

## INTRODUCTION

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is proposing to upgrade approximately 22 km of the Pacific Highway between Moorland and Herons Creek as part of the NSW Government's \$1.6 billion commitment to the 10-year Pacific Highway Upgrading Program.

Upgrading of this section of the highway will contribute to the objectives of the program in terms of road safety and efficient movement of traffic. This newsletter will bring you up-to-date on project activities and let you know what will be happening over the next few months.

## PROJECT UPDATE

### *Feedback on the Route Options Display*

The route options display, held at several venues in the project area between 8 May and 1 June 2001, was very successful. The display was very well attended, particularly when members of the project team were present. In response to the display, 107 submissions were received. The origin of the submissions was as follows:

• Kendall	24
• Laurieton	20
• Johns River	13
• Kew	12
• Herons Creek	7
• Elsewhere	31

The key issues raised in the submissions were:

• Social and business effects	21%
• Noise and vibration	13%
• Land/property acquisition	10%
• Safety	8%
• Planning and land use	8%
• Property or local access	8%
• Engineering design	7%
• Visual impacts and urban design	5%

In response to some specific issues raised in the submissions, the project team has already met with a number of potentially affected property owners, and further environmental and engineering investigations are being undertaken to try to address these issues.

### *About the Value Management Workshop*

A Value Management Workshop was held on 24 and 25 July at Port Macquarie. The objectives of this workshop were:

- to obtain further input from a range of stakeholders on the proposed upgrade options,
- to identify any significant problems with the upgrade options,
- to suggest ideas to overcome these problems,
- to identify any additional investigations required in relation to these ideas, and
- to ensure that NSW State Government requirements are satisfied.

Representatives of State and Local government agencies, groups such as the NRMA, and the local communities attended the workshop. The project team is currently examining the wide range of suggested improvements and amendments from this workshop for possible incorporation into the options.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

### *Evaluating the route options*

The RTA is now documenting and evaluating the route options. All options will be compared and evaluated according to the assessment criteria developed for this particular project. This assessment will assist RTA to identify and recommend a preferred option for the project.

### **Undertaking ecological surveys**

Although a preferred option for the Moorland to Herons Creek upgrade is not expected to be decided until early next year, it is important for the RTA to undertake some ecological surveys during November 2001.

The reason is that Spring is the best season to conduct surveys of most terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna. During Spring, a majority of terrestrial flora species are identifiable and most reproductive activity occurs in fish and macroinvertebrates (large species without a backbone).

These surveys will be conducted throughout the study area and the information collected will assist in the study process.

It is important to note that these surveys will cover the range of options and will not indicate the adoption of a particular option as the preferred route.

The project team will contact property owners in advance, where access is required to conduct these surveys. If you have any concerns or wish to discuss the surveys with a team member, please phone the freecall hotline on 1800 353 670.

These surveys will be sufficiently detailed to support the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). However, some additional surveys will be required at a later date to ensure seasonal coverage of the terrestrial and aquatic habitats affected by the proposal, once a preferred route has been selected.

## **LAND ACQUISITION**

In response to community concerns during and after the route options display, the key elements of the RTA's Land Acquisition policy are presented below.

The RTA is authorised under the *Roads Act 1993* to acquire land required for road development purposes. The RTA acquires land in accordance with the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*.

While this Act provides for compulsory acquisition, RTA generally acquires land through negotiated purchase with the owners. The RTA generally does not purchase land in advance of the announcement of the 'preferred option' for any proposed roadworks.

The RTA generally buys property for roadworks in one of the following ways.

- **Owner-initiated acquisition after announcement of the preferred route but before final determination of the route**

Where owners of land potentially affected by a 'preferred option' are unsuccessful in selling their property on the open market because of the effect of the road proposal and are experiencing hardship as a result, they can request consideration of acquisition by RTA. While there is no obligation for RTA to proceed with such acquisitions it will consider these applications, subject to the availability of funds for property acquisitions.

Acquisitions made under these circumstances are made in accordance with the 'hardship' provisions of the Act. The criteria for 'hardship' are set out in the Act and cover the need to sell for pressing personal or social reasons or to avoid a loss in income. The RTA's basis for assessing payment in hardship matters is market value unaffected by road proposals. No payments in addition to unaffected market value are made by the RTA in these circumstances. Each party is responsible for its own costs.

- **Owner-initiated acquisition under the 'hardship' provisions of the Act where the EIS has been exhibited, the project has been approved and the land has been designated for future roadworks**

Where owners are unsuccessful in selling their property on the open market if some or all of it is designated for acquisition for roadworks and are experiencing hardship as a result, they can request acquisition by RTA under the 'hardship' provisions of the Act. The criteria for 'hardship' are set out in the Act. The RTA's basis for assessing payment in hardship matters is market value unaffected by road proposals. No payments in addition to unaffected market value are made by RTA in these circumstances. Each party is responsible for its own costs.

- **RTA-initiated acquisition after the EIS has been exhibited, the project has been approved and the land has been designated for roadworks and in preparation for roadworks**

Where land is required for road construction in relation to an approved project, RTA will initiate acquisition.

If RTA has initiated acquisition, its basis for assessing payment is consideration of:

- market value unaffected by road proposals
- special value
- severance
- disturbance
- solatium (compensation amount)
- any increase or decrease in the value of adjoining or severed land.

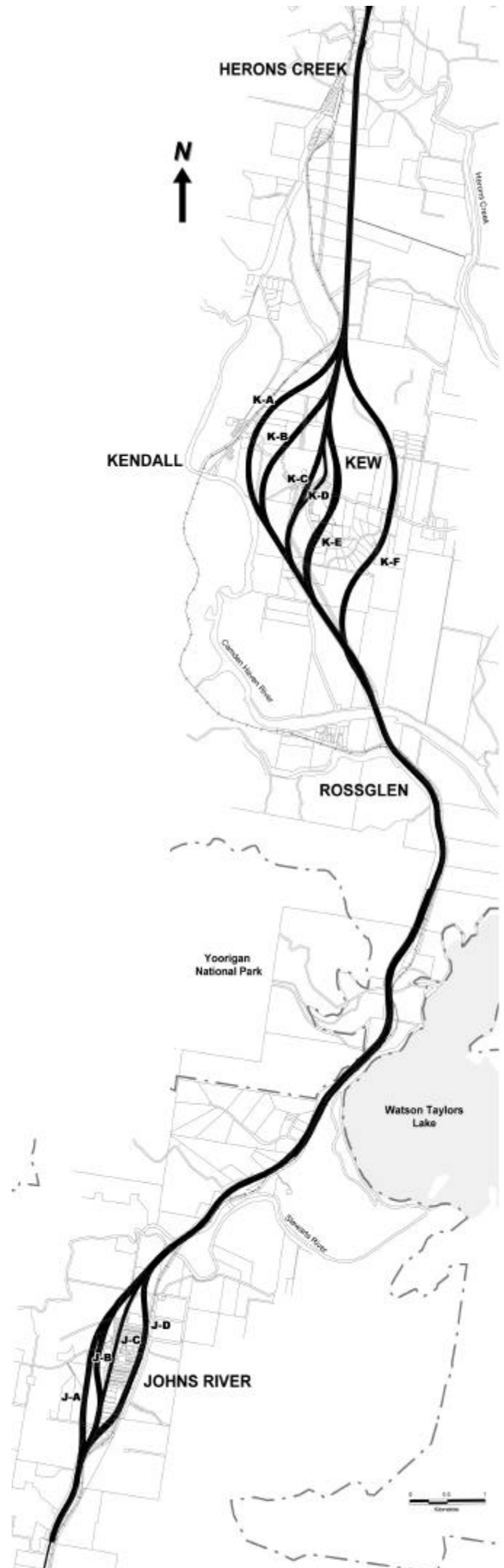
In these circumstances, RTA will reimburse valuation fees, should the land owner wish to obtain a valuation that is independent from that provided by RTA's valuer.

The RTA will also reimburse conveyancing costs up to a maximum amount to be advised to the owner following RTA's assessment of the compensation applicable to the particular acquisition.

A copy of RTA's Land Acquisition policy is available, at no cost, on request.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

After the announcement of the preferred option (which is expected early next year), there will be another public display and an opportunity for community comment. Issues raised by the community will be considered during the further development and refinement of the concept design and preparation of the EIS for the preferred option. Under some circumstances, a Species Impact Statement (SIS) may also be required. The EIS (and SIS, if required) will also be exhibited for public comment.



## WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If you have any queries, or would like to be included on the mailing list to receive further newsletters and information about the project, please call the project freecall number 1800 353 670 or visit the project website at [www.arup.com.au/moorland](http://www.arup.com.au/moorland) or the RTA website at [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.htm](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.htm). Comments from the community are welcome at any time throughout the project.

Any written comments and suggestions relating to the project may be sent to:

**Community Liaison Manager**

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or

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**FREECALL 1800 353 670**