

7. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

7.1 Introduction

As outlined in the Ministerial Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Effects under the *Environmental Effects Act 1978*, the proponent “needs to implement a formal program for the provision of public information and consultation with stakeholders during the EES”. The Ministerial Guidelines also state that the proponent’s EES Consultation Plan should:

- Identify the relevant stakeholders and interest groups;
- Analyse the stakeholder groups to understand their character, interests and consultation needs;
- Describe the consultation methods to be used and a schedule of activities; and
- Outline how inputs from stakeholders will be recorded, considered and/or addressed in the preparation of the EES.

VicRoads is the proponent for the Western Highway Project including, for this particular EES, Section 3 from Ararat to Stawell.

This chapter outlines the Communication and Consultation Plan for the Project, details the consultation activities undertaken and the communication mechanisms used, the outcomes of the consultation, VicRoads’ response and how the outcomes have informed the EES.

7.2 Consultation Prior to the EES

In 2009, VicRoads commenced consultation with the local community and key agencies for the Western Highway Project.

The purpose of the initial consultation was to obtain an understanding of the opportunities and constraints which could inform the development of alignment options.

During the initial identification and evaluation of alignment options, the project team consulted with various stakeholders including Local and State Government authorities to help determine individuals and groups affected, taking into account land use and social planning policies and proposals.

As part of the refinement of early options, VicRoads officers regularly undertook one on one meetings with land holders and other interested members of the community. The one on one consultation was valuable in understanding the individual and community interests which may have been directly or indirectly impacted.

As a result of consultation, it was clear that there was a broad level of support for the duplication of the highway between Ararat and Stawell. During the consultation process, the following issues were raised by the community as important considerations for the Project:

- Diversion of the highway around Great Western;
- Potential impacts on businesses and tourism;
- Improved safety in Great Western and access arrangements to properties; and
- Potential impacts on natural features, including biodiversity links.

In February 2010 the preliminary alignment options (ten options with variations) were presented to the community and feedback sought in order to reduce the overall number of options.

By mid 2010 the initial ten options were reduced to six options, which were presented to the community at Great Western. In October 2010, it was determined that an EES would be required for Section 3 of the Project. Accordingly, the consultation undertaken prior to the determination provided valuable context and understanding for VicRoads in developing a Consultation Plan for the Project.

7.3 Consultation during the EES

In August 2011, a Consultation Plan was developed by VicRoads in consultation with the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and with feedback from Technical Reference Group (TRG). The Consultation Plan was then published for the community to access on the VicRoads website www.vicroads.vic.gov.au and the DPCD website www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/environment.

The objectives of the Consultation Plan were:

- To inform stakeholders and community members of the EES process
- To provide stakeholders and community members with sufficient opportunities to provide input into the EES process.

In addition to the Consultation Plan, VicRoads established a database to record communication between VicRoads and landowners that were affected by the alignment options and the proposed Project. Formal correspondence was also recorded and tracked via the VicRoads records management system.

7.4 Stakeholders

The Project has a number of stakeholders with a range of interests, perceptions and expectations.

These stakeholders are outlined in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1 Stakeholders

Commonwealth Government Agencies	
Department of Sustainability Environment Water Population and Communities	Department of Infrastructure and Transport
State Government Agencies	
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria	Central Highlands Water
Department of Justice	Department of Planning and Community Development
Department of Primary Industries	Department of Sustainability and Environment
Department of Treasury and Finance	Environment Protection Agency (Victorian)
Heritage Victoria	Parks Victoria
VicRoads	Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
Local Government	
Rural City of Ararat	Northern Grampians Shire
Emergency Services	
Country Fire Authority	Rural Ambulance Victoria
State Emergency Service	Victoria Police
Schools	
Primary and secondary schools	
Businesses	
Agricultural	Manufacturing
Tourism	Transport and Freight
Industrial (including quarrying)	Small business operators
Indigenous groups	
Martang Pty Ltd	Barengi Gadjin Land Council
Private Infrastructure Companies	
Optus	Powercor
Telstra	Tenix
Australian Rail Track Corporation	Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water
Public Transport Operators	
Vline	
Community groups	
Great Western Progress Association	Stawell Historical Society
Landcare Groups	Victorian Farmers Federation (Western Victoria)
Media	
Pyrenees Advocate	Stawell Times-News
Ararat Advertiser	Wimmera Mail Times
Ballarat Courier	Win News
Federal Members of Parliament	
Catherine King MP (Member for Ballarat)	Dan Tehan MP (Member for Wannon)

State Members of Parliament	
Simon Ramsay MLC	David Koch MP
Gayle Tierney MLC	Jaala Pulford MP
Terry Mulder MP	Geoff Howard MP
Sharon Knight MP	Joe Helper MP
David O'Brien MP	

7.5 Community Consultation Activities

A range of community consultation activities were conducted for the EES process, with the aim of:

- Keeping key stakeholders and members of the community informed and up-to-date on the EES process.
- Providing stakeholders and community members with opportunities to provide input to the existing condition assessments for the selection of shortlisted alignment options.
- Enabling stakeholders and community members an opportunity to provide input to the existing condition assessments for the selection of preferred alignments.

The type and extent of consultation for each stakeholder group was determined by the potential impacts the Project would have on them and their interests.

The consultation activities undertaken prior to and during the EES process are outlined in Table 7-2.

7.6 Overview of Consultation

Consultation activities were undertaken in three phases:

- Phase 1 - Introduction and explanation of the EES process
- Phase 2 - Consultation on the short-listed options
- Phase 3 - Consultation on the preferred option.

7.6.1 Phase 1 – Introduction and explanation of the EES process

The objectives during Phase 1 were:

- To explain the EES process to the community and stakeholders
- To obtain stakeholder input on project issues, impacts and alignments

The consultation activities that were conducted during Phase 1 are outlined in Table 7-2.

Table 7-2 Phase 1 Consultation Activities

Action	Description	Stakeholder Groups
Websites	VicRoads provided broad Project and specific EES information on its website from March 2011 and will do so until the completion of the Project. The information displayed on the VicRoads website included details on the EES process, the progress of planning and contact details to enable community members to obtain information about the Project and provide input into the EES process. VicRoads contact details were also published on the DPCD website EES referral section. Updates on the EES progress were published on the VicRoads website monthly. A link to the information on the DPCD website was posted on the VicRoads website.	Stakeholders, Landowners and Community
Email updates	Email updates were distributed to the almost 170 community members that had given VicRoads their email addresses. The email updates allowed recipients to follow the progress of the EES.	Community
Information Bulletins	Since November 2010 VicRoads delivered two information bulletins and community updates to potentially affected landholders. The July 2011 bulletin was also delivered within the postcode areas 3373, 3374, 3375, 3377 and 3380.	Stakeholders, Landowners and Community
Fact Sheets	Fact sheets were published in December 2010 and July 2011 to explain aspects of the technical investigations that were undertaken as part of the EES process.	Landowners and Community
Local and State Newspapers	Project information was published in both local and Regional newspapers to provide the community with updates on the Project.	Stakeholders, Landowners and Community

Action	Description	Stakeholder Groups
Letters	<p>VicRoads have sent letters in December 2010 and June 2011 to all potentially impacted landholders. The purpose of these letters were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform landholders of the EES process ▪ Provide VicRoads' contact detail to landowners so they could provide feedback and seek more information on the Project ▪ To provide contact details for VicRoads so that landholders could provide feedback and seek more information on the Project. 	Stakeholders and Landowners
Face to face meetings with potentially impacted landholders and business owners	<p>VicRoads has conducted face-to-face meetings with the majority of potentially impacted landholders and business owners. The purpose of these meetings was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide an opportunity for landholders and business owners to provide feedback and seek further information on the Project ▪ To ensure that landholders and business owners understood the potential impacts that the Project may have. 	Landowners Directly affected businesses
Project Office	<p>The Project office opened in January 2009 and is located at Wendouree, Victoria. The VicRoads Western Highway Project team work from this office and are available to meet with members of the public. Approximately 100 people have visited the office to either meet with the team or collect written project update information.</p>	Stakeholders, Landowners and Community
Public Displays	<p>Public displays were held to provide information on the route options and give people an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Visitors to the displays could view large scale long aerial photos of the Project, photos, posters and fact sheets about the Project. The VicRoads Project team were in attendance at these displays to discuss any issues raised and to answer questions.</p> <p>In addition to these displays, Project information was made available at the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VicRoads Project office; ▪ VicRoads Customer Service Centres at Ballarat, Ararat and Horsham; ▪ Local Shire and Council offices at Ballarat, Beaufort, Ararat and Stawell; ▪ Australia Post Offices at Beaufort, Ararat and Stawell; ▪ Public libraries at Ararat; and ▪ Service Stations along the Western Highway. 	Stakeholders, Landowners and Community
Technical Reference Group	<p>The Technical Reference Group (TRG) was established in April 2011 and held its first meeting in May 2011. The TRG is comprised of statutory authorities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) ▪ Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) ▪ Parks Victoria (PV) ▪ Heritage Victoria (HV) ▪ VicRoads ▪ The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) ▪ The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) ▪ Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (WCMA) ▪ Ararat Rural City Council ▪ Northern Grampians Shire Council <p>The role of the TRG is to provide advice to VicRoads as the Proponent and the DPCD, as appropriate, regarding the development of the EES.</p>	TRG members
Professional and Local Services Group (PLSG)	<p>The PLSG was formed to ensure that emergency services, private infrastructure operators, local services providers and community representatives including Members of Parliament, Council representatives, and tourism and progress associations are included in the planning process. The feedback from these meetings was used to inform the EES process.</p>	PLSG members

7.6.2 Phase 2 – Community Consultation on Short-listed Options

Phase 2 of the Consultation Program involved consulting with the community and stakeholders on the short-listed alignment options.

The consultation activities undertaken as part of Phase 2 are outlined below.

7.6.2.1 Public Displays

Four public displays were held on the short-listed options for the Western Highway Project. The public displays were held on:

- Wednesday 13 July 2011 at Buangor 4pm to 7pm
- Thursday 14 July 2011 at Great Western 4pm to 7pm
- Saturday 16 July 2011 at Beaufort 9am to 12 midday
- Tuesday 19 July 2011 at Ararat 4pm to 7pm

At these displays, visitors were encouraged to provide feedback on the short-listed alignment options and raise any general comments they had

with the Project. Alignment options for both Sections 2 and 3 were presented at all of the public displays.

The displays were advertised in an Information Bulletin which was distributed to addresses in the project area. The displays were also advertised in local newspapers across the local government areas affected by the Project.

A combined total of approximately 250 people attended the public displays.

Visitor's feedback on the short-listed alignment options and general feedback was recorded at these public displays. This feedback was taken into consideration when selecting the short-listed options.

VicRoads continued to accept feedback on the shortlisted options throughout the entire EES process. Feedback was not restricted to the public displays.

Additional consultation activities that were undertaken as part of the Phase 2 consultation process is outlined in Table 7-3.

Table 7-3 Phase 2 Consultation Activities

Activity	Date	Stakeholder Groups	Purpose
Public Information Display	July 2011	Landowners/residents	Landowners/residents along the Ararat to Stawell section with properties directly impacted by short-listed options were invited to a public information display to provide comments for social impact and options analysis
Public Information Display	July 2011	General community and interested parties	Community and interested parties invited to a public information display to provide comments for social impact and options analysis
Stakeholder meetings – short listed alignment options	July 2011 and ongoing	Government, agencies, and utility services	Consultation with other major stakeholders
PLSG meeting - short listed alignment options	July 2011	Member of the Professional and Local Services Group	PLSG members invited to an information display to provide comments for social impact and options analysis
Project Update Bulletin Letter/email Frequently Asked Questions Newspaper column	July 2011	All	These communication materials were intended to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the Project EES steps. Provide general information about the EES process ▪ Outline consultation and opportunities for community and stakeholder input ▪ Identify that various project alignments would be considered ▪ Provide contact details for community members and stakeholders to contact VicRoads directly

Activity	Date	Stakeholder Groups	Purpose
Landowner and Community Feedback Form	July/August 2011	All	Structured feedback forms distributed to landowners, community and interested parties to gain feedback on short-listed options. Responses to issues raised by participants.

7.6.2.2 Phase 2 Community Feedback

The majority of feedback during Phase 2 from landowners related to specific individual concerns. This included access arrangement to properties from the highway during AMP3 (highway) and AMP1 (freeway) arrangements and how alternate arrangements would be managed.

Individual landowners also outlined concerns in relation to land severance and the ongoing viability of agricultural production and on infrastructure which is situated close to the existing highway which could be impacted.

Feedback from the broader community in Great Western related to the options around the township. The majority of feedback received preferred the options which extend to the east of the town, through or adjacent to the quarries and former landfill given the land is already partially disturbed and does not extend across prime agricultural land. This would also allow for traffic going south to Moyston to pass through the township and thereby potentially encourage people to stop within the township. The options to the west around Great Western were considered to have a greater impact on farming land and rural lifestyle properties and would result in greater severance. As part of the bypass of Great Western, the community also provided feedback on the need for the town to remain accessible and visible for commuters and therefore, location of on /off ramps to the freeway would be an important consideration.

7.6.3 Phase 3 – Consultation on Proposed Duplication Alignment

In November 2011 VicRoads identified its shortlisted alignments for the Project. Within the Ararat to Stawell section of the Project, a single alignment was selected as the proposed option, which included a bypass of the Great Western township to the east. Phase 3 involved consultation on the proposed option. The consultation activities that were undertaken as part of Phase 3 are outlined below.

7.6.3.1 Public Displays

Phase 3 consultation involved consulting with the community on the proposed option for the Project.

Six public displays were held regarding the shortlisted option. These displays were held at:

- Great Western – Wednesday 9 November 2011 4pm to 7pm
- Buangor – Thursday 10 November 2011 4pm to 7pm

- Beaufort – Tuesday 15 November 2011 4pm to 7pm
- Ararat – Wednesday 16 November 2011 4pm to 7pm
- Stawell – Tuesday 20 March 2012 4pm to 7pm
- Buangor – Tuesday 1 May 2012 4pm to 7pm

At these displays, visitors were encouraged to provide feedback on the preferred option/s within both Section 2 and 3. A similar number of people attended these public displays as with the Phase 2 displays.

At this time, landowners were informed if the shortlisted alignment would impact them directly, and were given the opportunity for a face to face meeting with VicRoads staff to receive more information about the extent of potential impact.

Landowners and/or their representatives were informed of VicRoads shortlisted alignments and the information provided to them included:

- The assessment criteria used to inform selection of the preferred alignment
- An explanation of the EES process
- A map of their property indicating the possible line of acquisition
- Information on the Planning Scheme Amendment process
- Information about the compensation process
- Information about the upcoming community information sessions.

Landholders who would have been impacted by the other short-listed options but not impacted by the proposed alignment were provided with an information bulletin that detailed the preferred alignment.

VicRoads staff attended face to face meetings with the majority of directly impacted landowners, either on site, at the project office, or prior to the community meetings at Great Western and Buangor.

Following feedback from the TRG, a separate meeting was held in Stawell to provide an overview of the proposed option and access arrangements into the town.

A summary of the activities that were undertaken as part of Phase 3 are outlined in Table 7-4.

Table 7-4 Phase 3 Consultation Activities

Activity	Date	Stakeholder Groups	Purpose
Public Information Displays	November 2011 March 2011 May 2012	Landowners/residents	Community sessions were held to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display the proposed alignment and explain why it is the recommended alignments Outline known issues and challenges Outline further studies relating to the recommended options Outline the inclusion of feedback from consultation into the decision making process
Public Information Displays	November 2011 March 2012 May 2012	General community and interested parties	Community sessions were held to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display the proposed alignment and explain why it is the recommended alignment Outline known issues and challenges Outline further studies relating to the recommended options Outline the inclusion of feedback from consultation into the decision making process
Project Update Bulletin Letter/email Frequently Asked Questions Newspaper column	November 2011 March 2012 May 2012	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To describe the proposed alignment To report on how options changed as a result of feedback through the public information displays Update stakeholders on progress of studies on the recommended alignments, if required and appropriate
PLSG meeting – recommended alignments	November 2011	Professional and Local Services Group	PLSG members invited to an information display to view the recommended alignments and explain why these are the recommended alignments.
Communication and consultation outcomes	December 2011 – May 2012	TRG	Report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback gathered from public displays Relevant findings from the social impact assessment processes

7.7 Consultation Feedback

Throughout the development of options and the proposed alignment, VicRoads has undertaken extensive consultation with landowners and potentially affected businesses within the project area.

Feedback has been provided on an individual and community level. Broadly, the main concerns can be summarised as:

- Land Acquisition
- Land Severance;
- Amenity impacts associated with emissions and visual impacts;
- Safety;
- Access;
- Flooding; and
- Environmental impacts

A summary of the issues raised and responses are outlined in Table 7-5.



Table 7-5 Issues raised through Consultation and Responses

Issue	Response
Land Acquisition	
<p>Most participants did not support options that involved land acquisition on their properties. Some participants said that their businesses (mostly farms) could be rendered less viable if their land or parts thereof was acquired for the Project. Landowners were concerned that some options would result in acquisition of their prime farming land.</p>	<p>Agricultural assessments were undertaken for properties where landowners raised concerns that the Project would affect viability.</p> <p>The outcomes of this assessment were used to draw conclusions regarding land use impacts in the Planning and Land Use Assessment.</p> <p>VicRoads has provided landowners with information on the land acquisition process, where requested. In selecting the preferred alignment, consideration was given to minimising land acquisition. The current design was refined through the EES process to avoid and minimise land acquisition, land severance and acquisition of dwellings, where practicable.</p>
Severance of agricultural properties	
<p>This included concerns about the loss of agricultural land affecting the viability of farms, as well as access to other agricultural properties in the same ownership located on the other side of the duplicated highway. Some participants stated that if they were no longer able to drive farm machinery on the duplicated highway to access their other properties this would be a major issue.</p>	<p>The proposed alignment has been selected to avoid and minimise severance of private land. Agricultural assessments were undertaken for properties where landowners raised concerns that the Project would affect viability (Refer to Technical Appendix P - Economic Impact Assessment for further details).</p> <p>The locations of some median breaks and intersections were selected to assist known movement of farm machinery. VicRoads has advised landowners that the highway, initially under Access Management Policy (AMP) road category 3 (AMP3) conditions, would have the same status as the existing Western Highway once duplicated in that it would allow continued use by registered/permitted items of plant. VicRoads has also advised that at some future time restriction to highway access would be introduced and it would be consistent with the AMP road category 1 (AMP1) upgrade in this proposal.</p>
Amenity, including noise, air quality and visual impacts	
<p>A range of concerns were raised with regards to amenity impacts, these included noise levels increasing at private residences and community facilities from both an increase in traffic volume and closer proximity of the proposed alignment to sensitive receptors. Some participants were concerned about the visual impact of the road encroaching on their properties, particularly in the vicinity of Great Western township and the Stawell Park Caravan Park. Some landowners and residents sought clarification as to how noise would affect adjoining residents and whether the VicRoads Noise Policy applied.</p>	<p>A number of photomontages from residential viewpoints have been developed which show what the ultimate upgrade (AMP1 freeway standard) would look like. Landscaping would be used to mitigate adverse effects at key locations.</p> <p>Noise mitigation measures (such as road surfacing) would be considered during detailed design at key locations such as intersections and in the vicinity of Great Western township. The Great Western bypass would be built in cut at some locations further reducing noise and visual impacts. Air quality impacts have been investigated and would have minimal impact.</p>
Safety	
<p>The issue of safety was raised by many participants, with respect to a number of existing highway sections and intersections, including within Great Western and London Road, Stawell. Some stated that they did not feel safe using some of the current access points and intersections on the existing highway. Others were concerned about increasing volumes of traffic, altered access to properties and proximity of the alignment options to residences and community facilities associated with the options presented. Safety was a concern along the entire alignment; however, the issue was more pronounced around the Great Western township, with participants concerned that an increase in traffic volume could hinder the community's ability to walk and ride bikes along some roads and also cause safety issues for children accessing community facilities and the school.</p>	<p>Traffic volumes, including truck volumes, within the project area are predicted to grow, which is one of the key drivers for the Project. Road safety is a key priority in this Project.</p> <p>Intersections and the highway alignment would be designed in accordance with relevant safety standards. VicRoads has noted that road safety audits would be undertaken throughout the Project to ensure that safety standards are met.</p> <p>A bypass of Great Western would result in the existing highway through the town reverting to a local road and thereby improving existing safety conditions in the township.</p>

Issue	Response
Access	
<p>Some participants identified that adequate access to their properties and their community was a major issue for them. Participants did not want the Project to sever access to their community and services, nor did they wish to travel further (e.g. be required to turn left and perform a U-turn, when they can currently turn right onto the existing highway) to access their communities or properties. Some agricultural landowners that reside between Ararat and Stawell raised the issue of requiring regular access to their properties by B-Double trucks and/or farm machinery.</p>	<p>The location of intersections has been considered to best meet traffic and road safety requirements.</p> <p>Community consultation sessions held have shown the location of these median breaks and feedback received has been incorporated into the proposed alignment where possible. Assessments were undertaken on the types of vehicles turning at different locations along the highway and how far they had to travel in order to make the turns. The results of these assessments were considered in the design of the proposed alignment.</p>
Flooding	
<p>A number of landowners, particularly those in the Great Western area, have expressed concern over the current flooding issues within the town and its outskirts. In January 2011 there was a large flood event that overtopped the existing highway and flooded many properties in the district. Some landowners are worried the Great Western bypass would further increase the flooding impacts on the town.</p>	<p>VicRoads has been working with Wimmera Catchment Management Authority and would design the road so that the flood extent for the proposed alignment is no worse than the existing flood extent for the same storm event. In addition the Project would investigate options that reduce flooding impacts within Great Western where possible. (Refer to Technical Appendix G - Surface Water Impact Assessment for further detail).</p>
Environmental	
<p>Some landowners expressed concern at native vegetation impacts and severance of wildlife corridors.</p>	<p>During consultation, the significance of the vegetation and the legislative requirements to avoid or minimise impacts on this vegetation was explained. The adopted alignment would be designed to minimise native vegetation and fauna habitat removal within the alignment corridor.</p> <p>During detailed design, the adopted alignment would be further refined to minimise native vegetation removal within the alignment corridor, with mitigation measures adopted (e.g. wildlife crossings) as appropriate to minimise impacts to wildlife corridors for significant native fauna.</p>

7.7.1 Alignment variations due to community feedback

During the consultation process when VicRoads was developing the alignment options, community members suggested alignment options or variations to alignment options presented. The main changes to the alignments resulting from community feedback are outlined below and in Figure 7-1.

■ Between Armstrong and Armstrong Deviation

A request was made by a landowner to extend the proposed Public Acquisition Overlay boundary over their property. The land is situated between the existing highway (and proposed highway) at the Armstrong Deviation and the railway line. The land was previously impacted during the Armstrong Deviation works and has become unviable in its own right. VicRoads has consented to extend the boundary of acquisition beyond that required to accommodate the landowner.

■ South-East of Great Western

A request was made to minimise the impact on historic vineyards at the Grampians Gully Estate. This request was able to be accommodated into the proposed alignment design by incorporating a short section of narrow median south-east of Great Western along the existing highway corridor to avoid the vineyard.

■ Great Western Bypass

Option 2C comprised a northern bypass of Great Western to avoid the quarry and to further separate the alignment from the town. This option was discounted because it impacted on higher quality native vegetation, was longer and had greater severance of private properties.

The final Public Acquisition Overlay boundary was slightly amended on the north-eastern side of the proposed bypass of Great Western to accommodate a landowner who would be left with a landlocked parcel of land.

■ North-West of Great Western

A request was made to improve access to properties for landowners off St. George Road as the current access was altered under the previously proposed option. The proposed design was altered to include a small service road off St. George Road to improve local access.

■ Great Western to Stawell

Between Great Western and the rail overpass east of Stawell a number of requests were made by the community to duplicate on the south-west side of the existing alignment. A number of landowners were opposed to the originally proposed duplication on the north-east side and the revised proposal was supported by all directly impacted landowners. This

variation included a new dual carriageway south west of the existing highway and Oddfellows Bridge and improved access to landowners off Harvey Lane.

A landowner also suggested that VicRoads continue the new alignment North-West of the existing Great Western bypass to London Road, Stawell. This proposal was not pursued as it would involve further land severance and would have resulted in higher construction costs due to the length of new dual carriageway.

East of Stawell

At the request of a number of stakeholders, including the Northern Grampians Shire, VicRoads Western Region and the community the London Road intersection was revised. This new proposal included a service road connecting Robson Road and Panrock-Reservoir Road to improve safety by reducing the number of access points to the highway to the one location. The new proposal also included an interchange at London Road. In addition, the new

proposal addressed some of the concerns held by the Stawell Park Caravan Park and Grange Golf Club over a previous proposal at Panrock-Reservoir Road.

7.8 Ongoing Community Consultation

VicRoads will continue to inform landowners, stakeholders and the broader community about the EES process to ensure people are kept up to date, and where appropriate, to provide feedback.

During the Public Exhibition period, VicRoads Project staff will be available at various locations to provide EES information and Project updates. At the conclusion of the EES process and throughout the construction phase for the Project, regular updates will continue.

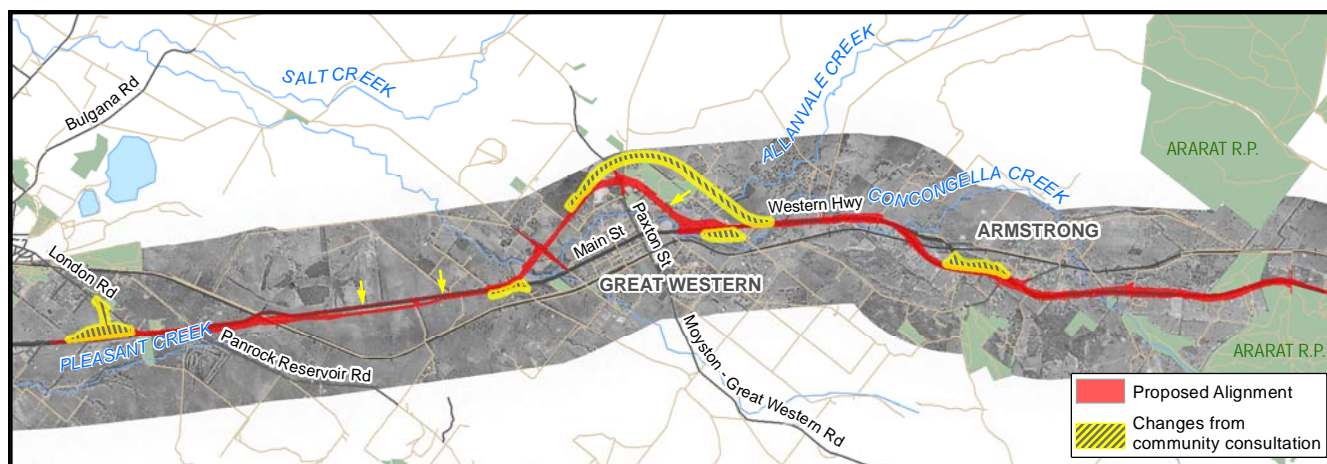


Figure 7-1 Community influence on final alignment