

# 7. Social and economic impacts

## 7.1 Context

The city of Wagga Wagga is located six kilometres north-east of the proposal. The city provides many essential services, such as medical and community facilities, shopping and schools. The city also caters for people travelling on the Olympic Highway, providing accommodation, restaurants and amenities. The Kapooka Military Area is a major contributor to Wagga Wagga's economy.

The Olympic Highway is the main route between Wagga Wagga and Albury. The highway serves as the major access between Victoria and the NSW Central West, as well as forming part of the Melbourne to Brisbane (Hume Highway to Newell Highway) corridor. The highway is used by coaches, heavy vehicles and motorists travelling between these locations. The Olympic Highway and Camp Access Road are also used by motorists travelling between the Kapooka Military Area and Wagga Wagga.

## 7.2 Social and economic impacts of the proposal

### 7.2.1 Positive impacts

The proposal would construct a new bridge and highway alignment that meet current network safety and design standards. This would have a positive socio-economic impact by improving road safety for motorists and heavy vehicles on the Olympic Highway. The removal of the risk of heavy vehicles rolling over onto the rail line would also benefit rail safety. The safety benefits of the proposal would address the community priorities identified during community consultation for the REF.

The proposal would remove the restrictions to traffic posed by the existing bridge and approaches. Higher mass limit vehicles would be able to use Kapooka section of the Olympic Highway as a result. This would provide economic benefits for industries relying on road freight.

As well, the proposal would provide the opportunity for increased clearances for trains to facilitate the future construction of a second rail line and double stacking of freight containers, subject to the removal of the existing bridge. This would provide economic benefits for industries relying on rail freight.

During construction the local area would experience a minor short-term increase in employment opportunities and procurement of local goods and services.

The proposal would meet the long-held need of the community for a safer rail crossing at Kapooka. Numerous articles in the local media have called for the project to proceed and objected to delays in the proposal. The proposal would have an overwhelmingly positive impact on the reality and perception of road safety at this location.

### 7.2.2 Negative impacts

The proposal would permanently acquire 9.5 hectares of private land zoned for primary production. For most of the properties the areas to be acquired are relatively small.

For Lot 2 DP 572294 (the property south of the decommissioned fuel depot), an area of 6.98 hectares would be acquired. This is about 15 per cent of the property. The property is used for rural residential purposes. About 2.5 hectares of the property would be fragmented by the proposal. Roads and Maritime would acquire the land that would be fragmented as a result of the proposal.

The proposal would be unlikely to cause a loss of value to properties in the study area relating to possible future subdivision. This is due to the E2 (Environmental Conservation) zoning of land in some parts of the study area, which does not permit subdivision, and the relatively small areas of land proposed to be acquired.

Considering the property acquisition process that would be adopted, it is unlikely that the proposal would substantially impact the economic circumstances of any private landowners.

The proposal would cause some disruption to traffic using the Olympic Highway and Camp Access Road during construction. It is expected that this disruption would be short term delays to traffic movement. These delays would be required to ensure the safety of motorists travelling through the construction site.

### 7.2.3 Safeguards and management measures

The following safeguards and management measures would be implemented by Roads and Maritime to minimise the socio-economic impacts of the proposal:

- Potentially affected residences will be contacted before the commencement of works, in accordance with Roads and Maritime *Community Engagement and Communication Manual* (Roads and Maritime Services 2012). Residents will be notified via door knocks, newsletters or letter box drops providing information on the proposed works, working hours and a contact name and number should any complaints wish to be registered.
- Local goods and services will be sourced wherever possible during construction.