

10 Next Steps

10.1 Detailed Concept Design

The preferred route discussed in **Chapter 1** is based on an initial concept design. This concept design is being continually refined to improve functionality and safety in a manner that minimises social and environmental impacts. This ongoing refinement of the preferred route will continue as the project progresses and will include consideration of more detailed aspects of the proposed upgrade, including the alignment of Sections A1-a and B1-b. The detailed concept design will be coordinated with the additional investigations and environmental assessment outlined in **Section 10.2**.

As the concept design is being developed, it is addressing some important identified issues. It is expected that discussions with affected landowners, additional investigations and refinements in the earthworks balances would cause further adjustments prior to the formal application to the Department of Planning for project approval. Some key issues that will need to be addressed are:

- **Noise:** The preferred route is located near the more densely populated sections of the study area. As such, careful attention will need to be placed on the geometric design to ensure that noise impacts are minimised.
- **Agricultural Impacts:** Issues such as access, ground and water sources and development restrictions will also need careful attention in the concept design development.
- **Impacts on Housing:** There will be disruption to residential properties along the preferred route. There will also be dwellings that will be close to the upgraded Highway but not directly impacted, that will require close attention in the final configuration and during construction.
- **Newrybar School:** The school will have the new Pacific Highway to the east in a considerable cutting to allow Broken Head Road to pass via a bridge over the upgraded Highway. The proximity of the preferred route to the school and subsequent location of the school between two major roads (old and new Pacific Highways) is an important issue. Ongoing consultation between the Project Team, the school, and the school community will focus on amenity, safe accessibility, and the integrity of the school.
- **Tunnel:** The T2 alignment and tunnel design will require further refinement in the next phase.

10.2 Environmental Assessment of Preferred Route

Following the announcement and public display of the preferred route for the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale Pacific Highway upgrade project, the RTA intends to submit an application with the Department of Planning seeking approval of the project in accordance with Part 3A of the EP&A Act. The Minister for Planning would decide whether the project would be approved or refused.

Additional studies, including geotechnical and ecological investigations, and further detailed assessment of the project, would be undertaken as part of the continued refinement of the preferred route, and the preparation of an environmental assessment for the project. Consultation with affected landowners and the broader community would also continue during the preparation of the environmental assessment.

The scope and level of detail required in the environmental assessment will be set by the Director-General of the NSW DoP, in consultation with the relevant Government agencies and local Councils.

Once it is completed and accepted by the NSW DoP, the environmental assessment will be publicly exhibited and submissions sought. The RTA would be required to consider and respond to the issues raised in submissions, and may also need to consider modifications to the project to minimise environmental impacts. The NSW DoP may require such modifications to be reported in a preferred project report, and made publicly available.

The NSW DoP would assess the environmental assessment (including any modifications), and the Director-General of the Department would prepare a report for the Minister providing the outcomes of that assessment, so that the Minister can duly consider the project.