

## 6.10 Socio-economic

### 6.10.1 Existing environment

The study area for the socio-economic assessment is defined as the area within 500 metres of the proposal. Census data for Wagga Wagga LGA has also been used to provide demographic information relevant to the proposal.

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 2011 Census (ABS 2012) provides the following core demographic data about the Wagga Wagga LGA:

- At the time of the 2011 Census there were 59,463 people in the Wagga Wagga LGA.
- The number of dwellings was 24,774, with an average household size of 2.5.
- The proportion of people aged 17 years or under was 25.4 per cent.
- The proportion of people aged 60 years or older was 18.2 per cent.
- The median weekly household income was \$1,149.
- The proportion of households with two motor vehicles was 78.4 per cent.
- People of Australian Aboriginal descent comprise 0.5 per cent of the population.

The top employment industries for the Wagga Wagga LGA (ABS 2012) are provided in Table 6.30.

**Table 6.30: Top employment industries for the Wagga Wagga LGA**

| Industry                          | Number employed | Percentage of people employed |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Retail trade                      | 3637            | 13.0                          |
| Health care and social assistance | 3223            | 11.6                          |
| Public administration and safety  | 3208            | 11.5                          |
| Education and training            | 2846            | 10.2                          |

The area surrounding Wagga Wagga, including the Kapooka area, mainly comprises rural land use. In 2011 the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry employed 1132 people, or 3.9 per cent of all people employed in the Wagga Wagga LGA (ABS 2012).

Land uses in the study area are described in Section 6.5.1. Rural land in the study area is used mainly for sheep grazing, cereal cropping and mixed farming. The other main land uses include the Kapooka Military Area and woodland conservation areas. Three residences are located in the study area. The Sydney to Melbourne Rail Line passes through the study area.

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.

Consultation was undertaken with the Wagga Wagga community, Wagga Wagga City Council, defence staff from the Kapooka Military Area, the freight industry and relevant government agencies. The main priorities identified related to road safety and restrictions on the Kapooka section of the Olympic Highway at the existing bridge (see issues raised during consultation in Section 5.1 and results of options analysis during value management workshop in Section 2.4.3).

The safety of the bridge is of major concern, with risks of injury or death to motorists through crashes on the bridge, as described in Section 2.1.3. Truck roll-over on the bridge is a safety risk for trains on the Sydney to Melbourne Rail Line.

Higher mass limit vehicles cannot use the bridge. This has economic consequences for industries relying on road freight. As well, the existing bridge does not allow for future rail duplication or double stacking of containers. This has economic consequences for industries relying on rail freight.

#### 6.10.2 Potential impacts

##### **Construction**

During construction there would be a reduction in amenity for the community and local residences as a result of construction activities. Potential impacts on amenity have been assessed in the following sections of the REF:

- Noise and vibration (Section 6.2).
- Visual (Section 6.4).
- Land use and property (Section 6.5).
- Air quality (Section 6.9).

The proposal would affect property accesses as described in Section 6.6.

A reduction in the water quality of dams and drainage lines due to an influx of sediment or man-made substances could potentially affect the quality of water for stock. Impacts of the proposal relating to water quality have been addressed in Section 6.3.

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

##### **Operation**

Based on the concept design, the proposal would permanently acquire about 9.5 hectares of private land zoned for primary production. For most of the properties the areas to be acquired are relatively small and would not affect the ongoing use of the land for primary production.

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.

In acquiring property for the proposal, Roads and Maritime would consider the effect that the proposal has on the value of the residual area of each property (the area retained by the land owner), as required by the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*. Any decrease in the market value of the residual area caused by the proposal would be included in the fee paid for the acquisition.

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 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 acquisition of land from areas zoned E2 (Environmental Conservation) (including the Planning Agreement Areas) would have a negative social impact by removing land dedicated to providing long-term biodiversity sustainability benefits. The Planning Agreement Areas were established by Wagga Wagga City Council on behalf of the Wagga Wagga community as part of the Biodiversity Certification of the Wagga Wagga LEP. The Biodiversity Certification provides an overarching strategy for ecologically sustainable development in the Wagga Wagga LGA. The proposal would therefore conflict with the objectives of the Wagga Wagga community in relation to this strategy. The loss of this land also conflicts with the community's general objective of maintaining the biodiversity of life as a potential resource to benefit society now and in the future. The ecological impacts of the acquisition of land would be offset as described in Section 6.1.

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, as described in Sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3.

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 (which is not assessed in this REF). This would provide economic benefits for industries relying on rail freight.

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.

### 6.10.3 Safeguards and management measures

In addition to safeguards and management measures identified in Sections 6.2.4, 6.4.4, 6.5.3, 6.6.3 and 6.9.3, the following would be implemented.

| Impact  | Environmental safeguards   | Responsibility                 | Timing           |
|---|--|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Socio-economic - general impacts to residences              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potentially affected residences will be contacted before the commencement of works, in accordance with Roads and Maritime <i>Community Engagement and Communication Manual</i> (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.</li> </ul> | Project manager and contractor | Pre-construction |
| Socio-economic - property access                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affected landowners and tenants will be consulted in providing alternate access arrangements that are suitable to facilitate existing activities.</li> </ul>  | Project manager and contractor | Pre-construction |
| Socio-economic - social loss of land zoned for conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roads and Maritime will consult with OEH and Wagga Wagga City Council to minimise social impacts relating to the loss of land from the Planning Agreement Areas.</li> </ul>   | Project manager                | Pre-construction |
| Socio-economic - local economy                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local goods and services will be sourced wherever possible during construction.</li> </ul>  | Project manager and contractor | Construction     |