

Bridge safety barrier delayed

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FENCED IN: The RTA's chosen design for the safety fence at Long Gully Bridge.

THE RTA has delayed construction on the safety barrier at historic Long Gully Bridge until early next year because it needs more time to investigate community submissions. The RTA received 36 submissions during its consultation period, which started in late September.

Artist impressions of the 3.3m curved steel fence were available from the RTA's website, and residents could email comments.

A spokesman for the RTA said submissions "included support" for the barrier, but he would not say how many had been negative towards the plan.

He said they would release results of the consultation "once it is completed", and inform the community of the final design before starting construction.

Construction of the barrier, estimated by the RTA to cost \$1.5 million, was expected to start next month, but has been re-scheduled for early next year.

"Some submissions are very detailed which required additional time to investigate," the spokesman said. "This process is nearing completion."

North Sydney Mayor Genia McCaffery was pleased to hear works had been delayed, saying she still hoped the RTA would consider other options.

"They really should consider producing a better design, or putting the money towards better suicide prevention services," she said.

Cr McCaffery said she was still trying to set up an emergency meeting with Willoughby Mayor Pat Reilly and Opposition transport spokeswoman Gladys Berejiklian to discuss the proposed barriers.

The State Government decided to install the fencing on the instruction of the State Coroner, who described the bridge as a "magnet for suicide attempts".

Meanwhile, security guards monitor the bridge 24 hours a day.

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