

11 Summary of next steps

11.1 General

The importance of achieving a balance between environmental, community, technical and cost factors as well as meeting current and anticipated transport demands is well recognised. The Federal Government and the NSW Government are committed to this outcome. Moreover, the provision of a high standard highway will improve freight/commuter traffic efficiency and road safety.

11.2 Further project development and community consultation

A public display of the preferred option will follow a joint announcement of the preferred option by the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and the State Minister for Roads and Ports.

Concept design and environmental assessment of the preferred option will then be undertaken. Further ground survey, geotechnical and other investigations will be undertaken to provide input into the refinement of the design and environmental assessment.

The statutory planning and approvals requirements of the project are outlined in more detail in **Chapter 3**.

Thus far, apart from issues with constructability, the key issues are identified as environmental; therefore, it is crucial that the approvals process selected provides a robust and transparent assessment to satisfy legislative requirements and community expectations.

When completed, the environmental assessment will be publicly exhibited and submissions would be sought from the community. It is anticipated that this would be in mid 2014. RMS may be required to prepare a report on the submissions received and revise any environmental commitments documented in the environmental assessment. RMS would also consider design modifications to the project to minimise environmental impacts. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure may request the RMS to display a preferred project report identifying any modifications.

11.3 Environmental impact assessment under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

A detailed concept design will be carried out on the preferred route option. This will be the subject of more detailed environmental assessment (refer to **Section 4.2.1**) and community engagement.

11.4 Land acquisition and construction

Land acquisition may be required and may involve the acquisition of both whole and part lots. The process of acquiring land will not commence until planning approval has been obtained (ie environmental assessment of the concept design of the preferred route has been completed, including the acceptance of conditions) and funds have been made available. Construction may commence after the preceding activities and detailed design have been completed, subject to the availability of funds.

11.5 On-going community engagement

RMS is committed to continuing community engagement throughout the whole process including concept design, environmental assessment, detailed design and construction. Information and progress will continue to be relayed via updates posted to community households and included in local media, meetings with individuals and groups and the project website. In conjunction with the information provided to the community, the project team will welcome continued feedback and comments.