

INTRODUCTION

Moorland to Herons Creek is a key project in the NSW Government's \$1.6 billion Pacific Highway Upgrading Program.

This newsletter outlines the preferred option and explains where you can view it. It also explains how you can comment on the proposal before the concept design is finalised and the environmental assessment is undertaken.

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) values the important part community consultation plays in the development of the project and will carefully consider all public comment made.

SELECTING THE PREFERRED OPTION

Moorland to Herons Creek was identified for the need to improve road safety, provide more overtaking opportunities and increase transport efficiency.

A range of options to improve the route was publicly displayed in May 2001 and the community was invited to comment. A Value Management Workshop including community representatives was held in July 2001. Engineering and environmental investigations were undertaken.

The RTA's objective is to deliver a cost-effective project in a timely manner, while minimising the effect on traffic, the environment and the community as a whole. To that end, criteria considered when evaluating feasible route options included:

- Traffic and transportation
- Engineering
- Economic implications
- Ecologically sustainable development/ environmental impact
- Land use and strategic planning
- Community issues

THE PREFERRED OPTION

Subject to environmental studies and obtaining project approval, the RTA proposes to upgrade 22 kilometres of the Pacific Highway between Moorland and Herons Creek to dual carriageway.

Option K-E at Kew and Option J-A at Johns River were identified as the preferred options.

The preferred option would:

- Duplicate the existing highway on the western side of the route for 1.2 km from Camp Obadiah at Moorland north to Johns River.
- Construct a bypass to the west of Johns River with access to Johns River via a staggered-T junction at Stewarts River Road and a new bridge to be built west of the existing bridge over the Stewarts River (Option J-A).
- Duplicate the highway immediately to the west of the existing carriageway, from north of the Stewarts River to north of the Camden Haven River.
- Construct new bridges to the west of existing bridges over the North Coast Railway and the Camden Haven River.
- Duplicate the highway to the west of the existing carriageway from north of the Camden Haven River to south of Kew.
- Construct a bypass to the east of Kew with an overpass over the new highway at Ocean Drive (Option K-E). The bypass would reconnect with the existing highway to the north of Ocean Drive.
- Provide a northbound exit, which would allow traffic access to Kew, Kendall and areas west of Kew, via Kendall Road. Laurieton and other coastal areas to the east of Kew would be accessible via Ocean Drive.
- Provide for northbound traffic leaving Kew to be able to enter the new road via the existing Pacific Highway.
- Include interchange ramps at Ocean Drive which would allow southbound traffic leaving and entering the highway to access Kew or destinations to the east of the highway.
- Duplicate the highway mostly to the east of the existing carriageway from north of Ocean Drive to north of Herons Creek Road, with new bridges to be built to the west over the Herons Creek Floodway and Herons Creek.

The RTA believes that this option represents the best overall outcome for the local community. It will provide motorists with a safer and more accessible road as well as reducing travel times and traffic congestion.



HOW YOU CAN COMMENT

The preferred option for the proposed Moorland to Herons Creek upgrade will be displayed from 25 March to 26 April 2002. Locations and times for the display are highlighted below. Project representatives will be on hand to answer your questions during all periods marked with an asterisk (*). Information on display will be:

- A preferred option plan outlining the approximate proposed new road boundaries
- Details of the carriageways, interchanges, intersections, earthworks and proposed arrangements for local access.
- Discussion of key road safety, efficiency, environmental, social, engineering and construction issues.

Community comment is now invited on all aspects of the preferred option. Written submissions should be forwarded by Friday 26 April 2002, to the Community Liaison Manager.

HOW YOU CAN STAY INVOLVED

Community comment will continue to be an important part of this project's development. Other consultation activities include:

- Further meetings with affected landowners to discuss the impact of the project and any land acquisitions required.
- More Community Focus Group meetings at Kew and Johns River.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Two community focus groups (CFGs) were established for Kew and Johns River early on in the process. The CFGs were established following a call for public nominations and their membership represents a cross section of their respective communities.

CFG meetings allow each member to provide important input into the project development. CFG members provide a communication link between the local community and the project team. While CFG members are not decision-makers for key aspects of the project, the input from the CFGs is vital to ensure the best overall outcome for the community.

The wider community is encouraged to contact CFG members if they want a specific issue raised or they can call the RTA directly through the hotline.

**Freecall
1800 353 670**

Display locations and times

Town	Venue	Dates and Times
Kew	Visitor Information Centre Pacific Highway, Kew	9.00am to 5.00pm, 7 days per week *2.00pm to 7.00pm, Wednesday 3 April 2002 *2.00pm to 7.00pm, Thursday 11 April 2002
Johns River	Johns River Community Hall	9.00am to 5.00pm, 7 days per week *2.00pm to 7.00pm, Thursday 4 April 2002
Laurieton	Laurieton Library Laurie Street, Laurieton	9.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12 noon, Saturday
Taree	RTA Motor Registry 7 Macquarie Street, Taree	8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm, Saturday
Port Macquarie	RTA Motor Registry Corner Central Road and Barton Crescent, Port Macquarie	8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm, Saturday
Wauchope	RTA Motor Registry Corner Young and Hastings Streets, Wauchope	8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm, Saturday
Grafton	RTA Pacific Highway Office 21 Prince Street, Grafton	8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The preferred option will now be refined. To do this, the RTA and the project team will carefully consider all community responses and suggested improvements to the preferred option. Additional specialist investigations and assessments will be carried out to help refine the concept design and prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

A Species Impact Statement (SIS) may also be needed to determine the potential impact of the preferred option on threatened flora and fauna species (aquatic and terrestrial). If a SIS is necessary, it will be prepared at the same time as the EIS.

The EIS (and SIS) is expected to be exhibited next year for further comment.

WHO YOU CAN CONTACT

If you need more information, wish to discuss issues of concern with a member of the project team, or would like to be included on a mailing list to receive further newsletters and information, please call the project freecall number, 1800 353 670 or visit the RTA website at:

www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.htm

Comments from the community are welcome at any time throughout the development of the project. Written comments and suggestions may be sent to:

Community Liaison Manager

Mr Tony McNamara
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Port Macquarie NSW 2444
Telephone: 02 6584 7155
Email: tonymcnamara@erm.com.au
or

RTA Project Development Manager

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PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADING PROGRAM

The Pacific Highway Upgrading is the single largest construction program in NSW for the last 40 years. Twenty major projects and eighteen smaller projects have been opened to traffic. Five major construction projects are underway – including Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway, Karuah Bypass, Halfway Creek realignment, Cooperook Bypass and Taree to Cooperook upgrade. A further fourteen projects are at various stages of planning and development including the Moorland to Herons Creek and Kempsey to Eungai upgrades.

The program has brought enormous improvements to road conditions and travel times. From 1997 to 2001, travel times between Hexham and the Queensland border have been reduced by around 20 minutes for passenger vehicles and half an hour for heavy vehicles. Notorious black spots have been removed with the completion of the Bulahdelah to Coolongolook Freeway, Taree Bypass, Raleigh Deviation and Ewingsdale Interchange.

As well as boosting tourism and transport efficiency, the upgrading program has provided safer and more consistent overtaking opportunities, saving lives and reducing the number of serious injury accidents.

