

## Mulwala Bridge live information session Q&A

Questions	Answers
<b>Maintenance and retention of old bridge</b>	
Why are you wasting money doing so much maintenance work on the bridge now, when do you plan on building a new bridge?	<p>Maintaining and repairing Mulwala Bridge now will ensure it is able to continue to safely operate and service the community while we continue planning for a replacement bridge.</p> <p>By proactively carrying out this work now, we will minimise bridge closures needed for future routine scheduled maintenance.</p> <p>This means we can hopefully reduce the number of future scheduled closures and minimise the need for lengthy detours.</p>
The future population of both towns is expanding. There would be a function for both bridges and the Weir crossing. Why not retain both, considering the funds now being put into the current bridge?	<p>NSW and Victorian Governments share maintenance responsibilities for 31 current Murray River crossings.</p> <p>The old bridge will require increasing maintenance as it ages further. This would impact ongoing maintenance funds from all other Murray crossings. Transport for NSW will continue to carry out essential maintenance on the old bridge until a new bridge is open to traffic.</p> <p>No matter which option is built, the old bridge will be removed because it is at the end of its lifespan and can't continue to be maintained.</p>
Will the Government agree to keep the existing Yarrowonga Mulwala Bridge once a new bridge is built?	<p>Although the existing Mulwala Bridge will be removed, there is an important process we have to go through before this takes place. As part of this process, we will consult with you, the Mulwala and Yarrowonga communities, about an appropriate way to recognise the history of this century old bridge and the importance it has played in connecting the two communities – socially, culturally and economically.</p>
The current bridge would provide many possibilities for tourism enterprises and community functions after the new bridge is built. The history of the current bridge would be best recognised by its retention and use for decades to come. It is an iconic structure, a great attraction to our town. Why would it not be retained, and value-add to the current expenditure on its structural integrity?	<p>We will let you know when we start this process because your knowledge – your stories, your photographs and your memories – will play an invaluable role in ensuring this bridge's significance is remembered for years to come.</p>
With the new bridge in operation, surely the expenditure to maintain the current bridge for light-weight purposes only would be far less?	

<p>Why is this proposed bridge so far down the preference list of other crossings?</p>	<p>The Murray River Crossings Investment Prioritisation Assessment, published in 2018, considered bridge condition and traffic and freight volumes using the connection between NSW and Victoria. Bridges higher up the priority list include much older timber truss bridges which are in poorer condition compared to Mulwala Bridge. After recent maintenance work, Mulwala Bridge is estimated to have a lifespan beyond that of other Murray River bridges, and is considered able to meet transport needs between Yarrowonga and Mulwala for the near future.</p>
<p><b>Cost</b></p>	
<p>I would like to know about the cost involved in these options. How much will it cost?</p>	<p>At this preliminary stage, we do not consider there to be substantial differences in cost between the 'Green' or 'Grey' options. The bridge over the lake will be a similar cost for both options. However, the 'Green' route has some unknown costs, particularly on the Mulwala side. These need to be further investigated before more robust project estimates are prepared.</p>
<p><b>Traffic studies, heavy vehicle and Belmore Street</b></p>	
<p>What is the proportion or percentage of traffic that runs between Mulwala and Yarrowonga as opposed to the amount or percent of traffic that goes through to Murray valley Highway?</p>	<p>Previous traffic studies considered traffic traveling between the two towns. Traffic cameras tracked vehicles at key points in both towns including across both crossings. If a vehicle was not recorded as travelling away from either town after a given time, it was considered to have had a destination in either Mulwala or Yarrowonga. The traffic study identified around 88 per cent of vehicles crossing the lake started in one town and finished in the other, representing local traffic connections. A further 10 per cent of traffic started in one town, crossed the lake and continued beyond the other town. Only around two per cent of traffic crossing the bridge did not start or finish their journey in either town.</p> <p>Traffic studies will be reconsidered once further funding is available, however Transport for NSW (Transport) does not expect overall travel patterns to have changed significantly from previous investigations.</p>
<p>How will heavy vehicles be diverted away from Belmore Street if the 'Grey' option is chosen? And has research been conducted into how forcing these machines and trucks into the bottleneck of Belmore Street?</p>	<p>The 'Grey' route would directly join an upgraded Irvine Parade. This would provide a more efficient alternative route to travelling along Belmore Street. Intersection arrangements are still to be confirmed, however the main road would travel around the corner, with an access to Belmore Street providing for vehicles wishing to travel there.</p> <p>We are currently working with our road safety and traffic engineers and will carry out consultation with Moira Shire to investigate an interim measure to improve road safety along Belmore Street. Until Irvine Parade is upgraded, there is an expectation there would be more heavy vehicles moving down Belmore Street once the weir bridge is closed for normal vehicle traffic.</p>
<p>Apologies I worded heavy machinery question poorly - more thinking in terms of 'Grey' route forcing heavy machinery and trucks onto Belmore Street, which would be unsafe for many reasons, and increase wear and tear on the main shopping area.</p>	
<p>How much research has been done into the suitability for each route regarding heavy machinery and B-double/triples?</p>	<p>As part of the design so far, we have considered the requirements for both of these vehicles. Whichever bridge option is chosen, it will be designed to satisfy agricultural equipment and B-double vehicles. Both bridge options would be wider and better accommodate those vehicles than the current bridge.</p>
<p>In response to the heavy vehicle information, thank you. I would add feedback that this would compromise foreshore use?</p>	<p>If the 'Grey' route is chosen, it may affect the amenity of the Yarrowonga foreshore, but we would work with Moira Shire to ensure we minimise the vehicle movement impacts on any foreshore redevelopment.</p>

(With big trucks etc turning down nearby). Just feedback!	
Which bridge route does the new road connect to?	<p>On the Yarrawonga side, the Victorian government is interested in establishing a new link to either the 'Green' or 'Grey' route from the Murray Valley Highway, which would take vehicles out of Belmore Street. Some preliminary planning work has gone into establishing a new link from the Murray Valley Highway east of the railway line up to Irvine Parade.</p> <p>If the 'Green' route is chosen, there would effectively be a direct link on the western part of Irvine Parade onto the 'Green' route bridge.</p> <p>If the 'Grey' route is chosen, then that road connection would extend east along Irvine Parade. A new intersection would then be established at the southern edge of the bridge to enable both light and heavy vehicles to safely turn onto Irvine Parade and then the new access road down to the Murray Valley Highway.</p>
<b>Rules and regulations</b>	
Could a load limit be set on the existing bridge to maintain it for car traffic?	Based on Transport and the Victorian Department of Transport's (DoT) investigations of a number of bridges, removing traffic from an aging structure only has a marginal impact on ongoing maintenance costs. The weight of the structure itself is the contributor to the maintenance requirements so putting a load limit and reducing traffic volumes wouldn't significantly reduce the maintenance costs which are increasing over time. The purpose of this project is to have one bridge to cater to all traffic movements.
<b>Decision making, feedback and next steps</b>	
What is the next step, when will the Governments announce the chosen option and construction of the new bridge begin?	We will work on the community feedback summary report once the consultation is closed. We will consider your feedback and comments on both bridge options. We will advise the NSW and Victorian governments of the outcome and seek endorsement of the preferred route.
When can we expect an announcement on the preferred route from this process?	This process can take many months but we will keep you informed as this important project progresses.
Will you release the feedback we have provided so far?	
What is the Government's position on the route for a new Yarrawonga-Mulwala Bridge? Will the Victorian/NSW Government change their mind on the bridge route?	<p>The current position of both NSW and Victorian governments is for a 'Grey' route. This consultation process is to confirm the community's preference and further consider the position of both councils.</p> <p>Once the submission period closes, we will review all your comments and prepare a consultation summary report which will be used to help inform the preferred option for the location of a future bridge.</p>
There was a question about not having a proper questionnaire available for people without propaganda before the questionnaire, where they haven't had the opportunity to see if Green is really the most popular choice?	<p>The community feedback period is the community's opportunity to provide comments on their issues and concerns. This is the chance for residents of Yarrawonga, Mulwala, or broader, who don't feel they have had an opportunity to provide their opinion on which bridge best suits their needs. We are open to all feedback.</p> <p>Please make sure you send your comments through by Friday 30 July via the project website, or email and regular mail.</p>
<b>Bypass</b>	
Will you be building a bypass?	There are no plans for a future bypass to be built at Mulwala.

<b>Councils</b>	
Does the fact Moira and Federation Councils are both in favour of 'Green' route carry weight in the final decision?	The Australian, NSW and Victorian governments will be involved in the funding of this project and both councils' views will form part of the decision-making. It will certainly be one of the key factors that is taken into consideration when the bridge route is chosen.
Can the survey page be updated to mention the 2017 plebiscite results?	The previous plebiscites into the community's bridge route preferences have been noted and are part of the reason Transport and DoT have reopened the options back up for community comment. We would like to better understand the community's preference and reasons behind those decisions. As the plebiscites were council surveys, they were not managed by Transport or DoT.
<b>Impacts to local businesses and pre-existing assets</b>	
Can you please explain the impacts to the water treatment plant Club Mulwala RSL and acquisition of land from Yarrowonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort?	<p>The 'Green' route travels over underground pipes connecting to the water treatment plant, including to ponds to the west of the railway line. The water treatment plant's access would be severely limited by the 'Green' route. There are also likely to be more impacts to the water treatment plant's infrastructure during construction.</p> <p>The current rear exit from Club Mulwala would be impacted and changed. The level difference between the club carpark and proposed 'Green' road alignment would require land from the existing car park to install drainage and build road embankments.</p> <p>Should the 'Green' option be chosen, significantly increased traffic volumes traveling past the currently uncontrolled Gulai Road railway level crossing may result in the need for traffic lights and Gulai Road realigned for a straighter railway crossing approach. This would be required for road safety and would in turn impact the 13th hole fairway.</p>
If 'Green' route is chosen, what are the impacts to Gulai Road and the railway line?	<p>For the 'Green' route, Gulai Road east of the railway line would be the only access to properties on the southern end of Melbourne Street. Traffic lights would need to be installed for this access as well as for railway level crossing safety.</p> <p>For the 'Grey' route, Gulai Road would continue in its current form with reduced traffic resulting from no vehicles crossing the weir.</p>
<b>Weir crossing</b>	
The Weir crossing should stay open until the new bridge is complete. So many times, TWO crossings are needed, if there's a traffic hold up or urgent maintenance on the traffic bridge.	<p>There are ongoing discussions with Murray Darling Basin Authority and the Catchment Management Authority. The weir crossing is scheduled to close later this year, and both authorities have been very flexible in ensuring the bridge will stay open until the ongoing maintenance work is finished. This work will ensure the existing bridge can provide years of future service.</p> <p>In case of emergency or traffic incidents at Mulwala Bridge, all vehicles will be diverted across the existing weir crossing. However, it is important to get vehicles off the weir crossing as soon as possible.</p>
When we are talking about the weir crossing being reopened on occasion, does that mean that in busy agricultural periods (e.g. harvest) the weir could be reopened?	<p>The current load limits on the weir do not facilitate the movement of heavy vehicles. All heavy vehicles should use the main bridge to travel across the weir, even during the harvest season.</p> <p>The weir will only be reopened for incident response or for emergency services situations.</p>
In one instance, we hear that the weight of the structure itself is the cause for maintenance,	The construction of the weir is very different from the way traffic bridges are built.

<p>and the traffic weight is negligible. On the other hand, we hear that traffic weight is a concern on the Weir structure. When you consider the weight of the water that the Weir adequately handles, that is not reasonable. Please explain these inconsistencies.</p>	<p>The weir was constructed primarily to be a dam, not a transport route and it has been modified over the years to provide a second link between the two townships either side of the border.</p> <p>In order to extend the life of the weir crossing and effectively operate as intended, the subject matter experts' advice to the Catchment Management Authority and Murray Darling Basin Authority has been to remove vehicle traffic from the weir crossing. By removing vehicles from the weir, the maintenance team can carry out the necessary work required for its efficiency and safety, without compromising on the safety of workers.</p>
<p><b>Previous work</b></p>	
<p>What has happened to all of the previous planning work?</p>	<p>Previous planning work has not been lost. There are minor changes in traffic flow and traffic make-up since those planning studies were carried out. We will revisit some of those traffic studies, traffic movement and traffic surveys to develop an appropriate design once the funding is announced for the detailed planning and development of a new bridge.</p>