



12 Social effects

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12.1 Overview

This chapter provides an assessment of the social impacts (including benefits) on the Beaufort area arising from the future construction and operation of the project. The chapter has been informed by the impact assessment provided in EES Appendix J: *Social impact assessment*.

Drawing from the project scoping requirements (DELWP 2016), this assessment considers three main impact themes:

- **Displacement and severance** of residential households, land uses and community facilities and services and places of community significance, and resultant impacts on the local demographic profile and social cohesion.
- **Access and connectivity** impacts to access to community facilities, services, open space or places of community significance, and changes to the local environment such as visual impacts, noise and air quality that may modify behaviour in relation to access and connectivity.
- **Community wellbeing** with respect to protecting valued character, building trust and community satisfaction, and minimising community stress.

The social impact assessment also assessed culturally significant trees, which are trees not listed in Commonwealth or State indigenous and historic heritage registers, but which have importance or significance to the local community.

The social impacts associated with the development of a bypass vary and depend on a range of socio-economic factors, including the regional structure, community size and historical factors. For this EES, a social impact is a change to the existing situation that can be attributed directly or indirectly to the project. Impacts can include both adverse or beneficial changes to the community quality of life in terms of safety, access, visual amenity, local access, connectivity, environmental amenity (including air and noise emissions) and population changes due to the construction and operation of the project.

Amenity impacts from the project are detailed in EES Chapter 14: *Amenity* and EES Chapter 15: *Landscape and visual amenity*. Economic impacts on businesses are presented in EES Chapter 13: *Land use and economics*. Feedback from the community and stakeholders during the options assessment and EES process has provided insights into the community identity, values and goals and the perceived impacts and benefits of the project to inform the social impact assessment. The consultation process is further discussed in EES Chapter 7: *Community consultation and stakeholder engagement*.

This chapter identifies the management and mitigation measures to address potential social impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the project. Mitigation for the social impacts identified in this chapter focus heavily on early, consistent and transparent communication with affected stakeholders and communities.

12.2 EES objectives

The evaluation objective set in the scoping requirements relevant to the social and community assessment is:

Social and community: *To minimise and manage adverse effects on the well-being of the local community, including potential impacts on cohesion and severance of community access to services, facilities and infrastructure.*

This chapter discusses the key issues identified in the scoping requirements as relevant to social and community values outlined in Table 12.1 below.

Table 12.1 EES key issues – Social and community

Key issues
Potential social impacts from displacement of residences, existing land uses and impacts on businesses.
Variable (positive or adverse) effects from relevant alignment alternatives on community access to and within Beaufort, including severance/access to community facilities, services and infrastructure.
Impacts of relevant alignment alternatives on opportunities for the future growth and development of Beaufort.
Potential for inconsistency with existing strategic land use planning objectives, policies or plans.

Specific aspects to be addressed were also detailed in the scoping requirements. These are detailed in Table 12.2 below.

Table 12.2 EES requirements – Social and community

EES requirements
Priorities for characterising the existing environment
Identify and characterise impacts on residences and social and community environments that could result from each alternative.
Identify potential change to land use plans for Crown land or land occupied by community facilities and infrastructure within or adjacent to relevant alignment alternatives.
Describe local movement patterns of residents and farmers with respect to access to Beaufort Township and community facilities and services.
Design and mitigation measures
Identify the potential impacts on places of cultural significance which could be affected by alignment alternatives and identify potential and proposed design measures that avoid or mitigate impacts.
Identify potential and proposed design responses and other mitigation measures which could either reduce adverse effects or enhance opportunities for community access.
Consider and incorporate the Pyrenees Shire Council’s strategic planning objectives in the design where appropriate.
Seek to identify opportunities to improve community wellbeing.
Assessment of likely effects
Assess the potential for direct effects on community facilities or other assets and significant disruption patterns of community access or interaction.
Assess the wellbeing and community cohesion effects, with consideration of effects identified from other town bypass projects.
Assess the potential for indirect effects on community wellbeing through the loss of native vegetation and culturally significant trees.
Approach to manage performance
Identify proposed measures to manage residual effects on residents and farmers well-being, and impacts on infrastructure during project construction, as part of the Environmental Management Framework.

12.3 Legislation and policy

The relevant legislation and government policies related to social and community effects are outlined in Table 12.3.

Table 12.3 Relevant legislation and government policies

Legislation/policy	Description	Relevance to project
State		
<i>Transportation Integration Act 2010</i>	<p>The <i>Transport and Integration Act 2010</i> states that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the transport system should provide for the effective integration of transport and land use and facilitate access to social and economic opportunities</i> • <i>...transport and land use should be effectively integrated so as to improve accessibility and transport efficiency with a focus on maximising access to residences, employment, markets, services and recreation</i> • <i>the transport system should be safe and support health and wellbeing.</i> 	<p>The project is consistent with the <i>Transport Integration Act 2010</i> objectives as it would promote social and economic inclusion by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing accessibility and ease of movement supporting the commercial activities within the local area and the region • improving freight movement and efficiency resulting in commercial advantages to local industries and the local economy • reducing travel time barriers to local access • making the Western Highway safer for regional and local traffic • increasing safety for pedestrians and cyclist by reducing freight and through traffic travelling along the Beaufort town centre main street.
<i>Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986</i>	<p>The <i>Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986</i> outlines the process for the compulsory acquisition of freehold land by State Government for a public purpose, which can be either compulsory or by negotiation. The <i>Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986</i> also provides procedures for the determination of compensation.</p>	<p>The delivery of the project requires the acquisition of land which is currently not in the ownership of the Roads Corporation. The land subject to acquisition is identified in the Public Acquisition Overlay maps forming part of the draft Planning Scheme Amendment (EES Attachment VI: <i>Planning scheme amendment</i>). Any impacts associated with the acquisition of land will be managed through the compensation procedure outlined under the <i>Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986</i>.</p>

Legislation/policy	Description	Relevance to project
Local		
<i>Beaufort Township Framework Plan</i> (Pyrenees Shire Council 2017)	Pyrenees Shire Council is currently finalising the draft <i>Beaufort Township Framework Plan</i> as part of the Pyrenees Futures project. The plan will identify valued townships character and traits to inform directions for future planning to address land use, urban design and the function of town centres, and it is anticipated that it will be incorporated into the Pyrenees Planning Scheme.	The <i>Beaufort Township Framework Plan</i> will include a specific Town Centre Activation Plan to consider possible short-term improvements to help make the town bypass-ready.
Planning Policy Framework: Pyrenees Planning Scheme	The Planning Policy Framework is included in the planning scheme for all Victorian councils. It outlines aspects of state planning policy that councils, as local planning authorities, must consider in their respective areas.	
	Clause	Objectives
	Relevance to project	
Clause 13 (Environmental Risks and Amenity)	<p><i>Planning should strengthen the resilience and safety of communities by adopting a best practice environmental management and risk management approach.</i></p> <p><i>Planning should identify and manage the potential for the environment and environmental changes to impact on the economic, environmental or social wellbeing of society.</i></p>	The project would assist in strengthening community resilience and safety by removing heavy vehicles from the centre of Beaufort and adopting a best practice environmental management on the new alignment. The project will improve the amenity in the Beaufort town centre through reduced air and noise emissions.
Clause 15 (Built Environment and Heritage)	<p><i>Planning must support the establishment and maintenance of communities by delivering functional, accessible, safe and diverse physical and social environments, through the appropriate location of use and development and through high quality buildings and urban design.</i></p> <p><i>Planning should promote excellence in the built environment and create places that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>are enjoyable, engaging and comfortable to be in</i> <i>accommodate people of all abilities, ages and cultures</i> <i>contribute positively to local character and sense of place</i> <i>reflect the particular characteristics and cultural identity of the community</i> <i>enhance the function, amenity and safety of the public realm.</i> 	The project aims to identify, respect and preserve areas of community value, including places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

Legislation/policy	Description		Relevance to project
	Clause 17 (Economic Development)	<p><i>Planning is to provide for a strong and innovative economy, where all sectors are critical to economic prosperity.</i></p> <p><i>Planning is to contribute to the economic wellbeing of the state and foster economic growth by providing land, facilitating decisions and resolving land use conflicts, so that each region may build on its strengths and achieve its economic potential.</i></p>	The project aims to contribute to the economic wellbeing of the region and provide for a strong and innovative economy by improving access, and supporting infrastructure investment in regional Victoria.
	Clause 18 (Transport)	<p><i>Planning should ensure an integrated and sustainable transport system that provides access to social and economic opportunities, facilitates economic prosperity, contributes to environmental sustainability, coordinates reliable movements of people and goods, and is safe.</i></p>	<p>The project aims to provide a safe and sustainable transport system by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locating and designing new transport routes that aim to minimise impacts on the environment while optimising accessibility, safety, emergency access, service and amenity • achieving the greatest overall benefit to the community by locating and designing new transport routes that maximise the benefits of the existing social, cultural and economic infrastructure.
Municipal Strategic Statement: Pyrenees Planning Scheme	Clause 21.03 (Settlement, Built Environment and Heritage)	The aim of Clause 21.03 is to provide local context to support Clause 11 (Settlement), Clause 15 (Built Environment and Heritage), Clause 16 (Housing) and Clause 19 (Infrastructure) and specific policies on settlement, housing and heritage.	<p>Specific objectives relevant to the project are:</p> <p>Heritage (Clause 21.03-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to conserve and enhance individual places and precincts of cultural heritage significance in relation to 19th and 20th century settlement and associated development.
	Clause 21.06 (Local areas)	The objective of Clause 21.06 is to outline the general land use strategy for Beaufort, having regard to the preferred role and function and their potential for growth.	<p>Specific objectives relevant to the project are:</p> <p>21.06-1 Beaufort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to develop the town's role as a highway service centre.
<p><i>Beaufort Ward Community Action Plan</i> (Pyrenees Shire Council 2013)</p>	The <i>Beaufort Ward Community Action Plan</i> is a list of objectives and issues that a community puts together to create a catalogue of needs for their community.		The <i>Beaufort Ward Community Action Plan</i> recognises the impact of the ongoing Western Highway Duplication project on the Beaufort ward including acquisition of dwellings, and residential and agricultural land, and removal of flora and fauna.

Legislation/policy	Description	Relevance to project
<p><i>Pyrenees Shire Council Revised Council Plan 2017–2021</i> (Pyrenees Shire Council 2018)</p>	<p>The <i>Pyrenees Shire Council Revised Council Plan 2017–2021</i>, adopted by Council on 26 June 2018, identifies a strategic objective to maintain strategic partnerships, and participate with peak bodies for support.</p>	<p>The <i>Pyrenees Shire Council Revised Council Plan 2017–2021</i> seeks to enhance advocacy on key project such as the Beaufort Bypass.</p>
<p><i>Pyrenees Shire Council Healthy and Well Plan 2017–2021</i> (Pyrenees Shire Council 2017)</p>	<p>The <i>Healthy and Well Plan</i> assesses the health and wellbeing of Pyrenees Shire residents and established guidelines and initiatives to improve outcomes over the coming five years.</p>	<p>One of the priority areas identified in the strategy is Active Living. The key direction is to “<i>Provide public spaces and infrastructure that encourages active living and that is safe and accessible by all</i>”.</p>
<p>Pyrenees Shire Recreation Strategy 2017–2022 (Pyrenees Shire Council 2017)</p>	<p>The <i>Pyrenees Shire Recreation Strategy 2017–2022</i> was developed to guide decision making in regard to investment, planning and management of new and existing recreation infrastructure within the municipality. Impacts to local facilities because of natural phenomenon like drought, fire and flood were identified as key challenges facing management of regional sporting grounds and facilities. Likewise, the challenges of servicing a changing and ageing demographic were noted within the Strategy.</p>	<p>Promoting informal physical activity such as walking and cycling by enhancing the municipal paths and trails network is noted as a key objective of the <i>Pyrenees Shire Recreation Strategy 2017–2022</i>, with improvements to pedestrian paths between the township and Camp Hill identified.</p>
<p><i>Beaufort Walkability Plan</i> (Pyrenees Shire Council 2016)</p>	<p>The <i>Beaufort Walkability Plan 2016</i> aims to improve the health and wellbeing of all Beaufort residents. Improving walkability and cyclability in Beaufort is key to improving the wellbeing of residents, as well as opening opportunities for underused transport modes and reducing the car dependence within the future town. This Plan includes Universal Design principles to ensure that spaces are designed for all members of the community to use. The construction of the project will reduce traffic through the town centre, allowing for a greater level of safety and provision of walking facilities. Working alongside neighbouring municipalities, this plan will also help to develop cycling trails between towns and regions for residents and visitors.</p>	<p>The <i>Beaufort Walkability Plan 2016</i> seeks to increase walking as a mode of transport within the town of Beaufort. It is noted that the Western Highway is one of the key constraints to improving walking safety and infrastructure within the town. The east-west route of the highway cuts a barrier through the centre of the town, isolating residents from accessing many community facilities on the opposite side of the current highway alignment.</p>

12.4 Methodology

12.4.1 Existing conditions

The existing conditions assessment of social and community values consisted of:

- a review of relevant State and local government policy and strategic documents to understand the current role and vision for the local area, as well as preferred future directions
- demographic profiling of current residential communities within the investigation area using publicly available data and indicators from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census of Population and Housing
- a review of the local area access network including roads, public transport routes and pedestrian and cycle access to understand how areas are connected, and how this influences accessibility for local communities
- an audit of community facilities, public services and places of special interest drawing on Council's database to identify likely locations of community activity, and the distribution of services and facilities that are likely to be accessed by communities within Beaufort
- a risk assessment to identify and prioritise potential impacts for assessment
- a site visit and consultation with stakeholders and community
- a literature review of relevant case studies relating to the social impact of road bypass projects in Australia.

Culturally significant trees assessment

A culturally significant trees assessment was undertaken as part of the social impact assessment, which focused on cultural significance from a non-indigenous context. This assessment addresses the scoping requirement to investigate impacts arising from the loss of 'native vegetation and culturally significant trees'.

The scope of this assessment was informed by the following context outlined in the *Assessment and Management Guidelines – Culturally Significant Tree Project* prepared by Symatree.

"Trees play an important role in elements of towns and cities such as approach roads, showgrounds, transport links, residential areas, important buildings, access roads, parks and nature strips. Trees help identify special places. They may have associations with individual people and communities or tell stories of other times and places."

Using this definition, an assessment was undertaken to identify individual trees or groups of trees meeting this description.

The assessment also included a search of the National Trust Significant Tree Register.

12.4.2 Impact assessment

The social impact assessment considered a number of individual impacts, as well as the distribution of impacts across the investigation area (defined in Section 12.5), and their likely consequences to the existing behaviour and social fabric both locally and across the region. The social impact assessment focused on potential impacts during the construction and operation of the project, associated with the following categories:

- displacement of residents
- severance and accessibility impacts to properties
- community access
- community amenity and wellbeing impacts
- impact to Beaufort social fabric.

12.4.3 Mitigations

Specific design, construction and operational mitigation measures were developed in consultation with RRV to manage the potential social and community value impacts of the project. All identified mitigations have been informed by technical specialist experience, with proven feasible control measures for major civil infrastructure projects, industry best practice measures and regulatory measures defined by State, Commonwealth and International agencies.

12.5 Study area

The study area for the project includes approximately 1,800 ha of land north of the Beaufort township. This study area and the Beaufort township were assessed to determine potential social impacts and constraints associated with the project.

12.5.1 Social impact assessment investigation area

The social impact assessment study area community includes residents of the Beaufort township area, the study area and surrounding dispersed rural residential properties. For the purposes of this assessment, the social impact assessment study area community is broadly defined as residential communities that are likely to interact with the Beaufort township as a primary or local service centre.

The community profile assessed in the social impact assessment used demographic data collected from the Statistical Area Level 2 geographical area that makes up the greater Beaufort area (Figure 12.1).



Figure 12.1 Statistical Area Level 2 area comprising the social impact assessment study area community

12.6 Existing conditions

12.6.1 Community profile

This section describes the existing social conditions including demographic profile, community facilities and existing social issues of the Beaufort area.

Demographic profile

The residential population of the Statistical Area Level 2 geographical census area that comprises the greater Beaufort area was 4,395 people, and 1,994 households or dwellings at the 2016 census. This has increased from a total residential population of 3,833 and 1,902 dwellings in 2011, representing residential population growth of 12.8% over a five-year period.

Beaufort has a higher proportion of middle aged and elderly residents, and a lower proportion of children and residents of young working age than the Victorian average, as shown in Figure 12.2 below. This trend has increased between 2011 and 2016 and is generally consistent with ageing populations across regional Victoria.

Population age profiles can influence the type and level of demand generated for various types of community facilities and services, and provide insight into communities that are likely to be less resilient or more vulnerable to change.

Areas with a significantly higher proportion of older residents may experience greater demand for accessible community services, non-car transport and aged care accommodation, and may have higher proportions of residents who require assistance with daily activities.

Statistical Area Level 2

Statistical Area Level 2 geographical area boundaries are defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the Census of Population and Housing. Statistical Area Level 2 is the smallest level of output for the Census and are determined based on population. However, in areas of low residential density, a Statistical Area Level 2 area can cover a large geographical area. These boundaries remain consistent with the Statistical Area Level 2 geographical areas defined in the 2016 Census, which enables direct comparison of demographic data.

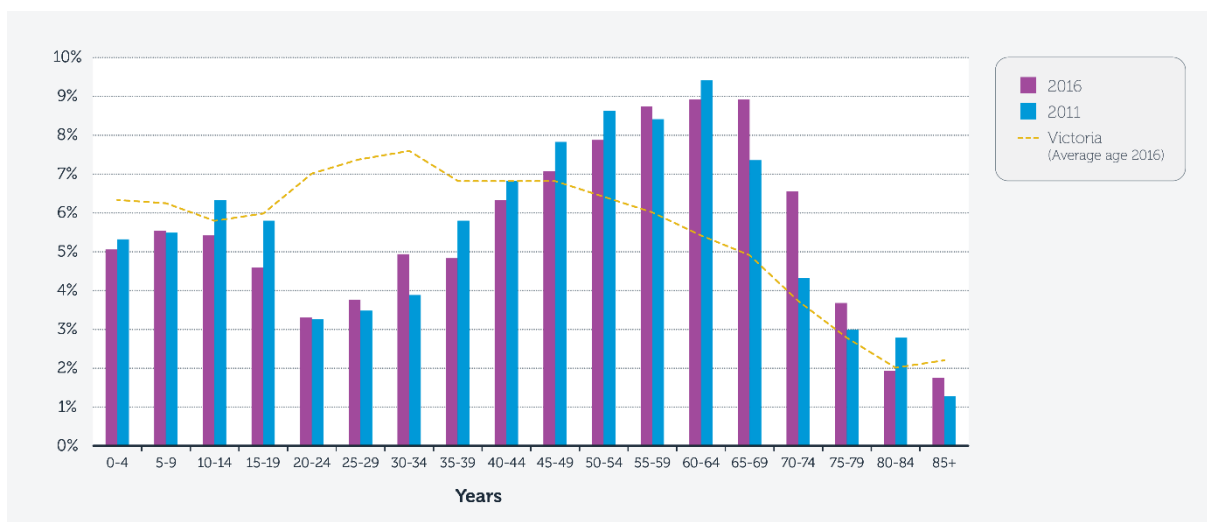


Figure 12.2 Age profile of the Beaufort community (2011 vs 2016) against the Victorian average in 2016

Within the Beaufort Statistical Area Level 2 geographical area at the 2016 census, couples with children represented 39.7% of households, couples without children comprised 47.7%, and single parent families represented 6.0% of households in Beaufort. Lone person households comprised 32.1% of households in Beaufort.

Identified vulnerable communities

The population of Beaufort displays several indicators of potential vulnerability, including an ageing population, relatively low household incomes, a relatively high number of residents indicating that they need assistance with core activities, and relatively high levels of youth unemployment in the region. However, as is common in regional towns, the Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership (2013) *Population Health and Wellbeing Profile* shows evidence of high levels of civic participation in the region suggesting strong social networks.

Community resources

Services, facilities and places of community significance

In general, the Beaufort community is well serviced by local and regional level community services, with many facilities serving the community in a number of capacities. These facilities are predominantly located within the Beaufort township (Figure 12.3) and include:

- community facilities, such as the Beaufort Library and Town Hall
- education and learning facilities (primary and secondary school)
- family and children facilities, namely Beaufort Early Childhood Centre
- emergency services (fire, police and ambulance)
- health services, such as the Beaufort Medical Practice and Nursing Home
- other services/facilities, including the post office, supermarket and visitor information centre.

Residents of the surrounding rural areas and communities such as Lexton, Raglan and Waterloo travel to Beaufort to access these facilities. The audit of community facilities identified a gap in the provision of youth spaces.

Major regional centres of Ararat and Ballarat provide a greater quantity and more specialised range of services to the community.

Beaufort and the Pyrenees region has a strong calendar of community events including annual festivals and regular local programs, such as the Beaufort Market, Beaufort Agricultural Show and Rotary Club Driver Reviver. The Beaufort township also hosts local sporting competitions in the recreation precinct to the south of the township.

The Beaufort township includes significant community places for reflection and remembrance including the Beaufort Cemetery and the Memorial Garden located in Bicentennial Park (Figure 12.4).

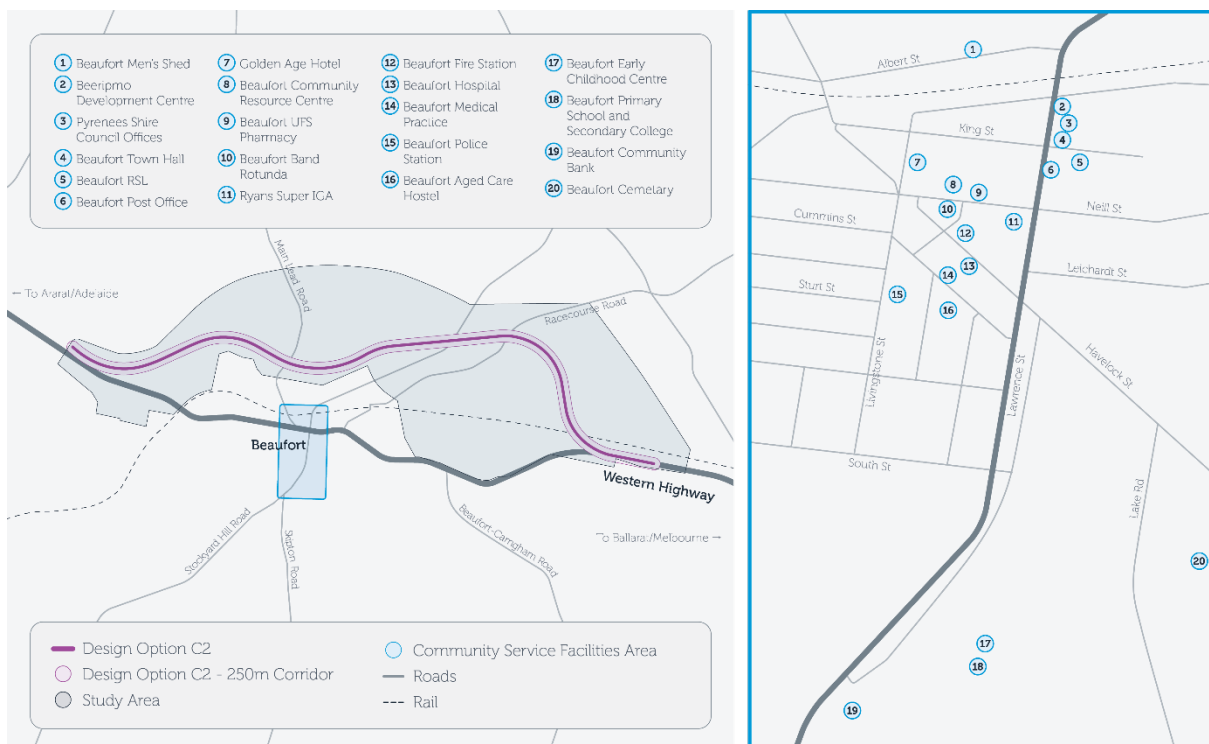


Figure 12.3 Community resources/facilities of the Beaufort area

Open space and recreation

The Beaufort township is well serviced with open space assets.

Camp Hill is located within the study area and includes the Camp Hill Recreation Reserve, Camp Hill Lookout, picnic area and barbeque, and recreational walking and cycling tracks throughout the Camp Hill State Forest. Camp Hill is a highly-valued asset for the Beaufort Community and is also noted for its mining history, with some active tenements remaining.

In the south-west of the study area is an area known by the local community as the Beaufort Commons. The Beaufort Commons was historically a shared public space for grazing, however, portions of this Crown land have been sold to private landholders over time and is no longer used in this capacity. The Commons includes the disused Beaufort Trotting Track (Figure 12.4).

Also within the study area is Snowgums Bushland Reserve, managed by Parks Victoria, which comprises native and non-native vegetation and a wetland, which is publicly accessible for passive enjoyment.

Within the town centre, two local parks (Wotherspoon Park and Beggs Street Park) provide playgrounds for the community. Also, located in the central township are the Band Rotunda and Bicentennial Park, which are commonly used outdoor meeting and events spaces for the local community.

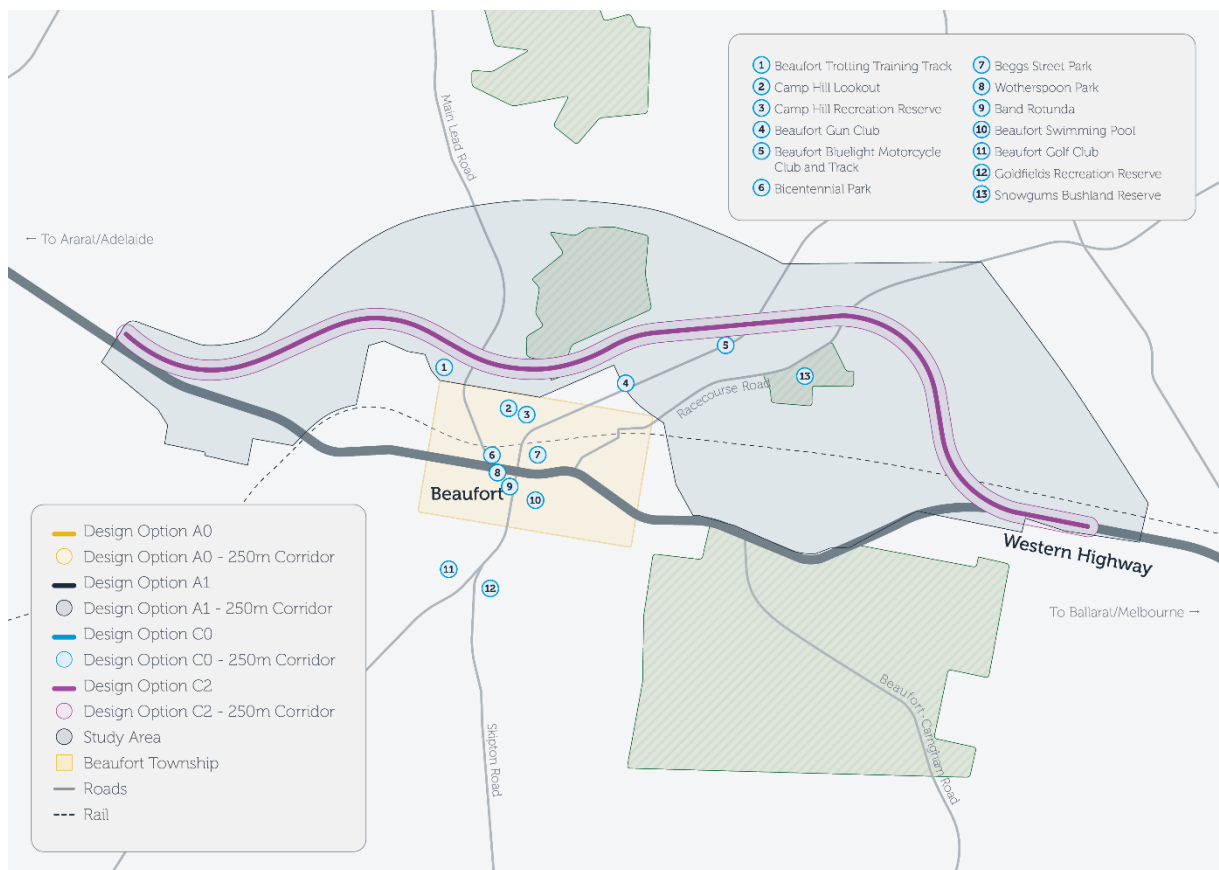


Figure 12.4 Open space and recreation areas in the Beaufort area

12.6.2 Local transport network

Road network

The Western Highway currently passes through the centre of Beaufort, providing the community their primary east-west road connection. Road connections to the north of Beaufort include Beaufort-Lexton Road, Main Lead Road, Back Raglan Road and Racecourse Road. Skipton Road is the primary road connection to the south of Beaufort.

Public transport

V-Line provides a train service from Beaufort Train Station on the Ararat–Melbourne route via Ballarat. This provides five services to and from Melbourne during weekdays, and three services to and from Melbourne during weekends.

Public transport services provided to the Beaufort area include one rail and three coach services providing access to Melbourne, Ballarat, Horsham, Ararat and Ouyen. A school bus route also operates through Beaufort to service local and regional residents.

Cycle and pedestrian connectivity

The *Beaufort Walkability Plan* (Pyrenees Shire Council 2016) focuses on improving accessibility and infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists in the Beaufort area. Currently there is only one signalised pedestrian crossing, located at the intersection with Lawrence Street, to cross the Western Highway which runs through the town centre.

There are currently no designated on-road bike lanes, however, recreational cycling opportunities exist in the surrounding area including Camp Hill.

12.6.3 Culturally significant trees

An assessment of potential culturally significant trees and a review of the National Trust Significant Tree Register did not identify any trees of recognised significance in the investigation area.

Discussions with some local residents identified a memorial tree located near the Camp Hill lookout, which memorialises the death of a young local resident in a motorcycle accident and the Memorial Garden at Bicentennial Park in the Beaufort township. These memorials are considered culturally significant to the local community, however, they are located outside of the study area.

12.7 Impact assessment

The following section summarises the assessment of potential social impacts of the project to the Beaufort community. The assessment of the Beaufort community includes the Beaufort population, and identified vulnerable members within the population. Assessment of impacts has determined no differentiation between potential impacts to the Beaufort population and vulnerable populations within it.

12.7.1 Construction

Displacement of residents

As the project will create a new road reservation, acquisition of private and public land is required.

A total of 22 private landowners are expected to be permanently impacted by the project through the partial acquisition of land from 47 private parcels, which is confined to the project area. One dwelling has been identified as being directly impacted by the project, which will result in the displacement of the existing residents.

Throughout the consultation program RRV met with directly affected landowners to provide information about impacts to their properties and to discuss the acquisition process and compensation, or to investigate opportunities to modify the project alignment to reduce impacts. RRV is in ongoing consultation with the directly affected landowners.

The loss of dwellings and acquisition of land may result in major changes to the lives of those affected and may adversely affect their wellbeing, particularly those with a strong connection to their properties. As such, the potential social impact to the affected residents is high, resulting in an overall medium level of impact.

Severance

The social impact assessment defines severance as:

‘Separation of people from facilities, services and social networks they wish to use within their community because of changes in comfort and attractiveness of areas; and/or people changing travel patterns due to the physical, traffic flow and/or psychological barriers created by transport projects’

Severance and accessibility to properties

Household and property access

While the project aims to avoid impacts to properties, access points, and public roads and paths where possible, the project will alter movement throughout the study area during construction. An assessment of existing property access points for residential properties in the study area identified three properties with access points and routes that will receive permanent alterations to access post construction. These properties are shown in Figure 12.5. All legal ingress/egress will be maintained, or alternative access provided throughout the project construction.

It is anticipated that impacts and alteration to property access will be high during construction. These impacts are temporary, lasting up to 2 years, and would be mitigated by the provision of alternative access during the construction period. All 22 private landholders subject to acquisition have the potential to be impacted by access changes during construction.

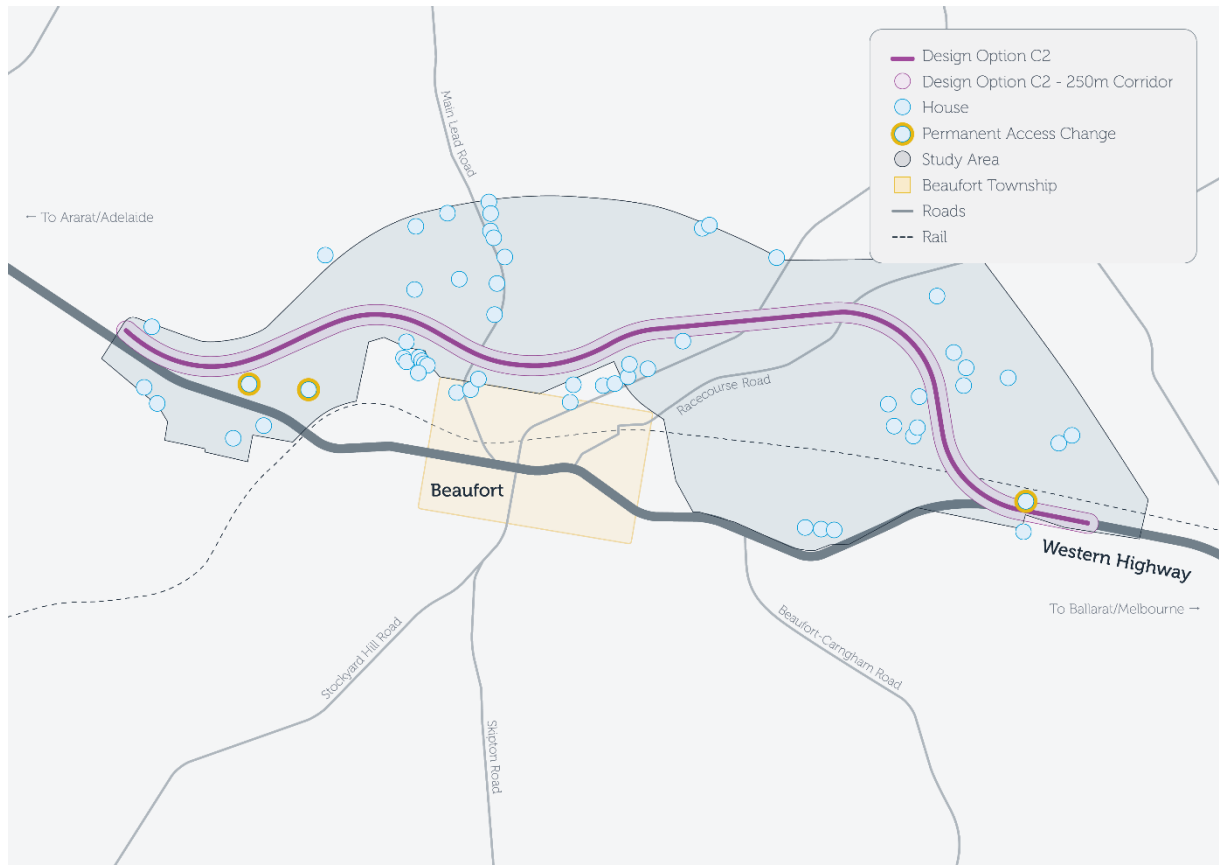


Figure 12.5 Disruption or alteration to private access

Farming and agricultural severance

Partial land acquisition required for the project severs large agricultural landholdings between the western interchange and Back Raglan Road, and between Beaufort-Lexton Road and Racecourse Road. Land severance will result in the creation of additional subminimal lots within the Beaufort Environs Restructure Area.

Further discussion regarding potential impacts to farming and agricultural land is discussed in EES Chapter 13: *Land use and economics*.

Access to community facilities

During the construction phase, particularly during the construction of the Beaufort-Lexton Road interchange, access and connectivity may be indirectly impacted by temporary or sporadic disruptions along existing access roads, which in addition to Beaufort-Lexton Road at the proposed interchange, may include Back Raglan Road, Main Lead Road, and Racecourse Road at other locations along the alignment. Disruptions or diversions during construction may temporarily disrupt school bus services or pick-up/drop-off points, but it is not anticipated that bus services will be permanently impacted by the operation of the project. Impacts to access to community facilities and services is considered to have a low to medium level of impact without mitigation given the temporary nature.

During construction, there is potential for an indirect medium level of disruption impact to community activities and events due to temporary traffic access changes, increased construction traffic and amenity impacts without mitigation.

Community amenity and wellbeing

The loss of vegetation and impacts on fauna were issues of high sensitivity for the community. Regardless of biodiversity values, the protection of vegetation and fauna was generally considered important by stakeholders and the community.

The potential impacts of the project on community wellbeing resulting from the loss of native vegetation and culturally significant trees have been minimised through the alignment selection process, which sought to minimise native vegetation clearance (including large old trees) and avoid identified culturally significant trees. Impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage will be managed appropriately within the framework of an approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the project, in consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Party (Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation). Impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage are further discussed in EES Chapter 10: *Cultural heritage*.

It is noted that the extended timeframe and options assessment process has generated some uncertainty and distress for some directly affected households. In July 2019, RRV publicly announced C2 as the preferred alignment, and engagement has been undertaken with directly affected landowners.

Indirect community amenity impacts are likely to be temporary and experienced during the construction phase and may include dust, vibration, noise and temporary access changes. The magnitude of amenity impacts during construction is considered low, however, the high sensitivity of the community toward amenity impacts will result in medium level of impact. Further discussion on potential amenity impacts (noise/vibration and air quality) are addressed in EES Chapter 14: *Amenity*.

Social fabric

During construction, the community may experience a temporary influx of population to accommodate the construction workforce. This may temporarily alter socio-demographic make-up and social fabric of the community. With consideration of the established community, Beaufort has a high proportion of middle aged and elderly residents, and a correspondingly low proportion of children and residents of young working age. The impact of this temporary change to the social fabric of Beaufort is considered to be medium.

There is a risk that during construction of the project, the Beaufort community sense of contentment and social cohesion may decline, however, with the implementation of mitigation measures, this has potential to evolve into a greater sense of acceptance, community pride, restoration of their social networks and identity.

12.7.2 Operation

Severance and accessibility to properties

Household and property access

In comparison to construction access impacts, it is likely that fewer properties will experience permanent changes during operation as the project area will be reduced once construction activity is complete.

Three households will have permanent impacts to existing access, as displayed in Figure 12.5 and discussed further in EES Chapter 8: *Traffic and transport*. All legal ingress/egress to property will be reinstated once the project is operational. Access impacts to households and properties are realised in the construction phase. The operational impact to changes in access is therefore low.

Community access

The project will retain access along all existing major roads, and the full diamond interchange at Beaufort-Lexton Road will allow access onto or off the bypass at this location.

Overall, the project is not considered to have a significant impact in terms of severance between communities to the north or south of the corridor. As such, the level of impact is considered low.

Access to community facilities

The local Rotary Club operates a Driver Reviver service over the Easter long weekend. This service currently uses a public space access off the existing highway alignment inside the bypass route. It is likely that the service will lose a significant amount of passing traffic operating in its current location following the construction of the bypass. RRV will work with the Rotary Club to identify an appropriate alternative location for the Driver Reviver service.

The project will temporarily impact land occupied by the currently disused Beaufort Trotting Track during the construction phase of the project, through restriction of access. Portions of the land surrounding the Beaufort Trotting Track, used for agistment will be acquired, however these are not publicly accessible. Additionally, the project will sever the informal tracks and connections between the existing network in the crown land north and south of the bypass on Camp Hill. The Blue Light Motorcycle Club, shown in Figure 12.4, sits outside the project area and will not be impacted by the project.

Overall, the project is expected to have a high positive impact on pedestrian access and safety in the town centre and major activity areas through the reduction in traffic travelling along the main street. The use of community facilities and infrastructure is mostly reliant on community usage and it is anticipated that usage levels would not be adversely impacted by the reduction of through-traffic.

Once the bypass is operational, all major north-south access routes between Beaufort and surrounding areas to the north will maintain existing operation. As such, it is not expected that regional access to Beaufort will be adversely affected during operation.

Community amenity and wellbeing

Through consultation, and on review of relevant policy and strategic documents, it is evident that the rural nature of the social impact assessment study area, including its undeveloped land, privacy and quietness, is highly valued by residents and visitors.

The project is likely to impact on the health and wellbeing of residents (66 dwellings) located within 500 m of the alignment due to changed visual amenity and increases in noise from the current condition, without the implementation of mitigations (detailed assessment of visual amenity and noise impacts is provided in EES Appendix F: *Landscape and visual impact assessment* and EES Appendix H: *Noise and vibration impact assessment*).

For the residents within 500 m of the bypass, the magnitude of impacts associated with amenity noise, visual and ecological values can be reduced through providing noise mitigation such as noise walls, earth moulding and vegetation, as well as opportunities to work with the community to co-design urban design and landscaping for the visible infrastructure such as bridges. The impact to these residents is considered to be moderate and the sensitivity is high, therefore, the overall significance of the operational amenity is considered a medium impact.

Amenity to the community within Beaufort township will be significantly improved, creating high positive level benefits to the community such as increased safety and reduced noise (refer to EES Chapter 14: *Amenity*).

The regional economy impact assessment (provided in EES Appendix I: *Regional economy impact assessment*) identifies that potential impacts to businesses reliant on passing highway trade may result in the loss of 27 full time equivalent positions in the short-term. Unemployment loss as an indirect result of the bypass can cause financial hardship and be a contributor to several health and wellbeing impacts, which could lead to housing issues, family tensions and breakdowns and mental stress. However, the project is also considered to generate a number of employment opportunities, including increased demand for local civil construction services and uplift in local trade attributed to the construction workforce during the construction period. The social impact from the potential short-term loss of 27 full time equivalent positions is considered to be a moderate impact.

Social fabric

Based on a literature review of relevant case studies relating to the ongoing social impact of road bypass projects in Australia, rural communities have historically been relatively adaptable to large-scale changes caused by infrastructure developments such as bypasses. Over time and due to these developments, rural communities may experience changes in their sense of identity comfort and social cohesion. The project will present the Beaufort township with an opportunity to promote itself as a destination for visitors, transitioning from a highway stop over town.

Reduced traffic flow through the township will have a positive impact on Beaufort’s social fabric due to reduced air and noise pollution, enhanced road safety and improved pedestrian access and safety in the town centre. Similarly, reduced traffic through the main streets creates opportunities to develop social spaces, which would positively impact the resident’s sense of community and a sense of pride. Improved, safer and more attractive streets create opportunities to increase social interaction and strengthen community networks.

It is anticipated that the project would promote social inclusion by:

- enhancing accessibility and ease of movement supporting the commercial activities within the local area and the region
- improving freight movement and efficiency resulting in further opportunities to grow local industries and the local economy
- reducing travel time barriers to local access.

Overall the project is considered to have positive impact to the social fabric the community and its overall significance is considered medium level of positive impact.

12.8 Mitigation

RRV will utilise its standard contract specifications, specifically provisions under Section 177 that relate to the audits and surveillance to ensure compliance with project environmental protection measures during construction of the project. Mitigation for the social impacts identified in this assessment focusses heavily on early, consistent and transparent communication with affected stakeholders and communities. A detailed and targeted consultation plan is required to ensure that communications are timely and consistent and meet the needs and requirements of impacted communities.

The stakeholder engagement and communication plan will be a key document that links construction environmental, traffic, access and business disruption management plans.

Table 12.4 below outlines specific mitigation measures to reduce the overall impact to social and community values in the investigation area during the detailed design, pre-construction, construction and operation phases of the project.

The environment controls employed for the avoidance, minimisation or management of other environmental values relevant to the social fabric of the investigation area, such as amenity (noise and air quality), biodiversity and habitat, visual and landscape and catchment and hydrology, are discussed in relevant chapters of this EES and associated Appendices.

Table 12.4 Mitigation measures for social and community impacts

Impacts		Mitigation measures	Mitigation no.
Design			
Displacement of residents	Land acquisition and displacement	To address land acquisition and severance impacts during construction and operation, mitigations will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design optimisation to reduce acquisition impacts • continued consultation with affected landowners • compensation in accordance with the <i>Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986</i>. 	S01

Impacts		Mitigation measures	Mitigation no.
Severance and accessibility	Property access	<p>During the detailed design and pre-construction phases, a construction and operational access strategy will be developed to the satisfaction of the Department of Transport, Pyrenees Shire Council and DELWP. Measures for the access strategy will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring there is a thorough community and landholder/manager consultation process and public advertisement of works ensure that alternative access and redirections are provided where existing access is removed, which follows relevant standards and guidelines, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within project Specific Controls Overlay, in accordance with project approval conditions -AS1742.3 – Manual of uniform traffic control devices - VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual Vol 2 Part 2.03 – Traffic control devices for works on roads. <p>The access management strategy will include strategies for maintaining access to private land, local road network, public amenity and Crown land.</p>	S02
	Community access	<p>Measures to address community access will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
Access to community facilities	Community access	<p>Measures to address community access will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Future project planning	<p>Measures to address future project planning will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Access to recreational facilities	<p>Measures to address access to recreational facilities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Disruption to affected facilities	<p>A business disruption plan will be developed to minimise impacts to local businesses. The plan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> preparation of a construction workforce management plan which seeks to utilise regional accommodation options (such as Ballarat, Ararat, private sector) communicate construction phasing and timeframes with local businesses communicate and co-ordinate road closures and traffic management to minimise impact to local businesses ensure disruption to transport routes and access to businesses is avoided, minimised or provided suitable alternatives promote the support to local businesses during construction periods co-ordinate engagement with local businesses in line with the community and stakeholder engagement plan. identify how local businesses will be provided with ongoing support during Beaufort’s transition from a highway town to a destination work with impacted community groups to find appropriate alternative locations for impacted services. 	S03

Impacts		Mitigation measures	Mitigation no.
	Disruption to affected facilities	A Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be prepared and implemented by the contractor to set out the specific actions, requirements and processes to engage with the community and other stakeholders (such as local businesses and special interest groups). The purpose of this plan is to provide means for community enquiries and complaints throughout the construction and operation of the bypass. It shall be prepared in line with relevant guidelines and the Victorian Auditor-General Office (2015) <i>Public Participation in Government Decision-making: Better Practice Guide</i> .	S04
	Reduction in through traffic	Measures to address the reduction in through traffic will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
Community amenity and wellbeing	Visual amenity impacts	Landscape design plans must protect and, where practicable, improve access to, and amenity for, potentially affected residents, open spaces, pedestrian and cyclist networks, social and community infrastructure and commercial facilities. The landscape design should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> utilise colours and materials for structural elements which blend in with or complement surrounding landscape character, avoid reflective and bright colours where possible, retain natural material/geology/earth in cuttings where noise attenuation is required, consider noise attenuation mounds, as a first option, followed by noise wall and other attenuation techniques minimise visual impact and overshadowing of bridges, noise walls and associated fill enhance usability in bridge underpasses for recreation and leisure, to encourage use and increase safety under bridges locate and design watercourse crossings to minimise loss of riparian vegetation and to accommodate erosion control methods ensure bridge design minimises visual and landscape impacts and enhance amenity, public use, passive surveillance levels and recreational offer to the extents practicable. This includes all aspects of the bridge design including, materials, noise walls, abutments and embankments. Landscape and architectural elements should be developed in consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Party and consider the application of Indigenous design elements to the project.	S05
	Community wellbeing impacts associated with uncertainty	Measures to address the amenity of the Beaufort township will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S04. 	–

Impacts		Mitigation measures	Mitigation no.
	Noise and visual amenity impacts	<p>A Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan will be developed by the construction contractor in accordance with Environment Protection Authority Victoria Guidelines to ensure that the impacts of construction noise are minimised as far as practicable.</p> <p>The Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan will be approved by MRPV and relevant stakeholders, and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of project-specific noise targets for construction • a prediction of noise from each construction scenario • an assessment of each scenario to the established targets • mitigation measures to be implemented to control noise levels • requirements for a noise monitoring regime whereby noise levels are measured and recorded • highlight potential unavoidable evening and night works for seeking prior approval from relevant stakeholders including RRV and the Environment Protection Authority Victoria. <p>Landscape and visual impacts will be managed through mitigations defined in S05 above.</p>	S06
	Improved amenity of Beaufort township	<p>Measures to address the amenity of the Beaufort township will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigations outlined in S03. 	–
Pre-construction / construction			
Severance and accessibility	Property access	<p>Measures to address property access will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Community access	<p>Measures to address community access will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
Access to community facilities	Community access	<p>Measures to address community access will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Future project planning	<p>Measures to address future project planning will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Construction access disruption to social infrastructure	<p>Measures to address access to social infrastructure during construction will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Disruption to community events and festivals	<p>Measures to address access to social infrastructure during construction will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Disruption to affected facilities	<p>Measures to address the disruption to affected facilities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigations outlined in S02. 	–

Impacts		Mitigation measures	Mitigation no.
	Disruption to existing community activities	Measures to address community wellbeing impacts associated with uncertainty will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Disruption to school bus route	Measures to address disruption to the school bus route will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S03. 	–
	Relocation of the Rotary Club Driver Reviver	Measures to address the impact of the relocation of the Rotary Club Driver Reviver will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S03. 	–
	Reduction in through traffic	Measures to address the reduction in through traffic will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S03. 	–
Community amenity and wellbeing	Noise and visual amenity impacts	Measures to address noise and visual amenity impacts will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S05 and S06. 	–
	Improved amenity of Beaufort township	During pre-construction stages, RRV in partnership with Council will identify potential resourcing, capacity building and funding options to support Council with implementation of transitional initiatives to reposition Beaufort from a highway town to a bypassed town to assist its economic and social recovery post bypass. Transitional initiatives identified for Beaufort will be aligned with the <i>Pyrenees Economic Development Strategy – February 2020</i> and include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attracting new and diverse businesses and employment opportunities to Beaufort planning and design projects to be implemented in support of new and existing business and employment opportunities and population growth within the township identifying the critical population mass required to enhance the social and economic sustainability of Beaufort branding and promotion including appropriate signage public realm and amenity improvements identify infrastructure improvements that support tourism, investment and the liveability of Beaufort. 	S07
	Employment	In accordance with the percentage targets declared by the Minister for Industry Support and Recovery under the <i>Local Jobs First Act 2003</i> , Construction Contractors will develop local procurement strategies to ensure economic benefits are realised during the construction phase.	S08
Social fabric	Community identity	Measures to address the community identity impacts will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S07. 	–

Impacts		Mitigation measures	Mitigation no.
Operation			
Severance and accessibility	Property access	Measures to address property access will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Community access	Measures to address community access will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
Access to community facilities	Community access	Measures to address community access will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Future project planning	Measures to address future project planning will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S02. 	–
	Relocation of the Rotary Club Driver Reviver	Measures to address the impact of the relocation of the Rotary Club Driver Reviver will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S03. 	–
	Reduction in through traffic	Measures to address the reduction in through traffic will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S03. 	–
Community amenity and wellbeing	Noise and visual amenity impacts	Measures to address noise and visual amenity impacts will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S05 and S06. 	–
	Improved amenity of Beaufort township	Measures to address the amenity of the Beaufort township will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mitigations outlined in S05 and S06. 	–

12.9 Residual impacts

Following incorporation of mitigations outlined in Section 12.8, the residual impacts for social and community values outlined in Table 12.5 below will apply for the project.

Table 12.5 Residual impacts for social and community values

Impact	Residual impact	Impact rating
Displacement of residents	The residual impacts relevant to displacement of residents would be alleviated through ongoing and proactive consultation with landholders and the implementation of the acquisition process. It is acknowledged that a change of this scale will generate community-wide social change and that this may cause distress to some residents.	Moderate
Severance and accessibility	Construction activities would be temporary in nature and therefore the residual risk rating would be low in managing temporary changes in access with appropriate access strategy mitigation in place. RRV will continue to consult landowners to understand access requirements, identify opportunities to mitigate impacts through design and to discuss the acquisition process and compensation or trade off.	Low
Access to community facilities	The project will continue to be refined during detailed design to avoid dwellings, adverse impacts to access, avoid places of importance and ecologically important communities. RRV will monitor and manage social impacts during construction and operation.	Low
Community amenity and wellbeing	Modifications and alternatives be reviewed during the detailed design phase of the project to further mitigate this impact. The project will increase safety, reduce noise and improve air quality, contributing positively to the amenity of Beaufort. It is recommended that RRV monitor and evaluate the effects of removing through-traffic in town on community amenity and wellbeing.	Moderate
Social fabric	Engagement with the community, Council and relevant agencies would occur to identify opportunities to manage social change of the reduction of through-traffic on the main street, including investigating opportunities to enhance social infrastructure, develop revitalisation and beautification programs and undertake collaborative strategies to promote Beaufort as touristic or stopping destination along the Western Highway. Although the project may generate impacts on valued aspects of Beaufort and the surrounding areas, the alignment has been refined throughout the EES process in response to the findings of technical investigations and community feedback. Impacts on community values will be more evident during the construction and post-construction of the bypass. It is recommended that evaluation of social impacts is monitored to manage any residual impact.	Positive

12.10 Conclusion

The social impact assessment identifies the potential social impacts as a result of the project, as well as beneficial outcomes for the local community.

The assessment was informed by stakeholder and community consultation undertaken for the project, with feedback providing insights into the community identity, values and goals and the perceived impacts and benefits of the project considered in the assessment of potential social impacts.

It is anticipated that the bypass would enhance community amenity of the wider Beaufort community and visitors by improving pedestrian access and safety in the town centre and major activity areas by reducing freight and through-traffic travelling along the main street.

Potential impacts include:

- impacts to community amenity due to changes in noise, air quality and visual impacts during construction of the project
- impacts to lifestyle, health and wellbeing of private landholders due to property acquisition, displacement, land access requirements, and changes to infrastructure and utilities within private properties during project construction and operation
- impact on community access, social infrastructure and connectivity due to changes to traffic, transport and access arrangements during the construction of the project
- changes to the visual landscape, noise and rural amenity for residents living within 500 m of the alignment
- ongoing impacts to social fabric of Beaufort due to the changing role of the township, from a highway stopover to a destination town.

Mitigation measures for the social and community value impacts focus heavily on continuing early, consistent and transparent communication with affected stakeholders and communities during the detailed design, pre-construction, construction and operational phases of the project. A detailed and targeted stakeholder engagement and consultation plan is required to ensure that communications are timely and consistent, and meet the needs and requirements of impacted communities.

Residual impacts of the project for:

- displacement of residents and acquisition will be moderate following design optimisation to reduce acquisition of private and public land, ongoing and proactive consultation with landholders and the implementation of the acquisition and compensation process
- severance and accessibility will be low following ongoing and proactive consultation and the implementation of the access management strategy
- access to community facilities will be low following ongoing and proactive consultation and the implementation of the access strategy, business disruption plan and stakeholder and engagement plan
- community amenity and wellbeing will be moderate during construction following the implementation of local employment strategies, transitional economic strategies, the construction environmental management plan and landscape design plans
- social fabric will be positive following ongoing and proactive consultation and implementation of stakeholder and engagement plan, local employment strategies and transitional economic strategies.