

Braidwood Community Association (BCA)

Comments on the QPRC Draft Integrated Transport Strategy

Summary and main conclusions

The BCA welcomes the process to develop a modern Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) reflecting the need to have sustainable transport options which meet the needs of QPRC residents. The BCA welcomes and in general supports the thrust of the draft ITS report.

The consideration of a future bypass for Braidwood is the number one priority for the BCA with regard to the proposed actions in the ITS. Not only should it be identified as a “HIGH” priority in Table 26 (p99), but the action should be extended beyond just establishing a corridor

The BCA believes there needs to be community consultation undertaken as soon as possible on the need for and support for a bypass. Route options should be considered and a preferred route should be identified. We appreciate this may be an iterative process in determining the preferred route options. If support for a bypass and a single route are confirmed, it will be necessary to then gazette this route and progress to a ‘grant application ready’ status as a matter of urgency. There needs to be a model developed for the required multi-level government infrastructure funding that will adequately resource the project, ideally with the next election cycle in mind for such commitments.

The BCA understands that the Braidwood & Villages Business Chamber committee is also of the view that consideration of a future bypass should be the number one priority to be pursued under the ITS for Braidwood.

The BCA’s second highest priority is a safe footpath on the bridge across the Monkittee Creek

The implementation of the Braidwood Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan is the BCA’s third highest priority. We urge QPRC to follow up this plan with funding to implement the actions identified.

The BCA makes a number of general comments on the ITS and also specific comments on the Wallace Street/ Lascelles Street intersection (Kings Highway); the local area traffic management study; public transport; parking and rural roads.

About the Braidwood Community Association

The BCA was created in July 2018. Following the amalgamation of the former Palerang Council with Queanbeyan City Council, our community had no direct voice on the QPRC Council. We had no existing organisation to represent the whole community, so we came together to create one.

Our aim is to provide a voice for residents of Braidwood and surrounding areas. Our meetings are open to all, and we are setting up communication links to enable participation by as many local residents and organisations as possible. We currently have over 70 financial members and growing, and a contact group of about 120 people. Our monthly meetings are attended by 25-30

people and we have a representative Committee of 12 residents, who meet monthly to guide the process of establishing our role as community representatives.

We are also working with other community groups to create productive, supportive links. The BCA has already set up constructive links with a number of QPRC staff. In particular, we have an excellent relationship with the Urban Landscapes team. We have worked together towards the creation of a new children's playground in North Rylie Park, and this partnership has been a very positive learning experience.

This submission was prepared by a volunteer group of eight members of the BCA and approved by the BCA committee. There has been insufficient time to consult more broadly with the BCA membership.

Further detail on the aims, activity and structure of the BCA is provided in Annex 1.

General Comments

With Braidwood located around one hour's drive from any larger towns (Queanbeyan, Goulburn and Bateman Bay) it is essential that there are good transport systems in place if the residents of Braidwood and surrounding areas are to have fast and efficient access to supplies of goods and services, and safe, high quality road connections for all residents.

The BCA therefore welcomes the process to develop a modern Integrated Transport Strategy aimed at creating and maintaining sustainable transport systems which meet the needs of residents. The BCA supports the general thrust of the draft ITS report.

The BCA notes that the focus of the report is mainly on Queanbeyan, reflecting the population concentration in QPRC, with Braidwood, Bungendore and surrounding villages dealt with almost as side issues. If the distance of roads under the responsibility of QPRC was taken as the driving factor, then rural areas would be more prominent in the report (unsealed roads account for 763km or 49 per cent of the total of 1,600 km of roads throughout QPRC).

The BCA notes that the ITS is a high-level strategy document and as such is largely aspirational. It is necessary for QPRC to follow up this report with operational plans and moreover the funding to implement the actions identified in the ITS.

The report identifies the NSW Government's intention to establish Canberra as one of the three Global Gateway Cities (together with Sydney and Newcastle) which will serve the South East Coast. The report also identifies the Kings Highway as a secondary freight route and acknowledges increased pressure on this route as a result. The Kings Highway, as the report acknowledges, passes through the centre of Braidwood. Concerns are expressed in the report regarding the volumes of heavy vehicles currently using this route, and the traffic congestion, pedestrian access and safety concerns already affecting the main street of Braidwood.

When considering the impacts of traffic on Braidwood, it is important to also recognise that it was the first town in NSW to be Heritage Listed. There are numerous significant heritage buildings on Wallace St / Kings Highway, which were not built to withstand large trucks and high volumes of holiday traffic. Heritage considerations also need to be taken into account in considering the route of any possible bypass (Heritage extends to protected views from the town) and the detailed implementation of the proposed path network.

The BCA notes that the report is quite data poor for some key indicators. What limited data is presented on traffic volumes relates to averages (eg Figure 9, p12 & p90), when an important issue is the extreme peak volumes through Braidwood's CBD, during most weekends (outside winter) and holiday periods. This is recognised on p12 with the statement "*There is increased demand and congestion in the strategic road network during peak seasonal demands and holiday periods (e.g., Kings Highway, Monaro Highway).*" But no action appears to be proposed to explicitly address this.

There is also no longitudinal data on traffic volume, nor separation between freight and car traffic to see where and in what mode the increases are occurring.

Finally, there is no inventory of the stock of transport infrastructure which QPRC is responsible for (eg distance of each road hierarchy class, including rural roads, bridges etc in total and by location). The only reference to the total roads infrastructure on the QPRC website appears to be a brief reference on the [Road Maintenance Home Page](#).

The BCA believes the strategy would benefit from the addition of annexes giving longitudinal data on average and peak traffic data by freight and car modes of transport for all centres and an inventory of the stock of transport infrastructure which QPRC is responsible for, such as the distance of each road hierarchy class, including rural roads, bridges etc in total and by location.

BCA Priority One: Planning for a Bypass for Braidwood

The consideration of a future bypass for Braidwood is the number one priority for the BCA with regard to the proposed actions in the ITS.

Table 20 (p60) on **Freight** (Main issues of concern and Proposed strategic responses) rightly identifies "*Trucks through Braidwood...*" as an issue. It proposes to "*Establish corridors for future bypasses of Braidwood ...*". This is repeated in Table 23 (p75) and Table 26 (p99), where it is given only "MEDIUM" priority. We note with some disappointment that most of the HIGH priority actions relate to Queanbeyan.

A further issue noted in Table 1 "Main issues of Concern" is "*Traffic congestion, access and safety on the main streets of Braidwood and Bungendore*". (pIII).

As a proposed strategic response, it is noted that "*A Kings Highway route strategy is being prepared by RMS.*" There are no details or time frames for this response.

The Monitoring and Review Plan (p108) includes "*Nominate bypasses for both Braidwood and Bungendore to be included within the structure plans. The location of industrial lands should be considered when investigating a bypass location.*"

The BCA believes that consultation and research for a Braidwood Bypass should be identified as a "HIGH" priority in Table 26 (p99). Further, the action should be extended beyond just "establishing a corridor". During this process, there should be consultation with the community on the need for and support for a bypass and to identify a preferred route. We appreciate this may be an iterative process in determining the route options.

If support for a bypass and a single route is confirmed, to then gazette this route and progress to a 'grant application ready' status is a matter of urgency. There needs to be put in place relevant multi-level government infrastructure funding to adequately resource the project, ideally with the next election cycle in mind for such commitments.

The BCA understands that the committee of the newly established Braidwood & Villages Business Chamber (BVBC) has also identified the "Braidwood Bypass" as the highest priority project to be pursued under this ITS.

This underlines that both committees of the BCA and the BVBC see consultation on the merits and the route of a bypass through Braidwood as their priority action under the ITS (Note: these are the respective Committees' views, as there has been insufficient time to consult with the broader constituencies).

Arguments in favour of this elevation to HIGH priority include:

- Increasing traffic volumes and specifically truck (notably B-doubles) and articulated vehicles (caravans and boat trailer) are having a significant impact on all those using the roads in terms of safety, convenience, comfort, noise and general well-being. This includes pedestrian traffic in Braidwood. See Annex 2 for photos taken on the corner of Wallace and Lascelles Streets over a 4 minute period on Friday 12 April 2019. This will only increase further with the commencement of operations at Dargues gold mine at Majors Creek;
- Braidwood is a Heritage town with many important heritage-listed buildings fronting the single main street, Wallace St/Kings Highway. These buildings were not constructed to withstand the impact of heavy freight trucks and high volumes of holiday traffic now using this route;
- A potential Braidwood Bypass is a recurrent issue which keeps rising to the surface. As early as 1999 there was consideration of a bypass (in the then Tallaganda Shire Council Community and Social Plan for 1999/00 to 2003/04). It is time to make a definitive decision one way or the other;
- New residences are beginning to be built all around the town. Residential development happening now and in the future will only make it harder and more expensive to establish a route. People also need to know now if a future purchase or sale might be affected by a bypass; and
- It is understood the overall process from identifying the opportunity/need for a bypass to the point that it is completed and ready to carry traffic can take many years.

For all these reasons the BCA sees the need to begin consultation on a Braidwood Bypass as a matter of urgency.

While the BCA is not formally supporting a Braidwood Bypass at this stage of examination, it recognises that there are a number of positive arguments in favour of this proposal. The removal of heavy vehicles and other traffic that does not need to stop in Braidwood would result in:

- Significantly improved public amenity in the town streets;
- Improved health and safety of the local community, including psychological health – older residents in particular find crossing Wallace Street a challenge;

- Significant reduction of wear and tear and, hence, need for year on year expenditure on road maintenance by QPRC of Braidwood's streets;
- Significant enhancement of Braidwood as a welcoming environment for friends and families of locals and for visitors, so that it can realise its potential of being a 'tourism jewel' in the QPRC region and become 'a destination' and not somewhere to pass through; and.
- Opportunities for further beautification of the town, which may not be compatible with high traffic volumes.

The BCA recognises that the determination of a route will not be easy given Braidwood's heritage extends to protected views from the town. Further it is not just an issue of the Kings Highway bypassing Braidwood as many of the heavy trucks use other routes which converge on Braidwood.

BCA Priority Two: Monkittee Creek Bridge

A safer footpath on the bridge across Monkittee Creek is the BCA's second highest priority action in the ITS.

The Creek at the entrance to Braidwood is known locally as Monkittee Creek, yet it appears to be identified as Gillamatong Creek in the ITS. Currently there is a dangerous pedestrian footpath across the bridge at this location.

The ITS includes among "other road works or studies that are currently being undertaken" - "Construct kerb and extend paved area on western side of bridge over Gillamatong Creek [known as Monkittee Creek locally] and consider the need and options for future widening of the bridge" "and "consider a pedestrian path crossing Monkittee Bridge" (p67)

In Fig 45 (Action Table showing priorities for roads and intersections), the bridge over this creek receives HIGH priority for "Construct kerb and extend paved area on western side of bridge and consider for further widening of the bridge" (p95).

Local residents note that the footpath on the bridge across Monkittee Creek is in dire need of attention. There is no barrier between the path and the Kings Highway, which then becomes Wallace St. It is dangerous and distressing to use. School children will use an informal and totally inadequate creek crossing at the side of the council storage area (Ryrie Street extension) rather than use the bridge crossing because it is dangerous and inadequate. Mothers with prams and elderly people find it daunting, especially when trucks are crossing the bridge. This is a matter of user safety and requires urgent priority.

The BCA requests that the action proposed be elevated from "consider a pedestrian path across Monkittee Bridge" to "create a safe pedestrian path across Monkittee Bridge", and that this be given HIGH priority status.

BCA Priority Three: Braidwood Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan

The implementation of the Braidwood Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan is the BCA's third highest priority action in the ITS

The draft Braidwood Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan is welcomed by the BCA as reflecting the concerns expressed at earlier stages of consultation. These concerns continue and are increasing as the population of Braidwood has expanded. Developments such as Summerfield Seniors Accommodation and an expanded residential care facility at the Braidwood MPS are impacting on the need for an improved footpath network to and from the retail and commercial centre of Braidwood.

It is necessary for QPRC to follow up this plan with the funding to implement the actions identified.

The BCA believes there is a need for further consultation on the detail of the positioning of the footpaths and to ensure any possible heritage issues are fully resolved. We note that pedestrian traffic to and from the schools using Park Lane, in addition to existing congestion especially next to the library and St Bede's school, may require Park Lane to become a one-way system. This may in turn raise issues regarding the Fire Station in Park Lane.

The BCA believes that regarding the proposed Refuge Islands (p40), a refuge island for Elrington St should receive a higher priority than Monkitee St. Both should be "MEDIUM" priority, not "HIGH".

It should be noted that in March 2016 community members were prepared to apply for a grant for a footpath along Coronation Avenue to the Braidwood Servicemen's Club with local businesses ready to assist by providing materials. This initiative did not go ahead.

The BCA has identified other issues of concern. These include:

Wallace Street/ Lascelles Street intersection (Kings Highway)

The draft ITS proposes to "*Undertake study to review options to improve safety*" (Figure 45: Action table showing priorities for roads and intersections, p97).

This is a peculiar intersection with a main highway intersecting with minor local routes. The current line markings and signage are totally inadequate. There is significant confusion, with users unsure as to who has right of way and the BCA believes urgent action is required.

A short-term low-cost action would be to improve signage and road markings to make clear who has right of way and who is to proceed. Local residents entering this intersection have to second-guess the behaviour of traffic coming from the east, and trucks coming from the south.

Local area traffic management study

Traffic calming action resulting from the "... *local area traffic management study of smaller roads which act as shortcuts around the town to the highway (Elrington Street, Monkitee Street and Little River)* [should this be Wilson St?], *impacting the amenity of schools, hospital, homes and residential care facilities, and consider a pedestrian path crossing Monkitee Bridge.*" (p67) and Figure 45 (p96).

The BCA believes this is an important action to be taken prior to a possible bypass. This is needed not only to address the numerous 'rat runners' during extreme peak traffic periods, but also because of the presence of young children and mothers at the pre-school in Wilson St.

The BCA also suggests that consideration be given to the inclusion of McKellar St in any proposed traffic calming measures as this is another route used by ‘rat runners’ to avoid the traffic in Wallace St.

Public Transport

Table 16 (p58) on Public Transport main issues and strategic responses rightly identifies the “*Lack of [public transport] services to Braidwood ...*” as an issue. However, there is no proposed strategic response.

The BCA is disappointed that QPRC is not proposing any strategic response. There is no community bus for Braidwood residents, so access to larger towns from Braidwood depends on private transport, limited and relatively expensive private bus services, or a limited service from the hospital for medical appointments. Compared to the examination of the intricate details of public transport for Queanbeyan residents in the ITS, the complete absence of any plans to consider providing or supporting public transport for Braidwood is extremely disappointing.

Parking

Regarding parking the ITS proposes action to “*Review parking supply and demand and restrictions in other key centres in Queanbeyan, Braidwood and Bungendore.*” (Table 19: Parking main issues and strategic responses, p59) and gives it a HIGH priority (Table 25: Priorities for car parking management actions, p98).

For Braidwood a key parking matter relates to trucks and vehicles towing caravans and boats that often park parallel to kerb occupying 3 or 4 car spaces along the main street. Although not illegal, it is frustrating to locals and visitors who also wish to park for access to shops. This could be addressed by establishing designated parking for long vehicles and then providing appropriate signage to direct relevant visitors to this parking.

There has been some discussion about providing parking in Council’s Depot on the lane off Duncan St and providing an access link to D&S Motors, which has recently been purchased by the Council. The BCA supports the concept of providing more parking using the Depot, but would like to be fully engaged in any consultation on the future use of the D&S site.

Rural Roads

Unsealed roads make up 49% of the total road network in the QPRC region.

The ITS identifies the issue of “*Maintenance of gravel roads*” as the last item in Table 1 - Road network main issues and strategic responses (pIV). The only relevant proposed strategic response is “*Develop program for maintenance of Council roads*” This is repeated in Table 18 on p59.

If this is the response to the issue of gravel roads, then the BCA is confused by this, since there is already a [QPRC unsealed road maintenance - grading](#) policy adopted on 27 June 2018 and due to be reviewed in June 2019.

Regarding this policy, it establishes the minimum grading frequency for roads based on the amount of traffic that travels the road each day (Average Annual Daily Traffic - AADT). It is unclear how regularly the AADT data is updated and whether the AADT takes into account

different types of traffic, as heavy freight trucks have a much larger impact on the roads' wear and tear. If not it should do.

The quality of grading is also important. This should include grading, rolling and cleaning out the earth drainage cuts and not just one of these activities.

Moreover, the policy is silent on how to deal with roads which are considered unsafe, when the specified grading frequency has not been reached (such as due to exceptional wear and tear by logging trucks when there is local forestry harvesting, or where a road has been washed out by extreme weather events). How such situations are dealt with should be made explicit in the policy.

The performance indicator for this policy is the "*Length of road graded in a 12 month period*". While this has the advantage of being a simple indicator, it does not relate to the actual policy of reaching the minimum grading frequency for roads based on the AADT. In this respect, it should be noted that some local residents have questioned whether the grading frequency targets are being met. Therefore, a more appropriate performance indicator would be the weighted average percentage of roads meeting the minimum grading frequency. For the future, the BCA believes that, as a starting point of any future reviews of such services, there should be a commitment to no reductions in the length of roads graded under Council responsibility, only to an enhancement.

Further to the point made above about the lack of an inventory of the stock of transport infrastructure which QPRC is responsible for, this policy simply states "*Council maintains a significant length of unsealed roads*" (which is apparently 763km or 49 per cent of all roads under QPRC's responsibility). It should specify the distances maintained under each of the 9 categories. Ideally for transparency, there should also be a schedule indicating when each road is next due to be graded. The policy also appears to be silent on the issues of replacing the remaining single lane bridges and sealing gravel roads. Even if these are financially problematical issues for QPRC, the ITS should still identify the issues and state an explicit policy.

It has been suggested that consideration be given to sealing the Cooma Road from Braidwood as an alternative route to the snow country.

Detailed drafting points

There are a number of detailed 'nit-picking' observations that can be made which may help improve the robustness of the final report. These are given in Annex 3.

Submitted by Sue Murray

BCA President

On behalf of the Braidwood Community Association

15 April 2019

Braidwood Community Association

1. Introduction

The Braidwood Community Association (BCA) was formed on 25 July 2018 at a public meeting. It began as an initiative of Sue Murray who called a public meeting on 17 May 2018, which led to the formation of a working group which made recommendations on how the BCA should be structured. The BCA is still in the process of fully being established and is yet to become an incorporated organisation and develop a website. It holds monthly public meetings and has an elected committee which also meets monthly.

2. Aims

i. Object

To promote and develop Braidwood and its surrounding areas, with the view to further enhance the well-being and sustainability of its community.

ii. Objectives

- a. Provide a forum to discuss issues affecting the Braidwood community and the development of collaborative strategies to address these challenges;
- b. Promote broader understanding of these issues;
- c. Reflect the interests of the Braidwood community to all levels of government;
- d. Help strengthen local community capacity through networking and supporting activities of other community organisations in the Braidwood and its surrounding areas; and
- e. Assist in activities that will help enhance the natural and built environment of Braidwood and its surrounding areas, including the provision of community facilities.

iii. Guiding Principles

- a. Inclusive organisation which treats everyone's views with respect and politeness and seeks to bring residents together in a harmonious way;
- b. Seeks to utilise the diversity of Braidwood as a strength; and
- c. Have a focus on consensus. The Association will facilitate and broker respectful discussion on issues with the intention of developing a better understanding of all sides and if possible building a broad consensus of community opinion. Where there is no consensus, the Association will not take a position.

3. Activities

- i.* Hold regular meetings and forums to discuss issues;
- ii.* Networking and supporting activities of other community organisations;
- iii.* Communications to the community (eg website, Facebook page, calendar, newsletter, community notice boards, where these are not already available); and
- iv.* Representation to all levels of government, both in response to government policy and activity and on any proactive Braidwood community initiatives.

4. Other issues

i. Geographical coverage

Braidwood and surrounding areas. How it relates to other community associations adjoining Braidwood on issues of common interest will be developed on a 'learning by doing' basis.

ii. Membership structure

Individuals who are a full or part-time resident of Braidwood and its surrounding areas. It will not be an association of associations, but will have an important networking and supporting role between associations.

**Photos taken on the corner of Wallace and Lascelles Streets, Braidwood
between 11.23am-11.27am on Friday 12 April 2019**



‘Nit-picking’ observations on the draft

- Issues reported as being raised in previous consultation in section 2.6.2 appear to repeat the same points in bullet points 1, 12 and 15 (Note: typo on bullet point 12 it is “*Coronation Avenue*”, not “*Coronation Street*”?)
- Should the reference to “*Gillamatong*” Creek be to “*Monkittee*” Creek (first dash point under “*Braidwood*” bullet point on p67 and Figure 45: Action table showing priorities for roads and intersections, p96)?
- If the previous point is correct, then the statement “*and consider a pedestrian path crossing Monkittee Bridge*” (second dash point under “*Braidwood*” bullet point on p67) is a duplication.
- Should the reference to “*Little River*” (second dash point under “*Braidwood*” bullet point on p67) be to “*Wilson St*”?
- The section on Bungendore & Braidwood Active Travel Context (p90) using a singular text seems to be written about Bungendore and assumes the same applies to Braidwood. Suggest a redraft by QPRC staff.
- Data for Braidwood Footpaths in Table 28, P107 differs from the same data in the Braidwood Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan (Table 5, p39). Which is correct?