

4. Project development and alternatives

This chapter describes the process undertaken to assess preliminary route options to determine the preferred route, and describes the development of the concept design.

DGRs	Where addressed
Project justification	
Describe the need for and objectives of the project, alternatives considered and justification for the preferred project taking into consideration the objects of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> and the following:	Chapters 4, 12
The environmental, social and economic impacts of the project.	Section 12.1, 12.2
The suitability of the site.	Sections 12.1, 12.2
Whether or not the project is in the public interest.	Sections 12.1, 12.2, 12.3

4.1 Development and evaluation of options

The process followed in developing and evaluating the route options is summarised below and further detailed in the *Hume Highway Upgrade Woomargama Bypass: Preferred Option Report* (RTA 2008b).

4.1.1 Preliminary route options

The RTA investigated the following three broad options for the provision of a dual carriageway bypass at Woomargama:

- Option A — a 10.5 kilometre bypass on the northern side of the village that generally follows the existing alignment, making use of some of the existing dual carriageway section in the north.
- Option B — a nine kilometre bypass to the west of the existing highway and Woomargama village, passing across the western slopes of Mount McKenzie.
- Option C — a nine kilometre bypass to the west of Woomargama village, traversing the eastern slopes of Mount McKenzie between the existing Hume Highway and Option B further to the west.

Figure 4-1 shows the preliminary route options.

4.1.2 Community consultation on preliminary route options

Community consultation on the preliminary route options was undertaken in November 2006, July 2007, February 2008 and May 2008. Consultation included two information sessions, a community workshop, a community drop in session involving a display and presentation on the three route options, and an information and response brochure. There have also been numerous one-on-one meetings with potentially affected landowners along each route option.

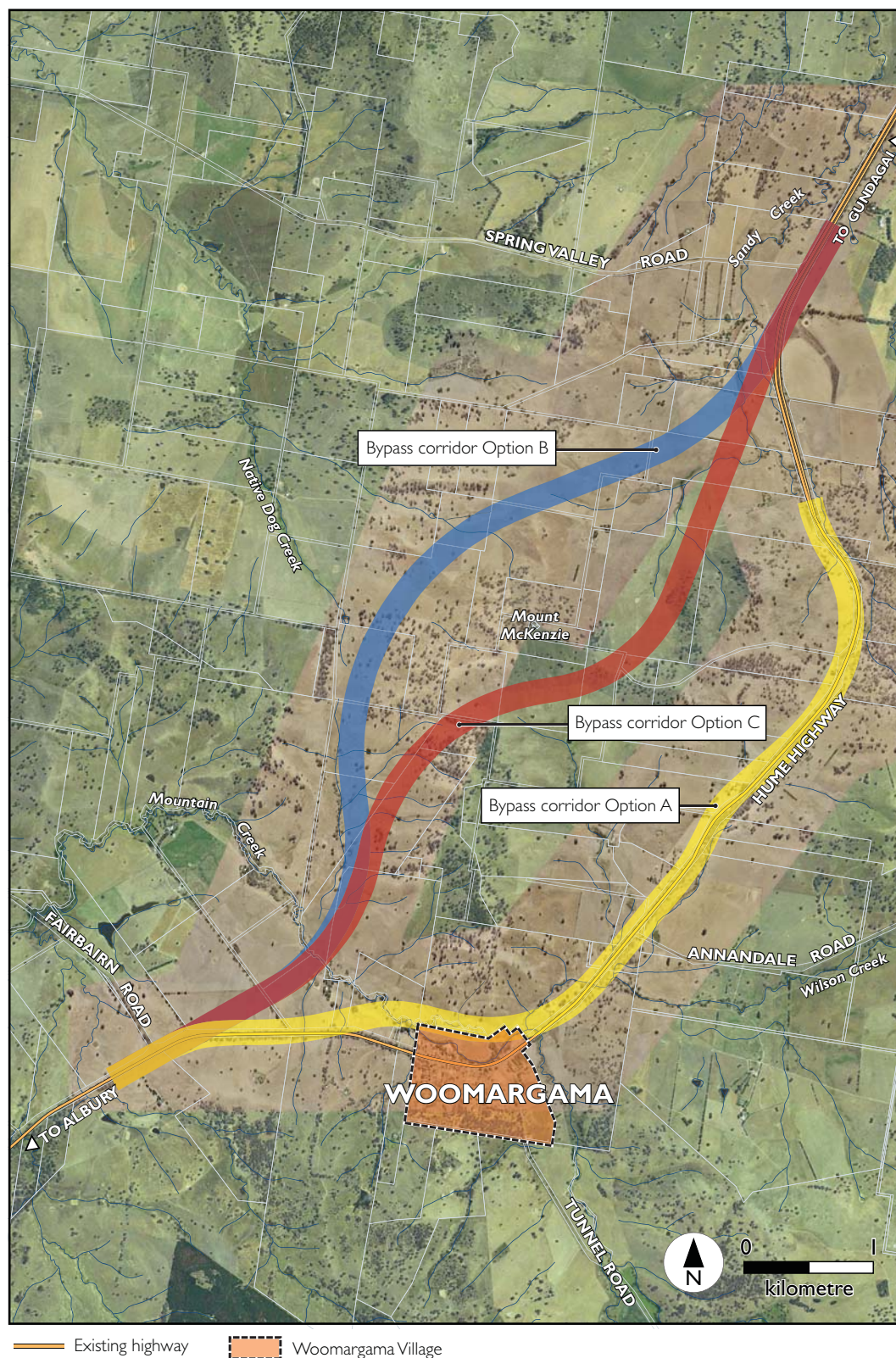


Figure 4-1 Preliminary route options

4.1.3 *Value management workshop*

In February 2008, a value management workshop was held to review and evaluate the three preliminary route options based on environmental, social and design criteria (selected at the workshop). The workshop was attended by members of the community, representatives from government agencies, including the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC (now the Department of Environment Climate Change and Water (DECCW)), Department of Primary Industries (DPI) (now the Department of Industry and Investment), Rural Fire Service, the Greater Hume Shire Council and the RTA. The outcomes of the workshop are summarised below:

- Option C was not considered a viable option for the Woomargama bypass and was eliminated from further consideration. This was based on poor performance against the criteria.
- Consensus was not reached at that time on a preferred route (between Option A and Option B).
- A need for additional environmental and design investigations of Options A and B was identified.

4.1.4 *Supplementary workshop*

A supplementary workshop was held on 30 July 2008 to address the need for further investigation into Options A and B as identified at the value management workshop. The workshop was attended by members of the community, representatives from government agencies, including the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, DECC, DPI, Rural Fire Service, the Murray Catchment Management Authority, the Greater Hume Shire Council, the NSW Farmers Association and the RTA.

Further environmental, social and design investigations were undertaken to provide more detailed information to enable selection of a preferred option. The outcome of the workshop was that Option B performed better against the environmental, social and design criteria.

4.1.5 *Selection of the preferred option*

Option B was recommended as the preferred option for the Woomargama bypass. This was based on the outcomes of community and stakeholder consultation, preliminary and additional investigations, the value management and supplementary workshops, and project costs and road user benefits. The reasons for adopting Option B as the preferred route over Option A include:

- It avoids potentially significant impacts on flora and fauna, and Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- It is safer and provides a better overall design standard.
- It is the shortest route and provides better overall value for money.
- It enables development of Woomargama in line with the Woomargama land use strategy and vision.

In selecting this option, it was acknowledged that there would be potential impacts to three large agribusiness enterprises that would require further assessment (see Section 9.5).

An announcement of the preferred route was made on 15 September 2008 by the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

4.2 The concept design

Following announcement of the preferred route and lodgement of the *Hume Highway Upgrade Woomargama Bypass: Preliminary Environmental Assessment* (RTA 2008a) with the Department of Planning (refer Section 2.3.1), the design for the project was refined to address issues raised through agency submissions, community consultation, detailed environmental investigations (eg Aboriginal heritage, flora and fauna) and other outstanding design issues. These design refinements included:

- Modifications to the alignment in the northern section.
- Modifications to the twin bridge design at Mountain Creek.
- Modifications to the design of the crossing at Sandy Creek.
- Modifications to cutting depths.
- Development of intersection arrangements with local roads.
- Development of private property accesses.

The outcome of these design refinements was the development of the concept design as presented in this environmental assessment, and described in detail in Chapters 5 and 6.