

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

**Meeting No. 11 7pm, Tuesday, 5 July 2005
Steaks on Kew, Pacific Highway, Kew**

No	Item	Discussion leader
	<p>Present: CFG members:</p> <p>Brian Bremner Ron Clapton Tracy Dignum Jan Kuras Kelvin Limbrick Rod Heath Allan Hagney Merv Isaac Graham Wood Joe Malvicino Barry Barr Ian Ferguson</p> <p>Roger Fenner – RTA Colin Henson - Arup Helen Weston – Arup</p> <p>Apologies: John Hamilton – Arup Owen Gill Ian Jackson Daintry Gerrand</p>	
1	Introduction and Member Re-acquaintance	Helen Weston, Arup
2	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Outline of completion and exhibition of EIS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exhibition extended from 4 to 6 weeks due to school holidays, to allow plenty of time to make submissions. - Display panels show basis of EIS, i.e. extent of project/description - how to make submission <p>Newsletter issued to all residents in postcode area (approx. 6,500) Advertised in local and Sydney newspapers Summary Document of the EIS is available at display points Complete EIS on display consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume 1 – EIS, • Volumes 2 & 3 – Working Papers <p>Scope of the EIS is based on legislative and DIPNR requirements The planning phase of RTA Pacific Highway Upgrade projects was discussed.</p> <p>Where to from now:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval process – approximately 12 months • Acquisition phase will follow when a decision on the funding and timing for the project has been made. <p><i>Question – what is the availability and content of the CD.</i> Response - the entire EIS is on the CD and it was forwarded to all CFG members. The EIS is also on the website along with history and future activities for the project. A hard copy of the EIS is available from RTA for \$25.</p>	Roger Fenner, RTA

A Changes in Design

1. Bulleys Road – now connects through to Stewarts River Road in Johns River. This is safer, especially for truck traffic from the quarry.
2. Where possible, changes made to provide access connection roads for properties to limit the number of intersection points with the highway.
3. Intersection for Watson Taylor Road made safer.
4. Charlies Yard Road adjusted to move it away from the northbound rest area and Rossglen Road. All three access points are now separate (based on discussions with Forests NSW).
5. Incorporated noise mitigation measures:
 - Walls/mounding,
 - At house architectural treatments, and
 - Low noise pavement.
6. Sunnyvale Road north and Herons Creek Road south – connected straight through to Kew to improve safety and separate the highway and local traffic.
7. Frontage – where possible provision made for future local access/service road facilities.
8. New Herons Creek School access off Bobs Creek Road including a turning circle at the school for safe pick-up and drop-off.

General discussion:

This project involves a mix of interchanges and at-grade intersections/property accesses. The more recent projects on the Pacific Highway are tending to move full grade separation with service roads connected to interchanges and no allowance for direct access from local roads or access points. This improves:

- safety, and
- travel time, along with associated cost savings.

Given the safety problems of at-grade intersection points/crossings, the longer term strategy for the Pacific Highway will probably involve upgrading with service roads and interchanges those duplicated sections of the highway that still contain at-grade facilities. Total grade separation is not currently proposed for this project. However, some consideration has been given to the reduction of the number of intersection/access points needed by combining a number of accesses into just one access point and making allowance for further rationalisation in the future.

Further investigations would be required in the future to achieve a fully grade separated highway facility for the Moorland to Herons Creek section.

Comments:

Will the speed limit be 110km/h?

Response – design speed limit will be 110km/h, however, actual posted speed may be limited to 100km/h depending on final access arrangements determined in the detailed design phase.

A number of intersections should be upgraded including:

- Rossglen four-way intersection
- Eggberts Farm access
- Herons Creek Road north – particularly due to truck

conflicts

Believes that the design for Herons Creek Road is not acceptable, and that it should match the proposal for the Herons Creek to Stills Road project.

Response – This project is far more advanced than the Herons Creek to Stills Road project, which is still in the development stage. That project is looking at the northbound carriageway alignment, along with interchange options at Bago Road. One option being considered is to link Herons Creek Road to the Bago Road interchange and close the Herons Creek Road intersection.

The priority of the Pacific Highway Upgrade program is the upgrading of the highway to improve both the safety and traffic flow on the highway. Known accident blackspots such as the Lakes Way will be upgraded to a grade-separated interchange, while the provision of interchanges at other intersections will be based on current traffic volumes, safety and the cost-effectiveness of providing such facilities. Interchanges at Kew and Johns River will be provided due to the significantly higher traffic and the fact that the bypassing of these two centres provides a suitable opportunity at minimal extra cost for the provision of interchanges as part of the current work.

The Herons Creek Road intersection has been designed to improve safety even though it has not been grade-separated. If traffic volumes increase beyond forecast levels in the future or safety issues arise, then the need for grade-separation at this location will be re-evaluated.

Believes RTA statistics show that on the Pacific Highway vehicles leaving the road is a higher cause of accidents than head-ons.

Response – While this may be the case in general, on rural roads such as the Pacific Highway, head-on crashes are probably more likely to involve fatalities in greater numbers than other types of accidents. Head-on accidents are therefore considered to be a significant problem, that can best be addressed by the provision of dual carriageways.

Existing Ross Glen Road intersection has never been a problem due to enough gaps in traffic. Believes upgrade will be an improvement. However, is concerned that there will be a problem with conflicts with the rest area.

Response – As discussed previously, the Ross Glen Road intersection has been sited to ensure that there is adequate clearance between it and the rest area.

Concerned about the ability of the Herons Creek Road intersection to cater for B-doubles – particularly if more than one need to queue. Also concerned that Boral Timber was not notified of future service road acquisitions (Egberts access) and was concerned about the potential impacts on the recently completed multi-million dollar upgrade of the mill.

Response – The Herons Creek Road intersection in the EIS definitely includes median storage for B-doubles. However this is only conceptual and the proposed intersection will be reviewed during the detailed design phase based on the traffic volumes and intersection warrants at that time.

The current acquisition area for a possible future local access road south of the timber mill ends at the southern boundary of the mill property. No decision has been made on the provision of service roads in this area. This matter would be looked at

separately by the RTA when and if a warrant is identified for the provision of service roads. The current acquisition area was based on what the RTA would reasonably require for the construction of the proposal, along with adequate provision for the connection of a number of property access points in the future into one to improve safety as traffic volumes rise.

If there is a need to connect this proposal for a local access road through to Herons Creek Road in the future, then the RTA would have to investigate the options available in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including Boral Timber, at that time. The RTA's current proposal does not require the acquisition of any land from the main Boral Timber mill block at this time.

Advised that a Sydney developer was proposing a transport depot on land to the west of the Eggberts Farm and are also seeking access to the highway – potentially via the Eggberts Farm access.

A Development Application (DA) would have to be submitted to Council for any activities such as a transport depot. The RTA would have the opportunity to provide input to Council for such a DA, especially with regard to access proposals, road safety and the impacts that the development may have on the highway. If the proposal affected the traffic flow or safety of the highway, the Developer may be required to upgrade the proposed intersection point or provide an alternative access arrangement at their own cost.

Supports the potential option of closing the Herons Creek Road intersection and constructing a service road to an upgraded Bago Road intersection.

Should merge the two projects together, including the provision of new bridges at Herons Creek.

Response – The RTA current design is based on future forecast traffic growth. As result, the proposed intersection treatment should function safely well into the future, providing there are no dramatic changes in traffic flows or known traffic generators in this area. If any changes such as these occur in the future, the proposed intersection treatment would have to be re-evaluated. The intersection and median width design definitely included consideration of use by B-Doubles.

The CFG members were encouraged to make submissions to the EIS on these or any other issues of concern, as the Minister for Planning and the RTA will take the issues raised into account when approving the project and finalising the design.

B Kew Bypass and Interchanges

The alternative options for the Kew interchange were placed on display and an evaluation of the process and decision in this matter is included in the EIS. The final decision was that the original option for the interchange layout was preferred due to the additional cost of the alternative option and the fact that significant benefits could not be identified for the additional cost of the alternative option.

Discussion:

Thought the cut material would have been enough to enable the 2nd option to be built economically.

Response – the two additional bridges were the main causes of the increase in cost. The cost impact versus the additional traffic it would deliver to Kew was not significant enough to

warrant the additional expenditure.

The Chamber of Commerce is disappointed and may wish to challenge this decision.

Response – That is the reason for a submissions period, so that people can raise issues that they are concerned about. It is suggested that any submission should include details of why the decision is considered to be flawed and give details of alternative solutions.

The community does not have the resources to give concrete arguments, they can only give reasoned/logical opinions.

Response – The RTA must respond to any issues raised. However, it would be more beneficial if the submission contains information on the reasons for the objection and suitable alternatives to improve the proposal.

Does the bridge design include provision to stop rocks being thrown onto traffic below.

Response – This is a matter for the detailed design, but a mesh protection fence is included on those over bridges that may be accessible to pedestrians as a standard procedure.

Questioned requirements for sufficient median separation for safety given the grade separation on the Kew Bypass

Response – This would be reviewed during the final design phase.

What is the design of the Kew gateway sign?

Response – This will be resolved during the final design phase in consultation with Council and the community. However, there are set standards that apply to the design of signposting.

C Johns River

The only change to the previously displayed layout is the intersection arrangement for Bulleys Road.

Is provision made at Wharf Road for semi-trailers that access Gibsons Engineering and the timber mill?

Response – This is a Council issue as the current proposal does not change the existing arrangements for Wharf Road.

D Other Issues

1. Noise – A number of residences are affected. The EIS identifies a suite of proposed mitigation measures. Finalisation of the actual measures will be determined in the final design phase in consultation with the affected land-owners.
The design requirements were discussed and it was confirmed that they would take into account the latest data on traffic volumes and truck numbers. B-triples were not considered as they are not approved for use in NSW.
2. Vegetation – vegetation removal minimised as much as possible with total loss of 64ha, 38ha in the road reserve and 26ha in adjacent land. This vegetation was considered to have low to moderate habitat value, although it is recognised that there will be an increase in edge effects. The project will not significantly affect threatened species, populations or communities, or their habitats. No SIS or referral under Federal legislation is required.
3. Visual – Urban Design and Landscape Design was developed in parallel with the concept design. There has been an increasing emphasis on this aspect by RTA, particularly with regard to replanting local native species for landscaping and the design of structures to match the existing environment and structures.

The Design, Construct and Maintain (DCM) contractor will

produce a final design within the boundaries of the project, the project approval, the Contract documents and the requirements of relevant government agencies. The landscaping design must also take account of ongoing maintenance issues.

4. Local Businesses – Highway related trade at Kew and Johns River was recognised. With the reduction in highway traffic through these towns, it is acknowledged that there will be a negative impact. To some extent this impact will be off-set by the design of the proposal, as well as future planning by Council and the community to deal with the changed circumstances.

Discussion:

Ocean Drive is a major road – who will look after it?

Response – Council will retain the responsibility for the maintenance of Ocean Drive.

Who will be responsible for the old highway through Kew?

Response – the responsibility for the current highway through Kew would be handed over to Council. The RTA will meet with Council to discuss and agree the handover of this section of road to Council before the handover takes place, looking at issues like the pavement condition and the need for traffic lights at the Ocean Drive intersection. Council should now be able to review their requirements and proposals for the Kew CBD area.

Council has not led on this issue, with only one meeting in 18 months.

Response – it is possible that Council is waiting on a final determination of the project before undertaking further work on this issue.

What will be the future intersection treatment at Ocean Drive.

Response — Council and the RTA will have to consider the actual traffic volumes when determining the final design for this intersection. It is likely that a roundabout would suffice here, however Council and community will have an input in the decision on the most suitable treatment. The probable traffic volumes and operating costs are not likely to warrant traffic lights here. A roundabout with its traffic calming affect may be more suitable than traffic lights or give-way/stop signs with a fixed directional priority. Traffic signals cost in the order of \$500,000/annum to maintain, which needs to be part of consideration.

Prefer raised median to fried egg roundabout. Also Traffic calming on Ocean Drive by Council may change traffic flows via Pacific & Oxley Highways to Port Macquarie rather than via Laurieton.

Is there enough room for a roundabout?

Response – Yes, with the reduction in traffic volumes there would be adequate room to construct a round-about in this location.

Will the RTA construct the round-about as part of the Pacific Highway upgrade?

Response – this would be subject to negotiations with Council as part of the handover package.

Will the design consider proposed development in Kendall? It must also be able to cater for semi trailers to service the needs of local businesses and the community.

Response – the design adopted would take account of future traffic volumes and movements.

5. Property Access – the access arrangements were developed following earlier consultation with land-owners. There is no provision for median cross-overs at most access points. Access arrangements are generally limited to left-in/left-out movements only because of the increasing traffic volumes and safety concerns. U-turn facilities are provided at regular spacing to allow for movements in the opposite direction.
6. Flooding – no significant impact. The new highway would be above the 1:100 year level.

4 Discussion

All

Informal discussion held at end of the meeting whilst viewing plans and the EIS.

5 Next Steps

Roger Fenner

Approvals (6-12 month process)

- EIS on display to 5 August 2005
- Receive representations from community and other government agencies
- RTA to consider all representations in a Representations Report – prepared by another section of RTA.
- Submitted to DIPNR with EIS seeking approval from the Minister.
- Minister/DIPNR assess the EIS and Representations Report and can ask for more information – RTA responds (new data, change in design, etc)
- Minister makes a decision – can approve with Conditions of Approval.

Suggested that paper be provided at the displays to allow immediate noting of issues whilst reviewing the EIS.

Response – will consider but the display sites are not staffed so there is concern about the security of submissions and the perception that the RTA does not influence submissions by providing proforma response forms. There is also the requirement that representations must be made in writing to a specific address.

Pre-Construction

- Decision on the funding and programming of the project.
- Detailed design (including more survey, investigations, geotechnical, etc) to determine how much property is required.
- Property acquisition under Land Acquisition (Just Terms) Compensation Act 1991
- Negotiations based on property valuation by RTA Valuers, with an option to obtain an independent valuation at the RTA's cost
- Compulsory Acquisition if agreement can not be reached.

Construction

- Call tender and award a Contract for the work
- Form a Community Liaison Group (CLG)
- Commence Construction

6 CFG

Helen Weston

The work of this CFG finishes up by the end of the approvals process, and it is replaced by a Community Liaison Group for the construction phase of the project as mentioned previously.

However, as there will be no new information that can be discussed with the CFG until the project is approved, it is unlikely that there will be another meeting with this group until that time. Unless major modifications to the project are required, a meeting will be called with the CFG following the approval of the project to inform you of the decision and dissolve the group.

If design changes are proposed due to representations will the CFG be informed?

Response – modifications of the Proposal in the EIS may have to be exhibited in the form of a Preferred Activity Report if they are significant. The CFG would probably be informed of the modification either by letter or advertisement.

7 Next Meeting

Helen Weston

The members will be contacted by the Project Team when there is a need for another meeting.

8 Conclusion and close of meeting

Helen Weston
