

7. The Next Steps

7.1 Oxley Highway to Kempsey Upgrade

Following the announcement of the preferred route for the Oxley Highway to Kempsey project the RTA will submit the concept design of the Preferred Route to the Department of Planning for approval under Part 3A of the EP&A Act.

Further survey, geotechnical, ecological and other investigations would also be undertaken to provide input into the refinement of the design and environmental assessment.

The level or scope of environmental assessment required for a proposal under Part 3A would be determined by the Director-General of Planning, who issues the environmental assessment requirements after consultation with relevant public authorities and local Councils. The environmental assessment may include a statement of commitments in respect of environmental management and mitigation measures proposed to be undertaken if the project is approved.

When completed, the environmental assessment would be publicly exhibited and submissions would be sought. The RTA may be asked to prepare a report on the submissions and revise its statement of commitments. It would also consider modifications to the project to minimise environmental impacts. The Department of Planning may request the RTA to display, for public information, a preferred project report, which identifies the proposed modifications.

The Department of Planning would consider the environmental assessment, the public submissions and any report requested from the RTA in recommending to the Minister for Planning whether the project should be approved.

Figure 7.1 shows where we are in the development of the project.

Figure 7-1 Option Development Process and the Next Steps

