



Australian Government
National Capital Authority

Community Engagement Report

Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Renewal Project

Community engagement for the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge
renewal project

30 May 2023

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Introduction

Under the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*, the National Capital Authority (NCA) prepares and administers the National Capital Plan (the Plan) to ensure Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.

The Plan sets out the broad planning framework for the Australian Capital Territory. Areas designated as having special characteristics of the National Capital are subject to detailed planning policies and guidelines.

Community Engagement

Commitment to community engagement

The National Capital Authority's (NCA) 'Commitment to Community Engagement' details how the NCA conducts consultation. For the NCA, community engagement involves proactive approaches to the broad Australian community to:

- keep people informed about decisions which have already been made or will be made and/or
- offer people opportunities for input to the NCA's thinking and decision-making processes.

Our role encompasses decisions about a very wide range of matters including long term planning and design outcomes, planning and supporting national and local events, protecting the environment, as well as consideration of specific development proposals and works within the National Capital.

Consultation for the project has been carried out since 2021.

Engagement Approach

Media activities to inform the community

Endeavouring to inform the public at the earliest possible time, the NCA has embarked on a continuing awareness campaign to inform key stakeholders and the community about the project by utilising various print and broadcast media.

We have distributed media releases, carried out media interviews across print, radio and TV, and have conducted roundtable discussions and on-site briefings for local media outlets. These media activities have garnered extensive coverage creating public awareness about the project. The below provides a summary of the various media activities:

- 28 January 2021; Infrastructure Magazine - \$137 million for Commonwealth Avenue Bridge upgrade
- 27 June 2022; 2CC Canberra - Bridge needs strengthening to make sure it can carry increased load in the next sixty years
- 27 June 2022; Multiple broadcasts via hourly news updates – the NCA has started the process for \$137M bridge strengthening project in 2CA Canberra
- 6 October 2022; WIN News Canberra - Commonwealth Avenue Bridge renewal project

- 7 October 2022; The Mandarin - Ball rolling on \$137 million Commonwealth Avenue Bridge upgrade
- 9 October 2022; Riotact - Much-needed Commonwealth Avenue Bridge upgrade a step closer
- 9 October 2022; 2CC Talking Canberra; Sunday Roast program - Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Renewal Project Director, talks about the gains and pains that the project will involve
- 12 October 2022; Canberra Weekly - Commonwealth Avenue Bridge to receive a facelift
- 12 April 2023; Canberra Times - National Capital Authority unveils early plans for \$137m Commonwealth Bridge upgrades
- 12 April 2023; Canberra Weekly - NCA unveils \$137 million Commonwealth Bridge plans
- 16 April 2023; 2CC Talking Canberra; Sunday Roast program - NCA Chief Executive interview.

The NCA has also conducted two media roundtable discussions to provide the community, through the media, an in-depth understanding of the project including the process the project needs to undergo before construction works can commence.

The abovementioned activities raised the profile of the project and generated public interest.

Social media

The NCA has utilised social media (e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn) to notify the community about the history of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and what the renewal of the bridge will entail. Social media posts have effectively provided a heads-up on the upcoming project and getting the conversations going in the public realm.

Our social media posts elicited mostly supportive reactions from the community and questions as to how the project will affect traffic, movement, and activities in the area, among others. Our social media team replied to public comments where warranted.

Community engagement activities

In addition to a media campaign, the NCA undertook several engagement activities to give community members and stakeholders an opportunity to understand the project better, meet the project team and provide feedback. The communication and engagement activities included:

- issuing a project update to 428 recipients who previously expressed interest and registered to be kept up to date about the project
- publishing a public notice on the project webpage detailing and inviting the public to attend one of the four face-to-face sessions (Attachment A)
- holding four community kiosk sessions, also known as 'pop-ups', to provide the public with an opportunity to speak to the project team face to face. The kiosk sessions were held at Queen Elizabeth Terrace near Commonwealth Place on 13 and 15 April and on the foreshore of Lake Burley Griffin at Barrine Drive on 14 and 16 April
- publishing an online survey enabling the public to provide feedback for the project (Attachment B). Members of the community can fill up in hard copy or access through a QR code. The survey drew interest, garnering 248 online views and 18 high-quality submissions. It remains open on the NCA website.

Engagement overview

Feedback received during the engagement period has helped us understand the community's views and concerns. The feedback received ranged from support for the project through to matters including:

- road congestion, construction traffic and disruption during construction
- pedestrian and cyclist safety during construction
- the proposal to remove the carpark near the Lake Burley Griffin foreshore at Barrine Drive
- the extent of the proposed upgrades to the path network surrounding the bridge
- how the project relates to light rail over Lake Burley Griffin
- cost of the project vis-à-vis other more essential public services.

All survey information received during the engagement period is provided at Attachment C.

Conclusion and what's next

The consultation process was carried out in accordance with the National Capital Authority's 'Commitment to Community Engagement'.

The NCA would like to thank everyone who provided feedback. Further, the NCA will consider all comments and, where merited, they will inform decisions during the refinement stage of the concept design.

Later this year we will display the concept design again as part of the NCA Works Approval process for public comment. Related and similar activities will be lined up to engage the public and hear what else they have to say.

Attachment A

Commonwealth Avenue Bridge renewal project webpage and Commonwealth Avenue Bridge renewal project feedback form.

Project Type
Infrastructure Renewal

Location Commonwealth Avenue Bridge

Construction Start Date 2023

Completion Date FY 2024-25

Budget \$157M

The Commonwealth Avenue Bridge we know today is actually the fourth bridge to cross the Molonglo River (pre-Lake Burley Griffin)

The first three bridges lasted an average of five years each. Today's bridge has lasted almost 60. Since construction, the Bridge hasn't undergone any major work. As one of two major crossings over the Lake, it is one of the busiest transport hubs in Canberra.

Maintaining this vital piece of infrastructure is of great importance and a responsibility that the National Capital Authority (NCA) takes very seriously. The proposed works will strengthen and widen the Bridge, increase its load bearing capacity to reflect current and forecast demands, and upgrade vehicle, pedestrian and cycleway paths and safety barriers.

Canberra is growing and our road infrastructure needs to keep up. The proposed improvements to the Bridge are essential to extend its life and to meet the current and future transport needs of our National Capital.

Public Engagement

From 13 April, NCA staff will be out and about around Lake Burley Griffin offering updated project information to the public in four face-to-face sessions.

- Thursday 13 April, 9-11am Commonwealth Place |
- Friday 14 April, 9-11am Barrine Drive |
- Saturday 15 April, 9-11am Commonwealth Place |
- Sunday 16 April, 9-11am Barrine Drive |

The sessions, which come prior to the formal submission of the project to the Parliamentary Work Committee in May, will offer detail on plans to strengthen and widen the bridge, as well as significantly upgrade the landscaping in the area. While this is not part of a formal consultation, which will come later in the process, the NCA welcomes feedback at this stage of the project.

Attachment B

Commonwealth Avenue Bridge renewal project survey form.

Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Renewal



Are you aware of the proposed Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Renewal (CABR) project in Canberra?

Yes No

How often do you use Commonwealth Avenue Bridge

Never
 Rarely (Several times a year)
 Sometimes (Several times a month)
 Often (Once a week)
 Very Often (Several times a week)
 Always (Every day)

How do you primarily use the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge?

Vehicle commuter
 Pedestrian
 Cyclist
 Public transport user
 Visitor/tourist
 Other (please specify)
Select all that apply.

On a scale of 1-5, how supportive are you of the proposed CABR project?

1 2 3 4 5
(1 being not supportive at all, and 5 being very supportive)

What do you believe are the main benefits of the proposed CABR project for the Canberra community?

Extended bridge lifespan
 Increased load-bearing capacity
 Improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety
 Better connectivity between shared paths
 Enhanced urban design and access to Lake's foreshore
 Other (please specify)
Select all that apply.

What concerns, if any, do you have about the proposed CABR project?

Environmental impact
 Traffic disruptions during construction
 Cost of the project
 Impact on the bridge's cultural and heritage value
 Other (please specify)
Select all that apply.

Do you have any suggestions or alternative solutions that you believe should be considered in addition to, or instead of, the proposed CABR project?

In your opinion, which aspects of the CABR project should be prioritised?

Ensuring minimal environmental impact
 Preserving cultural and heritage value
 Maximising safety improvements
 Minimising traffic disruptions during construction
 Improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists
 Other (please specify)
Select up to 3.

Please provide any additional comments or concerns you have about the proposed CABR project in Canberra.

Attachment C

Summary of responses received to the survey form.

Feedback form no.	What do you believe are the main benefits of the proposed CABR project for the Canberra community? And do you have any suggestions or alternative solutions that you believe should be considered in addition to, or instead of, the proposed CABR project?	What concerns, if any, do you have about the proposed CABR project? And what other concerns do you have about the CABR project?	In your opinion, which aspects of the CABR project should be prioritised? And which other aspects of CABR should be prioritised? And please provide any additional comments or concerns you have about the proposed CABR project in Canberra.
1	<p>Improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety enhanced urban design and access to Lake's foreshore.</p> <p>Please collaborate and build light rail into the project</p>	Light rail connection	The Light Rail project
2	<p>Extended bridge lifespan, increased load-bearing capacity, improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety.</p> <p>These public funds can be better spent on a number of essential services such as state funded childcare rebates, or teacher salaries or public hospitals</p>	Cost of the project	Cancel the CABR project unless it is a necessary safety issue
3	Extended bridge lifespan, increased load-bearing capacity, improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety	Environmental impact, and cost of the project.	Ensuring minimal environmental impact, maximising safety improvements, Improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Feedback form no.	What do you believe are the main benefits of the proposed CABR project for the Canberra community? And do you have any suggestions or alternative solutions that you believe should be considered in addition to, or instead of, the proposed CABR project?	What concerns, if any, do you have about the proposed CABR project? And what other concerns do you have about the CABR project?	In your opinion, which aspects of the CABR project should be prioritised? And which other aspects of CABR should be prioritised? And please provide any additional comments or concerns you have about the proposed CABR project in Canberra.
	<p>Reprioritise the central north -south transport corridor (Northbourne Ave, Commonwealth Ave, Adelaide Ave, and Yarra Glen) away from being a fast route for motorists; and instead towards being an activated urban boulevard with primary modes being cycling, walking, public transport. This change will support Transit Oriented Development along the current and future light rail corridor.</p> <p>Increased pedestrian and cycling space along the bridge and avenues will beautify the corridor, increase safety, and comfort, and reduce noise.</p> <p>Emphasise Tuggeranong Parkway and Monaro Highway/Majura Parkway as the main north-south vehicular traffic routes</p>	<p>Continued and increased motorist favouring bias in road space share, unwillingness to alter the status quo of street design</p>	<p>Reduce vehicle lanes and lane widths. Wind shelter for pedestrians and cyclists</p>
4	Improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety	Cost of the project	Improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Feedback form no.	What do you believe are the main benefits of the proposed CABR project for the Canberra community? And do you have any suggestions or alternative solutions that you believe should be considered in addition to, or instead of, the proposed CABR project?	What concerns, if any, do you have about the proposed CABR project? And what other concerns do you have about the CABR project?	In your opinion, which aspects of the CABR project should be prioritised? And which other aspects of CABR should be prioritised? And please provide any additional comments or concerns you have about the proposed CABR project in Canberra.
5	<p>Extended bridge lifespan, increased load-bearing capacity, improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety.</p> <p>While the widened Pedestrian/Cyclist path is good, I still concerned about collision between the faster moving cyclists and eScooters and the slower and less capable pedestrians. For example, small children suddenly walking into the path of the faster bikes and scooters. that will inevitably build up speed on the straight. There is a case for making the western side more attractive to the speedsters</p>	No response recorded	<p>There is no mention of elevators at each end of the bridge to allow wheelchair access to the bridge's shared pathway. The ramps could be used by the more energetic and younger members of the public who are wheelchair bound</p> <p>Maximising safety improvements, improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Glad to see provisioning rather than a government playing catchup on infrastructure</p>

Feedback form no.	What do you believe are the main benefits of the proposed CABR project for the Canberra community? And do you have any suggestions or alternative solutions that you believe should be considered in addition to, or instead of, the proposed CABR project?	What concerns, if any, do you have about the proposed CABR project? And what other concerns do you have about the CABR project?	In your opinion, which aspects of the CABR project should be prioritised? And which other aspects of CABR should be prioritised? And please provide any additional comments or concerns you have about the proposed CABR project in Canberra.
6	Extended bridge lifespan, increased load-bearing capacity, improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety	No response recorded	Ensuring minimal environmental cultural and heritage value, improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.
7	<p>Extended bridge lifespan, increased load-bearing capacity, improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety.</p> <p>Concerned that with all the works going on in that area it will be hard to get across the bridge - if there was available parking on the city side, we could park and walk - would be great to have suggestions on t6he best way to get across the bridge during peak hours</p>	Traffic disruptions during construction	<p>Maximising safety improvements, minimising traffic disruptions impact, preserving during construction.</p> <p>Thank you for your work on this major project</p>
8	<p>Improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety.</p> <p>Cyclist do not respect pedestrians and they need to be separated</p>	Separation of cyclist and pedestrians	

Feedback form no.	What do you believe are the main benefits of the proposed CABR project for the Canberra community? And do you have any suggestions or alternative solutions that you believe should be considered in addition to, or instead of, the proposed CABR project?	What concerns, if any, do you have about the proposed CABR project? And what other concerns do you have about the CABR project?	In your opinion, which aspects of the CABR project should be prioritised? And which other aspects of CABR should be prioritised? And please provide any additional comments or concerns you have about the proposed CABR project in Canberra.
9	Extended bridge lifespan, increased load-bearing capacity, improved vehicle, pedestrian and cycleway safety, better connectivity between shared paths, enhanced urban design and access to Lake's foreshore	Maximising safety improvements, improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists	
10	Improved vehicle, pedestrian, and cycleway safety. Ensure the detail of the cycling connectivity is right. Review the proposal in a broad context of walking and cycling in the area. Other recent projects on adjoining land are less than ideal.	Maximising safety improvements, minimising traffic disruptions during construction	Improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Consider a link for this feedback form to be located on the NCA general consultation web page and provide plans showing what is proposed

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