FACT SHEET

Consideration of a possible second access road to Gnarabup

Outcomes of Community Consultation

Background

After considering the Keelty Report - Appreciating the Risk - Report of the Special Inquiry into the November 2011 Margaret River Bushfire - the State Parliament requested investigation into new alternative access roads for various coastal towns. Main Roads WA was asked to lead the investigation. The background to this investigation was outlined in the previous Fact Sheet distributed as part of the wider community consultation from 18 November – 16 December 2016. We asked our communities to provide their input into the options developed for Gnarabup and now present the consultation outcomes in this Fact Sheet. We thank everyone who provided feedback into this important study.

Feedback

The overall consultation process aimed to determine people's views on:

- Whether a secondary fire access road was required;
- Which option they preferred; and
- Issues associated with each option.

The two most technically viable options were provided for consultation:

- Option 2: a connection from Wallcliffe Road, Gnarabup to Rainbow Cave Road; and
- Option 3: a connection from Wallcliffe Road, Gnarabup to Blackboy Hollow Cave Road.

A total of 312 submissions were received, with 239 via hard copy and 73 via the website. The responses to the key questions were:

A secondary emergency access road to Gnarabup and surrounding communities is needed		
Agree	237	76%
Disagree	71	23%
No Answer	4	1%
TOTAL	312	100%

I prefer the following option		
Option 2	246	79%
Option 3	41	13%
No Option	25	8%
TOTAL	312	100%

To gauge stakeholder and community views on issues associated with options, people were asked to rank a series of factors for each option. These factors were: Evacuation Time; Footprint; National Park; Private Land; Safety and Sight Distance; Road Geometry and Gradient; Existing Road Traffic Volumes; Amenity; Cape to Cape Track; and Cost. Additionally, respondents were able to provide comment, including feedback and issues/ concerns. The majority ranked **Evacuation Time** as most important compared to the other factors.

Issues Raised

This table summarises the key issues raised by the community during consultation and the Steering Group responses. All community submissions have been recorded in a consultation report, which has been summarised in the Feasibility Report and attached in full as an appendix. This report will be forwarded to the State Government for a decision.

COMMUNITY COMMENT	STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
A second access road is not required.	The Government will decide whether a second access road is justified. This investigation only reports on what the most feasible alignment would be.
A second access road is needed for safety reasons and should be a prerequisite for any future development of Gnarabup.	As above. Any potential future development will be a decision for the relevant authorities.
Option 3 is a better option than Option 2; it is further away from Wallcliffe Road and connects with Boodjidup Road.	While Option 3 provides greater separation from Wallcliffe Road, there are no major differences in evacuation time benefit between the options. The closure of the new road during an emergency will be at the discretion and management of the Incident Controller. The intersection of Option 3 with Caves Road will require significant clearing and earthworks to achieve a safe sight distance to the north. The existing Rainbow Cave Road intersection will require minimal works to achieve the required standard. The existing Caves Road and Boodjidup Road intersection does not have a significant recorded crash history. However, it would require an upgrade if either option is selected. As Option 3 connects with Boodjidup Road, it is less likely that there will be an increase in the use of 'rat runs' or shortcuts compared to Option 2. However, the traffic study provides no evidence to suggest that these rat runs currently exist.
The road could be gated/opened only for emergencies. The road should not be sealed or used as a public thoroughfare.	Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas and Government policy states that: • any second access road longer than 600m cannot be gated and must be a public road open at all times. Gates could be obstacles to using roads in emergencies. • any second access road must be sealed.

COMMUNITY COMMENT	STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
The road provides limited benefit in a fire emergency; road will be closed at the same time as Wallcliffe Road.	The current primary access to Gnarabup/Prevelly would be closed if a fire occurred from the north, which has been the main focus of this investigation. Fire modelling shows that Option 2 and 3 would be closed at a similar time if a fire occurred from the north. The fire modelling showed that the second access road provides at least 1 hour and 15 minutes additional time once a fire reaches Wallcliffe Road. This is based on a fire approaching from the north because this is the likely scenario that would close the only existing access, i.e. Wallcliffe Road. In this scenario, Wallcliffe Road would be closed well in advance of the fire, which means a second access road could provide a clear benefit. Other fire events and emergencies that cause Wallcliffe Road to be closed may not result in the closure of a second access road, and vice versa. Other individual fire events may result in less evacuation time benefit, which means a second access road may be closed sooner in this situation. A second access road would give communities adjacent to the new road an alternative escape route to the west. Generally, two accesses are better than one and this is consistent with the current Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas. It also provides another point for defending a fire.
Alternative options and measures should be considered instead of a second access road: refuge at the beach, fire breaks around Wallcliffe Road, bunkers, community education, increased firefighting resources.	The Government will decide whether a second access road is justified. The alternative options suggested by the community have been recorded in the report, but were not the focus of this study.
The road puts the public at greater risk when a fire occurs during evacuation (eg complacency).	Both escape route options from Gnarabup to Caves Road are similar lengths. Generally, two accesses are better than one and this is consistent with the current Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas. However, the Steering Group acknowledges that a second access road is not the only means to improve community safety and bushfire preparedness.
Traffic increases on other roads within the local network will make these roads and associated intersections unsafe.	While a second access road will not generate any additional traffic on the road network, traffic will be redistributed. Network areas that would require upgrades if a new road was to be built have been investigated (eg intersections with Caves Road, Boodjidup Road, Wallcliffe Road, widening of existing roads). Specific measures will be further examined should the road go ahead. However, any existing issues with the local road network that do not change if a new road was built are outside the scope of this investigation.

COMMUNITY COMMENT	STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
The standard of the road is inappropriate. A large roundabout will create excessive noise and visual scarring of landscape.	Austroads guidelines use traffic volumes to dictate the standard of the road and the intersection treatments required. The road cross section of an 8m seal width was selected to minimise environmental impacts while considering road safety requirements. If the new road progresses, the intersection treatments including the roundabout will be reviewed as part of the detailed design. Specific safety measures regarding delineation and sight lines of the road to enhance visibility will also be reviewed.
The travelling speed of vehicles on the new road and existing roads will cause safety issues.	If the new road progresses, a review of speed limits on all roads impacted by the redistribution of traffic resulting from the new road will be undertaken.
Traffic increases on local roads will reduce resident amenity.	The feedback from residents regarding changes to amenity has been noted in the Feasibility Report, including a number of suggestions for associated works (eg footpath, traffic calming, minimising signage). Main Roads and the Shire are aware of the reduction in amenity that a second access road will cause. If the road goes ahead, further consultation with affected residents will be undertaken to determine the best way these impacts can be mitigated as far as practicable. A preliminary traffic noise assessment has been completed based on the traffic volumes that are estimated to use the new road and the associated redistribution of traffic on other local roads. The modelling shows that dwellings affected by the Option 2 route are not subject to noise levels above the Western Australian Planning Commission limits. The Option 3 alignment is expected to have similar impacts. While visual impacts will be unavoidable, these have been limited in alignment selection. If the road is built, there may be opportunities to investigate further landscaping treatments during detailed design. If the road goes ahead the design team will liaise with the Shire regarding the minimum signage required to ensure that the emergency route is adequately delineated from the local network.

COMMUNITY COMMENT	STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
Traffic Volumes on Rainbow Cave Road and Wallcliffe Road will increase substantially including additional heavy vehicle usage. There will be flow on effects to other roads (eg 'rat runs') within the surrounding network.	Preliminary traffic modelling estimates that on average approximately 1300 to 1400 vehicles per day (vpd) will use the new road, with corresponding increases in traffic on the southern sections of Wallcliffe Road, Rainbow Cave or Blackboy Hollow Cave Road. An allowance for loop traffic of 250 vpd has been made which corresponds to 5% of the current average daily traffic volume on Wallcliffe Road. As a result, it is estimated that the traffic on Wallcliffe Road near Prevelly will decrease which may provide a marginal safety benefit. The current average volumes at either end of the second access road are: • Wallcliffe Road (south of Marmaduke Point Drive) – 604 vpd • Rainbow Cave Road – 171 vpd • Blackboy Hollow Cave Road – less than 50 vpd The Shire may restrict road use (other than emergency situations) to light vehicles only so that all other traffic continues to use Wallcliffe Road as the primary access. Traffic modelling shows that Wallcliffe Road will remain the preferred route for the majority of traffic. Other routes to the south through the local road network are unlikely to be preferred due to longer travel times and lower standard of geometry. Traffic calming measures will help discourage the use of these routes.
The project should consider pedestrian and cycling facilities on the second access road.	The proposed road width allows for cycling on the shoulder. Associated works include a footpath along Rainbow Cave Road if Option 2 is selected.
The Shire should spend the money somewhere else.	If the new road progresses, funding would be provided by the State Government, rather than being sourced from Council rates. If the new road does not progress, the State Government will determine whether it funds alternative measures.
Shire rates will be increased as a result of the second access road.	The ongoing cost of maintaining the road will be minimal and will not affect Shire rates.
The road will have adverse effects on the local fauna and habitat in the National Park, resulting in road kill and clearing. Are fauna crossings provided?	Environmental impacts are key considerations in investigating new road alignments. Preliminary environmental studies have been undertaken and a rigorous environmental approvals process will be followed if the road progresses. As part of this process, clearing and fauna impacts would be considered, as well as further consultation with key stakeholders.

COMMUNITY COMMENT	STEERING GROUP RESPONSE
The road will make the National Park more accessible, resulting in illegal recreation activities.	Measures to minimise the risk of unauthorised entry into restricted areas of the National Park will be investigated with key stakeholders during detailed design if the new road progresses. A second access road will also provide a more suitable alternative to the current informal vehicular use of the Cape to Cape Track.
The second access road will negatively impact sections of the Cape to Cape Track.	Realignment of the track will be undertaken and paid for as part of this project with further consultation with relevant stakeholders to be undertaken during detailed design should the road go ahead.
Option 3 goes through private land and the acquisition process will either accelerate or delay approvals.	The landowner has indicated a willingness to cede the land for Option 3 free of charge, but a land acquisition process is still required to create a road reserve. This administrative process may take some time to complete but it is not expected to delay the project. Both Options 2 and 3 require excision of land from the National Park which may be a lengthy process. There have been suggestions that the road could be built as a National Park road to expedite construction. If the road goes ahead, engagement with the relevant stakeholders would be undertaken to determine whether construction could proceed in advance of completing the excision process to create a road reserve.

The community consultation process raised a number of issues regarding preparedness for bushfire emergencies. Although outside the scope of this investigation, it is important to acknowledge these issues given there were various recommendations in the Keelty Report.

Below is a summary of these issues:

- Remove road verge vegetation on Wallcliffe Road from Caves Road to Prevelly instead of constructing a second access road.
- Provide additional firebreaks in strategic locations.
- Provide greater community education on fire preparation.
- Investigate installation of a bunker/s.

Presentation to Shire Councillors

The findings of the Steering Group's investigations were presented to the Councillors of the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River at a briefing on 8 February 2017. The Councillors were advised:

- That the road was not subject to Council approval and therefore there were no requirements for Council to make a decision.
- To consider providing an opportunity for submitters to address Council – possibly via allotment of time at a briefing session.
- That a summary of technical and consultation outcomes would be reported to State Government.
- If the road was funded, further approvals and detailed design work would be required, and further engagement undertaken through design.

At Council's 8 March 2017 meeting, Council made the following decision:

1. Supports the findings of the Gnarabup Second Access Feasibility Report – February 2017 into the provision of second access road to the Gnarabup/Prevelly localities, specifically that Option 2 is the preferred option;

2. Highlights the essential requirements for measures to address impacts on the amenity of residents and the existing road network through ensuring the following measures are included in the request for funding to the State Government:

    a) The incorporation of traffic calming measures to discourage the use of the alternative routes through the existing rural residential area.

    b) Ensuring a low speed environment in the existing rural residential area.

    c) Provision made for pavement improvement on the existing Rainbow Cave Road.

    d) Ensuring that existing crossovers are appropriately reinstated and finished through design and construction.

    e) Construction of a footpath on Rainbow Cave Road through the existing rural residential area.

    f) Undergrounding of power lines.

    g) Construction of a pullover bay for the school bus in Rainbow Cave Road.

    h) Ensuring that both design and speed limit considerations give due regard to potential impacts on fauna movement through the National Park;

3. Notes that further submissions regarding issues with the road network are to be incorporated in the community strategic plan process; and

4. Requests that if the State Government decides not to fund second access consideration is given by the State to the identification and funding of alternative risk mitigation measures**.**

How will consultation feedback be considered?

Feedback from this process, as well as the findings of the Steering Group, will be included in a report to the State Government. The government will then decide whether to pursue any of the options presented. It is important to note the delivery of any of these options is not a certainty and would require future decision by the State Government in favour of providing a road and an allocation of sufficient funds.

Should you wish to further discuss these outcomes, please contact Nick Logan of the Shire's Sustainable Development Directorate on (08) 9780 5273.