

**Pacific Highway Upgrade, Moorland to Herons Creek  
COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP – JOHNS RIVER/KEW**

Meeting No. 10

**6pm, Thursday, 11 December 2003  
Steaks on Kew, Pacific Highway, Kew**

No	Item	Discussion leader
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**Present:**

**CFG members:**

Owen Gill	Alan Grady
Brian Bremner	Tracy Dignum
Roger McCosker	Ian Jackson
Kelvin Limbrick	Ron Clapton
Allan Hagney	Jan Kuras
Merv Isaac	Rod Heath
Joe Malvicino	
Brian Fletcher	
Bob Higgins, RTA	Roger Fenner RTA
Christophe Steinbech, RTA	
Alistair Kerle, Arup	John Hamilton, Arup

Apologies: Helen Weston - Arup

**1 Introduction and welcome**

**Alistair Kerle, Arup**

- AAK welcomed CFG members to the meeting and outlined the agenda
- AAK noted that the only matter to be followed up from the previous meeting (CFG 9) was a request from the KGSC to be invited to the next meeting with Hastings Council. AAK noted that this request had been superseded to some extent by the decision to put both options on display.

**2 Project Update**

**Bob Higgins, RTA**

Bob Higgins discussed status of other Pacific Highway Upgrade projects, e.g. Karuah Bypass, Karuah to Bulahdelah, Halfway Creek, Brunswick to Yelgun, Nahiack, Taree to Coopernook, etc.

Tracey Dignum: Question to Bob: Has RTA changed the design of pavements?

Bob Higgins: Yes, RTA now consider 40 year design life pavements, e.g. concrete pavements, but they have a noise impact, so there must be a balance (e.g. noise vs pavement choice). Also, RTA consider the need to allow for future road widening or for future intersection layout improvements.

Tracey Dignum: Question to Bob: We had been told previously that project planning would be complete by now. What is happening?

Bob H: With respect to Moorland to Herons Creek, RTA and Arup have basically completed the concept design work, including additional design work to develop the second option for the Kew interchanges. Design

and documentation will proceed when the Kew option is decided.

Ron Clapton: Community concern that the project appears to be falling behind. With a federal government election next year, would Latham be a better PM and would a change be likely to provide additional funding for the Pacific Highway upgrades.

Bob H: Could not comment on politics, but mentioned that there is significant public/political pressure for continued improvements to the Pacific Highway.

Bob H: With upgrade projects, dual carriageway have fewer fatalities compared to old single carriageway sections.

Alistair: Re-emphasised RTA commitment to M2HC, accepted that there have been some project delays, but with the current display these should soon be resolved.

Bob H: Next steps would be to choose preferred option, hold the Value Engineering Workshop, and complete preparation of the EIS.

Ian Jackson: regarding timeline of M2HC?

Bob H: Need to complete the EIS, display the EIS and then obtain planning approval (approval by planning minister), could take to mid 2004 for EIS, and then 1 yr for planning approval (i.e. mid 2005) – but could depend on what submissions are received, emphasised that RTA wants to get the project right at this stage, rather than fix any unresolved issues during EIS approval stage. Funding could take 6-12 months after final planning approval – but depend on other project pressures – e.g. road accidents (fix blackspots first), noise taskforce.

Ian Jackson: How is it possible that the Oxley Highway upgrade can be fast-tracked while the Pacific Highway upgrades seem to be much slower?

Bob H: Pacific Highway has different funding source.

Ian Jackson: Questioned why RTA has backflipped on Option 2, why has an option which previously was unsatisfactory now being displayed?

Bob H: RTA is continuously reviewing and critically examining options in responding to community feedback as well as experience on other projects.

Ian Jackson: Chamber of Commerce pushing Option 2.

Bob H: Acknowledges this pressure.

Ian Jackson: Cost not an issue to him/Chamber of Commerce.

Bob H: RTA is resisting extra costs on projects, emphasised that all funds come from \$2.2B budget, and that any extra costs mean less dual carriageway can be built using the available budget. RTA must give good reason, both to Government and internally within RTA, of any cost increases and there have been some concerns about cost increases. RTA has also found that it is more expensive to rebuild old carriageways and this has added to project cost increases.

Ron Clapton: When will construction start?

Bob H: Can't speculate, e.g. there was a priority on Kempsey and this is only at route development stage. Have to prioritise funding / projects, e.g. with respect to congestion, noise, accidents. There was an earlier statement that by 2010, 60% of the Pacific Highway would be dual carriageway, this has been scaled back to 40% built, and 10% under construction.

**Purple shirt (next to Ian Jackson):** Anticipated completion?

Bob H: Could take 2-3 years to build, M2HC could be a Design/Construct/Maintain (e.g. at Karuah to Bulahdelah, Nahiack), requiring a 12 months tender process, i.e. 3-4 years. It might be possible to accelerate the project but this could result in some efficiencies and be more expensive.

Alistair: RTA could also stage construction, e.g. 2-3 stages, EIS will consider staging but cannot identify construction starting date.

Bob H: RTA could build Kew section first.

Ron Clapton: Would it be 100/110km/hr road.

Bob H: RTA's policy now is to allow sign posting at 100 km/h only where the highway will have controlled access (no more than 2 access connections per km) with most access only through interchanges (issue of safety). RTA can (and has been) retrofitting intersections to increase the signposted road speed from 100 to 110km/hr, e.g. Lakes Way.

Alistair: New sections are 110km/hr – road safety priority.

Bob H: RTA has achieved time savings of 55-60 minutes already between Hexham and QLD border.

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### **3 Community issues**

**Alistair Kerle, Arup**

Alistair: Asked members are there any other community issues?

Tracey: Heavy vehicles / B doubles. Sections with narrow medians and/or limited separation between carriageways result in excessive headlight glare from oncoming vehicles. Eyes become very tired with the constant glare. Also increased tendency for some vehicles to have extra/brighter lights. Could be an emerging issue for RTA.

Roger F: RTA tries to restrict corridor, but have been reviewing median width designs, especially to allow for future road widening. RTA trying things with vegetation, but we need to maintain (extra cost) and excessive growth of vegetation can create safety issues.

Ron Clapton: Questions of whether local roads need to be designed for B doubles in Hastings Council area.

Bob H: Approximately 30% of heavy vehicle traffic serves the local area (i.e. north coast) and that road must be designed to accommodate these movements. Road improvements to the Pacific Highway have provided time savings for these movements.

Movements of heavy vehicles onto the Pacific Highway from the New England highway has also occurred as a result of improvements to the Pacific Highway.

Jan Kuras: Why did RTA allow B-Doubles on Yelgun / Chinderah as it has brought additional heavy vehicles onto the Pacific Highway.

Bob H: This project has had huge community benefits, opened up development / local movements.

Roger F: B-doubles must be catered for in any new Pacific Highway projects.

Tracey: Asked about moving heavy vehicle inspectors from New England Highway to Pacific Highway given the movement of heavy vehicles onto the Pacific Highway.

Bob H: Not under his area of control.

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#### 4 Preview of display of Kew interchange options

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Presentation of design features of both interchange options

John Hamilton

John discussed changes common to Option 1 and 2 which had resulted from to RTA ongoing concerns over road safety and findings of the RTA task force on noise.

- As a result of the additional noise studies and visual impact assessments, a mound is now proposed on the eastern side of the alignment south of Kew, 3m high and about 400m long. The mound would be vegetated and smoothed such that it is conducive to landscape.
- A two-way link road is proposed between Sunnyvale Road and the existing highway. The link allows traffic to move between Kew and Sunnyvale Road without using the upgraded highway and eliminates the intersection near the start of the northbound off-ramp. A roundabout is proposed at the junction between the Sunnyvale Link road, Bethesda Rd and the existing highway. The roundabout would signify to drivers that they have left the highway and moved to a lower speed environment.

##### **Option 1:**

The key features of Option 1 were briefly described, with emphasis on the ramps providing access between the highway and the Kew area.

Ron Clapton: Questioned safety at roundabout on Ocean Drive, with respect to movement of children to and from the High School.

John: The team has spoken to council about their plans for cycleways along Ocean Drive. There will be a separate cycleway/pedestrian walkway on the bridge carrying Ocean Drive over the Bypass. Provision would be made for pedestrians and cyclists at the roundabout.

Roger: RTA will put a barrier screen at the edge of the bridge to prevent rock throwing onto Highway, this is now a requirement on all projects.

Ron Clapton: What happens if a vehicle follows the old highway south of Kew by mistake. Will they be able to get onto the highway without going back into Kew.

There would be no direct access to the highway but vehicles could follow the link road to Sunnyvale Road and then follow that road to the south and under the highway near Camden Haven River to get access to the southbound carriageway of the highway.

**Option 2:**

No roundabout at Ocean Drive.

Ian Jackson: Asked about traffic lights (Ocean Drive/ Pacific Highway), he wants them to stay.

John: Traffic forecasts suggest that from a traffic capacity perspective the signals would not be required once the bypass is in operation – a roundabout or give-way controlled intersection would have adequate capacity for the forecast traffic flows.

Bob H: Council will make decision on the future of the traffic signals, but community/RTA could influence decision.

Brian Bremner: Talked about how Gateway Sub-Committee wanted to beautify and improve the area.

Ron Clapton: Concerned about truck braking on south bound off ramp at Kew.

John: The noise impact not significant compared to existing conditions as there would be an appreciable improvements overall, and there few residences close to the off-ramp. However, but it is acknowledged that there would be some noise impacts from Option 2.

Roger F: Discussed the visual cues of the town that would be available for vehicles approaching Kew. With Option 1 vehicles approaching Kew from the North would have some limited views across towards the golf course before reaching the southbound exit ramp to Ocean Drive. With Option 2 there would be full reliance on advance signage to indicate the Kew exit. For vehicles approaching from the south, both options would have full reliance on signage to indicate the Kew exit – no views of the town would be possible before the exit.

Alistair: Written submissions are requested, and there will be two staffed displays to answer any questions. Submissions will be accepted until 30 January 2004.

Roger F: will chase up information about roundabout / traffic lights for intersection of Ocean Drive / Pacific Highway for next meeting.

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**5 Next steps in project development**

**Roger Fenner, RTA**

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**6 Confirmation of matters to be followed up**

- Roger Fenner will check availability of information on typical intersection capacities for roundabouts, signals and give way control as a guide to requirements at the Kew intesection following construction of the bypass

**Roger Fenner, RTA**

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**Next Meeting**

- AAK suggested that the next meeting may not be until some time

prior to EIS, unless any significant issues arise.

AAK thanked members for their patience and continued interest.

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**8 Conclusion and close of meeting**

**Roger Fenner, RTA**

Roger F: invites comments and commits to project and to community members.

Bob H: Asks CFG members if they could indicate their initial responses to the two options presented, to give a general idea of the views of CFG members.

Response:

2 preferred Option 1

4/5 preferred Option 2

2 undecided.

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