



Prince and Menangle Streets Intersection

Community Engagement Outcomes Report

Client: Wollondilly Shire Council

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1 Introduction

This report documents the findings of the community engagement process undertaken to inform proposed intersection changes for the Prince and Menangle Streets intersection at Picton. This report documents outcomes of discussions and workshops conducted 2022 and the outcomes of the analysis undertaken in response to issues raised by community members during that process. The next steps in the engagement process are to be determined following a report provided to Wollondilly Shire Council.

1.1 Project Background

The *Picton Town Centre Transport Master Plan 2026* was developed in 2019 to alleviate traffic congestion in Picton Town Centre. The Master Plan was adopted by Council in August 2019. One of the intersections identified as a priority in the plan was the Prince Street and Menangle Street intersection. Traffic modelling indicated that this intersection would ‘fail’ and reach a critical point by 2026. This is predicted to have wider impacts for the rest of the Wollondilly Shire, including residents of areas such as Tahmoor and Thirlmere accessing the freeway.

Based on the Master Plan recommendations, Council commissioned traffic engineering studies into possible intersection treatments for the Prince Street and Menangle Street intersection. The options identified through these studies included:

- Turning Prince Street into a one-way street
- Different forms of roundabouts
- Signalising the intersection (traffic lights).

The traffic engineering studies indicated that signalisation was the best traffic engineering solution to address the predicted intersection failure.

Council undertook consultation on these options during 2019. This process has since been criticised by local residents as being insufficient. It did include letters of notification to nearby residents and a meeting with residents in April 2019. Following more recent feedback (2021 and 2022) from community members, including those living close to the Prince and Menangle Street intersection, Council resolved at the Council meeting of 22 February 2022 to undertake additional community engagement for the intersection works. This stage of the engagement process is the focus of this Consultation Outcomes Report.

1.2 The Site

The focus of this engagement process is intersection of Prince and Menangle Streets in Picton. Although all issues and approaches were considered, the most problematic traffic movement has been identified as the right turn out of Prince Street into Menangle Street (with this being of most concern during both AM and PM peak periods).

Figure 1: The Prince and Menangle Streets Intersection



1.2.1 Site Complexities

The unique circumstances and complexities of the intersection include:

- The proximity between Station St and Prince St
- Location in a heritage precinct
- The nature of driveway access and egress with tight driveway entrances and limited opportunities to turn vehicles around on properties
- The presence of the one-way Victoria Bridge further along Prince Street
- The location as a gateway entry to the township of Picton
- The use of Prince Street as a cut through route to and from Tahmoor and Thirlmere
- Challenging geometry for any road upgrade consideration (roundabout / signals)
- Operational issues are predominantly driven by traffic numbers (not speed)
- Road safety / risk of accidents are likely to worsen as volumes increase
- For a signalised configuration – signal phasing / timings / coordination with pedestrian crossings are challenging due to the unusual geometry and the difficulty in safely and efficiently maintaining all required traffic movements.

2 Engagement Methodology

This section of the report describes the steps undertaken in the engagement process. The process was designed to address the direction provided by Council in the 22 February 2022 Council Motion. Due to the nature of the community response to the proposed intersection treatment options, additional steps were undertaken in this process to ensure that the key stakeholders had the opportunity to provide input into, as well as participate in, the engagement process.

During March 2022, WSP/ATX Consulting and a representative of Wollondilly Shire Council met with key local community members who had expressed interest in the project. These members were identified through liaison with the Sustainable Traffic Options for Picton (STOP) Group who had formed to advocate for action to address traffic issues in Picton. STOP had emerged as a group representing community interests in this project (it is noted they do not necessarily represent all community views but are considered to be a key group). At this meeting the proposed engagement process was discussed. This included the format and approach to the workshops. STOP members at this meeting provided advice on the timing, structure and content of the proposed workshops.

Following this meeting, it was decided that Council would engage with the STOP group to assist with recruiting participants for the workshops. STOP were provided with workshop details and asked to nominate representatives to fill 75% of the available workshop spots with the remainder being available to general community members. This process ensured that those members most active in their concerns about the proposed intersection works, including residents and businesses most directly affected, were able to participate in the workshop process.

Engaging with STOP in both the design and recruitment of the workshop process aligned with leading practice in community engagement and also eliminated risk of criticism that the process was not adequate or inclusive.

2.1 Key Steps and Timing

Table 1: Methodology Summary

Activity	Details/Description	Date
Initial meeting with community representatives	Meeting with representatives of STOP to discuss process including workshop timing, content and format	March 2022
Establishment of Your Say page	Establishment of Your Say page to address engagement components of project. Will be used as platform to promote workshops, etc.	March 2022
Recruitment for workshops – direct invitation	<p>Invitation to STOP to identify members to participate in workshops.</p> <p>Invitations to fill remaining spaces sent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Picton Chamber of Commerce — Picton Heritage Society — Police — Transport Advisory Committee members — Traffic Committee members. <p>Workshops advertised on Council web site /Your Say page</p>	April 2022
Workshops	<p>General format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Welcome, introductions and purpose — Project background and context — How traffic modelling works 	Workshop 1: Tuesday 3 May 600pm-830pm

Activity	Details/Description	Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Complexity of intersection – closeness of side streets, gradient, utilities, ownership, etc. — What’s important to the community – general principles – safety, on street parking, property acquisition concerns, etc. — Overview of current options — Workshop session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Suggested adaptations to any existing options — Any new options — Next steps 	<p>Workshop 2: Wednesday 4 May 600pm-830pm</p> <p>Workshop 3: Thursday 5 May 300pm-530pm</p>
Workshop summary of outcomes	Concise summary of key issues, discussion points from Round One Workshops including identification of options for further modelling	May 2022
Follow up meeting with community members	A follow meeting with small representation of community members including STOP representatives and other community participants in the workshops to share the workshop outcomes, discuss the options for further modelling and to confirm timeframes for next steps.	May 2022
Web page/ Your Say Update	Outcomes of first round of workshops to be available through Your Say following review at follow up meeting with community members	June 2022
<p>Period to allow for additional traffic counts, modelling and consultation with Transport for NSW to be conducted. Time period dependent on complexity of tasks involved and availability of data including from Transport for NSW.</p>		

The original methodology anticipated that the required analysis would be completed late in 2022. However, the complexity of the modelling, including the need to get key information from Transport for NSW regarding the Picton Bypass and its potential for impact on local traffic in Picton Town Centre, delayed this process significantly.

The modelling and information on the bypass only became available in mid-2023. The implications of the modelling require a reconsideration of options and these will first be presented to Council before the community engagement process recommences.

3 Workshop Outcomes

Three workshops were conducted on 3rd, 4th and 5th of May, 2022. 22 participants attended across the three workshops. The majority of these participants were local residents, mostly aligned with the STOP group and this included many of the property and business owners located at or very close to the Prince and Menangle Streets intersection.

3.1 Key Issues

The following are key issues and concerns identified consistently throughout the workshop process.

3.1.1 Reliability and robustness of the traffic modelling

A common concern expressed throughout the workshop process, was the reliability and robustness of the modelling used to identify the Prince and Menangle Streets intersection as problematic. The main concerns with the modelling centred on:

- Traffic counts – participants felt that as the modelling relied on traffic counts conducted prior to 2019 it was inaccurate and provided an over-estimate of traffic impacts due to changes that had occurred since that time. Participants suggested that work and lifestyle patterns had changed considerably as a result of the COVID pandemic and that these changes were not captured in the modelling.
- Development – participants identified that the development scenarios and assumptions used in the traffic modelling, included development applications that had either been withdrawn or were otherwise not proceeding.
- Picton Bypass – participants expressed concern that the modelling did not factor in the introduction of the Picton Bypass and the impact that this would have on local traffic volume. Participants felt that this omission resulted in an over-estimation of traffic volumes and the danger of introducing traffic control measures that would later become redundant once the bypass was operational. Council staff and the Traffic Engineer present at the workshops acknowledged these concerns but also highlighted the challenge in identifying the timing when the bypass might be operational. It was noted that the project has not yet proceeded to business case and is therefore yet to be funded.

In response to the issues raised with the modelling it was agreed at the workshops that new modelling would be undertaken that included:

- New traffic counts undertaken at the Prince and Menangle Street intersection and other relevant parts of the Picton road network to ensure traffic count data is as up to date as possible and more likely to capture any post-COVID changes in traffic patterns
- Updated development scenarios and assumptions that would best reflect current understandings of population growth
- The incorporation of the impact of Picton Bypass with an assumed timeline of the bypass being operational in 2031. It was noted that inclusion of this in the modelling would require agreement and provision of data from Transport for NSW.

For some participants, the perceived limitations of the data used for the original modelling was a critical issue. This was still the case for some participants after it was agreed through the workshop process that key issues would be addressed by redoing traffic counts, updating development scenarios, and modelling the impact of the Picton Bypass. Although these commitments directly addressed residents' main concerns, and the original data was essentially being made redundant by the new modelling, some participants were still uncomfortable and expressed their concerns.

3.1.2 Need for consideration of non-engineering issues and interests

Participants expressed concerns that, to date, proposed traffic management treatments had been developed without proper consideration of non-engineering issues including lifestyle, health, amenity and heritage. Participants felt that even if the level of service were to reach an F (or fail), it is reasonable for people to have to wait at an intersection for a period of time during peak hours. The impact of the preliminary options (signals, roundabouts etc.) including their cost, safety issues, air and noise impacts, etc. were not considered to be warranted to relieve what was perceived to be a waiting time at the intersection.

Participants also felt that the intersection required special consideration as it was located within a heritage precinct and also acted as the key gateway to the historic township of Picton. It was stressed that heritage related not only to the conservation

value of the houses, but also to the streetscape, the guttering and overall environment of the precinct. It was also highlighted that many of the heritage houses had narrow driveway entries that created additional safety concerns if the existing shoulder lane were to be lost (as was proposed in treatments such as signalisation and to some extent roundabouts).

3.1.3 A conservative and incremental approach

Workshop participants felt that the proposed solutions were out of proportion with the perceived problem. The view expressed was that the projected failure of the intersection (requiring traffic to wait at the intersection) was not a significant burden for motorists and that proposed measures (notably signalisation and roundabouts) were 'overkill' to address the problem. It was noted by Council and the Traffic Engineer that although wait times were considered a problem, this was more than just the inconvenience to some motorists of extended wait times at the intersection (with the right turn out of Prince Street into Menangle Street being the most problematic traffic movement). A concern with increased wait times was also that as wait time lengthened, the probability of higher risk motorist behaviour also increased becoming a road safety issue.

In addition to proportionality of response, many participants felt that any permanent treatments to the Prince and Menangle Street intersections were essentially a waste of resources because of what was seen as the imminence of the Picton Bypass. It was felt that any traffic treatments would be rendered unnecessary or redundant once the Picton Bypass was operational.

Participants felt that a prudent approach may be to introduce less intensive and less impactful solutions first, monitor their effectiveness and then only introduce other options if the traffic modelling (based on the agreed assumptions) identified that current measures became ineffective. Workshop participants identified a number of 'non-engineering' solutions such as improved signage, reduced speed limits, redirection of traffic through traffic apps, etc. as possible elements of incremental solutions.

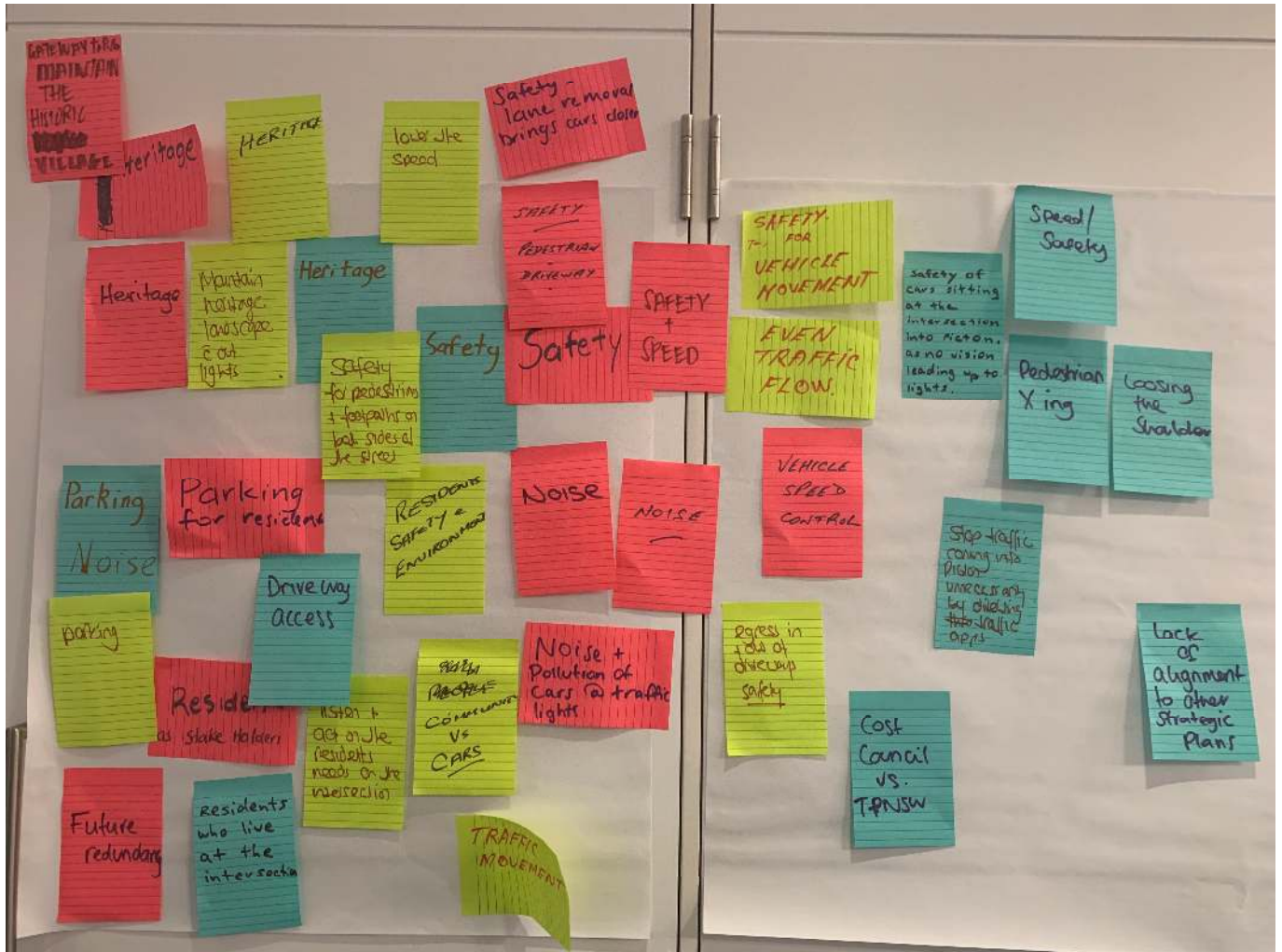
The steps suggested by residents and confirmed through a later discussion with members of the STOP group included:

- Fast track the construction of the Picton Bypass
- Instal traffic lights at the Picton and Menangle Road intersection rather than at Prince Street (to create traffic intervals)
- Reduce the speed limit on Menangle Street to 50 km/h
- Reduce the speed limit on Prince Street to 30 km/h and install a speed camera
- Create a designated left and right hand turn lane and signage on the eastern end of Prince Street for access into Menangle Street (may involve acquisition of some of Station Master property)
- Fix and add more visible and effective 'no truck' signage on Prince Street including at intersection with Prince Street
- Work with Google and others to create a 'virtual bypass' to redirect through traffic and truck traffic to alternative routes.

3.2 Community Interests

Workshop participants were asked to identify community interests and answer the question ‘what is important to you?’. This was conducted as a post it note activity (sample from one of the workshops shown below) and discussion.

Figure 2: Workshop Activity – What is important to you



The common themes to emerge from this activity across all three workshops were:

- **Heritage** – the importance of protecting the heritage of the precinct was a common concern. Specific comments included:

- ‘Gateway to Picton – maintain the historic village’
- ‘Maintain the heritage landscape without lights’

Discussion also emphasised that heritage was multi-faceted. It related to both visual impact (with traffic lights considered to detract from heritage value) and physical impact (concern that vibrations may impact older houses) on buildings as well as the streetscape, the guttering and overall environment of the precinct. As noted in the comment above, many people also highlighted the significance of the Prince and Menangle Streets intersection as a gateway to Picton and an important marker of entry into a historic township.

- **Safety** – this was also considered to be multi-faceted and critical issue. Two key safety issues raised included:

- The potential safety risk created by any option that removed or reduced the current shoulder lane on Menangle Street. Due to narrow driveways, and the inability for many people to turn their vehicles around within their property, many residents have to reverse out of their driveways. This practice relies on the shoulder lane to be done safely. Loss of the lane will mean residents would have to reverse out directly into a traffic lane, creating a safety hazard. Another resident access and egress concern was the safety and legality of residents on the eastern side of Menangle Street entering and leaving their driveways.

- The possible risk created by cars queueing at the Prince Street intersection (if lights were installed) when travelling north on Menangle Street. As the approach to the intersection from the south involves a significant crest in the road, it was thought that queueing cars would not be visible to cars travelling north until they had crested the rise in the roadway. It was thought this would provide limited time for those vehicles to safely stop and would create a road safety hazard.
- Other safety issues raised include safety for pedestrians, lack of footpaths, speed of traffic (with residents requesting reduction of the speed limit on Menangle Street to 50km/h) and general safety of vehicle movements.
- **Noise, pollution and amenity impacts** – community concerns were raised about noise and air pollution impacts of any proposed changes that required vehicles, and especially trucks, to stop at the intersection more frequently. This was thought to increase both noise and air quality impacts for surrounding residents and businesses. Any options that involved removal of the shoulder lane were also of concern as this was thought to remove any buffer or distance between the traffic and residences.
- **Parking** – The potential for the loss of on-street parking was identified as being important to residents and businesses in the area.
- **Community engagement** – residents felt strongly about the importance of community engagement and for their concerns to be listened to, acknowledged, and acted upon as much as possible.
- **Sensible use of funds** – participants felt that the solutions proposed to date did not represent a good use of Council funds. The discussion on this issue focused on the use of more conservative treatments first to see if improvements could be made before committing to what were considered to be more impactful treatments.

4 Written Submissions

Council invited residents and other interested stakeholders who were unable to attend any of the workshop sessions to provide written submissions and comments through Council's web site. A total of nine submissions were received. The key issues reflected much of what was raised in the workshop process and included:

- Suggestion to reduce speed limit on Menangle Road to 50km/h
- Opposition to installation of traffic signals with specific concerns including:
 - Loss of on street parking
 - Difficulties with residents accessing driveways
 - Detrimental impact on heritage character.
- Suggestion to promote alternative routes to Thirlmere and Tahmoor through working with Google
- Support for lobbying to accelerate the Picton Bypass project.

5 Options

The following six options were identified for further analysis and possible modelling at the workshops conducted in May 2022. As explained during the workshops, any option will require discussion and confirmation with Transport for NSW prior to further modelling being undertaken.

Table 2: Options Identified in May 2022 Workshops

Option	Description	Considerations
Do nothing	<p>Completion of new modelling which includes new traffic counts to capture any post-COVID changes and is also updated to incorporate the most recent understanding of likely future developments (noting that previous modelling was thought to include four local developments that have since been withdrawn).</p> <p>The revised base model will be reflective of 2022 conditions. The future year scenario will be reflective of forecast 2026 conditions (based on the future land use assumptions).</p> <p>This option would also include modelling the completion of the Picton Bypass with an assumed timeline for operation of 2031.</p>	<p>To be discussed with TfNSW including availability of data and agreed methodology for modelling Picton Bypass.</p> <p>If modelling shows that the intersection may fail prior to 2031 but may then operate reasonably once bypass is complete, can interim or temporary measures be introduced in the intervening period.</p>
Do nothing plus virtual bypass	Re-routing of visitor and worker through traffic through navigation apps.	Assumptions will need to be made on what level of traffic reduction could be modelled with this option. It was suggested in workshops that a 20% reduction in peak hour traffic may be assumed.
Signalisation at Picton Road and Menangle Road	<p>Signalisation of this intersection was identified as it was thought it may provide suitable 'breaks' in traffic along Picton Road to better enable right turns from Prince Street into Picton Road.</p> <p>Suggestion that this could be accompanied with a reduction in speed limit from 60 to 50km/h for the portion of Picton Road approaching Prince Street.</p>	For discussion with TfNSW
One way options	<p>Examination of two possible one way options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One way in westerly direction (avoiding right hand turn at Prince and Menangle) – Two directional one way street that would change direction with AM/PM peak periods. 	For discussion with TfNSW
Elliptical roundabout	Using new traffic modelling including new inputs described in option 1 to test effectiveness of roundabout that covers both Prince and Station Streets on Menangle Street.	Note this option did not receive widespread community support and has the potential to be divisive.
Signalisation	<p>Modifications to the existing signalisation option to address key community concerns. These suggested modifications included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Maintain shoulder on both sides to maintain distance between residences and traffic and to enable resident 	This option was not supported by participants in the workshops although the discussion did cover community suggestions to improve the signalisation option.

Option	Description	Considerations
	<p>to access and egress driveways safely as well as to park on street</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduce the width of the painted median to provide more space at sides – Minimise loss of on-street parking – Create footpath on eastern side of Menangle Street – Reduce speed on approach and install signage for vehicles approaching from south on Menangle Street due to crest of road creating potential hazard with cars queuing at lights. 	<p>Suggestion also made if lights could only operate during peak times and about low noise options (i.e. no crossing warning sounds for pedestrians)</p>

Other options that could be considered and potentially ‘packaged up’ with other options included:

- Temporary traffic lights
- Traffic lights that only operated during peak times
- Stop/go traffic control using traffic controllers at peak times
- Speed cameras
- A variety of signage including ‘local traffic only’ and ‘no left turn for trucks on Prince Street’
- Traffic calming on Menangle Street.

6 Additional modelling outcomes

Based on the feedback received during the engagement process, the following activities were undertaken

- New traffic counts were undertaken during the second half of 2022. These counts were done to provide updated figures for the traffic modelling that would reflect any changes in traffic that have occurred since COVID
- Development assumptions were updated to be included in the model. This was based on the most up to date development applications and were revised to remove developments that had previously been included but had not proceeded
- The inclusion of assumptions about the impact on local traffic of the Picton Bypass. This information was provided by Transport for NSW.

As a result of these activities it was found that:

- The updated 2022 traffic counts were essentially the same as those undertaken in 2016 (for the Picton Town Centre Transport Plan) suggesting that anticipated growth in traffic from 2016 to 2022 had not occurred
- Additional traffic generated from forecast development would not occur at the same rate as had been modelled in 2016
- The Picton Bypass would have an impact on local traffic in the Picton Town Centre.

Based on these results, the additional modelling has indicated that:

- The Prince and Menangle Streets intersection will operate satisfactorily without any requirement for improvements to 2026
- With the introduction of the Picton Bypass the intersection will operate satisfactorily without any requirements for improvements to 2036
- Without the Picton Bypass it is forecast that the Prince and Menangle Streets intersection will fail to operate satisfactorily from 2031.

6.1 Other changes

Some smaller changes suggested in the workshop process have been implemented. These include:

- Improved signage on Prince Street regarding the height limitations of the Victoria Bridge
- Changes to Google Maps navigation tool to redirect traffic travelling to Thirlmere and Tahmoor away from Prince Street (this occurred as a result of Council staff meeting with Google)
- Reduction of the speed limit on Menangle Street to 50 km/h.

7 Next Steps

The key traffic management outcomes of this project are:

- An upgrade to the Prince and Menangle Street intersection is not required at this time
- There is a need to continue to monitor town centre traffic with regular traffic counts undertaken
- Traffic models require regular updating
- Council should continue to work with Transport for NSW on the Picton Bypass.

From a community engagement perspective, it is recommended that:

- Council report back to community members on the outcomes of the engagement process
- For Council to determine the most appropriate form for that reporting back with the options being:
 - Convene a community meeting to brief interested stakeholders
 - Provide an email update to the project consultation database that includes all workshop attendees and others who expressed an interest
 - Provide an update on the project's web page on Council's website.