

## 4 Route Options Display Consultation

As noted in **Section 1.7**, the community and agency submissions received on the RODR are one of the three streams of input to the preferred route selection process described in **Chapter 7**. Details of the public display and the analysis of issues raised in submissions are documented in the *Tintenbar to Ewingsdale Route Options Submissions Report* (RTA 2006). This chapter provides a summary of the public display of the shortlisted route options and the issues raised in the submissions.

### 4.1 Route Options Display Activities

The display of route options commenced on 21 October 2005 and concluded on 2 December 2005. A range of consultation tools were used to facilitate and encourage community and stakeholder feedback on the route options, including advertisements, information brochures, landowner meetings, route options displays, a community information centre, and static displays.

#### 4.1.1 Advertisement and Information Brochure

Advertisements were placed in local and regional newspapers, and notice of the display was provided to members of the community within the study area and other relevant stakeholders. A Route Options Display brochure described the key issues associated with the options. The brochure provided details of display locations and times, and availability of additional information (project information line, RTA website and RTA Project Manager).

#### 4.1.2 Community Information Centre and Static Displays

Route options were displayed at a Community Information Centre located at the Bangalow Showgrounds during the display period, and members of the Project Team were in attendance. Staffed displays were also held at various locations during the display period as listed in **Table 4.1**. Static displays were also provided at specified locations in Newrybar, Ballina, Mullumbimby, Grafton, and Lismore.

**Table 4.1 Staffed Displays and Community Information Centre Timetable**

Location	Date
<b>Staffed Display</b>	
Bangalow A & I Hall	29 October 2005
Broken Head Hall	4 November 2005
Lennox CWA Hall	5 November 2005
Newrybar Hall	9 November 2005
Ewingsdale Hall	12 November 2005
<b>Community Information Centre</b>	
Bangalow Showgrounds	Wednesdays 10am-4pm
26 October to 11 November 2005	Thursdays 10am-6pm
	Fridays 10am-4pm

Key objectives of community and stakeholder involvement included:

- Ensure an open accountable and transparent community involvement process.
- Ensure all potentially affected property owners and interested stakeholders were provided with sufficient information about the project and the likely impacts so that they could provide informed input to the route selection process.

- Ensure appropriate and direct communication with property owners and/or managers in relation to access and investigations on landholdings within the study area by Project Team members and/or RTA representatives.
- Encourage community support and involvement in the project to facilitate better and more generally accepted outcomes.
- Provide a range of accessible opportunities for stakeholders, interested groups and the wider public to contribute to the project through issues identification, information provision and options evaluation.
- Build an ongoing relationship between the RTA, its contractors, and stakeholders in order to gain long term support for the project, and in particular the preferred route.

4.1.3 Landowner Meetings

The Project Team held over 100 meetings with land owners and/ or occupiers potentially directly affected by the shortlisted route options. This provided a direct mechanism whereby the concerns of potentially affected land owners/occupiers could be expressed and any issues discussed.

4.1.4 Website

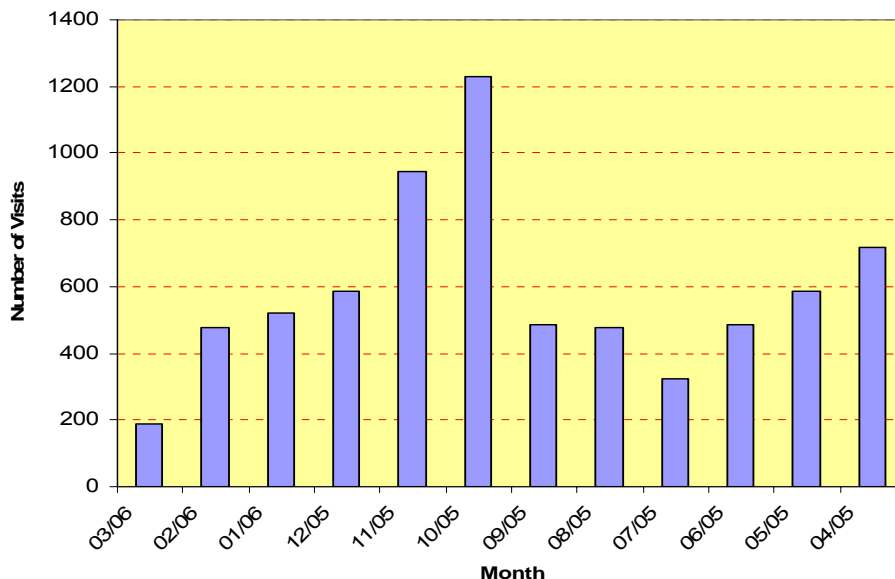
A website was established in the early stages of the project. The objective of the website is to provide easy access to community updates, public information and details of community involvement such as CLG and AFG meeting notes. Technical information including project reports, program objectives, details of the development process and field investigations are also displayed on the website and have been a useful source of information for many community members.

**Figure 4.1** identifies the number of times the website has been visited between April 2005 and March 2006. Within this timeframe, peak visitation periods were experienced in October and November 2005 when the route options display was held. During the display period, the RODR was the most frequently downloaded document.

The website is also used as a communication tool whereby community members can communicate with the Project Team via email. During the route option display period, community members were also able to supply feedback via the website.

Website activity peaked in October 2005 on announcement of the shortlisted route options.

**Figure 4.1 Website Visits by the Public**



## 4.2 Overview of Issues Raised in Submissions

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The feedback received on the RODR was extensive and indicative of the many varied views within the community. A total of 19,192 submissions were received in the six weeks following the release of the RODR and during the route options display. Submissions have been sorted by type and issues raised, with all submissions entered into a database and fully considered. Weighting has not been given to those issues that received the most responses; rather the submissions have been used qualitatively to gather as much information as possible to use in the selection of the preferred route. **Table 4.2** provides a breakdown of the origins of the submissions received.

### Form Submissions and Petition

There were two form submissions and one petition received. The first form submission was from the United Voices group and had four points, listed below:

- Move the interstate freight back to the New England Highway.
- Government to start investigation of alternative inland freight routes and rail options.
- Upgrade the highway to Class A within the existing corridor.
- Immediate start to a Class A Ballina Bypass.

The second form submission had five main points, listed below:

- Upgrade should occur within the existing corridor.
- No consultation with residences to the east of the highway before the study area was expanded.
- Highway upgrade on the coastal flats will increase environmental damage particularly the Newrybar valley and Coopers Shoot escarpment.
- Elimination of important agricultural land in the expanded study area.
- The highway upgrade was zoned and planned along the current alignment.

The petition requested the NSW Legislative Assembly to only consider route options that closely follow the existing Pacific Highway.

### Feedback Forms

Feedback forms were analysed in respect of locality of the sender, route preferences, and the issues identified as most important. **Figure 4.2** shows that feedback forms received were largely from people who live in or near the study area.

Option preference as noted on the feedback forms is shown in **Figure 4.3**. (Not all feedback forms returned had a clearly stated preference between the options, thus the sum of those who favoured one option over another does not equal the total number of feedback forms received.)

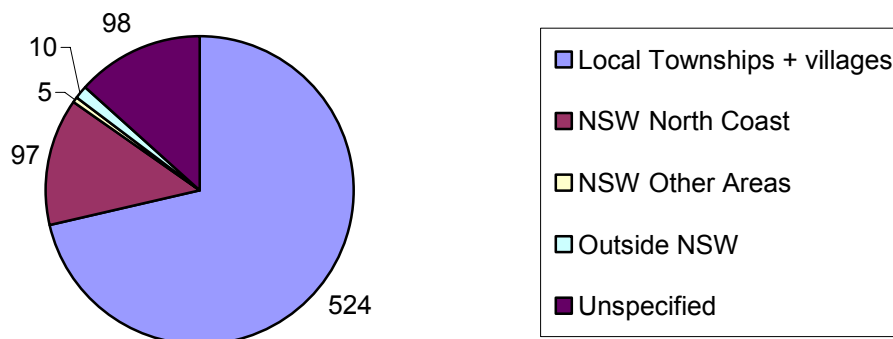
Significance of community issues as noted on the feedback forms is shown in **Figure 4.4**.

**Table 4.2 Origins of Submissions**

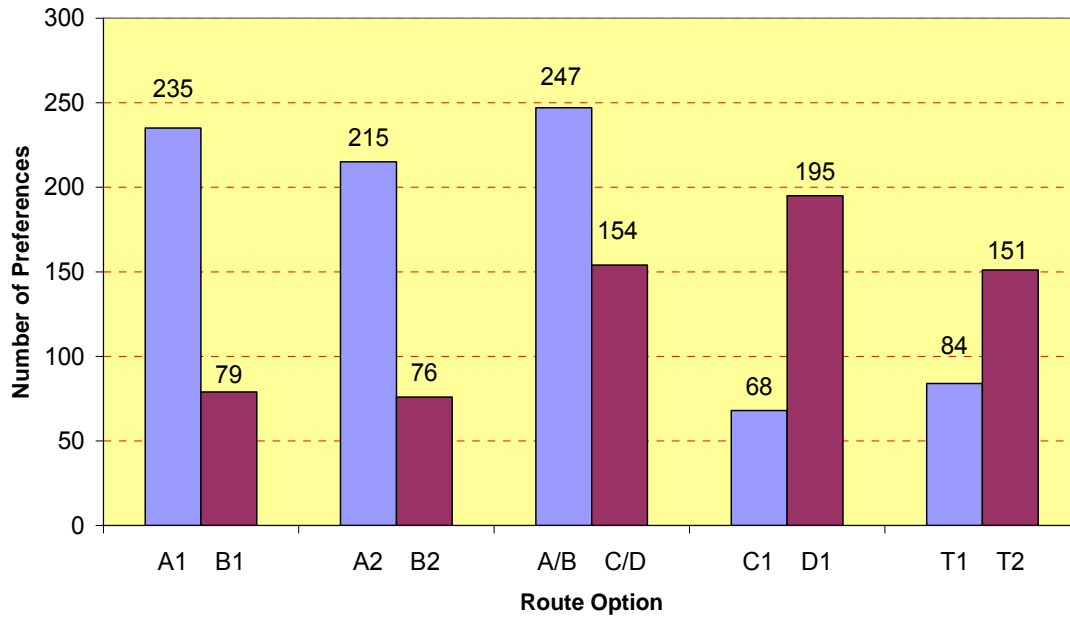
	United Voices		Feedback Forms and Other Submissions	
	Total	%	Total	%
<b>Total received</b>	<b>18,012</b>		<b>1,180</b>	
Address not counted*	1,776		358	
<b>Total counted</b>	<b>16,236</b>		<b>822</b>	
Postcode 2478 (Ballina/Lennox)	4,922	30	114	14.0
Postcode 2479 (Bangalow/Coopers Shoot/Knockrow/Newrybar)	1,176	7	430	53
Postcode 2481 (Byron Bay/Broken Head)	3,731	23	121	15
Other NSW	4,733	29	121	15
Australia not NSW	1,255	7.5	36	4
Overseas	419	2.5	0	0

\*Note: Origin of submission was not counted if an address was not provided, submission acknowledgement letter produced a 'Returned to Sender', duplicates, email only provided, illegible address and feedback forms being blank. The issues raised in these submissions were still incorporated into the report.

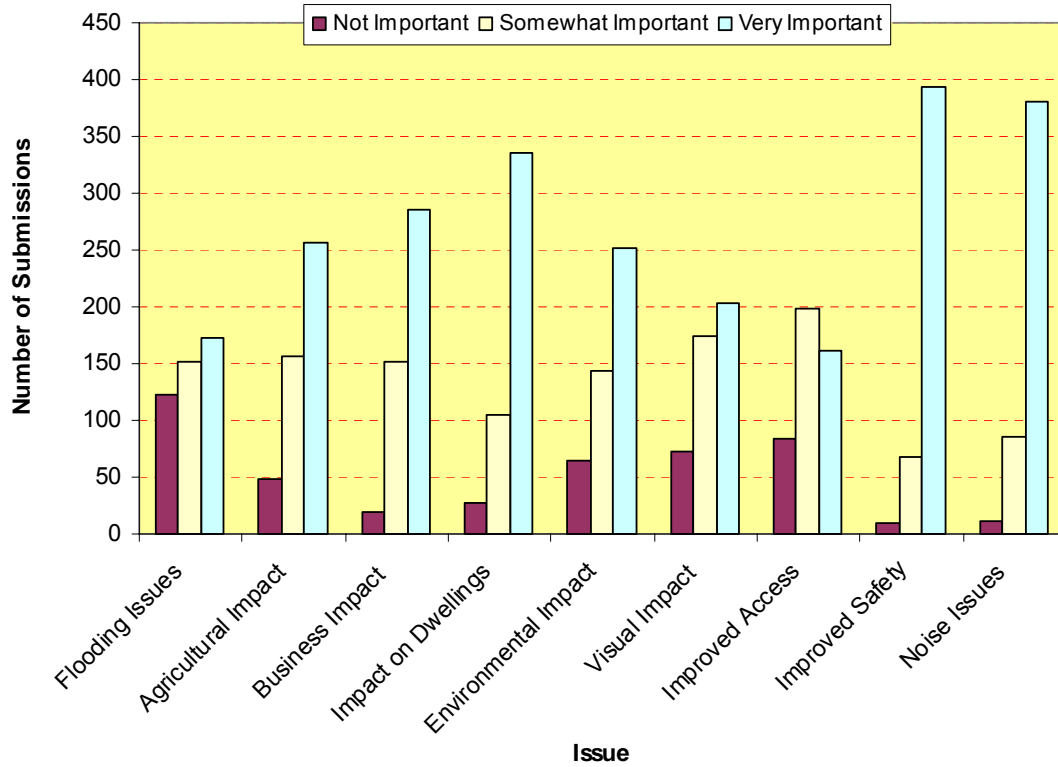
**Figure 4.2 Feedback Forms by Area**



**Figure 4.3 Option Preferences as Identified on Feedback Forms**



**Figure 4.4 Significance of Issues as Identified on Feedback Forms**



## 4.2.1 Community Submissions

A summary of the main issues raised in the submissions is provided in **Table 4.3**.

**Table 4.3 Community Submissions Summary**

<b>Issue Title</b>	<b>Main Issues</b>	<b>Number of times issue raised</b>	<b>% of issues within the category</b>
<b>Community Consultation</b>	Criticism of the consultation programme (including expansion of study area)	122	38.9%
	Concern as to how submissions (including "United Voices" submission) are treated	35	11.1%
	Influence of lobby groups	32	10.2%
	Uncertainty and anxiety caused by route selection process	28	8.9%
	Community being divided by process	20	6.4%
	Community representation on the CLG	18	5.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	
<b>Process</b>	The RODR contained inaccurate or misleading information and impacts should just be considered for the road footprint not a 250 m wide corridor	36	22.0%
	Concern regarding the expansion of the study area	32	19.5%
	The selection process was flawed (for example a 'do-nothing' option was not considered)	22	13.4%
	The RODR lacked quality, detailed information	19	11.6%
	Concern regarding the criteria weighting	29	17.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	An inland route particularly for freight is a better option	525 + (United Voices 18,012)	57.3%
	Poor planning at the State and Federal level	93	10.2%
	Alternative routes (and modes) should be considered	71 + (United Voices 18,012)	7.8%
	The highway upgrade should not be fast tracked under public pressure	67	7.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>756</b>	
<b>Engineering Design</b>	Various route preferences offered based on engineering design and feasibility	334	46.2%
	Concern over design guidelines including confusion regarding Class A versus Class M, number of lanes required and speed limits	159	22%
	Upgrade on or near existing highway	242 +(United Voices 18,012)	33.5%
	Disturbance and use of existing highway during construction	25	3.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>760</b>	

<b>Issue Title</b>	<b>Main Issues</b>	<b>Number of times issue raised</b>	<b>% of issues within the category</b>
<b>Tunnel</b>	Support for a tunnel option	23	17.2%
	Opposition to a tunnel option	46	34.3%
	T1 versus T2 preferences	51	38.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	
<b>Access</b>	Local road network impacts	19	17.3%
	Use of existing highway for local access and tourist drive	29	26.4%
	Interchanges	27	24.5%
	Access to individual properties	35	31.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	
<b>Safety</b>	Road safety should be a priority	91	29.3%
	Existing safety concerns (for example black-spots) should be eliminated urgently to reduce accident	64	20.6%
	The existing highway is unsafe and demonstrates that heavy vehicles and cars don't mix	70	22.5%
	Fog is not a significant issue	69	22.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>294</b>	
<b>Geology, Geotechnics and Soils</b>	Difficulty of constructing in areas of instability	38	51.4%
	Difficulty of constructing in soft soils	21	28.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	
<b>Hydrology, Flooding and Water Quality</b>	Impact on waterways generally and specific (including Knockrow, Emigrants, Platypus, Skinner and Byron Creeks) in terms of drinking water quality and aquatic ecology	267	63.1%
	Identification of flood prone land	65	15.4%
	Impacts on drainage hydrology	35	8.3%
	Impacts to springs and groundwater	32	7.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	
<b>Air Quality</b>	General impacts on the community	47	39.8%
	Health impacts	14	11.9%
	Vehicle emissions and greenhouse gases	14	11.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	
<b>Ecology</b>	Impacts to the coastal plain and escarpment	156	44.3%
	Data supplied by individuals not represented in the RODR	36	10.2%
	General extent of ecological impacts	33	9.4%
	Impacts to rehabilitation and revegetation projects	24	6.8%
	Impacts on the plateau	22	6.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	

<b>Issue Title</b>	<b>Main Issues</b>	<b>Number of times issue raised</b>	<b>% of issues within the category</b>
<b>Planning and Landuse</b>	Route preferences provided based on agricultural impacts	287	35.2%
	Options along the existing would make best use of earlier decisions regarding the Ballina by-pass and the Bangalow by-pass as well as existing 9(a) zoning	228	28.0%
	Prime agricultural land should be avoided	150	18.4%
	Inconsistency with other environmental planning instruments	41	5.0%
	Consideration of future residential developments	29	3.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>735</b>	
<b>Social and Business</b>	Options preference based on concern regarding impact on communities and livelihoods	310	37.9%
	Options preference based on concern regarding impact on (acquisition of) residences	225	27.5%
	Impacts on tourism	43	5.3%
	Non-agricultural impacts to the local economy should be considered	40	4.9%
	Social and educational impacts on Newrybar School	32	3.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>650</b>	
<b>Heritage</b>	Impact on Non-Aboriginal heritage	25	58.1%
	Impact on Aboriginal heritage	10	23.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	
<b>Visual Impact and Urban Design</b>	General visual amenity and route options preferences	127	47.4%
	Impacts to the scenic escarpment and coastal plain	96	35.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	
<b>Noise and Vibration</b>	Route preferences based on impacts of upgrade on or near the existing highway	178	44.8%
	Route preferences based on impacts of upgrade away from existing highway	113	28.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	
<b>Land Acquisition and Compensation</b>	The RTA has inadequate compensation arrangements for directly affected landowners as well as those landowners that would remain adjacent to the upgrade	131	52.8%
	Greater consideration should be given to the varying value of land throughout the study area	51	20.6%
	Land values will depreciate for lots away from the existing highway if coastal plains options chosen	33	13.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	
<b>Traffic and Transport</b>	Concern that road improvements have proven to increase traffic volumes (particularly of heavy vehicles) dramatically	19	40.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	

## 4.2.2 Agency Submissions

Key issues raised by agencies are listed in **Table 4.4**. Details of the submissions are included in the *Route Options Submissions Report*.

**Table 4.4 Agency Submissions**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
Ballina Shire Council	Council advises a preference for the planning, design and construction of the approved Ballina Bypass route. Council identifies that use of the approved Ballina Bypass route alignment would avoid conflict with its current investigations concerning urban structure planning at Cumbalum Ridge.
Byron Shire Council	Council raises issues relating to maintenance of connectivity of communities and accessibility into town centres, while securing road safety, and highlights concerns regarding the location of interchanges and the potential impact to the local road network, in particular, the coast road from Lennox Head to Byron Bay. Council also raises a number of issues relating to ecological investigations undertaken and potential impacts.
NSW Department of Environment and Conservation	The DEC raises concerns relating to biodiversity conservation and ecological impacts, Aboriginal cultural heritage, air quality, noise impacts and water management.
NSW Department of Planning	The DoP highlights the importance of farming land in the area, and the significant impacts of fragmentation and consumption of farming properties.
NSW Department of Primary Industries	The DPI highlights the importance of farming land and agricultural activity in the area, and notes that all four of the shortlisted options would impact on important agricultural land to some degree.
Rous Water	Rous Water identifies particular concern with Options A1, B1 and C1 due to the close proximity to Emigrant Creek Dam, crossings of Emigrant Creek, and/or disturbance to the Emigrant Creek catchment. Rous Water also suggests a number of water quality management practices that should be carried out as part of the upgrade.
Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council	The Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council identifies concerns with respect to impacts to dwellings, and highlights the need to preserve the potential for tourism in the area. The Jali Land Aboriginal Land Council also identifies that the shortlisted route option traverse land of known past indigenous occupation and that there may be artefacts or items of indigenous heritage in the area.
Northern Rivers Regional Development Board	The Northern Rivers Regional Development Board identifies issues relating to transport planning, including consideration of impacts to the local road network, the separation of local and interstate traffic, safety on the highway, and mitigation measures to ensure residential amenity is protected from heavy vehicle traffic. The Northern Rivers Regional Development Board also highlights the importance of minimising impacts to agricultural land, and of impacts to the natural and cultural landscape.

### 4.3 Outcomes of Public Display of Route Options

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As a result of feedback from the community and agencies, further engineering and environmental investigations were undertaken as described in **Chapter 3**. Additionally, relevant data obtained through the submissions was incorporated into the updated constraints analysis.

The outcomes of this stream of work are considered in the route selection process described in **Chapter 7**.