

SPORTSMANS CREEK NEW BRIDGE DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

Recommended Option Report

Preliminary Socio-economic Technical Paper – Appendix F

Prepared for:

ROADS & MARITIME SERVICES

Northern Region Office

31 Victoria Street

GRAFTON NSW

Telephone (02) 6640 1073, Facsimile (02) 6640 1006

Prepared by:

Kellogg Brown & Root Pty Ltd

ABN 91 007 660 317

Level 13, 201 Kent Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000

Telephone (02) 8284 2000, Facsimile (02) 8284 2200

September 2013

SEC312

1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

Roads and Maritime Services (Roads and Maritime) is undertaking investigations for a new bridge over Sportsmans Creek at Lawrence.

Roads and Maritime has commissioned Kellogg Brown & Root Pty Ltd (KBR) to undertake the development and assessment of options for the Sportsmans Creek new bridge project.

Sportsmans Creek bridge is located on the southern approach to Lawrence within the Clarence Valley Council (CVC) local government area. Lawrence is located 25 km north of Grafton on the Lawrence Road (MR152) which is managed and maintained by Council.

Roads and Maritime is responsible for the management of the bridge as an “ex-national” bridge and in accordance with the *NSW Government Gazette No 83, 1928*. The existing bridge over Sportsmans Creek was built in 1911 and is 91.7 m in length consisting of three (3) timber beam approach spans and two (2) timber Dare truss spans. The bridge has a carriageway of 5.5 m.

Geometry and design limitations of the existing bridge mean it is unable to be safely upgraded to cater for future haulage requirements of local surrounding agricultural industries, two-way traffic and pedestrian access.

Significant seasonal cane haulage activities rely on this bridge for access. A total of 300 ha of cane exists to the south of Sportsmans Creek with 40,000 tonnes (3,720 trips) of harvested cane transported across the bridge. This represents about 6% of the harvested cane processed at the Harwood Mill. There is no alternative available should the current bridge be load limited, putting the viability of this important industry at risk.

Roads and Maritime has developed and published the *RMS Timber Truss Bridge Conservation Strategy July 2012* for the management of its remaining timber truss bridge stock, after conducting public consultation. As part of this strategy, the Sportsmans Creek bridge is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a modern structure.

This bridge has a moderate state significance rating, and s.170 listing. There are six other Dare truss bridges that are to be retained in perpetuity by Roads and Maritime, including the nearby Briner bridge in Tucabia as outlined in the Timber Truss Bridge strategy. The bridge is not listed on the State Heritage Register.

This project will replace the existing crossing, including demolition of the existing timber bridge. The new bridge and associated road work will be handed over to CVC for their ongoing ownership, control, maintenance and inspection.

This technical paper and a number of other technical papers have been prepared to assist in the investigation of a number of bridge options for the Sportsmans Creek new bridge and identify constraints and opportunities within the study area.

1.2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project is to identify and select a preferred option for a new bridge over Sportsmans Creek at Lawrence.

The key project objectives for this project are:

- Construct a new bridge over Sportsmans Creek, Lawrence
- Enhance road safety for motorists, residents, cyclists and pedestrians
- Improve traffic efficiency within Lawrence
- Improve road transport productivity, efficiency, maintainability and reliability
- Support local and regional economic development
- Allow for safe removal of the existing bridge, in support of the Timber Truss Bridge Conservation Strategy
- Minimise the impact on the natural, cultural, social and built environment
- Consider community members' views
- Deliver value for money
- Facilitate handover of the new bridge and associated road work to Clarence Valley Council.

1.3 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS TECHNICAL PAPER

The purpose of this technical paper is to provide background information regarding the socio-economic context of the study area (as referred to Figure 1.1) and the village of Lawrence, in order to facilitate the selection of a recommended option. Each option will have differing socio-economic impacts, which may influence the suitability of the option in the longer term. Socio-economic impacts may be generated during both the construction and operational phases of the project and could be direct (such as to property) or indirect (to the greater community). Thus it is vital to consider both potential negative and positive contributions of the project to the community and businesses within the study area, and to the wider Lawrence village.



Figure 1.1
STUDY AREA OVERVIEW

2 Methodology

2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SIA) CONTEXT

In order to facilitate SIA of Roads and Maritime projects, Roads and Maritime has prepared an *Environmental Planning and Impact Assessment* Practice Note for Socio-Economic Assessment which is to be utilised for the preparation of environmental impact assessments under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Within this guideline Roads and Maritime defines socio-economic impact assessment (SIA) as:

Socio-economic impact assessment involves analysing, monitoring and managing the social and economic consequences of development. It involves identifying and evaluating changes to or impacts on, communities, business and industry that are likely to occur as a result of the proposed development, in order to mitigate or manage impacts and maximise benefits. (Roads and Maritime 2012, p4)

The guideline provides advice on the describing the existing socio-economic environment, the first step in the SIA process, which involves developing a profile or baseline of the existing environment and scoping the potential socio-economic issues, stakeholders and study area.

As this technical paper is being prepared to discuss constraints and opportunities in the study area in relation to the project and assist in identifying a recommended option prior to the legislated environmental impact assessment process, a full SIA is not yet required. The Figure 2.1 describes the phases of an SIA. This technical paper documents the outcomes of the *scoping and existing conditions* phases in relation to the project.



Figure 2.1
SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS (Roads and Maritime 2012, page 7)

This technical paper is will form the basis for further research and more detailed assessments in the future during the approvals phase of the project.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION

2.2.1 Overview

In order to prepare the baseline condition assessment for this technical paper a number of sources were reviewed;

- Publically available CVC reports and website information.
- Desktop study of aerial photography, maps and other sources using a Geographic Information System (GIS).
- Demographic data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census.
- Feedback from the initial consultation with community and businesses in July 2013.
- Field investigations undertaken in July 2013.

2.2.2 Community and stakeholder consultation to date

The preliminary community drop-in sessions (including residents and business representatives from within and outside the study area) were undertaken in two sessions held on 18 July 2013 (11am – 2pm and 4pm -7pm) at the Lawrence Public Hall. 38 people signed in and provided contact details for further project updates and 21 submitted formal feedback forms either on the day or by post and email afterwards.

Further individual meetings were held with key businesses and stakeholders in the area, the Lawrence General and Liquor Store, Lawrence Tavern and the Lawrence Historical Society.

Detail of this consultation can be found in the Recommended Option Report which this technical paper forms an appendix to and in the *Early Feedback Summary Report*, which is also an Appendix to the main report.

Where appropriate this information has been included in the preparation of this report.

2.2.3 Community and stakeholder engagement during the project

The stakeholder and community engagement strategy is being undertaken separately by Roads and Maritime and further consultation with individual property and business owners is planned following the release of the Recommended Option Report. The community will be kept up to date throughout the project and asked to comment at further “drop-in” sessions in later stages of the project. A Steering committee has also been formed with representatives from CVC and the Roads and Maritime to assist with informing the community through the course of the project.

As studies which may influence potential socio-economic impacts are currently being undertaken in parallel to this technical paper, a brief summary of potential socio-economic impacts can only be provided. Further detail regarding constraints is discussed in other technical papers, such as ecology, noise and vibration, traffic movements, public transport patronage, truck and pedestrian movements.

2.3 DATA LIMITATIONS

The following limitations to the development of this background study should be noted:

- The number of attendees at the initial consultation session does not represent a statistically relevant sample for the purposes of drawing conclusions regarding the socio-economic context for the project. Thus there is limited consultation/stakeholder engagement regarding community values.
- This paper has been prepared based primarily on a desktop assessment of secondary sources and further investigation will be required during the SIA phase.

3 Existing environment and constraints

3.1 LAWRENCE OVERVIEW

The village of Lawrence is located in the Mid-North Coast Region of New South Wales in the Northern Rivers Catchment, at the mouth of Sportsmans Creek, where it meets the Clarence River. The village falls within the Clarence Valley LGA which covers a large area consisting of approximately 10441 km² and is bordered by seven other LGAs and the Pacific Ocean in the east (CVC 2013). In comparison, the ABS Census Urban Centre and Locality statistical unit of Lawrence covers a very small area of approximately 6.2 km². The village is connected to Grafton in the south by the Grafton-Lawrence Road and to Maclean in the north, via the Bluff Point Ferry on Rutland Street.

The route through Lawrence is known as tourist route Number 22 and is identified in CVC's tourism and infrastructure plan the *Clarence River Way Masterplan 2009* (the Masterplan). However, it is traversed predominately by local traffic connecting to the Bluff Point Ferry, which operates 24 hours seven days a week, and Grafton, to reach services and employment centres (CVC 2009). The route is also frequented by large trucks transporting cane during the peak transport season between July and December to the Harwood sugar mill on a 24-hour basis (CVC 2010). During floods, the roads within the area from the south are frequently cut-off and residents will travel to and from Grafton via Pringles Way and Summerland Way, which is the other major route within the area.

In the *Clarence Valley Social Plan 2010 – 2014* (the Social Plan) the CVC social planning area which Lawrence is located within is known as the 'Rural Coast' and consists of numerous small localities, small riverside villages and coastal villages (CVC 2010). The area was first settled in the 1860s and development grew with the establishment of the Harwood Sugar Mill, with sugarcane growing being the predominant agricultural industry in the local area. This continues to be the case today, with over 200 sugar farms located within the Clarence Valley, on the lower reaches of the Clarence River surrounding Maclean and Harwood (CVC 2011).

CVC (2010) note the major features of ecological and environmental value in the area as the Yuraygir National Park, Solitary Islands Marine Park, Kooyong State Conservation Area, Yaegl Nature Reserve and Woodford Island Nature Reserve. CVC (2010) also note the Harwood Sugar Mill as a key business within the Rural Coast planning area. The area is also popular with tourists and the tourism industry represents a key growth area as part of the Masterplan. The riverside land within the Rural Coast represents an important part of the natural environment for the region, which represents approximately 40% of land use within the LGA and is an important tourist attraction (ABS 20131d).

3.1.1 Land use, Business and Community Services

Few services and retail opportunities exist for the community within the village of Lawrence. Residents travel to Grafton to access health, educational and other related services, retail and employment, being the main city centre for the Clarence Valley LGA, or Maclean, located closer to the village.

The Lawrence bus service provides services between Grafton and Lawrence on weekdays. There are no formal bus stops – residents are dropped in the village near their homes.

The study area for the project is located south of the residential centre of the village, near the existing bridge over Sportsmans Creek as shown on Figure 1.1. The study area contains approximately 21 houses (1 under construction), two businesses and one cane farm, located in the south of the study area. Two houses were noted for sale during the field investigations. A number of the houses are heritage listed and one house of unique architecture. In the north-west corner of the study area is a parcel of privately owned land which has not been developed.

There are two reserves in the study area Flo Clark Park, located on the southern side of Sportsmans Creek and the Lawrence Memorial Park on the banks of the Clarence River. Both of these parks have boat ramps which are frequently in use by local fisherman and for water-based recreation interest groups. Two other recreation reserves exist in the village, which are Ogilvie Park (near the Lawrence Post Office) and Sportsmans Park, which is not a formal designation, however, is situated on the opposite bank to the village at the mouth of the Creek.

The Lawrence Public Hall is also popular for hosting community events and clubs such as the over 50s club and Community Musical Fellowship.

3.1.2 Community values

Community consultation undertaken as part of this project and undertaken by council in preparing their *Clarence Valley Sustainability Initiative* (the Sustainability Initiative), has highlighted a number of key values and issues for the Clarence Valley (CVC 2006). Stakeholder consultation, in particular with the community, is an important part of identifying the community values, that is, the places, features and social elements that are important to the local and regional communities.

Issues raised by the community in the drop-in sessions in relation to the project are discussed further in Section 3 of the Recommended Option Report to which this paper is an Appendix to and in the *Early Feedback Summary Report* Appendix.

Some of the key community values which were identified by the community in the Sustainability Initiative relevant to the study area include:

- The scenic views, rural activities, community interactions with their surroundings.
- The natural environment and flora and fauna within it and the recreational opportunities it provides.
- Protection of natural environment in developing future economic benefits.
- Healthy waterways and clean water.

- Sense of place, cultural heritage, relationship to surrounding landscapes and human scale they are developed to.
- Community size is such that members can build relationships with others, feel connected and supported. The ability to ‘pull together’ in times of tragedy and natural disaster.
- Safe and respectful communities (both safety and property security).

3.2 LAWRENCE’S SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The following is a demographic profile of the Lawrence social characteristics derived from the Urban Centre and Locality (UCL)¹ statistical unit from the last ABS Census in 2011. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the population characteristics from the ABS 2011 community profiles. For regional context, the percentage breakdown of the data for the Clarence Valley LGA and NSW is provided.

A number of trends derived from council's social investigations for the Social Plan and the most recent census data can be observed:

- According to the Social Plan, the Clarence Valley LGA population is growing, with the population reported at 48,425 at the 2006 census, which was an increase of 1026 (2.17%) during 2001-2006 (CVC 2010). This growth is attributed to an increase in retirees and those looking for a sea change and/or tree change and moving to the area.
- At the 2011 census, the population of the LGA was reported as 49,665 and is projected to grow to 54,500 by 2021 and further to reach 57,300 by 2036 (CVC 2010, ABS 2011b). The highest proportion of population is in the 35 to 49 age group, with the majority of population over 35.
- The population of the statistical urban centre of Lawrence is relatively small in comparison to the LGA, with a population of 390 persons reported at the 2006 census, which has increased to 740 as at the 2011 census (ABS 2011a). In the Social Plan the population was also reported to grow to 758 in 2016, however, given it has already reached 740, this figure could be potentially larger (CVC 2010). Furthermore, in contrast to Clarence Valley there is a higher proportion of residents in the over 45-54 age bracket.
- The unemployment rate within the LGA has been steadily decreasing from 8.4% in June 2006 to 7.4% in December 2009 (CVC 2010). It rose slightly in the 2011 census to 8.9% and was reported by CVC in 2013, as 6.1% in September 2012 (CVC 2013).

¹ The definition of a UCL is derived from Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) (the second smallest geographic area as defined in the Australian Statistical Geography Standard) satisfying the following criteria:

- have an urban Mesh Block population greater or equal to 45% of the total population and dwelling density greater or equal to 45 dwellings per sq km; or
- have a population density greater or equal to 100 persons per sq km and a dwelling density greater or equal to 50 dwellings per sq km; or
- have a population density greater or equal to 200 person per sq km.

For further information refer to *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2011* (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001) and *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 4 - Significant Urban Areas, Urban Centres and Localities, Section of State Australia July 2011* (cat. no. 1270.0.55.004)

- When comparing the portion of people born in Australia who reside in NSW to those in the Clarence Valley LGA and in Lawrence, it can be seen that almost 20% more people are born in Australia in these two areas. CVC reported in the Social Plan that this figure is slowly increasing, along with those from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- The population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people is growing within the Clarence Valley LGA, with approximately 5% of people identifying as within this group at the 2006 census. At the 2011 census, this figure had risen to 6%. CVC (2010) note that the Aboriginal proportion of the population is expected to double in the next 20 years; with current trends showing the majority of growth in the group is in the 0 to 34 years age group. In the locality of Lawrence, however, the proportion of the population is similar to that of NSW, at 2.5% at the 2011 census.
- The Social Plan showed that the Rural Coast has an Index of Relative Socio-Economic disadvantage (SEIFA) of 952.7 (out of 2000), which is higher than the council average of 934.5 based upon the 2006 census results (CVC 2010). A low index value overall indicates a higher level of disadvantage amongst a community. At the 2011 census, this relative index had declined to 907 in the Clarence Valley LGA, indicating social exclusion and levels of disadvantage has not improved (ABS 2011e).
- At present there is no state or territory housing in the village of Lawrence and the median rental price is \$245/week which is \$35 higher than the Clarence Valley LGA.

Table 3.1 Socio-economic characteristics of Lawrence UCL, Clarence Valley LGA and New South Wales by Usual Place of Residence during the ABS 2011 Census

	Lawrence Urban Centre and Locality (ABS 2011a)		Clarence Valley LGA (ABS 2011b)	NSW (ABS 2011c)
	No.	%	%	%
Population and Demography				
Population				
Total Persons	740	--	49665	6,917,658
Age Groups				
0-14 yrs	108	3.7	18.7	6.6
65+ years	215	29.2	21.2	12.6
Median Age	55	--	46	38
Males	375	50.7	49.4	49.3
Females	365	49.3	50.6	50.7
Cultural Diversity				
Indigenous persons	19	2.6	5.7	2.5
Language spoken at home (Non-English)	9	2.9	3.1	31.0
Overseas Born	100	13.2	12.3	31.4
Families and Housing				
Dwellings				
Total Dwellings (Occupied)	314	90.2	85.1	90.3
Total Dwellings (Unoccupied)	34	9.8	14.9	9.7
House (including semi-detached, townhouse etc)	304	96.9	91.3	80.2
Flat or other Dwelling	10	3.2	8.4	19.8
Households				
Family households	231	73.6	69.6	71.9
Lone person House	75	23.9	27.2	24.2
Group Household	8	2.5	2.7	3.8
Av Household Size	2.3	--	2.4	2.6
Housing cost and tenure				
Fully owned	177	56.7	37.5	33.2
Median Rent (\$/week)	\$245	--	\$210	\$300
Rented (Total):	34	10.9	19,549	743,053
<i>Real estate Agent</i>	14	4.5	12.5	17.4
<i>State Housing Authority</i>	0	0	2.2	4.4
Other Tenure Type	0	0	0.7	0.8
Being purchased	98	31.4	28	33.4
Not stated	3	1	2.6	2.6
Vehicle ownership and travel to work				
Vehicle Ownership				
Households with no vehicles	16	5.1	7.5	10.4
Households with vehicles	121	38.5	40.7	86.4
Households with two or more vehicles	164	52.2	48.3	48.6

	Lawrence Urban Centre and Locality (ABS 2011a)		Clarence Valley LGA (ABS 2011b)	NSW (ABS 2011c)
	No.	%	%	%
Journey to Work				
Travel to work by car/truck/motorbike (as driver or passenger)	145	70	89.2	64.5
Travel to work by public transport	3	1.4	0.6	10
Travel to work by walking	10	4.8	6.5	4.1
Travel to work by cycling	0	0	1.5	0.7
Economic characteristics				
Income				
Median Individual Income (\$/weekly)	\$340	--	\$396	\$561
Median Household income (\$/weekly)	\$671	--	\$768	\$1,237
Employment				
Workforce participation (Full-time)	113	47.5	50	60.2
Workforce participation (Part-time)	80	33.6	34.7	28.2
Unemployed persons	32	13.4	8.9	5.9
Top 3 Highest Industries of Employment (Lawrence and Clarence Valley)				
Health care and social assistance	30	14.7	13.9	--
Retail Trade	24	11.7	13.2	--
Accommodation and Food Services	22	10.7	8.7	--

3.3 LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMY

The local economy of Lawrence is very small and it is best analysed through addressing the statistical data for the Clarence Valley LGA, particularly as the main industry in the area contributes to the region's economy as a whole. The local economy is identified as a growth area with the Masterplan, particularly in relation to encouraging investment from the tourism industry and improving infrastructure to facilitate industry transport (CVC 2010).

The two key goals for the Economy identified by CVC in the *Interim Clarence Valley Vision 2024* (Interim Valley Vision) are healthy economic activity and meaningful work and employment, which are reflected in the State of the Environment reporting and other key strategic documents (CVC 2011, CVC 2013).

According to the Interim Valley Vision, there were approximately 4,090 businesses in the Clarence Valley in 2011, which has been in steady decline since 2007 (ABS 2011d, CVC 2013). The highest percentages of businesses registered by industry, in sequential order include;

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry (26.3%).
- Construction (16.6%).

- Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services (7.8%).
- Retail Trade (7.6%).

The estimated turnover for industry in the Clarence Valley was \$1.3 billion in 2010/2011, which has since decreased by 0.4% annually; however, the average turnover of all businesses has increased by 0.2%. Overall the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is growing for the Clarence Valley at around 8% per annum and is presently worth approximately \$1,703.9 Million (CVC 2013). The core economic base which is comprised industries such as fishing, timber, agriculture and sugar, with emerging economics in tourism, regional food, arts and design, education, boat building and timber value adding (CVC 2013). Investment within the region is increasing, in particular in aged care, tourism, timber and core infrastructure, encouraged by sea-change immigration, growing population, more affordable land and lower operational costs. (CVC 2013).

Resource based and goods industries drive the economy (including agriculture and its associated manufacturing), with largest Gross Regional Product (GRP) for the Clarence Valley is the manufacturing sector which in 2006/2007 reported \$190.40 million turnover or 10.9% of the total GRP for the LGA (CVC 2011). This is closely followed by Property and Business (\$138.9 million), retail trade (\$134.6 million) and Government Administration and Defence (\$112.8 million), which is focussed upon Grafton (CVC 2011). According to the 2009/2010 State of the Environment Report, the resource based industries of sugar, fishing and timber production are integral in the region. The sugar industry contributes \$103 million to the local economy each year and supports 1000 jobs (CVC 2011).

The largest portion of workers within the Clarence Valley LGA work in the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry, followed by the Retail Trade sector and the Accommodation and food services, which reflects the casual and part-time nature of the majority of jobs within these sectors. A similar pattern is reflected in the workforce of the Lawrence UCL (approximately 200 persons or 27% of the total population). Given the few number of businesses and retail and absence of health services within the village, this suggests that residents must travel elsewhere for employment, to Maclean or Grafton.

The *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy 2006–2031* identifies that there will be growth from tourism and agriculture and manufacturing industries within the region as identified within the Masterplan and potentially bring social and economic benefits to the local Lawrence village (Department of Planning 2009). The Clarence North growth area as shown in the Strategy identifies an area surrounding Lawrence for future development.

The Masterplan also identifies the tourist route and village of Lawrence as an area which CVC would like to promote investment to encourage further tourism. It states that investing to make the riverside land more attractive to tourists is required, while ensuring environmental protection.

Key economic trends for consideration and strategy for development at both the local and regional economy can be derived from the *Clarence River Way Masterplan, Valley Vision 2024* and the *Mid North Coast Regional Strategy 2006–2031*. The following trends and strategic directions are of note for the region in general:

- Encouraging capital expenditure to improve infrastructure such as, recreational areas, site and landscaping improvements, road upgrades and environmental improvements.
- Foster economic prosperity through environmentally sustainable activities.
- Encourage economic growth and investment utilising federal funding support (through the Masterplan) to promote the rural coast area as a touring region.
- Protection of high value natural environments to ensure that new urban development avoids key habitat corridors, threatened species, vegetation communities, coastal lakes, estuaries and aquifers.
- Ensure development and growth does not impact upon the coast and character of local villages.
- Increase housing stock to meet the demand of 59,600 by 2031 to meet the population growth, however, also ensure this meets the needs of smaller households and the elderly population.
- Ensure the demand for land supports economic growth and capacity of the additional employment opportunities.
- Support and value voluntary work and build opportunities for training and mentoring to retain expertise in communities (in particular for disadvantaged, youth and less skilled community members).

3.4 KEY SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

CVC has identified in their Social Plan that key issues facing villages and rural communities relate to;

- population growth
- social cohesion and community values
- transport and economic growth.

This section of this paper discusses the key issues identified by CVC with regards to the potential socio-economic constraints in the project study area.

3.4.1 Population growth, property and amenity

Issues noted by CVC in their Social Plan with regards to population, social cohesion and values in villages, included the need for more public housing options, upgrades to ablution blocks and playgrounds, and free or low-cost activities for adolescents and cultural activities for families and children.

CVC have adopted an action plan for addressing these key issues as part of the broader action plan for Clarence Valley, with the broad goals to;

- improve community health and wellbeing
- provide opportunities for creative culture and recreation
- support community relations (including diversity and connectedness)
- encourage community resilience through engagement, support and training.

Property and acquisition

As there are a small number of houses in the area, some of which on Bridge Street are heritage-listed, property acquisition and encroachment is an important socio-economic constraint to consider. However, the issues affecting the broader community in relation to housing shortages may not necessarily be the case in the study area or pose a constraint to the project if considered in the options location selection.

A new bridge may still result in socio-economic impacts through acquisition and affected individuals would need to be consulted with as to the significance of potential impacts. For instance, should a wider bridge footprint be proposed within the existing 20 m road reserve on Bridge Street, it would encroach onto houses and buildings as they are built up close to the edge of the road, and there is no formal footpath. Furthermore, should a bridge option be considered along Grafton Street or in another alignment, acquisition would be required of private property where there is no existing road reserve.

The impact on property values in Grafton Street, will be a consideration for future impact assessments should a new bridge be located along this alignment. Furthermore, the Lawrence Tavern, located in between Grafton and Bridge Streets, represents the only accommodation, pub and restaurant within the village and thus it plays an important function in fostering social cohesion and should be considered in the options selection process.

Local amenity

The Sportsmans Creek new bridge has the potential to result in a change in local amenity and to directly impact upon public land and private property. Socio-economic impacts may be generated as a result of;

- changes in local hydrology (generating increased flooding)
- amenity based impacts such as noise, air quality, traffic and access, and aesthetics/visual landscape.

Direct property and amenity impacts to properties identified in the study area (refer Figure 1.1) will need to be considered further during the environmental impact assessment of the recommended option.

Community values – Environment and rural landscapes

A key issue for consideration is the value placed on the natural environment by the community; namely in relation to protection of vegetation, recreational areas, local character and waterways. Any bridge options which significantly change the character of the study area or require dramatic changes in the natural environment and waterfront land are likely to be less favourable to the community. Options which propose dramatic modification to recreational areas and undisturbed areas would require further consultation with the community and CVC as they would not be consistent with planning strategies and are likely to impact negatively on the community's sense of place.

The removal of the existing bridge will invariably change the entry to the village and the impact of this and any new bridge locations would be considered in further visual

and landscape assessments. The community has been generally supportive of the removal of the existing bridge, including key stakeholders such as the Lawrence Historical Society. Other buildings within the village which contribute to the local character include the heritage listed Lawrence Public Hall and the small number of heritage listed houses which form part of the conservation area on Bridge Street and are likely to be high value to the community as well as individual owners.

3.4.2 Economic Growth and Accessibility

A number of issues are facing the local and regional economy that have been identified by CVC in their Social Plan and are echoed in the strategic documents for the Mid North Coast Region. These issues are identified with reference to the goals set in the Interim Valley Vision and *previous Clarence Valley Vision 2020* (CVC 2008). In particular of relevance to Lawrence and the study area are related in particular to the resource industry and economic growth:

- sustainability of the sugar cane industry (influenced by factors of the exchange rate, climate, price)
- aging population of sugar farmers and of the population in general
- aging population of fisherman, declining catch and increased operating costs
- changing national and global economic drivers for traditional industries (agriculture, sugar cane etc)
- need for attracting new and successful businesses
- promoting tourism opportunities and associated industries.

The Sportsmans Creek new bridge presents a small opportunity to facilitate economic growth in addressing these issues by CVC, such as through improved transport routes facilitating tourism and industry. All bridge options will facilitate the growing demand for freight accessibility for HML trucks identified in the NSW Government 'Bridges for the Bush' initiative and improve traffic flow as demand increases for the Bluff Point Ferry with population growth and increased tourism. However, the extent of these opportunities will need to be investigated further along with the potential impacts upon the immediate local economy of Lawrence (such as impact upon businesses and services or a reduction in land suitable for cane farming), as discussed below, during the environmental impact assessment.

Accessibility and safety

Linked to these issues in the regional economy are concerns regarding the accessibility to health and retail services, employment, recreational opportunities. Key focus issues in the Social Plan facing villages and rural communities in relation to transport and economic growth which council is focussed upon are;

- Improving accessibility to public spaces, parking and health services for the elderly, disabled and families with children (including maintenance of pathways and bikeways).
- More suitable public transport (including on weekends).
- More service outreach.

- Transport to health outpost/services.

These concerns are also reflected in the preliminary consultation undertaken with the community for the Sportsmans Creek new bridge, with the top two aspects reported in relation to the project as road safety and pedestrian safety. The new bridge presents an opportunity to address road safety concerns raised by the community in relation to speeding and the passing of vehicles and other modes of transport on the new bridge.

Public transport, cyclists and pedestrian movements

A further consideration is the public transport, cyclist, and pedestrian movements (including accessibility for prams and disabled persons) around the small village and how this would be influenced by the location of the bridge.

There are potential opportunities to create safer and more accessible pedestrian and cyclist friendly crossing of Sportsmans Creek depending on the option selected. However, there is also the potential to significantly negatively impact upon these pedestrian movements depending on the location of a new bridge and the footprint required. The needs of pedestrian and cyclist movements would need to be considered as part of the traffic assessment of the project to ensure impacts are minimised during construction and needs catered for during operation.

Furthermore, as demand for increased and accessible public transport is reported within the Social Plan as an issue affecting villages within the region, it is also important that movement patterns of the Lawrence Bus Service is considered as well, such that the community is not adversely impacted by any changes.

Business and community facilities

In the survey responses following the preliminary community consultation sessions the next three top-priority concerns (following road and pedestrian safety as referred to the Early Feedback Summary Report,) were equally reported in relation to the project and included;

- The impact of the project on business,
- Impact on community and,
- Impact on community facilities and services.

The general community concern regarding business and facilities highlights the value and dependence of the small local economy of Lawrence to its residents. As such, it is potential impacts \on business patronage in particular, passing trade for the Lawrence General and Liquor Store and the Lawrence Tavern is an important consideration. Any options proposed in the study area, must consider how accessibility to the Lawrence Tavern and the Lawrence General and Liquor Store will be modified and whether this will influence potential patronage.

Recreational accessibility and tourism growth

The project presents an opportunity to improve accessibility to waterfront land and the environmental quality of waterfront land. A key consideration in the Masterplan, the promotion and improvement of waterfront land for tourism is an important consideration in selecting a new bridge option. Flo Clark Park at the south of the study

area, is waterfront land which is important to local fisherman (with the boat ramp providing access to Sportsmans Creek) and other recreational users such as tourists and local residents. Any new bridge crossing in the vicinity of Flo Clark Park has the potential to impact the boat ramp and influence the quality of recreational land in the Park. Furthermore, as Flo Clark Park is at the entry to the village from the south, it influences the attractiveness of the area to tourists, which in turn encourages them to stop. The potential social-economic and visual impacts of options which will modify this area and any waterfront land, should be considered in the assessment of options for the Sportsmans Creek new bridge.

4 Future Investigation of Socio-economic Opportunities and Constraints in the Study Area

The construction of a the Sportsmans Creek new bridge has the potential to generate opportunities for improvement for village and the region resulting in a number of social and economic benefits. The potential social and economic benefits include:

- improved traffic flow resulting in improved travel times for freight, public transport and local vehicle movement
- a safer crossing for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists wishing to cross over Sportsmans Creek
- improved business connectivity which in turn contributes to the local and regional economic development
- improved accessibility to recreational areas and waterfront areas which will attract more tourists and locals into the area.

The consideration of these opportunities is important for assessing options and for future assessment of the recommended option during the environmental impact assessment phase. In order to achieve the greatest potential benefits, future studies must also investigate the potential adverse impacts of the project and consider the social and economic constraints of the area.

Future investigations of the recommended option should consider the following social and economic issues and ensure the appropriate mitigation measures are developed to minimise potential impacts:

- changes to access and passing trade to businesses within the local area, in particular the Lawrence General and Liquor Store and Lawrence Tavern
- property values, including influences from aesthetics and visual impacts
- direct property impacts, such as loss of housing through acquisitions and changes to local hydrology
- amenity based impacts on community, residences and businesses relating to noise and air quality during both construction and operation
- changes to existing cyclist, pedestrian and public transport movements, including the needs of the elderly and disabled
- pedestrian movements, particularly the needs of the elderly and disabled

- indirect impacts on the local road network and community within the village as a result of any changes in traffic movements
- any clearing of vegetation within undisturbed areas or modifications to recreational areas or the visual character of the village.

The likelihood and severity of these issues will be dependent upon the outcome of the impact assessment and it may be possible that some impacts can be avoided entirely (such as property acquisition). Furthermore, the assessment of impacts will require collaboration with other studies, including the Traffic and Transport, Hydrology and Flooding, Visual and Urban Design and Ecology assessments. These assessments should aim to minimise potential impacts on the community as identified in this technical paper.

5 References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011a, Census of Population and Housing: Basic Community Profile - Lawrence UCL.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011b, Census of Population and Housing: Basic Community Profile - Clarence Valley LGA.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011c, Census of Population and Housing: Basic Community Profile - NSW.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011d, National Regional Profile 2005–2009, 2006–2010 and 2007 – 2011.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011e, Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011f, Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2011 (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011g, Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 4 – Significant Urban Areas, Urban Centres and Localities, Section of State Australia July 2011 (cat. no. 1270.0.55.004)
- Clarence Valley Local Environmental Plan 2011
- Clarence Valley Council (CVC) 2006, Clarence Valley Sustainability Initiative, [Accessed: 15 August 2013], http://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/cp_content/resources/CVCReport-6Mar06sml.pdf
- Clarence Valley Council (CVC) 2008, Clarence Valley Vision 2020, [Accessed: 15 August 2013], http://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/cp_content/resources/Valley_Vision_2020_Final_web.pdf
- Clarence Valley Council (CVC) 2009, Clarence River Way Masterplan, [Accessed: 30 July 2013], http://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/cp_content/resources/cvc256_crw_masterplan_web_white.pdf
- Clarence Valley Council (CVC) 2010, Clarence Valley Council Social Plan 2010 – 2014, March 2010, http://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/final_social_plan_2010.pdf
- Clarence Valley Council (CVC) 2011, SOE Supplementary Report 2009 / 2010, [Accessed: 24 June 2013], http://soe0910.clarence.nsw.gov.au/cmst/cvc006/view_doc2.asp?id=2394&cat=1
- Clarence Valley Council (CVC) 2013, Interim Valley Vision 2024, [Accessed: 18 July 2013], http://clarence.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/metro/page.asp?p=DOC-GZU-21-05-76

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Department of Planning, 2009, Mid North Coast Regional Strategy 2006-2031, [Accessed: 18 July 2013],

http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plansforaction/pdf/midnorthcoast_regionalstrategy_final.pdf

Roads and Maritime Service (Roads and Maritime) 2012, Environmental Planning and Impact Assessment - Practice Note - DRAFT Socio-economic Assessment

Roads and Maritime Service (Roads and Maritime) 2013a, Timber Truss Road Bridges. [Accessed: 15 August 2013],

http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadprojects/projects/maintenance/timber_truss_bridges/index.html

Roads and Maritime Service (Roads and Maritime) 2013b, Environmental Planning and Impact Assessment - Practice Note - Socio-economic Assessment