

*Draft* Submission to the  
Roads and Maritime Services  
Preferred Option for the  
Batemans Bay Bridge



1 September 2017

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## Executive Summary

Eurobodalla Shire Council applauds the NSW Government, and the local member for Bega and Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Hon Andrew Constance MP, for driving the proposed new Batemans Bay Bridge. We thank both the current Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Hon Melinda Pavey MP and the previous Minister, Hon Duncan Gay MLC, for their support of the project and for taking the time to visit the site first hand.

Council strongly supports the preferred option for the replacement of the Batemans Bay Bridge with a new four lane bridge on the western side of the existing bridge, inclusive of the removal of the existing Batemans Bay Bridge.

The proposed new bridge represents a landmark investment in critical transport infrastructure by the NSW Government for Batemans Bay, the south coast region, NSW and the broader ACT region. The proposal will bring positive benefits for the region's economy, the efficiency and safety of road transport as well as greater flexibility in the use of the Clyde River.

The proposal also opens up significant opportunities to enhance the foreshore areas on both the northern and southern sides of the Clyde River and we welcome the commitment of the NSW Government and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) to work closely with Council to design and construct the associated foreshore works.

The preferred option for the bridge does present a number of challenges relating to connectivity of local roads and for boating traffic on the Clyde River. We recommend a suitable RMS/Council technical alliance be established to develop detailed design options for elements other than the bridge itself. All works should be at the cost of the RMS as part of the bridge project.

Our recommended considerations for the proposed new Batemans Bay Bridge are outlined within this document. This submission recommends a number of offsets to address identified issues, noting that the community and affected landowners may raise other valid issues direct with the RMS as the responsible NSW Government agency for this project.

More broadly, we applaud the commitment of the NSW Government and RMS to continue engaging closely with Council and the community in developing detailed design solutions and the associated social, economic and environmental studies, and throughout the delivery phases of the project. This will be critical as a project of this scale in this location will otherwise disrupt the day to day activities of the community and business.

The RMS has created a project page on their website for the bridge project to allow the community to remain up to date at:

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/south-coast/batemans-bay-bridge/index.html>

## The Bridge

The new bridge will be a landmark piece of infrastructure on the landscape of Batemans Bay, and for the entrance to Eurobodalla. The inclusion of four lanes and unfettered access for 26m higher mass limit B-doubles is essential to address current and future traffic demands along the Princes Highway.

The bridge design must be sensitive to the location and surroundings. Whilst the design needs to meet all practical matters, the bridge must provide a high-class urban finish that serves the needs of the community and continues as a prime feature for visitors to Eurobodalla.

RMS needs to undertake all necessary studies to assess the positive and adverse economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts resulting from the provision of the new bridge, both during the construction phases and ongoing. Any potential adverse impacts should either be avoided or appropriately mitigated.

Pedestrian and cyclist use of the new bridge will be significant. The project must include the construction of a shared pathway as part of the bridge project with appropriate connections. This should include the provision of shared pathways from the Batemans Bay Public School in the north, to the Mackay Park sporting and events precinct in the south. Access for pedestrians and cyclists from the bridge directly to the northern Wharf Road, and southern Clyde Street foreshore areas must also be incorporated.

The shared pathway on the bridge must be fully accessible for people of all abilities. Eurobodalla has a significantly higher than average aged population. Accessible lifts should be considered for the connections to Wharf Road and Clyde Street.

The design of the bridge should optimise opportunities to provide ongoing benefits, particularly at the bridge abutments. The use of retaining structures to maximise parking and foreshore areas will provide significant long term value. These structures should be of a high quality finish and treated appropriately to mitigate potential adverse impacts such as graffiti.

Similarly, the placement and finish treatment on the bridge pylons should also be designed to optimise long term outcomes in terms of the foreshore amenity and ongoing maintenance.

The bridge itself will provide magnificent views for pedestrians and cyclists to the east over the Clyde River and out to the Tollgate Islands. The RMS should consider a viewing area as part of the bridge structure.

The new bridge should be sufficiently high over the Clyde River to facilitate unfettered boating access under the bridge by the majority of vessels, including current tourism operators and houseboats. Council agrees that it is not in the best interests of the overall community to cater for all larger scale yachts. A bridge at this height would significantly increase the challenges of providing accessibility along the shared pathway and appropriate fit within the landscape of Batemans Bay.

The precise height of the new bridge should be determined by RMS in consultation with NSW Maritime.

To offset this compromise height solution, we recommend the NSW Government design, construct and maintain a suitable extension to the existing NSW Government concrete T-wharf (including all necessary marine and wave studies to determine the most appropriate solution). The design should consider the needs of both commercial and recreational vessels. This would accommodate improved mooring and access to the Batemans Bay CBD east of the Batemans Bay Bridge.

The new bridge will include necessary highway lighting. RMS should consider the inclusion of street banner systems to facilitate community and tourism outcomes, and to help support the sense of arrival at the regional centre of Batemans Bay. A system capable of supporting ease of change of the banners should be incorporated.

The new bridge and approaches should account for the future impacts of sea level rise. This should include consideration of future adaptation strategies, if and when required.

Council supports the removal of the existing bridge upon the completion of the new bridge as a necessary component of the works. This will ensure the Clyde River waterway is restored for safe boating and dramatically improve the aesthetics of the final bridge arrangements. It will also avoid the significant ongoing costs to the NSW Government of sustaining the dis-used bridge structure.

The design of the new bridge should preferably retain the historic features associated with the old punt wharf structures, still visible on both sides of the river today.

Appropriate interpretative signage should be included as part of the works to recognise the significant role that the existing bridge has played in the development of Batemans Bay. This signage should also highlight the previous arrangements where the punt was used to transport vehicles across the Clyde River prior to the original construction of the existing bridge.

The proposed interpretation of the history of the punts and the existing bridge should be developed and submitted to Council's Heritage Advisory Committee for comment once developed.

The design of the bridge should take account of all normal engineering matters including the location of existing services, stormwater drainage and the like. It is understood that the new bridge will have a drainage system capable of capturing oil and fuel spills to mitigate the risk of pollution of the Clyde River in the event of an incident on the bridge. We applaud this inclusion given the sensitivity of the receiving waters and the importance of the river for our Clyde River oyster growers.

The new bridge will impact critical Council services, in particular trunk watermains and sewer rising mains under the Clyde River, and potentially the sewer pump station near the corner of the highway and Clyde Street. The RMS should continue to work with Council's technical team to develop and provide suitable alternate arrangements.

We also applaud the investigation work being undertaken to identify and minimise impacts on Aboriginal artefacts and the marine environment including sea grasses and wetland areas.

The new bridge should be considered in the context of other improvements to the Princes Highway including:

- a. Completion of the connection of the Princes Highway to the South Batemans Bay Link Road. Council has made previous submissions to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Hon Andrew Constance MP and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight Hon Melinda Pavey MP on this urgently required connection.
- b. Upgrade of the Princes Highway/Beach Road intersection.
- c. Provision for a new left turn only exit from the Village Centre underground car park direct onto the Princes Highway between North Street and Beach Road.

## Princes Highway/Kings Highway Roundabout

The proposed works must include necessary upgrades to the Princes Highway/Kings Highway roundabout. The current delays are unacceptable and present a significant burden in terms of highway management, road safety, emergency response and adverse impacts on the economy of the region.

The Kings Highway is the lifeblood of Eurobodalla Shire. It provides the key east-west link to and from our region to Canberra, Queanbeyan, Goulburn and the Hume Highway to Sydney as well as other interstate and regional linkages. The current intersection arrangement restricts the movement of vehicles from the Kings Highway onto the Princes Highway. This causes significant unnecessary delays, increasing driver frustration and leading to long queues in shoulder and peak periods.

The traffic flows on the Kings Highway are typified by extraordinary peaks each Friday, Saturday and Sunday as well as during holiday periods. This is a completely different pattern to the normal diurnal peaks in traffic flow experienced in an urban centre and requires critical investment to develop safe outcomes. This unusual nuance in traffic flows results in periods of congestion and higher risk to the community. This is further exacerbated during long weekends and holiday periods leading to lengthy delays in getting through to Batemans Bay and beyond.

RMS should give consideration to the additional works required to alleviate traffic congestion at peak periods, particularly for visitors coming via the Kings Highway. A modest investment now is likely to have significant and long lasting positive benefits in the operation of the highways including at peak periods.

This investigation should include the provision of a separate additional left turn slip lane from the Kings Highway onto the Princes Highway to free up the existing two lanes for dual right turn manoeuvres.

RMS should also consider extending the dual southbound approach lanes on the Princes Highway to reduce queuing back along the Princes Highway north of the roundabout. The provision of widening the Princes Highway to four lanes back to Berrima Parade is identified in Council's transport studies.

The provision of an off-road shared pathway to the Batemans Bay Public School and Surfside (north) should take account of the future needs of the Princes Highway. This shared pathway is included in Council's Eurobodalla Pathways Strategy 2017 which can be found at:

<http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/council-services/works/traffic-studies> and should be included as part of the bridge project.



Princes Highway looking south to the Princes Highway/Kings Highway roundabout.



## Southern Foreshore – Clyde Street Precinct

The preferred option results in an overpass of the Princes Highway over Clyde Street with no direct vehicular connection. Council accepts this is an inevitable consequence of providing a new bridge sufficiently high enough over the Clyde River to facilitate reasonable boating access.

This arrangement will impact the traffic flows throughout the Batemans Bay CBD as traffic will be diverted to these streets, particularly North Street, Clyde Street, Orient Street and Beach Road. RMS should fully assess the impacts of this change on the traffic movements and operation within Batemans Bay CBD.

These impacts would be partially offset by designing and constructing a new left turn exit from the Village Centre underground car park direct onto Vesper Street to reduce the total traffic volumes exiting via North Street and Beach Road. This is the major car park in Batemans Bay north of Beach Road with approximately 900 underground car spaces. The new exit would require direct negotiation with the owners of the Village Centre, noting this has previously been agreed by RMS in principle. Council is supportive of this treatment as one of the offsets for the adverse impacts on the current traffic arrangements as it would bring benefits to traffic flows in both North and Perry Streets and Beach Road. This also fits well with encouraging more traffic to utilise the new South Batemans Bay Link Road and the future works required on Beach Road between Orient Street and the Princes Highway.

Council currently has a *Paramics* traffic model established to manage and assess changes to the traffic flows in Batemans Bay and environs. RMS should fund an update to this traffic model to account for the proposed changes and allow Council to re-establish its base model to continue to monitor and assess progressive changes in traffic flows over time.

The removal of vehicular access directly onto Clyde Street has potential negative implications for businesses in Clyde Street. These impacts should be offset by improvements to parking in Clyde Street and the adjoining foreshore area. Improved boating access to the Batemans Bay CBD at the T-wharf would also assist these businesses.

The proposed bridge overpass of Clyde Street opens up significant opportunities to provide a continuous and integrated foreshore beautification, incorporating the connecting underpass road to service west Clyde Street, pedestrian and cycling access, increase parking for the Batemans Bay CBD, continuity of foreshore landscaping, appropriate lighting and new service connections. Council is open to investigating the relocation of the existing public toilet should this be necessary, provided this is at cost to the RMS.

The removal of direct access from the Princes Highway into Clyde Street east adversely impacts the existing angled parking provided on the north-eastern side of Clyde Street. This parking could be converted to right angled parking subject to appropriate civil works including modification of the foreshore pathways and landscaping, as well as provision of regular raised threshold treatments to adequately reduce the speed environment in Clyde Street. This change would also increase available parking in Clyde Street, further offsetting the loss of vehicular access from the highway.

The removal of direct access from the Princes Highway into Clyde Street east will also restrict access to the existing regional bus exchange on Clyde Street opposite North Street. The RMS will need to identify, design and construct a new regional bus exchange at a different location working closely with Council, the community and bus operators.

Council wishes to retain the local boat ramp on the southern side of the Clyde River as it provides an important access point to the Clyde River. The changed traffic arrangements will require car and boat trailer combination to travel through the CBD area. Therefore Council would propose to limit the current boat trailer parking to the existing arrangements.

RMS will need to acquire land for the provision of the new bridge in direct negotiation with the affected property owners under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991. This is solely a matter for RMS.

Council encourages RMS to work with Council to optimise car parking and landscaping opportunities for the Batemans Bay CBD on any residual lands not required for the bridge following construction.

The current truck movements servicing the Bridge Plaza development require access back onto Clyde Street. To facilitate this movement, a right of access exists in favour of Lot 21 DP7122243 over the south eastern side of Lot 1 DP710414 Clyde Street. The RMS should liaise with the respective landowners to assess if the new bridge alignment may provide an opportunity to adjust the position of this right of access to optimise the urban design outcomes. Council does have a sewage pump station and underground sewer infrastructure in this vicinity that would need to be considered in any proposed solution.

Access to Clyde Street west will require improved signposting to ensure it can be found with ease.

Detailed solutions for the foreshore areas should be developed working with Council. It is recommended that a technical alliance be formed between RMS and Council to develop detailed designs for engagement with the community.

The use of the rockwall protrusion at the existing southern abutment would be a good location for a fishing platform to offset the loss of the fishing currently undertaken off the existing bridge. This same area may serve as a good location for interpretative elements, potentially including a public art element.

Council already has a Batemans Bay Streetscape Advisory Committee. RMS may wish to use this Committee to assist with the community engagement process on the foreshore elements of the project.



## Northern Foreshore

The preferred option for the new bridge results in a significant height difference between the new highway and Wharf Road at the intersection. The removal of the existing northern bridge approach provides opportunities to further develop the northern foreshore.

It is essential that pedestrians and cyclists are connected from Wharf Road and Old Punt Road onto the new bridge to allow access from North Batemans Bay and the Wharf Road precinct back into the Batemans Bay CBD. A lift should be considered to facilitate access to the shared pathway on the bridge.

The lack of a vehicle access to and from Wharf Road will result in diversion of vehicular traffic back to Peninsula Drive. RMS should consider the following options in consultation with Council:

- a. Provide a left turn slip lane from the Princes Highway into Wharf Road (no access for right turn out of Wharf Road). This would mitigate the diversion of traffic flows onto Peninsula Drive and provide more direct access to the popular foreshore area at Korner's Park off Wharf Road.
- b. Provide a connecting roadway between Wharf Road and Old Punt Road. This option has advantages and disadvantages including, but not limited to:
  - i. A connecting roadway would increase traffic in Old Punt Road and back onto the Kings Highway roundabouts. This option would require widening of Old Punt Road to cater for the additional traffic and to separate pedestrians. Resolution of the road reserve over the existing Old Punt Road is required regardless of the solution.
  - ii. Taking connecting traffic directly past the existing boat ramp area would compromise the operation of the ramp and associated boat parking and reversing arrangements. If this connecting roadway is to be considered it may be necessary to relocate the boat ramp and associated parking to another location. Whilst a new boating facility off Wray Street is possible, it would require significant investment by RMS, require approvals including Marine Parks permits for reclamation, as well as direct engagement with local residents and fishers.
  - iii. An alternate layout for the boat parking arrangement may provide a viable solution subject to this being separated from the connecting roadway. Concepts are being prepared to assess the viability of this alternative.
  - iv. A connecting road is likely to require relocation of the existing public toilet.
  - v. This option would reduce the traffic flows diverted to Peninsula Drive.
  - vi. Suitable traffic control and mitigation measures would be required to ensure a safe environment for the adjoining foreshore reserve area. This might include appropriate threshold and traffic management measures.
- c. Provision of additional boat trailer and car parking on the foreshore area to support activities associated with the existing Old Punt reserve boat ramp and nearby

restaurant. This is an important consideration given the limitations on boat trailer parking on the southern foreshore at Clyde Street.

- d. Upgrade of the car park and foreshore area at Korners Park to take account of the changes to the road embankment. It is noted that the Korners Park and Old Punt reserve areas are likely to be used by RMS during the construction period.

The foreshore areas of Old Punt Reserve and Korners Park are highly utilised by residents, visitors and for events. A high quality of beautification and restoration work with suitable inclusions will be required following construction of the bridge.

The foreshore caravan park and residential precinct on Wharf Road will require improved signposting to ensure it can be found with ease.

The existing Princes Highway road embankment has experienced some minor stability issues on the eastern side impacting the existing pathway near Wharf Road. RMS has previously accepted responsibility for this embankment and maintenance of the vegetation on it. These stability issues should be adequately addressed as part of the overall project.

The road reserve covering the existing boat parking area and Old Punt Road requires modification to provide for previous works. These changes should be incorporated into the overall acquisition plan being undertaken by RMS to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and cost.

## Wharf Road access

The proposed new bridge will place significant additional reliance on the use of Wharf Road and Peninsula Drive to access the Princes Highway.

Wharf Road has been identified by the NSW Government as a coastal erosion hot-spot. Council has prepared a Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) for this precinct that will guide how the erosion hazard is managed. The plan is currently with the Minister for Environment awaiting certification under the *NSW Coastal Management Act 1979*.

The key action in the plan is for the NSW Government to purchase private land that is at immediate and ongoing risk from coastal erosion and shoreline recession. NSW Department of Planning will be responsible for this action and have endorsed the CZMP prior to Council seeking certification from the Minister. When implemented, this will provide public open space that can also be utilised as a buffer to manage public infrastructure. Once the land is in public ownership, Council will have options on how to maintain access to the Wharf Road area. Management options include:

- a. Consolidate access and future works expenditure to the sections of Wharf Road that are not at risk from erosion
- b. Allow the existing connection to Peninsula Drive to erode and rely on the lower maintenance access from the Princes Highway
- c. Consolidate future development behind areas that are protected by existing rock walls.

Closing the Princes Highway access will restrict management of the hazard to maintaining the Peninsula Drive access. This will represent a significant cost to Council as the works will need to mitigate against coastal erosion and coastal inundation over the design life of the asset and beyond. Works would need to include:

- a. Design and construct 450 to 500m section of rock wall to design life that meets sea level rise projections beyond 2100
- b. Back fill corresponding section of rock wall
- c. Design and construct section of Wharf Road to new landform alignment
- d. Remove, relocate and replace associated services behind new works.

This substantial cost cannot be met by Council within the planning and construction period of the new Clyde River bridge crossing. RMS should take some responsibility for investment in this area to address this critical environmental hot-spot and/or engage with the NSW Government to secure funding for the necessary works to secure the Wharf Road access back to Peninsula Drive.

# Attachment A – Area Map



This is for illustrative purposes only and not to scale.

Proposed New Batemans Bay Bridge – RMS Preferred Option