and consolidated answers.

7.3.10 Options assessment workshop

During the route selection process an options assessment workshop was held to evaluate each of the preliminary route options to identify a preferred route. A summary of the comments made and concerns raised by agencies and stakeholders is provided in Section 7.4.

The workshop was held in February 2008, and was attended by a range of agency, stakeholder and nominated community participants. Chapter 4 details this workshop and its outcomes.

7.3.11 Other communication tools

A freecall 1800 project information telephone line (1800 755 767) and email address (holbrook_bypass@pb.com.au) were established and maintained throughout the preliminary environmental assessment and environmental assessment phases. Contact information for the project team was provided on all public correspondence, as was a reply paid postal address to which letters could be directed. Further project information was also made available on the RTA's website (www.rta.nsw.gov.au).

7.4 Summary of community and stakeholder issues and concerns

The issues raised by the community and stakeholders have been considered and addressed through the preliminary and environmental assessment phases, and informed the detailed investigations undertaken for the project. The issues have been considered and addressed in the environmental assessment.

The issues raised by government agencies are summarised in Table 7.2 and issues raised by the community and stakeholders are summarised in Table 7-3.

Table 7-2 Summary of issues raised by government agencies during development of the project

Government agency	Issue	Specific issue raised	Where addressed in the environmental assessment
DECC (now DECCW)	Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates on survey methodologies and results. 	DECCW was consulted during the biodiversity assessment.
	Aboriginal heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates on cultural and archaeological survey methodologies and results. 	DECCW was consulted during the Aboriginal heritage assessment.
	Environment protection licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project may require an Environmental Protection Licence under Schedule 1 of the <i>Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997</i>. 	Section 2.1.2
	Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates regarding projected noise levels and proposed noise mitigation measures for the project. 	DECCW was consulted during the noise assessment.
	Land acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire land under the provisions of the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act 1991</i>. 	Section 9.4
Department of Lands (DoL)	Environmental disturbance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an offset for the loss of habitat on Crown land in accordance with the <i>Native Vegetation Act 2003</i> and the <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i>. 	Section 9.1.4 Technical Paper 1 (Volume 2)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct the project with minimal environmental disturbance to Crown land. The RTA is responsible for all remediation works required on Crown land. 	Sections 4.1, 4.2, 9.1 Technical Paper 1 (Volume 2)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct the project in a manner so as not to cause damage or increase soil erosion. 	Sections 6.3, 9.1, 10.3 Technical Paper 1 (Volume 2)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take measures to ensure that the project does not contribute to the spread of noxious weeds. 	Section 9.1 Technical Paper 1 (Volume 2)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify the DoL if any noxious weeds or other environmental hazards are present on Crown land. 	
	Public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain and do not restrict public access on Crown land. 	The project would not restrict access to Crown land.
	Sediment and dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure appropriate sediment and dust control measures are provided for the duration of the works. 	Sections 10.3, 10.5

Government agency	Issue	Specific issue raised	Where addressed in the environmental assessment
Department of Primary Industries (DPI) (now Department of Industry and Investment)	Aquatic habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake adequate assessment of fish and fish habitat that would be affected by the project. Include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Undertake fish sampling and aquatic habitat assessment of all Class 1 - 3 watercourses. ▶ Assess the potential impacts of the project on fish and fish habitat. ▶ Consider the importance of the waterways and associated fish and fish habitat within the catchment area. ▶ Document any existing blockages to fish passage (full or partial) within each Class 1-3 watercourse, which may impact on the design of crossing structures, or mitigation measures adopted for the project. ▶ Consider any impacts that structures in the floodplain may have on fish passage and connectivity of habitats during a flood event. ▶ Consider the significance of the impacts on threatened species listed under the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i>. ▶ Make predictions regarding the extent and type of impact on fish, fish habitat and fish passage. ▶ Outline the types of mitigation and monitoring measures that would be undertaken. 	Section 9.1 Technical Paper 1 (Volume 2)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Notify the DPI of any proposed dredging and reclamation works (such as construction of temporary crossings, bridges, culverts, creek diversions, geotechnical investigations, excavating or reclaiming the bed or banks of any waterways) associated with the project in accordance with section 199 of the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i>. ▪ A permit may be required to temporarily or permanently block fish passage (eg for bunding of waterways during bridge or culvert construction, use of silt fences across waterways and other similar works) under section 219 of the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i>. ▪ Describe the type and extent of such works within the project. 	
	Licenses and permits		Sections 5.3.10, 6.6.3, 10.1
	Aquaculture, commercial and recreational fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the type and location of aquaculture, commercial and recreational fishing activities within and downstream of the project that may be impacted by the project. 	Not applicable

Government agency	Issue	Specific issue raised	Where addressed in the environmental assessment
Department of Water and Energy (now DECCW)	Design consideration for crossings of Class 1 - 4 watercourses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design all watercourse crossings (including temporary crossings and permanent bridges and culverts) in accordance with DPI Fisheries guidelines. Consult DPI Fisheries during the detailed design phase of all stream crossings on Class 1 - 4 watercourses. Schedule work in streams in dry seasons, during periods of low flow, to minimise impacts on flow and fish passage, and should take into account the migratory seasons of fish. Works should be concluded quickly to minimise impacts on fish and fish passage. 	Sections 5.3.10, 6.6.3, 9.1 Technical Paper 1 (Volume 2) Chapter 11
	Revegetation of stream bed and banks and creek diversions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the proposed rehabilitation works for streams (existing or creek diversions), riverbanks and riparian vegetation zones disturbed during the project. Provide landscape plans, including the location, species, sources and numbers of plantings. Make suitable trees that are required to be removed available for the Murray Re-snagging project in accordance with the <i>Timber for the Murray Re-snagging Project Guidelines for the RTA and Contractors</i>. 	Section 9.1 Technical Paper 1 (Volume 2)
	Water supply and access to water sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess water supply and access to water sources. Prioritise investigations on obtaining a suitable water supply. 	Rehabilitation plans would be developed during detailed design. Section 10.1
	Water licensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate existing and proposed water licensing requirements in accordance with the <i>Water Act 1912, Water Management Act 2000</i> and consideration of the <i>NSW Inland Groundwater Shortages Zone Order no.s 1 and 2, 2008</i>. 	Sections 6.3, 10.1
	Impacts to watercourses and associated systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate no adverse impacts to watercourses, riparian corridors, wetlands and groundwater dependent ecosystems as a result of the project. 	Sections 9.1, 10.1 Technical Paper 1 (Volume 2)
Ministry of Transport		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide details on potential creek realignments. 	Sections 5.3.10, 9.1
	School bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address the potential for disruption to existing school bus services during construction of the project; also address in a future construction management plan. 	Section 9.5 Technical Paper 5 (Volume 2)
	Cycle way provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the opportunity for the provision of cycle way connecting along the highway to adjoining communities. 	Section 9.5 Technical Paper 5 (Volume 2)

Government agency	Issue	Specific issue raised	Where addressed in the environmental assessment
Greater Hume Shire Council	Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interchange arrangements. Access to the town. Signposting to the town. Continued access to the submarine. Access to the tip. Ongoing property accesses. 	Section 5.3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing viability of the town and business district. Ongoing growth potential for the planned commercial industrial complex. 	Section 9.4
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise. Amenity of the main street post bypass. 	Section 9.3 and 9.4
	Environmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flooding and water flow within the town and creek area. Environmental issues. 	Section 9.1 and 10.1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of existing roads. Ongoing road funding. 	Existing roads will be funded in accordance with recognised funding models for local and regional roads.
	Property impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocation of Council works depot. 	Council will need to relocate the Council depot to an area that it finds to be suitable.
	Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with Council and stakeholders. 	Chapter 7
	Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future traffic growth. 	Section 9.5
	Services and utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service and utilities adjustments and upgrades in the area. 	Section 5.3
	Travelling stock routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining connectivity of the stock routes between Culcairn Road and Wagga Road. Retaining connectivity of the stock routes between Culcairn Road and the eastern side of the existing highway at the southern end of the project. 	Section 9.4.2, Section 9.5.3, Section 9.5.4
Hume Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA)	Travelling stock reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining use of the Culcairn Road Travelling Stock Reserve. Retaining or relocating the Wagga Wagga Road Travelling Stock Reserve. 	Section 9.4.2, Section 9.5.4

Government agency	Issue	Specific issue raised	Where addressed in the environmental assessment
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC)	Threatened species and ecological communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider impacts to threatened species and ecological communities protected under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>.	Section 2.1.3, 9.1
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Land acquisition	Section 9.5.2
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ongoing consultation	Chapter 7

Table 7-3 Summary of issues raised by the community and stakeholders during development of the project

Issue	Specific item raised	Where addressed in environmental assessment
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clearing of native vegetation, particularly in the former Town Common. ■ Habitat fragmentation due to severance, and edge effects. ■ Impacts on aquatic communities. ■ Prolonged drought period. ■ Weeds and pests. 	Section 9.1 Technical Paper 1
Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dust during construction. ■ Emissions during operation. 	Section 10.5
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Greenhouse gas emissions during construction and operation. 	Section 10.8.1
Soils and landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Erosion and sedimentation during construction and operation. ■ Salinity potential. ■ Soil contamination. 	Section 10.1, Section 10.3, Section 10.7
Surface and groundwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Potential increase in intensity and/or frequency of storm events and impacts on creeks, flooding, drainage structures and other issues. Direct impacts on farm dams and bores/spring. ■ Water quality during construction and operation. ■ Potential draw down of groundwater during construction. 	Section 10.1, Section 10.3
Social and economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Loss of business and tourism from reduction in passing trade. ■ Accessibility to town for local landholders. ■ Presence and maintenance of access to the travelling stock route. ■ Loss of residential amenity. ■ Changes to livelihood due to proposed bypass. ■ Loss of productive agricultural land. ■ Changes to land use close to road corridor. 	Section 9.4, Section 9.5

Issue	Specific item raised	Where addressed in environmental assessment
Property acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to severed property portions. Number of full property acquisitions. Loss of infrastructure and access to infrastructure. 	Section 9.4, Section 9.5
Aboriginal heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on archaeology and cultural sites. Impacts to Aboriginal heritage within the former Town Common. 	Section 9.2
Non-Aboriginal heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on 'the Castle' at northern end of the project. 	Item is not heritage listed. Impacts on property are addressed in Section 9.4
Noise and vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impacts on currently unaffected properties and sensitive receivers (ie road will be closer). Construction impacts on properties and sensitive receptors. 	Section 9.3
Urban design and landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in landscape character and viewsheds for landowners with a view to the west. 	Section 10.3
Hazard and risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spills. Bushfire. Emergency services access. 	Section 10.6
Cumulative impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of the construction of all three proposed bypasses and the adjacent Hume Highway duplication works on resources (materials and human) and travel times. 	Section 9.1
Traffic and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on flora and fauna. Delays during construction. Changed traffic patterns (regional and local) during operation. 	Section 9.5

7.5 Consultation: the next steps

The RTA is committed to ongoing community and stakeholder consultation. Section 2.3.1 identifies the key steps in the Part 3A environmental assessment process. The RTA will maintain communication with the community, stakeholders and agencies throughout this process. During public exhibition of the environmental assessment, a community information session will take place in Holbrook.

Should the project be approved, the RTA would continue to consult with community members, stakeholders and government agencies during the pre-construction and construction phases of the project. A freecall 1800 project information line, project email and project website 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.