

6 Working Paper

Sikh Cultural Assessment

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE – SAPPHIRE TO WOOLGOOLGA

Cultural impact assessment
August 2007



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conclusion of the cultural impact assessment is that the Pacific Highway Upgrade – Sapphire to Woolgoolga (hereafter referred to as the Proposal), would not have a significant impact on the cultural heritage or social cohesion of the Woolgoolga Sikh community. The assessment concludes that a number of impacts have the potential to create indirect negative cultural impacts for the local Sikh community; however these can be managed through mitigation measures developed in consultation with those property owners directly affected by the Proposal. This assessment recommends that these management measures recognise the importance of ensuring agricultural based employment continue in the local area for those individuals impacted by the Proposal, including those who are indirectly impacted (that is, those individuals who are not the actual owners of impacted properties but are reliant on them for employment).

The assessment's conclusion is based predominantly on the Proposal's potential impact on local employment of Sikh community members that may occur through direct and/or indirect impacts on local farm properties. Based on the factual data presented in *The Impact on Agricultural Lands of Pacific Highway Upgrade: Sapphire to Woolgoolga* (the Agricultural Report), the actual number of farms *severely* or *critically* impacted by the Proposal is not substantial and does not pose an irreversible (or unmitigated) threat to the overall cohesion of the community. A number of properties are also affected to a lesser degree (*moderate* or *minor*) however the Agricultural Report finds that the farms would still be economically sustainable. The number and level of impact has also been considered in the context of the total number of Sikh owned agricultural properties. The data is as follows:

- There are ten *severely to critically* impacted Sikh owned properties.
- Two of the owners of severely to critically impacted properties have additional property that is not severely impacted by the Proposal.
- Six other Sikh owned agricultural properties are impacted to a lesser degree (*moderate* or *minor* impact).
- Approximately 183 agricultural properties in the area owned by people of Indian heritage.¹
- Four residences are located on three of the ten *severely to critically* impacted agricultural properties owned by Sikhs. Only two of these residences would need to be acquired by the RTA for the proposal.

This data forms the factual evidence to support the assessment's findings. While a number of community consultation activities were undertaken and much information was collected through this process, this information provided widely conflicting views regarding the possible cultural impacts of the Proposal. These views include those individuals that were supportive of the Proposal and those that were strongly opposed.

The primary contention made by a number of community members, (who were not supportive of the Proposal), was that the social cohesion and cultural strength of the community was threatened due to job losses that would result from the Proposal. Some feedback from the community suggested that

¹ This information was provided by the Department of Agriculture and is as accurate a picture as can be ascertained regarding Sikh property ownership.

these job losses would be far-reaching, that the collective buying/bargaining strength of the farmers would be damaged and that women, in particular, would be disadvantaged. The overall result, it was suggested, would be that community members would be forced to leave the local area in search of employment, and/or become reliant on Australian government welfare payments. Both options were considered unacceptable from a cultural and community perspective.

Not all community members shared this view. Many indicated the Proposal had no cultural impacts at all.

The assessment does not dispute the assertion that the links to local land and farms are culturally important and that any significant threat to land may lead to a demise in the community's cohesion and cultural strength. The assessment is based on both the feedback gained through the consultation process and the data presented in the Agricultural Report (cited above). Using both sources of information, the conclusion is that only a small percentage of families would be impacted by the Proposal and that significant migration from the area is unlikely to result. This conclusion is drawn while being aware of the extended family networks that work on the farms.

2 BACKGROUND ²

2.1 About the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program

In January 1996 the NSW and Australian governments announced a joint commitment to a 10 year program to upgrade the Pacific Highway between Hexham and the Queensland border. As at the end of July 2007, a total of 263 kilometres was double-lane divided road. The remaining kilometres of highway are under construction, have been approved for construction or have had a preferred route identified.

The Pacific Highway is an AusLink National Network road. Its upgrading is funded by the NSW and Australian governments. This represents an investment of \$2.3 billion to June 2006. The NSW government has contributed around \$1.66 billion and the Australian Government has contributed around \$660 million.

In December 2005, the NSW and Australian governments announced a jointly funded program of \$960 million for the three years to 2009. In May 2006, the NSW and Australian governments announced an additional \$320 million in joint funding for the period to the end of 2009.

Both governments are jointly examining how the entire length of the Pacific Highway can be upgraded to dual carriageway in the next 10 years. The objectives of the Pacific Highway Upgrade Program are to:

- Significantly reduce road accidents and injuries.
- Reduce travel times.
- Reduce freight transport costs.
- Develop a route that involves the community and considers their interests.
- Provide a route that supports economic development.
- Manage the upgrading of the route in accordance with Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles.
- Provide the best value for money.

2.2 About the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Proposal

The Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy (the Strategy) is being developed to address the need to upgrade the Pacific Highway between Sapphire and Woolgoolga (the Proposal) while planning for future traffic needs within the Coffs Harbour area.

Since planning for the Strategy began in September 2001, a wide range of potential road corridors and route options have been investigated. These have included options developed by the Proposal team and options put forward by Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) and the community.

The options investigated for the Strategy fall within three broad strategic corridors:

² This section has been provided by the RTA.

- Far Western Bypass. A bypass of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga through the Orara Valley from Englands Road south of Coffs Harbour to Halfway Creek or Grafton.
- CHCC Preferred Corridor. Options within a corridor adopted by CHCC in late 2003 as its preferred option for a bypass of Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga.
- Coastal Corridor. Options along the coastal plain between Englands Road south of Coffs Harbour and Arrawarra Creek north of Woolgoolga, with a future extension to Halfway Creek.

The assessment of the three broad strategic corridor options found that the Coastal Corridor was the most feasible option. The Sapphire to Woolgoolga Proposal comprises the northern section of the Coastal Corridor. The assessment and selection of the preferred route for the CHHPS is detailed in the *Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy. Preferred Option Report Connell Wagner (2004)*.

The preferred route for the Strategy, including the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section, was announced on 7 December 2004. The preferred route for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section of the upgrade involves:

- An upgrade of the existing highway to dual carriageway between Korora and south Woolgoolga.
- The Option E bypass of Woolgoolga.

Since the announcement of the preferred route for the Proposal, the RTA has conducted further studies and field investigations, such as geotechnical, flora and fauna and socio-economic studies. The studies form the basis of the Environmental Assessment (EA) that has been prepared as part of an application to the NSW Department of Planning for approval of the Proposal.

2.3 About the community consultation for the Proposal

Consultation with the Woolgoolga community (general)

An extensive consultation and stakeholder involvement program has been implemented for the Proposal that has involved ongoing communication and consultation with the local community and other diverse stakeholders since the Proposal began in September 2001. The program has included the following key activities:

- Widespread distribution of seven information brochures (community updates) at key milestones between September 2001 and November 2006.
- Widespread distribution of a Progress Update in April 2005 and a Letter to Residents in August 2006.
- Advertised open information sessions and public displays (both static and staffed displays).
- Meetings with and presentations to local interest groups.
- Formation of and regular meetings with the two Community Focus Groups (CFGs) for the development of the Proposal.
- Interviews / meetings with relevant stakeholders including property owners and local businesses.
- Public notices and media coverage (print and electronic).
- Two Value Management Workshops and a Value Engineering Workshop with diverse agency and community representation.
- Formation of a contact database on which members of the public were able to register to receive community updates.

- Provision of a freecall telephone enquiry line for direct enquiries to the Proposal team.
- Establishment and frequent updating of a Proposal website including email address.
- Invitations for written submissions and completion of survey forms by individuals and interest groups.

The community involvement program and the outcomes of the program are documented within a number of reports prepared during the Strategy development process (see Pramax Communications 2002a 2002b 2003 2004a 2004b, Connell Wagner November 2004).

Consultation with the Woolgoolga area Sikh community

The Community Involvement Plan (CIP) for the upgrade identified the Sikh community as a significant community group and identified communications activities targeted specifically to engage the community in the consultation process. The CIP incorporates advice received from discussions with the coordinator of the Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre who is a member of the local Sikh community.

Specific involvement with the Sikh community has included:

- Letters written to both Sikh Temples in Woolgoolga on 13 September 2001 to advise the community of the Proposal and to seek approval to erect displays at the temples.
- Information sessions / presentations provided at the two Sikh Temples in Woolgoolga in December 2001.
- Distribution of the seven information brochures (community updates), Progress Update and Letter to Residents to the 72 Sikh property owners identified as registered on the contact database.
- Community display posters produced at Proposal milestones have been translated into Punjabi and placed on display at both Sikh temples in Woolgoolga and at the Woolgoolga Neighbourhood Centre. At the suggestion of a member of the Sikh community, the display poster for the preferred route was also displayed in the waiting room of a Sikh doctor's surgery in Woolgoolga.
- Letters were written to both Sikh temples on 19 February 2004 advising of the release of Community Update No.4 which provided information on the new and revised options for Woolgoolga – Options C1 and E. The letter also advised that copies of the Community Update would be delivered to the temples for distribution to community members.
- From the commencement of the community involvement process, there have been positions for two representatives of the Sikh community on the Woolgoolga Community Focus Group (CFG). As with other members of the CFG, if attendance by the Sikh representatives at the CFG meetings became irregular, the Sikh representatives were contacted to ascertain if they wanted to continue to attend the meetings or identify replacement representatives. After the preferred route was selected, all representatives on the CFGs (including the Sikh representatives) were contacted to ascertain if they wished to continue their membership. A separate request for three additional Sikh representatives on the CFG was also approved.
- Throughout the development of the Strategy, there has been at least one representative of the Sikh community on the Woolgoolga CFG at any time. At least 1 representative of the Sikh community has attended 12 of the 21 meetings held by the CFG.
- At this time, four out of a total of 14 representatives on the Woolgoolga CFG were members of the Sikh community.
- The Proposal team has held numerous meetings with individual property owners who are members of the Sikh community.

- Two Value Management Workshops have been held for the Proposal, to which representatives of the Sikh community were invited. A member of the Sikh Community attended the first workshop in April 2003 as a representative of the banana growing industry. An invitation was issued to a member of the Sikh community to represent the banana growing industry at the second workshop in August 2004 but the representative did not attend.
- There has been a standing offer for members of the Proposal team to meet with the wider community and contact details are advertised in the community updates and on display material.
- Meetings have also been held with 13 individual Sikh property owners, in many instances, on more than 1 occasion.

The community will have the opportunity to provide further comment on the Environmental Assessment for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga upgrade during the public exhibition period.

Feedback from the Woolgoolga community (general)

Much of the feedback throughout the development of the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy and the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Proposal has been from stakeholders potentially directly affected or nearby the various corridors and routes. As corridor and route options have been excluded, responses from stakeholders potentially directly affected or nearby those corridors or routes have significantly declined. Relatively few responses have been received from environmental groups and stakeholders not potentially directly affected or nearby the corridors and routes.

The issues consistently raised by respondents since the launch of the Strategy in September 2001 have been:

- Property impacts, for example the area of land required for the Proposal and access arrangements.
- Socio-economic impacts, for example the impact on agricultural activities and on future development of the Coffs Harbour / Woolgoolga area.
- Long term role of the proposed upgrade.
- Traffic noise and vibration impacts and concerns about the ability to mitigate them.
- Air quality impacts.
- Road safety impacts.

Some over-arching issues related to the Pacific Highway or transport industry have also been raised by respondents. These have included:

- An increase in heavy vehicle movements, particularly B-doubles, since the opening of the full length of the Pacific Highway to B-double vehicles in August 2002 and associated noise, air quality and road safety issues from the mix of local and through traffic.
- The ability of the various options assessed to serve as a functional bypass for many years.
- Obtaining more Federal Government funding for the Pacific Highway, particularly through it gaining national highway status.
- Encouraging more freight to be transported by rail.
- The ability of the various options to allow for urban expansion in a growing regional area.

The above feedback is the result of responses to questions on the 'Have Your Say' survey forms as well as written submissions. Because it is based on data from those individuals who have elected to respond, it cannot be considered as a valid or statistically representative survey of the area.

3 ABOUT THE CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction

Following a meeting with the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW in September 2005, the RTA agreed to undertake an assessment of the potential impact of the Proposal on the cultural and heritage values of the local Sikh community as part of the Environmental Assessment (EA). The scope of the assessment included investigation of mitigation options to reduce the potential impact of the Proposal on the Sikh community.

In March 2006, the RTA engaged Manidis Roberts to undertake the assessment.

3.2 What is a cultural impact assessment?

An impact assessment may be described as the process of identifying the potential consequences of a current or proposed action. In this instance, the impacts or consequences of the proposed upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Sapphire and Woolgoolga are being assessed in relation to cultural values, specifically the cultural heritage of the Woolgoolga Sikh community.

While the concept of assessing the environmental implications of development Proposals is widely understood, cultural impacts are less often understood or investigated. Assessment of cultural impacts is a more subjective process and is not an exact science.

Cultural impact may be thought of as the consequences to a community of any policies or actions that significantly change a community's norms, values, beliefs, practices, institutions as well as the way they live, work, socialise and organise themselves as part of their cultural life.

3.3 Objectives of the assessment

The objectives of the cultural impact assessment were to:

- Identify and assess the potential cultural impact of the Proposal on the Woolgoolga Sikh community. This includes both positive and negative impacts.
- Identify possible mitigation measures to minimise any potential impacts.

The scope of the assessment does not include re-visiting the selection of Option E as the preferred route for the bypass of Woolgoolga. This was re-iterated to the community members involved in the consultation activities.

3.4 Methodology

A number of activities were undertaken during the assessment. These included both community consultation and research. Both are described below.

Community consultation

The consultation program for the assessment consisted of six key activities which are described below.

- *Activity 1:* Informal discussion with members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community at the first Sikh Temple on Sunday 30 April 2006. Flyers were provided to community representatives advising them of the activity prior to 30 April 2006.
- *Activity 2:* Discussion with members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community from the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple on 7 May 2006. Flyers were provided to community representatives advising them of the activity prior to 7 May 2006.
- *Activity 3:* Individual meetings with members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community scheduled for 8 May 2006.
- *Activity 4:* A (small) discussion group meeting. While the event took place, with approximately 45 individuals attending, representatives from the community rejected the proposed format and did not participate. The community requested the opportunity to submit comments/feedback in writing.
- *Revised approach – activity 5:* Community representatives were invited to provide comment on the potential impacts of the preferred route by 28 July 2006. Additional presentations were made to the two Sikh temples to explain the revised approach. Two submissions were received, one from the Sikh Community and another from the First Sikh Temple.
- *Proposed consultation during the display of the Environmental Assessment:* The assessment report will be included in the EA for the Proposal which will be placed on display for community information and comment. Presentations will be offered to both Sikh temples in conjunction with the display of the EA.

To achieve the objectives of the cultural impact assessment a consultation plan was developed in collaboration with the RTA. The consultation plan described the approach to be taken with regards to consultation activities with the local Sikh community.

The RTA provided the contact details for key community representatives within the Woolgoolga Sikh community. These representatives helped to facilitate communication with the wider Sikh community through their association with the two Sikh temples.

The Manidis Roberts project manager undertaking the cultural impact assessment made initial telephone contact with community representatives which were followed up with written correspondence. Their advice and suggestions were sought in regard to the proposed consultation activities.

The consultation plan also included a review of outcomes to ensure consultation was appropriate and responsive to the community's needs. The review was also designed to consider whether the amount of consultation had been adequate and provided a sufficient level of feedback regarding the Proposal impacts.

A summary of the consultation methods and steps that were undertaken for the cultural impact assessment are presented in Table 1.

Throughout discussions and consultation with community members, the following key points were emphasised:

- The objective of the cultural impact assessment is to identify the potential positive and negative impacts of the Proposal on the cultural values of the Sikh community.
- The assessment would investigate measures to minimise any potential negative impacts.
- The scope of the cultural impact assessment does not include reviewing the selection of Option E as the preferred route for the bypass of Woolgoolga.
- Consultation is targeted at both (Sikh) landowners who are directly impacted by the Proposal and the wider Sikh community members whose land is not directly impacted by the Proposal.

Table 1 Summary of consultation activities undertaken

Date	Method
18 April 2006	Telephone contact was made with key representatives of the community and the two Sikh temples.
18 April 2006	Letters were sent to the two local Sikh temples requesting access to the Sikh community and permission to conduct a community consultation session on their premises. (The letters were to confirm the outcomes/agreements of the conversation held that day.) A copy of the letter is included in Appendix A. A community information flyer advertising the consultation sessions was included with the letters sent to the two local Sikh temples. A copy of the flyer is included in Appendix B.
30 April 2006	A number of informal meetings were undertaken with members of the Sikh community at The First Sikh Temple in Woolgoolga. The RTA project manager and Manidis Roberts project manager introduced themselves to the temples and invited the attendees to participate in the discussions. Participants were advised about the opportunity to participate in or request an individual meeting on the 8 May 2006. A flyer was distributed to seek participants for a discussion group to be held on 15 May 2006 (see Appendix C).
3 May 2006	A written summary of the feedback gained from the consultation meeting at The First Sikh Temple was provided to the temple (see Appendix D). Community members were invited to review and comment on the summary .
7 May 2006	An informal community consultation meeting was undertaken with members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community at The Guru Nanak Sikh Temple. The RTA project manager and Manidis Roberts project manager introduced themselves to the temples and invited the attendees to participate in the discussions. Participants were advised about the opportunity to participate in or request an individual meeting on 8 May 2006. A flyer was distributed to seek participants for a discussion group to be held on 15 May 2006 (see Appendix C).

Date	Method
8 May 2006	The Manidis Roberts project manager undertook an individual meeting with one community member from The Guru Nanak Sikh Temple. No other requests for individual meetings were received from the community.
15 May 2006	A written summary of the feedback gained from the consultation meeting at The Guru Nanak Sikh Temple was provided to the temple (see Appendix E). Community members were invited to review and comment on the summary.
15 May 2006	A discussion group consultation was held at Woolgoolga Primary School.

The structured discussion group consultation was revised in response to a request by the community for an alternative form of consultation (see Chapter 5 for further details).

As a result of this feedback an additional consultation activity was undertaken. A number of the Sikh community members expressed the desire to submit a written submission instead of participating in any further verbal discussions. This request was agreed to and a new method of consultation was introduced.

The revised consultation activity invited members of the community to submit written comment. A verbal explanation of the revised consultation process was provided by the Manidis Roberts project manager who visited both Sikh temples. In addition, a flyer was distributed to the community inviting individuals to submit feedback regarding the cultural impact of the Proposal.

A summary of the revised consultation activity and actions undertaken is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Revised consultation activities undertaken

Date	Method
22 May 2006	Telephone contact was made with the community representatives. The suggested approach for the revised consultation activity (an invitation to submit written comment about the potential impact/s of the Proposal) and timeframe was explained. The community representatives were advised that written correspondence further explaining the details of the activity would be sent and that feedback was sought.
22 May 2006	Written correspondence was sent to the community representatives confirming the suggested approach and seeking feedback on the revised consultation approach. A draft flyer to be used to advertise the consultation activity was also included for the community representatives' comments.
29 May 2006	Follow up telephone contact was made with the community representatives to confirm comment and feedback. The consultation approach and the community flyer were then revised as a result of the feedback gained.
31 May 2006	In response to requests from representatives of the Sikh community at a second meeting with the Community Relations Commission and the RTA on 30 May 2006, the timeframe for the consultation method was extended from four weeks to eight weeks.

Date	Method
18 June 2006	<p>A verbal presentation at both temples was undertaken to explain the revised consultation method and to answer any questions.</p> <p>A flyer was distributed, via the temples, inviting the community to submit written comment, with eight weeks allowed for receipt of comments.</p>

Research activities

The assessment included desktop research and a review of other related information regarding the Proposal. In particular, the assessment drew information from the following key sources:

- *The Impact on Agricultural Land of Pacific Highway Upgrade: Sapphire to Woolgoolga* (specialist report commissioned by the RTA as part of the EA, hereafter referred to as the Agricultural Report).
- Proposal updates/community information published by the RTA.
- Websites including the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Sikh Council of Australia.
- Reference material including specialist texts (accessed via the internet).

This information was particularly important in establishing the Proposal's impact on the Sikh community including those relating to economic activity and businesses. The actual number of affected properties, including the level of impact, was a critical aspect in determining the flow-on cultural impact. It was not possible to accurately corroborate this information through the consultation process. The outcomes of research activities also helped to establish a context for the assessment in terms of the history of the Sikh community in Woolgoolga and the Proposal progress to date.

4 THE SIKH COMMUNITY

4.1 The Sikh religion³

The history of the Sikh religion can be traced back to the central figure of Guru Nanak (1469–1539). The teachings of Guru Nanak were passed on to ten disciples, or Gurus, who created the Sikh religion and developed spiritual scriptures, known as the Adi Granth.

A key belief of Sikhism is that there is one God – The Creator. Sikhs do not believe God takes a human form. The Sikh religion values social equality and tolerance, with all people considered equal before God, regardless of religion, sex or race.

Another central tenet of the Sikh religion is the belief in karma and reincarnation and the unreality of the material world.

The Sikh religion does not support the caste system. Practical demonstration of this and the inclusive nature of the religion may be seen in the Sikh temples which contain communal kitchens where people are encouraged to gather and eat together.

4.2 The Sikh community in Australia

According to the 2001 Australian census, 17,401 people identify themselves as Sikh (ABS 2001).

The Sikh community in Australia originated primarily from the Punjab region of India. Sikhs began migrating to Australia and New Zealand at the end of the 19th century and throughout the mid 20th century. The majority of these migrants worked as farming labour moving back and forth between India and Australia (Bhatti & Dusenbery 2001).

The greater part of Sikh migrants settled in Northern New South Wales and North Queensland. Today's Sikh communities continue to be strongly focused in these regions (More & Singh 2006).

While most Sikhs have come to Australia from India, there has also been some recent Sikh migration from Malaysia.

According to the Sikh Council of Australia – an umbrella body that aims to represent the needs of the Sikh Community – the Sikh community engages in the current political landscape by voicing its concerns about the need to inform and educate the community about aspects of the Sikh religion. Recent issues of concern include the potential pressure from governments and the community to restrict Sikhs from freely wearing the kirpan and the turban. The kirpan (the religious knife/sword) and the turban are important parts of the Sikh religion and any proposed measures that restrict the wearing of these are likely to be strongly opposed by the Sikh community (Sikh Council of Australia 2006).

³ This summary of the key elements of the Sikh religion has been primarily sourced from the ABC Religion & Ethics Library (available: <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/stories/s798009.htm>). It is presented as a broad summary of the key elements of Sikhism only.

There is also an ongoing effort by the Sikh Council of Australia to remind and educate the community and the government about the loss of Sikh lives in India following the 1984 assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (Sikh Council of Australia 2006).

4.3 The Sikh community in Woolgoolga

Woolgoolga is home to one of the most well known Sikh communities in Australia.

The permanent migration of Sikhs to Woolgoolga commenced in the 1940s. The Sikhs primarily worked as labourers on the banana plantations, with a significant number of these Sikhs acquiring leasehold and freehold banana plantations (More & Singh 2006).

The Sikh community in Woolgoolga was established through Sikh immigrants purchasing land and housing and families arriving from India. Temples were built providing important places of worship, meditation and congregation for the Sikh community. Woolgoolga is home to Australia's first two Gurdwaras (temples) – The First Sikh Temple of Australia and the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple (Bhatti & Dusenbery 2001).

The Woolgoolga Sikh community has been active in its relationships with the non-Sikh community. This has been demonstrated by the successful overturn of the Woolgoolga RSL's attempt to ban the wearing of the turban in 1999 (Bhatti & Dusenbery 2001).

Banana farming has made a significant contribution to the economic development of the region and the prosperity of the Sikh community (Bhatti & Dusenbery 2001). Approximately 90 per cent of Woolgoolga's banana industry is owned and operated by Australian Sikhs (Coffs Harbour City Council 2004).

While the majority of Sikhs identify themselves as farmers, many agricultural properties are reducing their banana growing businesses. A number of factors have contributed to the decline of the local banana industry with many Sikh farmers expanding into blueberries, tropical fruit and other crops such as avocado. Given the combination of demand for lifestyle blocks, higher offered values and a generally static or declining income from banana growing, a move away from farming into the development and/or subdivision of land (subject to Council approval) is likely to continue.

For many Sikh families, farming and the relationship to the land is an important aspect of their culture. A significant number of Sikhs identify themselves as farmers. The connection to the land is also related to the farming tradition that originates from the Punjab region of India.

Many of the farms are run as family businesses, providing a source of employment for the family and playing an important role as the focal point for the family unit. This involves not just the nuclear family but also an extended family of several generations. It was highlighted that the farms rely on collective buying and working power, which would be under threat if farms have to close. One of the important links between culture and farming is that the farms provide the family network with the flexibility of self employment. This flexibility affords Sikh families the freedom to carry out religious activities, including religious ceremonies that are not recognised by public holidays. 'Farms enable us to celebrate our religious ceremonies/days of significance,' said one community member.

Consequently, any (real or perceived) threat to a family's property and business has a potentially broader ramification that extends beyond economic independence. It is potentially a threat to the family unit itself, to individual self-identification and maintenance of culture.

4.4 Woolgoolga community profile

Situated within the Coffs Harbour local government area, Woolgoolga is a coastal township located along the beaches of the mid-north coast of New South Wales. It is 586 km north of Sydney and 25 km north of Coffs Harbour. Woolgoolga provides a number of services, such as retail outlets and schools, to surrounding smaller beachside villages such as Arrawarra, Mullaway, Emerald Beach, Sandy Beach and Safety Beach.

Based on the available data, the Woolgoolga community has the following key characteristics (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001; Coffs Harbour City Council 2004):

- An unemployment rate of 18.6 percent which is considerably higher than the Coffs Harbour LGA average of 13.2 percent.
- Agriculture accounts for over 16 percent of the jobs in Woolgoolga. This reflects the importance of the fruit growing industry.
- 12 percent of the population speak a language other than English.
- The population is ageing, with Woolgoolga being a popular retiree location. Over five percent of people are aged 80 years and over, which is higher than the state average.
- Median weekly individual income of \$200 – \$299, which is the same as the weekly individual income level for the Mid North Coast – less than the state average of \$300 – \$399.
- There is one high school and two primary schools in Woolgoolga.
- Older housing is located in the inner area of the township with more modern dwellings located in newly developed areas towards the south and west of the Woolgoolga town centre.
- The town centre has a range of shops, restaurants, and community amenities. These include an RSL Club, police station, neighbourhood centre, community hall, bowling club, post office, banks, caravan park, and supermarket. Local council buildings include the Woolgoolga library and the Woolgoolga public swimming pool.
- The total population of Woolgoolga is 4526. An estimated 22 per cent (1000 people) of the Woolgoolga population is Sikh. (Due to the absence of relevant census data total Sikh population numbers cannot be more accurately verified).

Table 3 provides a statistical profile of the Woolgoolga community in 2001.

Table 3 Woolgoolga – 2001 key statistics

Characteristic	Total
Total males	2,217
Total females	2,309
Total persons	4,526
Total indigenous persons	13
Persons born in Australia	3,610
Persons born overseas	669

Characteristic	Total
Australian citizens	4,144
Total dwellings	1,957
Fully owned dwellings	908
Rental properties	519
Dwellings being purchased	259

Source: ABS, 2001 Census, *Basic Community Profile*.

5 THE CONSULTATION

5.1 Introduction

The consultation undertaken with the Woolgoolga Sikh community was designed to include proactive discussions with the community with regard to the consultation process. The approach included ongoing monitoring of the adequacy and appropriateness of consultation activities. The approach also had the flexibility to adjust the process in response to input received from the community.

The consultation plan included informal meetings as well as a formal, structured session. This plan was communicated to the community prior to its implementation and feedback was sought. The objectives of the assessment were also clearly articulated and reiterated throughout the consultation process.

A number of issues emerged during consultation activities. A summary is provided below with further explanation in the sections following. This summary is provided for information purposes and to give a clear context for the outcomes of the consultation activities that are presented in the sections that follow.

Issues that emerged during the consultation process included:

- Difficulties in engaging a wide range of community members in discussions. This refers particularly to accessing landowners who were not directly affected by the Proposal. The brief for the assessment was to engage both affected and unaffected Sikh landowners.
- Misunderstanding regarding the need for translation services.
- Reluctance by some community members to participate in some of the consultation activities. This related particularly to the structured workshop.
- Reluctance of a number of community members to discuss issues in a group format. Concerns were also raised in this context that the assessment and associated consultation activities may be divisive amongst the Sikh community and amongst the broader community.
- Objections from some members of the community regarding the purpose of the assessment and a reluctance to engage in discussions regarding the assessment's stated objectives. While this was clearly the right of any community member, the task of assessing cultural impacts was made more difficult. It also made mitigation strategies difficult to identify in this context.

Difficulties engaging with the wider Sikh community – landowners not directly impacted by the Proposal

The consultation team experienced difficulties in engaging large numbers of the Sikh community in the process. This was notwithstanding efforts to pro-actively engage wide representation from the community including affected and unaffected property owners. Of the estimated 1,000 Sikhs that reside in Woolgoolga only a relatively small number, (no greater than 40), attended each consultation session. Some community members have suggested that many Sikhs feel that they are largely unaffected by the Proposal and therefore saw no need to participate in the consultation activities.

A specific example of the difficulties in accessing a wide range of community members relates to a visit to the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple on 18 June 2006. The visit was undertaken to provide a verbal presentation to the community about the written submission process. (The written submission process

had been agreed to after the unsuccessful structured workshop on 15 May 2006.) Prior to the meeting, a flyer about the meeting had been provided to the temples to distribute to the wider Sikh community.

Despite previous discussions with representative community members, the meeting was not publicised by representative community members to the congregation or wider Sikh community. No explanation was provided as to why the flyers publicising the meeting were not distributed. This consequently resulted in very low attendance, with only eight members of the community attending. The attendees represented individuals who had been previously involved in consultation activities and families impacted by the Proposal.

Misunderstanding regarding the need for verbal translation services

Advice received from the community representatives (including during the one-to-one meeting with one community member on 8 May 2006) was that an interpreter was unnecessary. However, written translation of printed materials would be appreciated. In addition, informal feedback received from members of the community was that the majority of individuals in Woolgoolga were fluent in English. However, during the structured discussion group on 15 May 2006, a number of individuals strongly criticised the absence of an interpreter.

Based on the advice received from the community, written translation was provided for the community flyers used to advertise the consultations but an interpreter was not present at the first three consultation meetings.

Following a later request from a representative of the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, an interpreter was arranged for the verbal presentation to be held at the temple on 18 June 2006. The interpreter attended the meeting, however the participants did not utilise this translation service.

Reluctance to participate in the structured workshop

During the structured discussion group on 15 May 2006 it became immediately apparent that many members of the community were dissatisfied with the format for the consultation activity and were unwilling to engage in any discussions regarding the assessment's objectives or topics. A number of community members raised a number of other points, un-related to the assessment, including dissatisfaction with the preferred route for the Woolgoolga bypass and with the RTA's consultation approach. At this meeting a number of community members requested that they be given the opportunity to submit written feedback.

Prior to the meeting 25 people had indicated their intention to attend the session by filling out the participation section of a flyer that had been distributed. No prior indication had been given to the consultation team in regard to dissatisfaction regarding the structured discussion group. On the basis of the response to the flyers and on previous discussions with representative members of the community about the consultation approach (including a one-to-one meeting with a community representative), the consultation team had concluded that the discussion group was an appropriate format that would be acceptable to the community. There was no prior indication given to the consultation team about dissatisfaction by members of the community regarding the structured discussion group approach.

Reluctance by community members to participate in a group format

The consultations typically involved a small number of vocal individuals leading the community input and feedback. Active contribution to the consultations was generally confined to less than ten individuals.

The team was advised by some community members that there was reluctance by other members of the Sikh community to raise any issues that were contrary to those expressed by the more vocal individuals. Some community members made suggestions of bullying and/or pressure tactics, expressing feelings of

nervousness in speaking out against the views of the dominant group. These feelings were generally relayed in one-to-one discussions with the Manidis Roberts project manager outside the format of the consultation activities, for example on the telephone or after group meetings.

Some community members expressed concerns about the possibility that the broader (Woolgoolga) community may perceive the Sikh community as unduly benefiting from privileged or special consideration not available to the wider community. One individual expressed this attitude in the following way – ‘there is no cultural impact – it’s the same for all Australians.’ This concern may have been a factor in the reluctance by some members of the community to engage in the consultation process.

During the course of the consultation a significant division between the two Sikh temples became apparent. This division added to the reluctance of a number of community members to participate in open group discussions. The consultation team was aware of and concerned about the potential for the consultation process to exacerbate any (existing or otherwise) divisions within the Sikh community and the wider Woolgoolga community.

Objections to the scope of the assessment

The feedback received from a number of more vocal participants was overwhelmingly characterised by dissatisfaction with the scope of the consultation in that it did not include discussion or negotiation of the preferred route for the Woolgoolga Bypass (Option E). ‘What’s the point of discussing it if the route is not going to change?’ was a frequent type of comment that was voiced. While this sentiment may be understandable, the scope of the assessment and consultation had been clearly articulated in a number of formats including all written materials. This sentiment made two of the consultation meetings extremely challenging in terms of gaining relevant information from the community that could be used for the assessment. This was particularly evident when it came to identifying potential mitigation strategies.

5.2 Meeting at First Sikh Temple – 30 April 2006

Informal discussions were held with members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community on 30 April 2006 at the First Sikh Temple.

The RTA project manager and the Manidis Roberts project manager provided introductions and an overview of the consultation process and scope of the cultural impact assessment. The community was provided with a brief update of the overall Proposal status and information regarding the cultural impact assessment. The community was advised of a number of opportunities to participate in the consultation process. All members of the community were encouraged to participate in discussions including those not directly impacted by the Proposal. Nine male and six female members of the community provided feedback to the Manidis Roberts project manager in one-to-one or small group (2–3) discussions.

The opportunity to meet on an individual basis with community members on 8 May 2006, was offered to the group. No community members accepted this offer.

Summary of feedback

Overall, community members thought the Proposal would have a positive impact on Woolgoolga generally and the Sikh community. This included a positive impact on travel times to Coffs Harbour, improved road safety (a reduction in road accidents) and benefits to the local economy. Participants indicated that the improved accessibility of Woolgoolga might assist in encouraging local growth and development in the area.

Most participants did not draw a specific cultural link/impact to the Proposal and the Sikh community. Indeed questions relating to the cultural impact of the Proposal met with bemused reactions in a number of instances.

There was almost unanimous agreement that the RTA had consulted and communicated with the local community sufficiently and appropriately. The use of translated materials was noted and appreciated. One participant did raise concerns regarding the recent lack of communication (or perceived lack of communication), which was felt to be a negative sign.

Other general comments regarding the Proposal included a view that 'the highway had to go somewhere' and the RTA 'should just get on with it' and 'not waste any more money.'

Some concerns were raised regarding the possible impact on the agricultural businesses affected by the Proposal. Concern was expressed that any negative economic impact to these businesses may have a wide impact on the general community as job losses would result in movement away from Woolgoolga. The possible disintegration of the community through movement to other centres (particularly Sydney) in search of work was a source of unease for one participant.

The impact on the local economy was also raised in the context of Woolgoolga missing passing tourists once the bypass is complete.

One participant did express the view that only Option E was being explored and that this was probably because it was the cheapest option.

Two participants thought that Option A was preferable however acknowledged that the majority of the community were supportive of the Proposal. They both also speculated that the Proposal (or chosen option) might change following the NSW state election in March 2007.

One participant asked about access into Woolgoolga or Coffs Harbour once the road was built.

5.3 Meeting at Guru Nanak Sikh Temple – 7 May 2006

A second informal consultation session was held at the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple in Woolgoolga on the 7 May 2006. Community members had been advised of the meeting through verbal communication and written correspondence provided to three community members. Flyers advising the community of the meetings were also provided. The RTA project manager and the Manidis Roberts project manager provided an overview of the consultation process including the scope of the cultural impact assessment and a brief update on the Proposal.

The format for discussions with the community took a different form to that originally envisaged. Members of the community requested that interested individuals re-convene as a group rather than participate in one-to-one discussions.

A group of approximately 30 community members discussed the Proposal after the community lunch was finished. The RTA project manager provided more information on the status of the Proposal by way of an introduction. The Manidis Roberts project manager then re-iterated the purpose of the discussion and asked that participants consider the positive and negative impacts of the Proposal as well as strategies that may alleviate any negative impacts.

The opportunity to meet on an individual basis with community members on the following day, 8 May 2006, was offered to the group. One community member accepted this offer.

Summary of feedback

When asked if there were any positive impacts of the Proposal there was little response from the group. Safety and a reduction in traffic volume were cited by some attendees, however these impacts were not met with significant agreement from the group.

Overwhelmingly the group expressed concern regarding the negative impact of the Proposal on the local community. In short, the group stressed the importance of land and agricultural businesses to maintaining the social cohesion of the community. The group also emphasised the strong family connections felt towards land and ensuring that properties (and enterprises) could be passed on to future generations. The general belief expressed by the group was that farms would no longer be economically viable if the Proposal was to proceed. It was argued that this would result in job losses and people moving away from the community (for example, to Sydney). The flow-on impact would disrupt community stability and erode the temple's congregation.

The cultural significance of properties and agricultural businesses was cited in a number of contexts. This includes providing women and young people with employment as well as new immigrants from India to the area. The importance of the extended family and the role that farms play in maintaining these social structures was also stressed.

When asked if there were strategies that may reduce or alleviate the impact of the Proposal on the community, in particular the cultural implications, again the group was generally lukewarm. Options for purchasing other land or diversifying farming activities, or exploring other employment opportunities, were not well received and most participants indicated these were not feasible options.

Other comments by the group related to the impact on the potential for sub-division of land and concern regarding the impact on opportunities to develop residential lots. Financial issues were raised in this context including concern that compensation for such loss would not be appropriate. There was some limited discussion regarding the educational attainment of the community. Most participants argued that regardless of educational outcomes, most young people still want to work on the family farms.

Participants were asked about the RTA's consultation process. Many indicated that they had not been consulted and were not happy with the approach that the RTA had taken. Participants also indicated that the assessment was a futile exercise as the route had been decided. Some participants expressed dissatisfaction that the consultation meeting was not about changing the proposed route and that this was what they thought the meeting was about. A number of negative comments regarding the proposed route were made.

5.4 Structured discussion group – 15 May 2006

A discussion group was held at Woolgoolga Primary School on 15 May 2006. Community members were notified of the meeting in a number of ways. Notice was provided during the informal meetings at the temples and a flyer advertising the discussion group and its purpose was distributed via the temples. Twenty-five people confirmed their intention to participate in the discussion group by completing the participation section of the flyer.

As a result of a request from a member of the community, the venue for the discussion group was changed from Woolgoolga RSL to Woolgoolga Primary School. Community members were advised of the new venue by telephone contact with each of the confirmed attendees, as well as liaison with three community members who assumed responsibility to advise other community members about the change of venue.

The RTA project manager and two Manidis Roberts' team members (including the project manager) were present throughout the discussion group. Approximately 40 community members attended the meeting.

The Manidis Roberts project manager began by confirming the purpose of the discussion group and by reiterating the topics to be discussed. It was explained that the discussion would not include negotiation of the preferred route and that the purpose of the meeting was to identify the potential positive and negative impacts of the Proposal and any strategies that might lessen any negative impacts on the community.

When asked if anyone had any initial questions there were objections made about the discussion group methodology. The Manidis Roberts project manager replied that a flyer explaining the consultation process had been distributed prior to the meeting and that no one had indicated any objections. However, if the group were unhappy with the method then it could be amended.

A number of the group expressed the desire to submit a written submission instead of participating in any further verbal discussions. The group was unwilling to engage in the discussion group and discuss the intended topics. One comment was made about the futile nature of discussing any positive impacts as there 'weren't any'.

Further comments about the inadequacy of the discussion group methodology were voiced. One community member criticised the absence of a Punjabi translator at the meeting. Another participant questioned the cultural sensitivity in not having a translator present.

There was a series of concerns raised about the wider consultation process undertaken by the RTA. A number of participants repeatedly voiced dissatisfaction about the RTA's consultation process during the selection of the preferred route. Several participants also expressed frustration that the consultations undertaken to date did not include discussions and/or negotiations concerning the preferred route of the bypass.

The structure of the discussion group was never fully explained to the group due to the unwillingness of participants to engage in the format and provide input. The intention was that the discussion group would begin with individuals identifying the potential impacts and then discussing and sharing ideas in a broad group setting. The group would then prioritise the issues and small groups would be formed to discuss these issues. The session would then draw to a close with the broad group working towards a general consensus about the most important impacts of the Proposal.

When asked what consultation process the group might prefer, it was suggested that a written survey or questionnaire might be preferable.

As only six-eight people were participating in the discussion, an attempt was made to encourage more people to participate from the group and to confirm an alternative method of consultation. Only a limited response was received.

A number of participants were of the opinion that community members needed time to consider the impacts of the Proposal and discuss it with family members, before reaching an informed response. The group requested a period of four weeks to formulate written submissions. No commitment was made by the consultation team regarding the timeframe for submissions. It was agreed that the timeframe would be discussed with key community representatives.

It was agreed by the group that the process for the next step would be agreed upon with three key community contacts that had been established to facilitate communication with the wider Sikh community. The Manidis Roberts project manager sought to confirm that the group was happy with

these individuals' roles as community representatives. A nomination for other community representatives or contacts were sought to which there was no response.

5.5 Invitation to submit written comment – June – August 2006

Introduction

Following a request from a number of community members, the RTA and the Manidis Roberts project manager agreed to a methodology that invited written feedback from the community. To ensure that the community was in agreement with the proposed approach, community representatives were telephoned prior to implementing the new consultation activity. After discussing the approach, community representatives were sent written correspondence, including a draft flyer, outlining the process and seeking their comment. Once agreement was reached (and after a number of comments were incorporated into the approach), flyers were translated in to Punjabi and sent to community representatives who had agreed to distribute the flyers at the temples. Meetings at both temples were also arranged. The purpose of the meetings was to explain the process to the broader community and provide an opportunity for community members to ask any questions.

The Manidis Roberts project manager attended meetings at the First Sikh Temple and Guru Nanak Temple on 18 June 2006. The First Sikh Temple introduced the Manidis Roberts project manager to the congregation on completion of the service. The majority of the congregation was present at this time. Community members were advised of the approach, purpose of the consultation and deadline for submissions. In answer to individual questions, community members were advised that they were welcome to submit a group response on behalf of the congregation. Flyers were distributed to individuals.

On arrival at the Guru Nanak Temple, the Manidis Roberts project manager was advised that the congregation had not been advised of the presentation regarding the revised consultation activity. As a result, only nine members of the community were available. An interpreter had been engaged and was present however was not used as the community advised the Manidis Roberts project manager that they were all conversant in English. Community members were advised of the approach, purpose of the consultation and deadline for submissions. Community members were also advised that they were welcome to submit a group response on behalf of the congregation. Flyers were distributed to individuals.

Submissions received

Two written submissions were received, one from The First Sikh Temple and one from the 'representatives of the Woolgoolga Sikh Punjabi community'. The submission from The First Sikh Temple was a two-page letter, signed off as the 'Congregation of The First Sikh Temple.' Trish Dengate "Independent Community Consultant" prepared the other submission. This submission included signatures and letters of support. (The submissions are attached as Appendix H and Appendix I.)

Summary of issues raised

The First Sikh Temple

The submission sought to present the 'varied views' of temple members about the impact of the Proposal on the Sikh community. It voiced support for measures to improve the safety of the Pacific Highway and it considered that shorter travel times would have a potentially positive outcome for people who work in the Coffs Harbour area and for the local economy. The submission suggested that

the cultural impact on the Sikh community is directly related to the number of Sikh properties that are affected. The submission put forward that the Coffs-Woolgoolga Sikh community is made up of approximately two hundred families and about 12 Sikh families own properties directly affected by the Proposal. Attention was drawn to the Sikh community's love and affection for the land and the threat to the cultural heritage and identity of families affected by the Proposal if they have to sell their family farms.

It was requested that compensation considerations take into account not only economic factors but loss of family heritage and emotional distress. The submission thanked the RTA for its consultation efforts and visits to the Temple and the translation services provided for the benefit of 'those few who have difficulty with written English.'

Representatives of the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh Community

This detailed submission identified seven broad issues – heritage, employment, economics, agriculture and environment, social/cultural, access and equity, and welfare – and the cultural impacts of these issues.

A total of (approximately) 235 signatures were included in the submission as well as 11 letters of support. The submission overwhelmingly rejected the preferred route of the bypass. The consensus presented was that the Proposal presents no positive impacts and there exists no feasible strategies to mitigate the Proposal's negative impacts. The submission noted that the First Sikh Temple represents (is utilised) by 15 per cent of the local Sikh community and the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple represents (is utilised) by 85 per cent of the community. A summary of the main issues raised in the submission is presented below.

Heritage

Issues included loss of identity and status, severance of cultural links to the land and the impact on the cohesiveness of the wider multi-cultural community.

Employment

Issues include the need for local, flexible employment to maintain the cultural and religious way of life, the lack of alternatives for family-based employment, and the particular difficulties – such as language barriers or discrimination – that women may face in accessing employment.

Economic

Issues consist of the impact on the agricultural industry and its effect on the local economy, and the dependence on farmers' shared resources and the resultant reduced collective buying and working power.

Agricultural and environmental

Issues raised comprised access and inconvenience issues and dust issues associated with construction activities, visual amenity, loss of vegetation protection for crops, and general pollution.

Socio/cultural

Issues identified included the loss of viability of the temples if 30 per cent of the congregation are forced to leave the area, the consequences of fracturing the extended family structure, and the loss of identity and social standing.

Access and equity

Issues included concerns about reduced access to farms and production problems from the construction works, and decreased access to employment.

Welfare

Issues included the erosion of moral values and youth problems from family fragmentation, and the possible increase in the need for welfare benefits and the cultural barriers (including the general feeling that government financial support is culturally unacceptable) to accessing welfare services.

5.6 Community feedback

This section provides a broad summary of the Sikh community's perceptions regarding the potential impacts from the Proposal and comments provided by them. Most of the other impacts identified are not cultural and are outside the specific scope of the assessment. They are therefore not discussed in great detail however are provided for information purposes.

As detailed in the Agricultural Report, there is a level of apprehension at the potential loss of viability of seriously impacted properties. There is a high level of anxiety regarding financial compensation for loss of land.

In addition there is a significant level of concern with respect to the impact of the Proposal on the ability to sub-divide property and realise profits through land sales. The decision to sub-divide property is driven by the declining revenues from banana farming and the high demand for real estate in the North Coast area. As this capacity to sub-divide depends on other factors such as council re-zoning/approval, this Proposal has created a higher level of uncertainty for the Sikh community. 'People are planning to build on the land – this will be disrupted by the Proposal,' was a sentiment felt by a number of individuals. Questions regarding the potential to sub-divide land were raised by some individuals during consultation meetings. This issue does not relate to any direct cultural impact as a result of the Proposal.

There were a number of positive consequences of the Proposal cited by the community. There was broad general consensus within the community that the Proposal would lead to a much-needed improvement in road safety, with a likely reduction in the road accident rate. 'It is dangerous going from Woolgoolga to Coffs Harbour so the new road is a positive,' said one individual.

The reduced commuting time to Coffs Harbour was also cited as a positive impact. As one person commented, 'it provides a better commute to Coffs Harbour.' Community feedback also indicated that people thought the Proposal would reduce traffic through Woolgoolga, which was considered beneficial.

A number of community members identified the improved accessibility of Woolgoolga as providing a boost to the local economy. It was thought that this might provide better local growth and development opportunities for the area.

There were mixed views regarding the adequacy of the RTA's consultation process relating to the Proposal. Views expressed included, 'the consultation process has been good so far,' and 'people understand what is going on' as well as others who were highly critical.

6 THE ASSESSMENT

6.1 Introduction

This section assesses the Proposal's potential impact on the cultural heritage of the Woolgoolga Sikh community. The findings of the assessment are based on information gained from consultations undertaken with the Woolgoolga Sikh community between April and August 2006 and independent research. This consultation includes a number of meetings conducted at the two temples, and the two written submissions provided by the community. The assessment also draws particularly on the agricultural investigation undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment. The agricultural investigation assesses the impact of the Proposal both on current farm operations and on future farm potential in relation to the broad community (including Sikh landowners).

6.2 Cultural impact

The direct impacts from the Proposal on the Sikh community of Woolgoolga are impacts on agricultural land that are owned/worked by Sikh members of the community. There would be no direct impacts on the temples, which are focal points for the community, or other community members who do not own impacted properties.

For many Sikh families, farming and the relationship to the land is an important aspect of their culture. A significant number of Sikhs identify themselves as farmers. The identification with farming and land cannot be overstated. Consequently, any (real or perceived) threat to a family's property and business has a potentially broader ramification that extends beyond economic independence. It is viewed as potentially a threat to the family unit itself, to individual self-identification and maintenance of culture.

There are a number of other understandable concerns relating to the impact upon agricultural land. These include reduced access to properties, the interruption to farming production and general unease about the impact of construction activities. Any reduction in employment that may result from impacts on farming was also highlighted as a cultural problem in that dependence on government welfare is considered culturally inappropriate. Negative employment outcomes have a direct link to assessing the cultural impact of the Proposal as people may be forced to move from the area in search of employment. This outcome would have a negative impact on the cohesion of the community and is therefore considered a potential cultural impact, albeit indirect. (The likelihood of this occurring is discussed further below.)

In order to assess the potential impact to the community's culture as a whole, the number of impacted Sikh-owned agricultural properties has been determined as well as the level of impact (in terms of economic viability) to those properties. This data has then been considered in relation to the total number of Sikh owned properties.

Based on information provided in the Agricultural Report, of the 40 agricultural properties that are identified as directly affected by the Proposal, 19 properties are assessed as experiencing *severe to critical*⁴ impacts on overall farm management.

Of these 19 properties, ten are understood to be owned by Sikhs. This means there are a total of ten Sikh families who own properties that are assessed as *severely to critically* impacted in terms of overall farm management. Two of these property owners hold additional property not assessed as being severely to critically impacted by the Proposal. There are six other Sikh owned agricultural properties that would experience *moderate*⁵ to *minor*⁶ impacts. Of the 16 Sikh property owners impacted by the Proposal, at least four have other potential agricultural properties that are not impacted.

The Agricultural Report indicates that, of the ten *severely to critically* impacted agricultural properties owned by Sikhs, four grow bananas, two grow bananas and blueberries, one grows bananas and hydroponics, one grows blueberries and one is not currently used for cropping.

Informal information provided by the Department of Primary Industries indicated that as of November 2003 there were approximately 253 banana plantations in the study area (defined as from Campbell Close to the south and Upper Corindi Road in the north) and 183 were owned by people of Indian heritage⁷.

Four residences are located on three of the ten severely to critically impacted agricultural properties owned by Sikhs. Only two of these residences would need to be acquired by the RTA for the proposal.

Consequently, this data suggests that only a small proportion of the overall Sikh population and Sikh owned agricultural properties would be impacted by the Proposal and that the potential impact would be confined to a small number of families (therefore a small proportion of the community).⁸

The potential impact of the Proposal could be significant if a major proportion of Sikh owned properties were critically affected by the Proposal with the result that considerable numbers of Sikh families were effectively forced to move away from the area. Such a situation may result in the deterioration or fragmentation of the Sikh community and a reduction in the collective cultural life of the Sikh community. The data presented above clearly indicates that this is not the case, given the relatively small number of Sikh owned properties which would be severely or critically affected by the Proposal. As a result, the Proposal is not considered to be a major threat to the culture of the Sikh community.

It should be recognised that the nature of any vibrant and growing community involves migration in and out of an area. This community is no exception and there is well-documented evidence of continued migration of families and individuals, including from India.

There is no evidence to suggest that the direct outcome of the Proposal would result in a significant number of Sikhs having to leave the area. The Agricultural Report outlines a number of options for farmers who are considered critically impacted. They include:

- To leave the farming industry altogether.

⁴ Severe to critical impact is described as being greater than 25 per cent of the land is impacted.

⁵ Moderate impact is described as less than 25 per cent of the land impacted.

⁶ Minor impact is described as less than 15 per cent of the land impacted.

⁷ Information was provided by the Department of Primary Industries in response to an email request regarding property ownership. The response is quoted as follows: *As of 10 November 2003, there were 253 banana plantations from Campbell Close to the south and Upper Corindi Road in the north. Of these, 183 properties were Indian owned. Some of these properties may have had both blueberries and bananas.*

⁸ The consultation team acknowledges that there is disagreement within the Sikh community regarding the actual number of indirectly impacted families. The team has used the available data as reference above in making its assessment.

- Use compensation payments to purchase other farming properties.
- Move to additional property holdings.

There is no evidence to suggest that compensated farmers who wish to remain in farming cannot purchase other farming properties in the local area. This includes exploring options for the consolidation of impacted properties, so that an agricultural property could continue to operate through the amalgamation of land from a neighbouring property that may have been partially acquired for the project. Provided that Sikh families that wish to remain in farming can do so and find and purchase an alternative property, impacts can be mitigated.

If the Proposal were to result in any net job losses to the Sikh community it is possible that this would have some cultural implications. The loss of farming jobs could result in movement away from Woolgoolga to urban areas, such as Sydney, in search of employment. Again, this outcome is likely to be confined to the small number of families who own and work on farms that are classified as critically or severely impacted. While the number of Sikh families who own agricultural properties that may be critically or severely impacted is ten, the importance of wider family networks is recognised and it is noted that the actual affected number of individuals would be greater than a typical nuclear family. It is considered that any fragmentation of the Sikh community that may result from such migration may be alleviated by the mitigation strategies discussed in Section 7.2 below.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The assessment concludes that the potential impact on the Sikh community would be primarily economic and is linked to the loss of farming land. There would be no impact to the Sikh temples, which are the centre of the faith and the community, and a minimal cultural impact. The conclusion that the Proposal would have a minimal cultural impact was confirmed by the fact that many Sikhs considered the cultural impact of the Proposal negligible or non-existent.

The consultation process presented many challenges, in particular the ability to successfully engage the community in discussions to identify strategies to reduce the potential negative impact of the Proposal. There were two common types of responses provided to questions regarding mitigating strategies:

- There is no cultural impact therefore there are no strategies that can be identified.
- There is nothing that can be done to alleviate the negative impact apart from changing the proposed route.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, and the conclusion that the cultural impact would be minimal, a number of broad strategies aimed at further minimising any potential impacts are discussed below.

7.2 Recommendations

Compensation for land acquisition

The RTA has obligations for land acquisitions which are mandated in the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991* (the Act). Broadly, the Act provides the financial and legal requirements relating to property acquisition by government agencies⁹.

While the Act provides compensation for property acquisition, it does not provide for strategies to reduce the severity of Proposal impacts. To comply only with the requirements of the Act would not provide any lessening of the direct and indirect impacts on the cultural heritage and values of the Sikh community thereby potentially resulting in negative community impacts. This is not consistent with the entirety of the assessment that has reported that the impacts are manageable if appropriate mitigation strategies are employed that reduce the necessity for community members to leave the area in search of employment.

Potential mitigation strategies

The following discussion is provided as a good practice approach that may be used in addition to the application of the Act, as described above. It is provided not only as a strategy to assist in meeting the RTA's Proposal objectives, it is also provided as an act of good faith with the community who have participated in the consultation process. It is consistent with the RTA's stated policy regarding property

⁹ See http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/latca1991442/s3.html for more detail regarding the Act including specific objectives.

acquisition which advocates a non-adversarial approach¹⁰. The recommendations have been grouped under broad key headings including further explanation regarding the need for ongoing community dialogue.

Ongoing dialogue with the Sikh community

It is proposed that ongoing consultation with the Sikh community around mitigation strategies, including addressing economic impacts, provides a meaningful and time efficient approach. That is a proactive approach to assisting with mitigation strategies (outside the parameters of financial compensation).

The strategies also provide holistic support in the form of economic planning that reduces the impact of the Proposal on the Sikh community including possible job losses. In short, the proposed mitigation strategies relate to measures that lessen the agricultural impacts (and the associated cultural impacts) of the Proposal and assist in the identification of possible alternative approaches to ensuring the economic viability of agricultural businesses. They are proposed in order to avoid, reduce or minimise the potential cultural impact that has been identified.

Facilitating access to specialist advice

The opportunity for farmers to relocate in the Woolgoolga area and diversify into the production of blueberry or other agricultural goods is likely to provide alleviation to the economic and agricultural impact of the Proposal. As a result of diminishing returns for banana crops, some farmers have already diversified into blueberries, which, despite their high establishment costs, are currently a lucrative export driven product. Further opportunities for agricultural diversification should be explored for critically impacted farmers. The RTA could support this process by facilitating access by owners of *severely or critically* impacted agricultural properties to specialist consultants who may provide advice in this area. For example, facilitating access to specialist consultants who undertook economic impact assessments and/or the Agricultural Report. Specialist support in assessing opportunities for agricultural diversification, including comparative set-up costs, may be useful for severely or critically impacted property owners. This opportunity could be made available for a period of time following project approval, eg. 24 months.

Management of residual land

In some instances residual agricultural land could be used for bananas, blueberry or other agricultural production, and may represent an opportunity for consolidation with an existing adjacent land owner. While ultimate responsibility will rest with the potential purchaser to ensure that the land is suitable for the desired purpose, given its proximity to the proposal, assistance could be provided in making this decision. Specialist consultants engaged by the RTA could, in consultation with agricultural landowners severely or critically affected by the Proposal, develop a strategy for the consolidation and management of residue lands.

¹⁰ See RTA website - http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/constructionmaintenance/downloads/pacific/property_acquisition.pdf. This property acquisition fact sheet states *One aim of the Act is to encourage the purchase of land by negotiation, rather than using the compulsory acquisition process. The RTA fully supports this objective.*

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APPENDIX A **LETTER TO THE SIKH TEMPLES**

18 April 2006

Dear

Further to our recent discussions, I am pleased to provide you with more information regarding the cultural impact assessment I am preparing on behalf of the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA).

Following discussions with the Community Relations Commission For a multicultural NSW, the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has agreed to undertake an assessment of the potential impact of the Pacific Highway Upgrade on the cultural and heritage values of the Sikh community in the Woolgoolga area. The RTA has engaged Manidis Roberts to undertake this assessment. (If required, more information regarding Manidis Roberts may be found at www.manidisroberts.com.au). My role as the project manager is to assess the potential impact of the project on the local community including undertaking consultation activities with key community representatives.

The purpose of the cultural impact assessment is to:

- Gather information directly from the local community about the potential impact of the project.
- Enable members of the community to provide feedback on the project including positive and other impacts.
- Enable members of the community to make suggestions regarding strategies that may reduce the potential impact of the project on the community.
- Provide the RTA with information about the potential impact of the project on the community and possible strategies to reduce these impacts. This information will be included in the Environmental Assessment being prepared for the project.

All community members are encouraged to participate in the consultation process and will be provided with feedback during the assessment.

It should be made clear to all community members that the purpose of the consultation and cultural impact assessment is not to review the preferred route for the highway.

Subject to your agreement, I propose to address the community at a convenient time during or immediately following the Gurdwara activities on 7 May 2006. I will be available all day to undertake informal interviews with members of the community, to gather feedback and provide information.

In order to conduct these activities, I seek your permission to use the facilities of the temple. A small room is requested with table and chairs. The capacity of the room would ideally be for a maximum of six people. I also seek your assistance in promoting the consultation meetings. It is hoped you may be able to assist in the distribution or display of a community flyer to inform people that the meetings are taking place. Copies of the flyer are enclosed.

I hope that you look favourably on the proposed consultation process and I would be pleased to consider any advice or suggestions you may have to improve the process. It is important that a representative group from the community is involved to ensure that the assessment addresses the potential impacts on all members of the community.

I will be in touch shortly to discuss the proposed consultation process.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 9281 5199 or 0416 086 887.

Sincerely

Julie Tassone

Project Manager

Manidis Roberts

APPENDIX B **COMMUNITY INFORMATION FLYER
NUMBER ONE**



A New South Wales Government Initiative



Upgrading the Pacific Highway Sapphire to Woolgoolga

- Invitation to participate in community consultation - Cultural Impact Assessment

Assessment of potential impacts on the Sikh community

On behalf of the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority, Manidis Roberts consultants will hold a number of community consultation meetings with members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community. The consultation is part of a cultural impact assessment of the preferred route of the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway Upgrade on the Sikh community.

The purpose of the consultation meetings is to:

Receive feedback about the potential impacts of the project on the Sikh community.

Provide input into possible strategies to reduce any impacts.

The purpose of the consultation is not to review the preferred route of the highway.

Julie Tassone of Manidis Roberts and RTA staff, will be available to discuss the project with the community at:

First Sikh Temple - 30 April 2006

Guru Nanak Sikh Temple - 7 May 2006

The meetings will be informal. All Sikh community members are encouraged to participate and provide their views on the project.

If you would like more information please call Julie Tassone on 02 9281 5199.

For more information contact the project information line 1800 636 363
(toll free)

Or visit the website www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific
(Click on Sapphire to Woolgoolga)

APPENDIX C **COMMUNITY INFORMATION FLYER
NUMBER TWO**



Upgrading the Pacific Highway Sapphire to Woolgoolga

- Invitation to participate in a discussion group - Cultural Impact Assessment

Assessment of potential impacts on the Sikh community

On behalf of the RTA, Manidis Roberts will be holding a discussion group meeting with interested members of the community. The group will discuss the following:

- The potential cultural impact of the project on the Sikh community.
- Possible strategies to reduce any impacts of the project.
- Other issues regarding the potential impacts of the project on the Sikh community.

The discussion group meeting will be held between **5pm and 7pm** on **15 May 2006** at the **Woolgoolga RSL, Beach Street**.

If you are interested in participating in the discussion group **fill in the form below** and send to:

Manidis Roberts

Julie Tassone

Locked Bag 2740

Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

(Fax 02 9281 9406)

OR call:

Julie Tassone or David Harrison on 02 9281 5199.

Upgrading the Pacific Highway

Sapphire to Woolgoolga

DISCUSSION GROUP - 15 MAY 2006

YES I would like to participate in the discussion group.

My name is:

My contact phone number is:

APPENDIX D **MEETING WITH FIRST SIKH
TEMPLE, 30 APRIL 2006 – SUMMARY
OF FEEDBACK**

MEETING WITH FIRST SIKH TEMPLE, 30 APRIL 2006 - SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

The following provides a summary of the feedback provided during the first discussion meeting held with members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community on 30 April 2006 at The First Sikh Temple. Comments are paraphrased to capture the tone and nature of the discussion rather than direct quotes. The feedback has been grouped into six broad categories:

- Economic – general
- Economic – agricultural
- Cultural
- Road safety and traffic
- RTA communication and consultation
- General comments

Economic – general

It's good for Woolgoolga.

There's no negative impact – it will possibly have a positive impact.

It's positive, (in terms of) local development - it's better for the community.

It will attract more people to the area.

There are generally not enough jobs locally – the population will decline.

If the road is moved too far away Woolgoolga will no longer attract tourists.

We need to attract more tourists to the area.

People may leave town which may impact (negatively) on local businesses.

There are currently not enough people to do the work on farms.

It may help Woolgoolga to grow.

It's good for business – more people will come to the temple.

Economic – agricultural

It has to go through someone's property.

The people who have properties affected have other properties (farms).

There are concerns regarding the negative impact on agriculture/farming and fears that people may have to leave the region.

There's not enough local work to attract young people – especially Sikhs, who are all farmers.

You could save the farms by choosing a different option.

You can't expand the farms due to environmental legislation. That is, there is no way alleviate the loss of land caused by the road cause you can't expand farms.

What will happen if people lose their farms?

Some young people who are tertiary/university educated stay and work on the farms because they want to stay with the community – others leave because they can't find relevant work (work they are qualified for) locally.

There may be job losses due to the impact on farms – people may move to Sydney.

We're all farmers but not all of us are directly impacted.

I don't have any suggestions as to how to minimise the impact on farms.

We're all farmers – someone's property has to go.

Cultural

There is no cultural impact – it's the same for all Australians.

We're Australians – we've been here for 100 years or more.

What's it got to do with culture?

We're all tertiary educated.

We're all fluent in English.

There is no Sikh community nearby – there may be a negative impact on the community if people move (decrease in population/local community disintegration).

It's got nothing to do with culture.

There is no impact on culture or the Sikh community specifically.

Road safety and traffic

There's too much traffic through Woolgoolga.

Current access to the school is dangerous.

It's positive as traffic will decrease.

It provides a better commute to Coffs Harbour.

Accidents will be reduced and traffic decreased.

A lot of people work in Coffs – it will improve the access.

It will improve the link between Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour.

You have to go to Coffs Harbour for everything – getting there safely is important.

I am happy with the project – there are so many accidents on the highway.

It's all positive, people who go to Coffs Harbour will come to Woogoolga.

The current access to the school – crossing the highway – is dangerous.

What access will we have to Woolgoolga once the road is built?

It is dangerous going from Woolgoolga to Coffs Harbour so the new road is a positive.

RTA communication and consultation

The RTA has been good.

Translation of information is appreciated.

We feel privileged (by the level of communication/consultation).

The process has been good so far.

People understand what is going on.

The RTA has provided good information however recently there has been no information provided. This has caused some anxiety.

Some of the maps are difficult to read/understand.

Public displays need to be available outside work hours.

It's better if the RTA comes to the temples to speak to people or gives a presentation at the community centre.

There is a feeling that the RTA is forcing Option E. Why are no studies being conducted around the other options? It is assumed that Option E is the cheapest option.

The RTA has communicated reasonably well with the community so far.

Enough information has been provided so far.

I'm happy with the consultation.

The RTA is providing enough information.

General comments

Compensation (of impacted land) needs to be looked at – not this other stuff.

Basically, just get on with it.

Enough money has been spent – they should just get on with it – not waste time and money with this study.

Overall, it's positive and is needed.

What will be the impact on the sub-division of property?

The option may change as a result of the NSW state election in 2007.

My land is not affected.

I would prefer Option A.

I don't care about the project, it doesn't affect me.

We need it.

It's a good thing.

This study is a waste of money.

APPENDIX E MEETING WITH GURU NANAK SIKH
TEMPLE, 7 MAY 2006 – SUMMARY
OF FEEDBACK

MEETING WITH GURU NANAK SIKH TEMPLE 7 MAY 2006 – SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

An informal consultation session was held at the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple in Woolgoolga on the 7 May 2006. The following provides a summary of the comments from the meeting. Comments are paraphrased to capture the tone and nature of the discussion rather than provided as direct quotes. The feedback has been organised under a number of key topics.

Impact on farming

- We will not be able to farm the land if the project goes ahead.
- It splits our property in half – we will not be able to use the land anymore.
- The bypass will negatively affect the local environment – the weather/local conditions and pollution will impact on farms.
- Farms will no longer be viable.
- Blueberry crops are an important and growing export.
- The farms provide work for women and young people.
- We are going to lose valuable farming land.
- There is no land available locally – it is not suitable to grow bananas – there are too many environmental controls – you cannot clear existing land.
- We need to preserve local lands for agricultural purposes.
- Opening up crown land would not help as it is unsuitable for growing bananas.

Connection to land

- Landowners have been here for 50 years. There is a strong connection to the land.
- The connection to the land is further strengthened by the fact that people define themselves by what they do – that is, farming. This extends to the Punjab and what people did in India. Land equates to culture in people's minds.

Family/community

- We want our sons to carry on the farms – this is their future.
- What will be left for future generations?
- Our extended family is important.
- There are also families affected in Coffs Harbour.
- It is important that farms/land is in close proximity to the rest of the community.
- We want to pass on the land to our children.
- Some people currently live in town.

- There will be a terrible impact on extended families – people will be forced out if they are not able to sustain themselves.
- Where will people go if they are forced out?
- The local community is growing. People return to India and assist with family reunions/immigration. People who immigrate have immediate employment through the local farms.
- Having our own farms enables us to celebrate our religious ceremonies/days of significance. They are not recognised as public holidays like Christmas and other religious events. We have the flexibility to do this with our own farms.
- There is a sense of cohesion in the community – we all help each other.
- Through the extended family grand parents look after the children while parents work on the farms.
- The temple will be adversely affected if people move away – there will be no congregation. You can't have a temple without a congregation.
- We want to encourage others in the community to the temple as well.
- We are a model community – we contribute to the local economy and the community as a whole.
- Even if young people get a tertiary education, they still want to come back to the community/farms.
- Even if young people go to the city for their education – they still come back to the community.
- The land is so valuable to the community you cannot compensate for the loss.

Financial impact

- The land west of the highway is good residential land which will be locked up if it is split by the highway.
- People are planning to build on the land – this will be disrupted by the project.

Traffic/the project

- Why is the RTA not upgrading the existing highway?
- Why are you bringing all the traffic from the Northern Beaches?
- It will bring the traffic from Sydney-Brisbane.
- There are more traffic lights in this stretch of road than anywhere between Brisbane and Sydney.
- The way the by-pass is being constructed is unacceptable. It is not a long term solution – the RTA will need to re-do the road in the future.
- There are some safety issues with the existing road.
- How will the project reduce trucks and general traffic?
- It will attract more Brisbane to Sydney traffic.
- Our access (across the bypass) will be disrupted – we'll have to drive to Coffs Harbour to get to Woolgoolga.
- Our access will be cut-off by the bypass.

LETTER REGARDING REVISED CONSULTATION APPROACH

22 May 2006

Rashmere Bhatti
Guru Nanak Sikh Temple
13 Crabbe Street
Woolgoolga NSW 2456

Dear Rashmere

We would like to propose a modification to the consultation process for the cultural assessment of the potential impact of the preferred route for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway Upgrade Project on the Sikh community following recent feedback received from members of the community,

The modified consultation process will provide members of the community with an opportunity to submit their feedback and comments regarding the impact of the project in writing to Julie Tassone, Manidis Roberts. Feedback may be submitted in any written format however it is requested that the following points are addressed:

- Potential positive impact/s of the proposed upgrade route.
- Potential negative impact/s of the proposed upgrade route.
- Suggested strategies to address the potential negative impact/s of the proposed upgrade route.

Proposals regarding the selection of alternative routes for the highway upgrade will not be considered, as the purpose of the assessment is not to review the preferred route of the proposed highway upgrade.

The proposed closing date for receipt of submissions is **7 July 2006**.

A draft community flyer explaining the modified consultation approach and objectives is included for your consideration. We seek your comment regarding the flyer and request that comments are provided by **29 May 2006**.

The flyer will be provided in both English and Punjabi.

In order to explain the revised process to the community, we seek to address the temple meeting on **11 June 2006**. We propose that the flyer would be distributed at this time.

Attendees at the community meeting on Monday night 15 May 2006 expressed a desire to submit their views/feedback in writing. While a survey/questionnaire was proposed at the meeting, independent advice was that this approach would be inappropriate, as the integrity of data obtained could not be assured.

The proposed methodology will provide the community with an opportunity to submit their comments and feedback in writing while maintaining the integrity of data obtained.

You are invited to consider this revised approach and provide feedback to Julie Tassone by **29 May 2006**. If you require further information please do not hesitate to call me on 02 9281 5199.

Yours sincerely

Julie Tassone

Project Manager

Manidis Roberts

APPENDIX G **FLYER REGARDING REVISED
CONSULTATION APPROACH**



Upgrading the Pacific Highway Sapphire to Woolgoolga

**Cultural impact assessment of the preferred route for the
Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway Upgrade Project on the
Sikh community**

- Invitation to provide written feedback -

On behalf of the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority, Manidis Roberts invites members of the Sikh community to submit written feedback regarding the potential impact of the preferred route for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway Upgrade Project on the Sikh community.

The assessment includes discussion of:

The positive impact/s of the proposed highway upgrade.

The negative impact/s of the proposed highway upgrade.

Strategies that may address the negative impact/s of the proposed highway upgrade.

Proposals regarding the selection of alternative routes for the highway upgrade will not be considered, as the purpose of the assessment is not to review the preferred route of the proposed highway upgrade.

The closing date for receipt of submissions is 28 July 2006.

Submissions may be made in English or Punjabi by:

POST:

Attention: Julie Tassone

Manidis Roberts

Locked Bag 2740

Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

FAX:

Attention: Julie Tassone, 02 9281 9406

EMAIL:

juliet@mandisroberts.com.au

If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact Julie Tassone on 02 9281 5199.

APPENDIX H **WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM THE
FIRST SIKH TEMPLE**

**The First Sikh Temple in Australia Inc.
Hasting street
P.O. Box 322
Woolgoolga
NSW 2456**

25th July 2006

Road and Traffic Authority

Submission from congregation of The First Sikh Temple in Australia inc.

We wish reiterate views which already have been expressed in meeting with Julie Tassone on 30th April 2006. Like many other Australians we are appalled by road fatalities on our roads. Several local families have lost loved ones in the road accidents in the local area. Thus we are all very supportive of any measures which will improve safety on our roads and reduce the death toll.

With regards to Sapphire to Woolgoolga highway upgrade and Woolgoolga bypass. Our members have varied views. Some members are supportive of highway upgrade in general but quite rightly have the proverbial "not in my backyard" attitude. Sapphire to Woolgoolga upgrade can have beneficial impact on Woolgoolga. Improve safety and reduce commuting times for the many community members who travel regularly to work in Coffs Harbour or to work the banana plantations in Coffs Harbour area. Shorter travel times may have positive impact on local businesses and rental properties and land value. Reduced traffic at Woolgoolga roundabout will improve safety at school children crossing. Although some people have expressed concern that access to their properties will be restricted once bypass is in place and it also may adversely effect further residential expansion of Woolgoolga and therefore the value of their land.

The adverse economic and cultural impact on the Sikh community by highway upgrade and bypass can be determined by number of properties affected. The Coffs-Woolgoolga Sikh community of approximately two hundred family have about twelve families whose properties are likely to be directly effected by the Sapphire - Woolgoolga upgrade and Option E bypass. The owners of these properties naturally do not wish to have highway go their properties. They will lose their livelihood and face uncertain future and problem relocating.

The Sikhs especially from Jat caste have peculiar relationship with the land. Our ancestors in Punjab have been farming for many

centuries. The love and affection for land runs deep in veins of every Jat. The land is not just a commodity but family heritage. In Punjab it would tantamount sacrilegious and shameful act to sell the family farm. It is akin to selling family heirloom. In Punjab it is not uncommon for Jats to spend fortunes and years and even engage in physical vendettas to retain or regain the ownership of even minute piece land. These sentiment and emotions are also engrained in the psyche of the local Jat Sikhs. They have owned these properties for close to half century. The Sikhs who will lose properties when final route of the by pass is determined by the authorities need to be more than adequately compensated not only for loss of livelihood, financial hardship, potential land value but also for loss of family heritage, great sentimental value and emotional hurt.

We are appreciative of RTA for the several visits to the Temple to inform the congregation and translating pamphlets into Punjabi. Even though many of us second or third generation Australian and are fluent in English. These translated pamphlets have helped to inform those few who have difficulty with English.

Congregation of The First Sikh Temple

APPENDIX I

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WOOLGOOLGA PUNJABI SIKH COMMUNITY



submission

Cultural and Social Impact Assessment

of the preferred route for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway upgrade project on the Punjabi Sikh Community

CULTURAL & SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

OF THE PREFERRED ROUTE FOR THE
SAPPHIRE TO WOOLGOOLGA PACIFIC HIGHWAY
UPGRADE PROJECT
ON THE PUNJABI SIKH COMMUNITY

- SUBMITTED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WOOLGOOLGA PUNJABI SIKH COMMUNITY, 31ST JULY, 2006.
- PURPOSE OF SUBMISSION : TO RESPOND TO AN INVITATION BY ROADS & TRAFFIC AUTHORITY CONSULTANTS MANIDIS ROBERTS, TO PROVIDE WRITTEN FEEDBACK REGARDING THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WOOLGOOLGA HIGHWAY BYPASS ON THE LOCAL PUNJABI SIKH COMMUNITY.

COMPILED BY : Trish Dengate (Independent Community Consultant)

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- 1 Introduction
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 - Identifying the key issues
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- 4 Social / Cultural Impact assessment process
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 - Family Profiles
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SUMMARY

The purpose of this submission is to respond to a request by the Roads and Traffic Authority Consultant for the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community to provide written feedback regarding the proposed Pacific Highway Bypass (Option E).

The Social and Cultural Impact Assessment was undertaken by an independent consultant on behalf of the Punjabi Sikh community. Religious leaders and Elders of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Temple provided the support and formal structures necessary to access and consult the community.

A series of community and individual meetings were used to reveal the real local issues in relation to the cultural impact of Option E, and to promote open participation in the process. Family profiles for those families directly affected by the proposed bypass were developed and support letters from a variety of local, state, national and international experts and organizations concerned about the gravity of the cultural and social impact on the Punjabi and wider Woolgoolga community.

The cultural and social impacts are far more prominent than perhaps the RTA envisaged due to the complexity and multicultural nature of the unique and prosperous local community. These impacts are explored in terms of the following interrelated key issues identified; heritage; employment; economics; agriculture & the environment; socio/cultural; access & equity; and welfare.

Strategies for monitoring impacts and establishing management measures were difficult to consider in view of the significant short and long-term negative cultural impacts highlighted. There were no positive impacts identified.

The greater majority of Punjabi Sikh families directly affected by Option E feel that standard mitigation measures will not reduce or prevent the erosion of their cultural practices and traditions. The cultural and religious connection to the land may be difficult for the RTA to comprehend. However, without the abandonment of the proposal or complete re-location of families to similar agricultural properties in close proximity to the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community and Temples, the cultural and social impacts will be irreversible. They are also in direct conflict with many current government policies concerning multiculturalism, social justice and equity and regional economic sustainability.

1 INTRODUCTION

Written feedback has been invited from members of the Punjabi Sikh community by Manidis Roberts, on behalf of the NSW Roads & Traffic Authority (RTA). Members of the local Punjabi Sikh community concerned about the potential impact of the RTA's proposed route for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway Upgrade, enlisted the assistance of Trish Dengate (local independent Consultant) to undertake the consultation process and to prepare this document.

The following social impact assessment endeavors to measure the social and cultural consequences of the proposed Option E on three levels ie; individual properties and Sikh families directly affected by the proposed route; the local Punjabi Sikh community; and the wider Woolgoolga community as a whole.

As an agriculturally-based culture, and in view of the fact that 30% of the local Punjabi Sikh community will be directly affected by the proposal, the economic impact on all levels will also be considered.

The process of such an assessment focuses on predicting how local people may be affected in how they cope as members of the unique Woolgoolga community, in terms of how they live, work, relate to each other, spend their leisure time, and meet individual needs.

Cultural impacts are of vital consideration in terms of measuring how such a major project may influence changes to Sikh (specifically) norms, values and beliefs which guide an individual's position in society and the flow-on affect to the broader community.

Aims of the Social/Cultural Assessment

One of the main aims of completing the assessment is to improve equity and sustainability in the decision-making process for the proposed highway option E. By revealing the real local issues and promoting open participation in estimating social and cultural impacts, it is hoped that community interests will be better represented.

The RTA in attempting to select a suitable route to bypass Woolgoolga has endeavoured to minimise the predicted impact on local residents predominately from an economic and physical perspective. In this case however, the cultural and social impacts are far more prominent than perhaps the RTA envisaged due to the complexity and multicultural nature of the local community.

Identifying the Key Issues

A great deal of information and debate has already been collected by the local Punjabi Sikh community, in response to the initial lack of understanding as to the ramifications of Option E to its members.

Concern over the lack of meaningful consultation and understanding about Sikh culture and heritage was presented to the Community Relations Commission and then to the General Purpose Standing Committee No.4 Inquiry on the Pacific Highway Upgrade (Parliamentary Inquiry) in November 2005, by concerned members of the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community.

The Final Report of 16th May, 2006, outlines the community representative's suggestion that the RTA in 'creating' the new option E; "in reality moved the problem.....into the backyard of the people in the community (Punjabi Sikh) least able to advocate for themselves due to cultural, language, lack of skills and knowledge of processes and already disadvantaged by their lack of inclusion in the consultation process" * (3.52, p.30) *(General Purpose Standing Committee No 4, Pacific Highway Upgrades Final Report, Report 16, May 2006.)*

The Punjabi Sikh community has since pressured the RTA into undertaking a Cultural and Heritage Impact Assessment which has already included a number of consultation meetings in May, 2006 (see Appendix A). The RTA appointed consultant from Sydney has provided the opportunity to submit this document as part of the Impact Assessment process.

In addition to examining the above information and researching the Punjabi Sikh culture, a number of informal meetings with members of the Punjabi Sikh community, local businesses, industry representatives, and individuals assisted in summarizing the seven key community issues in relation to the proposed Option E. These issues then became the basis for the consultation process.

2 BACKGROUND

Understanding the affected community

An estimated 700 Punjabi Sikh people live within the Coffs Harbour local government area, with 150 living in Coffs Harbour itself. The remaining 550 (79%) live in the Woolgoolga area (*Coffs Harbour City Council, Population Profile, 2004*)

Coffs Harbour City Council's Population Profile (2004) is based on the last Census figures of 2001, and describes the Coffs Harbour LGA on the basis of localities. Woolgoolga is geographically a relatively small area which contains 7% of the total LGA population. Other localities described on the northern beaches include; Red Rock/Corindi (2%); Arrawarra/ Mullaway/Safety Beach (3.9%); Sandy Beach/Emerald Beach (5.8%); and Moonee/Sapphire (5.5%).

The 'snapshot' on Woolgoolga states that; "the population is culturally diverse, with a high proportion of the population being of Indian origin; 12% of the population of this locality speak another language as well as English. It is a unique locality nestled between beaches and surrounding hills filled with banana farms, both providing beautiful views and atmosphere for Woolgoolga." (p.27)

Other significant statistics from the Profile include;

- Higher proportion of labourers than for the LGA as a whole
- Fewer than average people with any type of skilled vocational education
- Over 16% of the jobs in Woolgoolga are related to agriculture, which is an indication of the continuing significance of the banana industry in this locality
- The unemployment rate is significantly higher than the LGA average of 18.6%.
- Higher proportion of the population not in the labour force than the LGA (11% more)
- Lower incomes than the LGA average

The above figures reflect the continued importance of the agricultural industry for residents and also the lack of diversity in employment locally. The proximity of farms to Woolgoolga's services and facilities is also important to the viability of individual properties.

The other vital aspect of the local agricultural land is its versatility. Farmers are diversifying in order to remain viable and better able to respond to changes in market demands. The majority of farms grow mixed crops ie; bananas; blueberries; raspberries; avocados; and mangoes.

Many local farmers have been replacing some areas of bananas with blueberries. Although they are very labour-intensive and require a relative

large initial financial outlay (land preparation, posts, netting, plants, etc), the ongoing costs in managing blueberries are less than for bananas. The Federal Government recently contributed a \$240,000 grant towards developing and improving the local blueberry industry and packing/distribution facilities.

Although current banana prices are exceptional due to the recent destruction of Queensland banana supplies, since the mid-nineties prices have been poor. Once the Queensland banana industry recovers, it is likely that mixed farms will continue to be on the increase.

In view of the extended family network dependent in some way on the eighteen Indian-owned properties directly or indirectly affected by the proposed Pacific Highway Option E, it is estimated that 30% of the Indian community within the Coffs Harbour L.G.A. will have their way of life seriously threatened. Although difficult to comprehend in a planning environment tailored towards building highways, the consequent impact on the culture of Woolgoolga's close-knit Sikh community, will be far-reaching.

Such impacts are also inseparable from the wider community which has developed and progressed with the Sikh community as an integral and unique part of this vibrant and friendly town.

3 CURRENT PROFILE

Social and Historical Context

People from the Punjab state (land of five rivers) in northern India originally migrated to Australia prior to federation, and were predominately seeking opportunities in agriculture. Some of these 'sojourners' began settling in the Coffs Harbour/Woolgoolga area after the Second World War, and the community began to rapidly expand following the multicultural policies of the seventies. The community is now known as the birth place of Sikhs in Australia.

The banana industry offered opportunity and an agricultural lifestyle which soon became the foundation for the establishment and success of the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community. By 1995, 90% of banana growers in the area were Punjabi, with the willingness to work hard and ability to utilize family labour a key factor to their dominance in the local industry.

The two Sikh Temples are the main focus of the Punjab community's religious and social life. Extended families continue to be important, with traditions maintained in terms of kinship, caring for the elders in the family, and the custom of arranged marriages. The 'village' of Woolgoolga allows close daily interaction with members of both the Punjabi Sikh and wider community, and easy access to properties and other services.

Many elaborate marriages are held in Woolgoolga (eight to ten per year), where approximately \$25,000 is spent locally for each wedding by the families. Large number of visitors from other parts of Australia, India and the world converge on the town for these events. Three day religious celebrations are held at different times throughout the year (a minimum of 14 times each year), where \$2-3,000 is spent locally at local grocery stores on catering.

In the last decade the community has undergone economic and social change. However agricultural traditions and cultural life continues to dominate the lifestyle, norms, values and beliefs of Woolgoolg's Punjabi Sikh community.

Traditions which continue to dominate for even the younger generation.

International expert on Punjabi Sikh culture, Professor Vern A. Dusenbearly of Hamline University, provides further perspective on the community in his letter concerning the Pacific Highway Upgrade (See Appendix D).

4. SOCIAL/CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In considering the full range of perceptual and tangible impacts the Woolgoolga Bypass may have on people and the community, seven key issues examined in the Cultural Impact Assessment are considered to be closely interrelated and therefore essential to the process of assessment ie;

- ❖ Heritage : history and cultural significance of the land for the community
- ❖ Employment : autonomy, inclusion and support of the extended family
- ❖ Economics : individual, Punjabi Sikh community and wider community impact
- ❖ Agriculture & the Environment : loss and disturbance of prime farming land
- ❖ Socio/Cultural : potential degradation of the social fabric and cohesion of the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community
- ❖ Access & Equity : physical and emotional loss of land and employment
- ❖ Welfare : reduced capacity for families to meet and support individual needs

(within the Sikh cultural context)

5. CONSULTATION PROCESS

The task of preparing feedback for the Cultural Impact Assessment was delegated to an independent consultant in an effort to provide an unbiased perspective.

The process of consultation involved;

- speaking to individual families directly affected by the proposed Option E
- conducting meetings targeting members of the Punjabi Sikh community (including men, women, youth, new migrants and migrants who have been settled in the area for longer)
- informal consultation with members and business operators in the wider Woolgoolga community.

There are three representative bodies of the Sikhs (Gurudwaras) in Woolgoolga. The original, First Sikh Temple (utilized by approx. 15% of the community); the Guru Nanak Gurudwara Sikh Temple (85% of the community) and the third newly formed Gurudwara, the Woolgoolga/Coffs Harbour Sikh Sports Council (which is made up of members from both Temples).

Members of both Temples were invited to attend consultation meetings and/or contact the consultant preparing the submission individually. Invitations were extended via announcements during the Temple services, and personal invitations by the community leaders (ie; Priest and Elders) from the Guru Nanak Temple.

Two meetings were held at the Woolgoolga Bowling Club (one youth and one general meeting), and one at the Guru Nanak Temple. The focus for the meetings was on the Indian community. (**See Appendix A for Agenda)

As a result of the familiarity of the issues amongst the Punjabi Sikh community, consultation methods were based on the concept of clarifying already well-established areas of concern in order to highlight potential community impacts of Option E.

Utilising the formal structure and processes of the Temples, "Issues Sheets" (**See Appendix B) were distributed throughout the Punjabi Sikh community. People were also given the opportunity to voluntarily sign sheets to register their support for the main themes (ie; Issues) of this submission (**See Appendix C).

Those who did not support the main themes for the submission demonstrated their views by not taking up the opportunities described above. Naturally, there are a small percentage of people within the Indian community who have taken a different viewpoint and who consider the compensation

measures for those affected by Option E to not adversely impact on Punjabi Sikh culture and the wider community.

Methods

The research stage of the project involved reviewing documents produced by members of the Sikh and wider community about the social and cultural issues surrounding the Pacific Highway Upgrade, and formal meetings and other relevant material produced by the RTA, Coffs Harbour City Council, organizations and other government departments.

Consultation methods included;

- Individual interviews and liaison via the phone and email and subsequent letters of support from local businesses, Sikh and agricultural industry peak bodies, experts and other community organizations (**see Appendix D)
- Informal discussions
- Three Focus Groups - Guru Nanak Temple meeting (men and women)
 - Indian Youth meeting
 - General open community meeting

*(** See appendix E for a summary of the main concerns raised at the meetings, in relation to the identified issues)*

- Meeting with the Coffs Harbour City Council Mayor, two Councillors, two Council Engineering staff, five Punjabi Sikh representatives, and one general Woolgoolga community representative (RTA Community Focus Group member)
- Case Study Interviews *(** See Appendix D for information collected from families directly affected by Option E)*
- Various community elders and the Guru Nanak Priest (who is a registered interpreter, ensuring an unbiased approach and clarity) were involved throughout the process in enlisting the purpose of the consultation, informing as many community members as possible, accompanying the consultant at all meetings, and interpreting.

6. RESULTS OF CONSULTATION PROCESS AND RESEARCH

Family Profiles (Case Studies)

Profile information collected on those Punjabi families affected by Option E is outlined in Appendix F. The information reflects common factors to all the families ie; a number of generations living and working together in agriculture, and some also providing employment outside the family network.

A more detailed family and business profile is also included in Appendix F, which describes the approximate annual costs of running a banana farm, and the type of local businesses utilized in the process. Personal concerns about Option E are also recorded.

Other interesting data collected related to young people in the community. Of the affected families, approximately 42 people aged between 18 and 30 years work only in agriculture (two of whom are married). For the 30 to 40 age group, approximately 28 work in agriculture, all are married and support an extended family network. The 'flow-on' effect for these families alone would be devastating to the local community.

Summary of Social and Cultural Impacts.

The following table has been developed in the interest of presenting practical, consistent and concise information by using the issue headings identified for the consultation process. It aims to cover consideration for each of the seven identified issues in terms of;

- ❖ Projected Socio/Cultural Impact
- ❖ Predicted Standard RTA Response
- ❖ Barriers to Positive Outcomes

Please note that the purpose of predicting the RTA response to identified impacts is to highlight the difficulty in overcoming complex barriers to achieve positive outcomes. The predicted standard RTA response in no way represents strategies suggested by the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community.

The community, in fact, were unable to identify any feasible 'mitigation strategies' for the identified impacts, due to the serious consequences for Punjabi Sikh culture and way of life.

Issue 1

HERITAGE

History and cultural significance of the land for the community

Projected Socio/Cultural Impacts	Predicted Standard RTA Response	Barriers to Positive Outcomes
Severance of cultural links to the land and agriculture Degradation of culture Separation of younger generations from their traditional heritage Loss of status, identity, values, autonomy and livelihood Erosion of moral standards and respect for Punjabi Sikh culture Impact on non-Sikh properties and families who are all part of the same unique and cohesive multi-cultural community Fewer opportunities for interaction between cultures eg; school, TAFE visits to Temples	Financial compensation Focus on re-training and education for displaced families Change of career focus Improving access to income and welfare support	Negative emotional & psychological impact Alienation from cultural support networks Loss of extended family security and financial support Separation of families Access to culture & inherited 4 th generation traditions removed Displacement and loss of quality of life Greater reliance on government support Fragmentation of local community and current self-supporting spirit

Issue 2

EMPLOYMENT

Autonomy, inclusion and support of the extended family

Projected Socio/Cultural Impacts	Predicted Standard RTA Response	Barriers to Positive Outcomes
<p>Autonomy & quality of life Loss of flexible, independent & culturally significant employment opportunities Difficulty in finding alternative employment Employment and prosperity for future generations seriously depleted Removal of employment security & support for young people in close proximity to community & culture Long-term investment by affected farmers will be lost eg; new blueberry crops</p>	<p>Referral to Job Network Agencies Access to Centrelink financial support Targeting re-training & other local employment opportunities</p>	<p>Need for local, flexible employment in order to maintain cultural, religious and family way of life Lack of local realistic alternatives for extended family-based employment Loss of supported & co-operative employment environment Only agricultural-based skills Language barriers for new migrants, women and discrimination in employment Seasonal nature of alternative agricultural work eg; blueberry picking at Corindi High existing unemployment in local area</p>

Issue 3

ECONOMICS

Individual, Punjabi Sikh community and wider community impact

Projected Socio/Cultural Impacts	Predicted Standard RTA Response	Barriers to Positive Outcomes
<p>Reduction of land under agriculture Erosion of sustainability for local banana & blueberry industries Flow-on effects to local businesses and wider community eg; Rural Store; fuel depots; mechanical repairs; grocery stores & other ancillary shops Wealth & prosperity of the local economy will be depleted. Reduced 'collective buying and working power' for farmers Deflation of family/household income and earning capacity Unmeasured impact of construction stage on properties</p>	<p>Welfare support</p>	<p>Few other local employment options for displaced families Dependence on shared resources & infrastructure of local industry, which will have negative economic affects on the remaining farmers Reduced earning capacity Difficulty in duplicating current lifestyle & agricultural properties with financial compensation (which does not allow for the purchase & re-establishment of other properties Welfare support will be dependent upon government guidelines & assessment standards</p>

Issue 4

AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Loss and disturbance of prime farming land

Projected Socio/Cultural Impacts	Predicted Standard RTA Response	Barriers to Positive Outcomes
<p>Significant negative visual amenity of motorway & interchanges</p> <p>Reduced amenity for residents & tourists</p> <p>Loss of vegetation and natural protection from the elements for crops</p> <p>Interruption of wildlife corridor</p> <p>Pollution; air, noise, run-off into waterways</p> <p>Fear of affecting the quality of produce due to eg; dust on fruit</p> <p>Access & inconvenience issues to properties</p>	<p>Standard 'mitigation' strategies ie; noise/ weather barriers; wildlife 'underpasses'; pollution traps; dust reduction measures; re-vegetation; etc</p>	<p>Conflict with Council's 'Our Living City' Draft Settlement Strategy</p> <p>Destruction of some & reduced viability of other farms</p> <p>Application of simplistic solutions to complex issues</p> <p>Orientation and bias towards physical impacts</p>

Issue 5

SOCIO/CULTURAL

Potential degradation of the social fabric and cohesion of the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community

Projected Socio/Cultural Impacts	Predicted Standard RTA Response	Barriers to Positive Outcomes
<p>Loss of identity, respect for moral values and standards Loss of social standing & status Reduced ability to meet cultural obligations & traditions Viability & stability of Temples affected if 30% of the congregation relocate Degradation of the social fabric & cohesion of the Punjabi Sikh community Long-term impact on younger generation Loss for the wider dynamic Woolgoolga community Psychological & emotional consequences of splitting up the extended family structure and separation from the land</p>	<p>Nil (considering the lack of adequate, culturally sensitive, accessible and appropriate services available to meet the needs of Punjabi Sikhs The area already is recognized amongst welfare agencies as requiring more research & investigation as to how to meet the particular need of community in a culturally sensitive way</p>	<p>Having to re-locate to find work is not feasible with the cultural interdependence of the extended family Many feel that relocating simply isn't an option due to strong cultural ties within the group situation afforded by the Woolgoolga community Difficulty in maintaining the community without employment and other opportunities for young people Cultural barriers to accessing welfare services</p>

Issue 6

ACCESS AND EQUITY

Physical and emotional loss of land and employment

Projected Socio/Cultural Impacts	Predicted Standard RTA Response	Barriers to Positive Outcomes
<p>Decreased access to employment & autonomy Loss of 30% of properties and lower production for others Apparent discrimination against a minority group Access to farms & disruption to production during construction period Reduced access to Temples Conflict with government rural migration strategies, multicultural policies and even economic incentives eg; recent \$240,000 Federal grant towards blueberry industry</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>Exacerbation of language barriers Reduced ability for the community to provide financial and other support for new migrants. Difficulty for existing predominately Coffs-based services to cater for the needs of culturally displaced people accustomed to close, appropriate community support . Language barriers</p>

Issue 7

WELFARE

Reduced capacity for families to meet and support individual needs
(within the Sikh cultural context)

Projected Socio/Cultural Impacts	Predicted Standard RTA Response	Barriers to Positive Outcomes
Capacity for families to fully support its members and to meet individual needs reduced Potential increased demand for welfare services & income support Eg; childcare, education, aged care Erosion of moral value and standards for youth and potential social problems which may follow eg; juvenile crime	Nil	Strong cultural barriers to accessing and participating in welfare services eg; cultural shame of utilizing services such as aged care., childcare, etc.

7 LETTERS OF SUPPORT

During the process of consultation local and national organizations were approached in order to gain a broader perspective on the potential impact of the area losing 30% of the local farming industry and a significant amount of productive agricultural land.

In Appendix D, letters from the following organizations and individuals are included;

- ❖ Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Sikh Temple
- ❖ Sikh Council of Australia
- ❖ Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW
- ❖ Regional Communities Consultative Council
- ❖ Banana Industry Committee
- ❖ Professor Vern A. Dusenbeary of Hamline University, USA.
- ❖ Woolgoolga Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Australian Red Cross
- ❖ Woolgoolga Norco Rural Store
- ❖ Coffs Harbour City Councillor, Keith Rhoades
- ❖ W.H. McLeod, Professor of History, University of Otago, NZ.
(specializing Punjabi Sikh history, religion & society)

A number of important points were raised within these letters, which all emphasize the important role the Punjabi Sikh community have in the continued growth and prosperity of the Woolgoolga area and their vital cultural links to the land. A summary of the points raised are in relation to Option E are as follows;

- Fragmentation of viable and productive agricultural land and the impact on the ability of the area to sustain the local banana and blueberry industry with an estimated gross value exceeding \$20M p.a, and industry adopted flow-on effect of 2.5 (Banana Industry Report estimate) for the dependent local light industrial and trading segment.
- Concern about the unmeasured impact of the construction period and long-term ramifications of an altered agricultural environment ; flow-on effects on the Woolgoolga economy and indirect impacts on neighbouring farms.
- Fragmentation of west Woolgoolga and significant environmental threats
- Economic consequences of transforming 10 km of landscape into motorway for the local area should not be ignored or underestimated, including for the tourism industry which contributes an estimated \$19M p.a. to the local economy.

- Loss of employment opportunities created by agricultural production, particularly for the Sikh community
- Substantial financial and other community support and involvement provided to local, national and international projects and humanitarian appeals by the Punjabi Sikh community
- Cultural stability will be at risk and family cohesion strained
- Powerful attachment to the land, due to the cultural basis from the 'Jat' rural caste in India
- The social order of the Sikh community and their traditional values, heritage and culture will be seriously eroded or virtually lost in the process
- The 'harsh cruelties' of resettlement if the farmers are forced to move, such as "religious vilification, racial persecution, bigotry and cultural intolerance which will have a devastating affect on them and the future of their children." (No. 1, Appendix D)
- Religious and cultural discrimination and consequent barriers to education
- Social, moral and psychological breakdown of the dislocated families.
- "...It is short-sighted to cause such division within a community which has been so productive and cohesive for so many years.....Woolgoolga has been a 'lighthouse' community for its unity and strength in welcoming and living evidence of how Australian values can be shared" (Ethnic Communities Council of NSW)

8 RECOMMENDATIONS ~ MANAGEMENT & MONITORING

Strategies for monitoring impacts and establishing management measures were difficult to consider in view of the significant short and long-term negative cultural impacts of the proposed Woolgoolga Highway Bypass on the Sikh community.

The majority of Punjabi Sikh families directly affected by the proposal feel that standard mitigation measures such as financial compensation, education/re-training opportunities and on-site management measures (eg; individual property access; dust reduction & regeneration strategies) will not be able to reduce or prevent the erosion of their cultural practices and traditions.

The cultural and religious connection to the land will be impossible to maintain for these families without their complete relocation to similar agricultural properties in close proximity to the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community and Temples. This viewpoint equally applies to those properties only partly or indirectly affected, if the ongoing viability of their farms will be compromised by the proposed motorway in any way.

Simplistic and economic approaches to solving complex social and cultural impacts cannot be practically applied and sustained in this unique and culturally dynamic environment. An environment which is integral to the economic prosperity and social integrity of the wider Woolgoolga community.

The information substantiated in this submission proves the critical nature of the adverse social and cultural impacts of the Bypass. Nothing can compensate for the destruction of such a close-knit prosperous community.

We therefore feel that it is imperative that the RTA seriously re-consider their 'preferred Option E route' as potentially having irreversible adverse social and cultural effects on the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh community which cannot be suitably 'mitigated'.



..APPENDIX A community meeting agenda



Focus group guide

The purpose of the Focus Groups is to;

- ⇒ *Explain the purpose of the Cultural Impact Assessment currently being prepared by the Woolgoolga Sikh community.*
- ⇒ *Facilitate discussion and feedback from the community about the main issues to be included in the submission.*
- ⇒ *Seek further ideas and support for the submission from as many members of the local Sikh community as possible.*

Agenda

- 1 Introduction & welcome
- 2 Background to the submission
- 3 Explanation of process
 - informal discussions
 - research
 - meetings/support list
 - submission
 - expected outcomes
- 5 Main issues identified so far (refer to Issues Sheet)
- 6 Discussion regarding how people feel the proposed highway bypass will impact on;
 - individual families
 - local Sikh community
 - Woolgoolga community as a whole.
- 7 Questions and general discussion
- 8 Where to from here, and thankyou.



..APPENDIX B
community issues report



Focus group guide

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ISSUES SHEET

Proposed Pacific Highway Woolgoolga Bypass (Option E)

Mandis Roberts is a Consultancy Firm who is preparing a 'Cultural Impact Assessment' of the proposed 'Option E' for the RTA (Roads & Traffic Authority). They have invited members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community to "provide written feedback regarding the potential impact of the preferred route for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway Upgrade".

An independent local consultant (Trish Dengate) is helping to put together the submission, which aims to explain to the RTA how their proposal will affect the Sikh community, particularly on a cultural and social level. Both the negative and positive impacts need to be considered.

The submission needs to be received by Mandis Roberts by 28th July, 2006.

Gathering Information

Apart from having informal discussions with members of the local Sikh community, the following meetings are planned;

- Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Temple meeting
(Sunday 16th July, 2.00pm)
- Sikh Youth Meeting, Woolgoolga Bowling Club
(Sunday 16th July, 4.30pm)
- General Sikh Community Meeting, Woolgoolga Bowling Club
(Tuesday 18th July, 5.00pm)

An individual meeting with Trish Dengate can be organized by phoning her on ph: 0407542045.

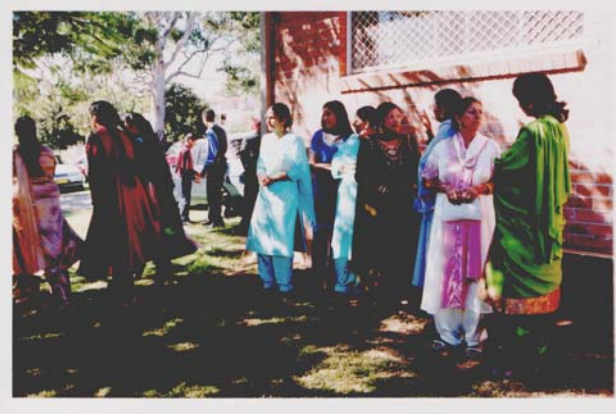
ISSUES RAISED SO FAR

1. Heritage_: Woolgoolga's Sikh community is well known nationally and internationally for the unique way it has been able to retain orthodox Punjabi Sikh culture and religion within Woolgoolga. The community is also well known for its generosity and support for the wider community.

The significance of land to the Punjabi social structure is related to occupation, which defines who you are and is an important part of the community's beliefs, values and attitudes. Agriculture is therefore of paramount importance to the local Sikh community, and a valued way of life.

2. Employment : The importance of involvement in agriculture for the Sikh community should not be underestimated, particularly from an employment perspective, as it includes and supports the extended family. It also allows autonomy and flexibility for families, which is difficult to reproduce in other employment settings.
3. Economics : The proposed 'Option E' will impact on prime agricultural and residential land, which currently offers easy access and proximity to Woolgoolga's services. Other economic issues to be considered are;
 - ongoing viability of affected farms eg; increased difficulty in managing disease control, fertilizing, spraying and produce quality assurance with highway 'buffer zone' restrictions, pollution, and access.
 - impact of reduced collective buying and working power, with fewer fully operational farms eg; aerial spraying
 - Lack of consideration of the 'flow-on effects' for farmers of the altered landscape and adequate compensation, including during the estimated four-year construction phase.
 - impact on local banana and blueberry industries
 - impact on other local businesses eg; Rural Store; Bogas
 - extended family (income support for young people, including education; combined households; welfare support for grandparents and other family members, as required)

4. Environmental : The motorway and the related 'interchanges' will certainly have negative impacts on the amenity of the area. Other environmental concerns which will also impact on the quality assurance of produce include; air pollution; noise pollution; run-off from motorway; changes to existing landscape & unmeasured agricultural consequences eg; increased exposure to the elements; drainage; wind; dust; construction noise/disruption (eg; blasting); separation of wildlife corridor.
5. Socio/Cultural : In order to assess the community impact of the livelihood of 30% of Sikh community being depleted, the cultural connection to the land and agriculture needs to be understood, ie;
 - Loss of identity, ability to meet traditional obligations reduced, viability of temples affected.
 - Degradation of social fabric and cohesion of the Sikh community.
 - Long term impact on younger generation, who continue to follow and respect traditional way of life and return (after education) to agriculture.
6. Access : With the loss of some farms and lower production for others, decreased access to employment would result, particularly with the lack of skills outside the agricultural field (especially for women). Other related issues are;
 - language barriers exacerbated
 - difficulty in duplicating the current work environment with the proximity of employment to residences, the community and Temples.
 - Access to properties during the four-year construction stage is a concern, and consequent disruption to farm production.
7. Welfare : In the long-term, the capacity for families to meet individual needs may be depleted, with a potential increase in demand for welfare and income support ie; childcare; education; aged care; Centrelink subsidies, etc.



..APPENDIX C signatures of support submission



SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

**THE FOLLOWING SIGNATURES WERE COLLECTED
FROM MEMBERS OF THE GURU NANAK SIKH TEMPLE
AND OTHER CONCERNED WOOLGOOLGA PUNJABI
SIKH COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES.**

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

** PLEASE FILL IN SEPARATELY (NOT AS A FAMILY)**

For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
BHUPINDER LALLI	27 GORDON ST Woolgoolga	B.S. hall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SATNAM K LALLI	27 GORDON ST woolgoolga	S.K. Lalli	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PARVINDER LALLI	27 GORDON ST woolgoolga	P.L.Li	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rupinder LALLI	27 GORDON ST woolgoolga	R.Kalli	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
ROBERT GREENAL	25 GORDON ST woolgoolga	R.G.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
MOHAN S THANDI	11-13 OCEAN ST woolgoolga	man singh		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
K.S. KHURICHAN	307 2nd BOAMBER B CORP	K.S.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SOHAN S THANDI	HOLLOWAY RD woolgoolga	sohan singh		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
G. S BHATTI	Nelson St woolgoolga	Gursharan Singh		
K. CHAUHAN	2 MCCREADY ST WOOLGOOLGA	K.C.		
F. DARA MALHI		F.D. Singh		
A.S. Brah	18 RIVER ST. woolgoolga	A.S.		
LASHKER SINGH	1 TARTALGAR ST WOOLGOOLGA.	L.S.		
MANJIT SIDHU	26 FAWCETT ST H.S.W. WOOLGOOLGA 2nd St	M.S.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
TAJINDER	21 CARRINGTON ST WOOLGOOLGA	T.J.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DHARMAN	21 CARRINGTON ST WOOLGOOLGA	D.H.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q. Khan	24th Ave	Q.K.		

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

** PLEASE FILL IN SEPARATELY (NOT AS A FAMILY)**

For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address/phone	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
Meena Singh	57 Turon Pde, Woolgoolga NSW 2456	Meena Singh	Family	
Harinder Singh	As above	@Singh	✓	
Kuldip Singh	" "	Kuldip Singh	✓	
Parkash Singh	" "	PK Singh	✓	
BALDIR SINGH	26 CRABBE WOOLGOOLGA	Baldir Singh	✓	
AMERJIT SODHI	" " "	Amerjit	✓	
Darraj Sidhu	42 HIGH ST, woolgoolga	Darraj	-	
Najveet Sidhu	" " "	Najveet	-	
Bev Singh	161 Broken Head R Newrybar	Bev	✓	✓
RESHMAL SINGH	" " "	Reshma	✓	✓
Binder Brah	Castle Hill 105 Ridgecrop Drive	Binder	?	?
Jasvir Thandi	14, Mackay St,	Jasvir	✓	✓
Rupinder Kaur	19 Azure Ave - 66562419	Rupinder	✓	✓
Singh Thandi	14 Mackay St.	Singh	✓	-
Najveet Sidhu	129 Mackays Road	Najveet		
Chaiti Kaur	13 PARKER CLOSE WLGALGA	Chaiti	✓	✓
Harvinder Kaur Singh	5 GREENWOOD CRES Lismore	H.K	-	-

Supporter

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

**** PLEASE FILL IN SEPARATELY (NOT AS A FAMILY) ****

For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address/phone	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
GURMEET S. SLDHU	22 NITINGALE ST WOOLGoolga	H.S. Sidhu	✓	✓
HARBHAJAN	6 TRAFALGAR ST WOOLGoolga	H.S. Sidhu	✓	✓
BHUPINDERS	13 PARKER CLOSE woolgoolga	B.S.	✓	✓
TAJINDER PAL	13 PARKER CLOSE woolgoolga	Tajinder	✓	✓
MANDEEP	" "	Mandee	✓	✓
BANITA	" "	B.S.	✓	✓
PHOOLA	28 BARNES ST WOOLGoolga OLDF SAIBBS	SINGH	✓	✓
Garry Arndt	10 Howland St. Woolgoolga	Garry Arndt	✓	✓
H. Singh	28 Barnes St Woolgoolga	H. Singh	✓	✓
P. Sidhu	36 Trafalgar St Woolgoolga	P. Sidhu	✓	✓
AJIT SINGH	19 BARNES ST WOOLGoolga	Ajit Singh	✓	✓
Morjat Bhatti	24 Barnes St woolgoolga	M. Bhatti	✓	✓
RATAN HUSNA	6 TRAFALGAR ST woolgoolga	Ratan	✓	✓
RANJIT Singh	14 BARNES ST woolgoolga	Ranjit Singh	✓	✓
KULWINDER SANGHA Bhupinder Singh	817 Pacific Hwy 28 Barnes St woolgoolga	Kulwinder Sangha	✓	✓
JIMPEEPAS	10 A HIGH ST woolgoolga	J. Peepas	✓	✓

Guru Nav + concerned
res:

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

**** PLEASE FILL IN SEPARATELY (NOT AS A FAMILY) ****

For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address/phone	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
HARBHINDER SINGH GILL	34 CRABBE ST Woolgoolga N.S.W 2456	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Baljit Singh	29 BARNES ST Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NAHINDER LAW	41 CRABBE ST "	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SURINDER PAL SINGH GILL	99 MIDDLE BOAMBEE RD COFFS HARBOUR 2450	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HARBANS S. GILL	34 NIGHTINGALE ST. Woolgoolga	H.S. Gill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
R. S. Chahal	27/CRABBE ST Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
WJ J. WILLIAM SINGH	41 BARNES ST Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
JASWINDER SINGH	57 TUROW PDE 0412501844 WOOLGOOLGA	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
JORAHAR SINGH	15 RIVER STREET Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ROHIT SINGH	38 CRABBE ST Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
LABIT SINGH	21 Treadwell St	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
H. ATWAL	1 Arks Ave	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Joginder Singh	27 Queen St Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
M. Singh	87 Queen St Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PRITAM SINGH	27 QUEEN ST	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BAKHSISH SINGH ATWAL	1 ARKAN AVENUE	<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

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For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address/phone	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
Bachetes Singh	10A High St Woolgoolga	B.Singh	yes	yes
MICHAEL SINGH	57 TURON PDE WOOLGOOLGA	M.Singh	YES	YES
Jagi Mathi	27 Haviland Street Woolgoolga	Jagi Mathi	Yes	Yes
Taji Bhandari	3 Landrigan close	Taji Bhandari	No	No
AMARJIT SINGH	15 NELSON STREET	Amarjit	YES	✓
GURMUKH SINGH	49 RIVER STREET	G.Singh	✓	✓
BALBIR SINGH	29 KNOX STREET	B.Singh	✓	✓
JOHN ATWAL	16 BARNST WOOLGOOLGA	John Atwal	YES	YES
David Atwal	4 Arken ave Woolgoolga	David Atwal	"	"
ROBAL SINGH GILL	251 MIDDLE BARNBEE RD	Robal Gill	—	—
Nicholas ATWAL	97 James small Drive	Nicholas Atwal	✓	✓
SURAJ GILL		Suraj Gill	✓	✓
Lakshmi SINGH	67 Turon Pde Wlgoolga	L.Singh	✓	✓
MS ATWAL	4 melissa pl	MS Atwal		✓
SSSAL INDEPA	RAJ-MARAL WELPIC ATW WOOLGOOLGA	SSSAL INDEPA	✓	✓

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

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For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

Name	Address/phone	Signature	* Please tick	
			Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
Kim Clavi	34 Nightingale St Woolgoolga			
S. Gill	34 Nightingale St Woolgoolga			
Balvir Sidhu	36 Tratalgar St Woolgoolga	B. Sidhu	—	—
Kamaldeep Clavi	34 Nightingale Street Woolgoolga			✓
Sukhdev Singh Malhi	1 Barnes St Woolgoolga		Yes	Yes
Parampal Kaur	1 Barnes St Woolgoolga		Yes	Yes
Harpreet Singh	1/18 Strawberry Close Woolgoolga	H. Singh	—	—
Sukhjeet Brar	1/18 Strawberry Close Woopi	S. Brar	—	—
Sharanjit Kaur	24 Haviland St Woolgoolga	S.K. Malhi	—	—
Komaljit Dhillon	26 Murphy Crs Coffs Harbour		—	—
P. BASRA	4 Gosling Close Coffs Harbour		—	—
J.S. Bhatti	13 Crabbe St, Woolgoolga	J.S.	Yes	Yes
H.S. Sider	23 Clarence Crest C-H		Yes	Yes
S.S. TAOAL	79 James Street Drive Kooragang		✓	✓
H.S. SIDER	23 INNES WAY Kooragang	H.S. Sider	✓	Yes
S.N. CREWAN	28 CRABBE ST WLGGA	M. Crewan Return		
R. Bhatti	13 Crabbe St WLGGA	R. Bhatti	✓	✓

* Please tick

Name	Address/phone	Signature	Own Agric. Property	Work in Agric.
Daljit	247 Middle Bambee Rd	Daljit	Yes	yes
Amrind	251 Middle Bambee Rd	A.K.	Yes	Yes
Balvir Kaur	North St Woolgoolga	Balvir Kaur	Yes	yes
Reghbir kaur	Barnes St. Woolgoolga	Reghbir Kaur	Yes	Yes
Chetan kaur	Barnes St. Woolgoolga	Chetan	no	no
Jaswinder kaur	Barnes St. Woolgoolga	Jaswinder	Yes	yes
Gurmit kaur	Hasting St - Woolgoolga	GURMIT Kaur	Yes	yes
Balwant kaur	UNDOWN RD WOOLGOOLGA	Balwant	YES	YES
Baljit kaur Gill	UNWINS RD WOOLGOOLGA	Baljit Kaur	Yes	YES
Supinder kaur	Cottonwood cres ^{Coffs Harbour}	S. Rai	Yes	Yes
Resham kaur	COTTONWOOD CRES ^{Coffs Harbour}	R. Rai	Yes	Yes
Rajwant kaur	3 CRABBE ST woolgoolga	Rajwant Kaur	Yes	yes
Sagita kaur	1 CASSON Corindi	Sagita kaur	yes	yes
BEANT Kaur	1 CASSON Corindi	BEANT Kaur	yes	yes
IKULJINDER Kaur	8 CRABBE ST Woolgoolga	IKULJINDER	Yes	Yes
Prabhjit Kaur	55 Scarborough	Prabhjit	Yes	Yes
Sukhwinder kaur	Scarborough St.	Sukhwinder kaur		YES
AVTAR Kaur	59 Nightingale St Woolgoolga	AVTAR Kaur		YES
KHUSHDEEPSINGH	46 CRABBE ST WOOLGOOLGA	Khushdeep S.	Yes	Yes
SANSHR K. GILL	34 CRABBE ST WOOLGOOLGA	Sanshr K. Gill	YES	YES

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

** PLEASE FILL IN SEPARATELY (NOT AS A FAMILY) **

For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address/phone	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
Pindergol ball	41 Crabbe st Woolgoolga	Pindergol	Yes	Yes
Amarjot ball	" " " "	A-K Lall	Yes	Yes
Sarjot Atwal	10 Haviland st Woolgoolga.	S. Atwal	Yes	Yes
Sukhwinder	4 Melissa PL woolgoolga	S-K Atwal	Yes	Yes
NARINDER ATWAL	1 ARKAN AVE WOOLGOOLGA	N. Atwal	YES	YES
NARINDER ATWAL	1 ARKAN AVE WOOLGOOLGA	N. Atwal	Yes	Yes
Harkyotsidha	67 Tiron Pde. woolgoolga	H. Sidha	Yes	yes
Swinder	8 Island view close. C.H	S. K. Atwal	Yes	yes
Sukhwinder Singh	23 Innes Way Korora	S. K. Singh	yes	yes
Baljinder Atwal	97 James Small Dr Korora	Baljinder	Yes	Yes.
Rajpreet Dhanial	26 Murphy cres COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450	R. Dhanial	yes	yes
Raghvir Dhanial	"	R. Kaur	Yes	Yes
Amardeep Dhanial	"	A. Dhanial	Yes	Yes
Harpreet Kaur	Lot 12 Pacific Highway Korora	H. Kaur	yes	yes
Munjit Sohi	23 Forest Clerance Cr	Munjit	yes	yes
Kulwinder Atwal	16 Barnes St. Woolgoolga	K. Atwal	Yes	Yes
Sandeep Kaur	15 SARE St. woolgoolga	S. Kaur	Yes	Yes

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

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For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
PARVEEN SHETRA	61 SCARBOROUGH ST.	Parveen Shetra		
JASVINDER SINGH	14 SHANMAN CC	J. Singh	✓	✓
Amandeep Kaur	"	Amandeep	✓	✓
Manand Singh	"	M. Singh	✓	✓
Kamandeep Singh	"	K. Singh	✓	✓
Supinder Kaur	"	S. Kaur		
Piera Singh	"	P. Singh		
Hardip Singh	15 Parker Close	H. Singh		
Gurpreet Kaur	" "	Gurpreet		
Harbans Kaur	" "	H. Kaur		
NARINDER Kaur	10, KNOX ST.	N-K		
Jaspal Singh	"	Jaspal		
GURMAN DOSA	4/26 CLARENCE ST	G. Dosa		
MANSIDER DOSA	" "	Mansinder		

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

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For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
Tara Singh	25 Gordon St, Woolgoolga	<i>Tara Singh</i>		
Gyan. k. Singh	25 Gordon St, Woolgoolga	<i>G.K. Singh</i>		
Sharon Singh	32 Barnes St, Woolgoolga	<i>Sharon Singh</i>		
Jamette Singh	25 Gordon St Woolgoolga	<i>Jamette Singh</i>		✓
Raymond Singh	2 Copmanhurst place, OLD	<i>Raymond Singh</i>		✓
Navneet Singh	" " " "	<i>Navneet Singh</i>		✓
Karnaljeet Singh	30 Gordon St Woolgoolga	<i>Karnaljeet Singh</i>		✓
John Singh	" " "	<i>John Singh</i>		✓
MARGUR DIL SINGH	25 Gordon St. Woolgoolga	<i>M. Singh</i>		✓
Randhawa	25 Gordon str Woolgoolga	<i>Randhawa</i>		✓
Navi Singh	30 Gordon st, woolgoolga	<i>Navi Singh</i>		✓
Bhupinder Singh	32 Barnes St, Woolgoolga	<i>Bhupinder Singh</i>		
Hameet Bawa	5 Maulana Cl Woolgoolga	<i>Hameet Bawa</i>		
Rohan Singh	5 Maulana Cl Woolgoolga	<i>Rohan Singh</i>		
J. SINGH	1 Bultitude St. WOOLGOOLGA.	<i>J. Singh</i>	✓	✓
M. K. Sidhan	67 Turon PDE	<i>M. K. Sidhan</i>		

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

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For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

* Please tick

Name	Address/phone	Signature	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
HARSHINDER Gill	34 WYNNS RD WOOLCOOR	<i>[Signature]</i>		
Sarabjit Singh	55 Scarborough St Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>	-	-
AMANPREET SINGH	1 CASSON CLOSE, CORINDI BEACH	<i>[Signature]</i>	✓	✓
Jaswantsingh	8 Crabbe St Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>		-
Amarjit Singh	55 SCARBOROUGH ST.	<i>[Signature]</i>		✓
BASPA SINGH	1 CASSON CLOSE CORINDI	<i>[Signature]</i>	✓	✓
AVTAR SINGH	3 CRABBE ST Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>		✓
Amarvir Singh	17 Barnes St Woolgoolga	<i>[Signature]</i>		✓
JOLA SINGH	17 BARNES ST WOOLCOOR	<i>[Signature]</i>	✓	✓
JOGINDER SINGH	1 CASSON CL CORIND	<i>[Signature]</i>	✓	✓
BALDEW SINGH	28 HASTINGS ST Wooli	<i>[Signature]</i>	+	-
BASPA MELO	Beach St Wooli	[Signature]		
Starati	Hastings St woolgoolga	[Signature]		

1st/2nd side

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

**** PLEASE FILL IN SEPARATELY (NOT AS A FAMILY)****

For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

Name	Address	Phone	* Please tick	
			Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
N. S. Sidhu	19 HIGH ST, WOOLWOOLGA	66541564	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
K. K. SIDHU	19 HIGH ST, WOOLWOOLGA	66541564	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GEOFFREY SIDHU	19 HIGH ST, WOOLWOOLGA	66541564	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RAMANJEE SIDHU	19 HIGH ST, WOOLWOOLGA	66541564	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. SRAI	10 HIGH ST WOOLWOOLGA	66542357	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T. S. GREWAL	25 ARKAN AVE Woolwoolga	66541498	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R. K. GREWAL	25 ARKAN AVE WOOLWOOLGA	66541498	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Raman
R K SRAI

SUPPORT FOR ISSUES RAISED

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For the purpose of the submission, please indicate whether you own an agricultural property, or work locally in agriculture eg; bananas, blueberries.

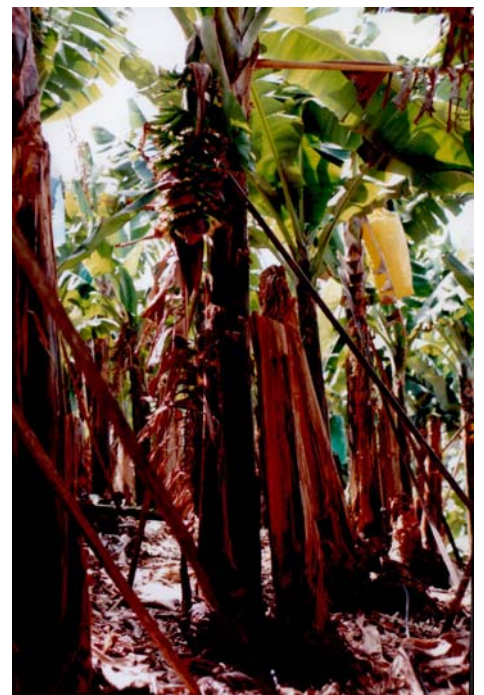
* Please tick

Name	Address	Phone	Own Ag. Property	Work in Agric.
KASHMIR SINGH GILL	34 CRABBE ST WOOLGOLGA	0266-542621	✓	✓
KASHMIR GILL	99 MIDDLE BOAMBEE RD. BOAMBEE WEST	0266585655	✓	✓
CHAWAN KAUR	99 MIDDLE BOAMBEE RD BOAMBEE WEST	0266585655	✓	
GULMEER KAUR GILL	99 MIDDLE BOAMBEE RD BOAMBEE WEST	0266585655	✓	✓
Simran Kaur Gill	99 MIDDLE BOAMBEE RD BOAMBEE - WEST.	0266585655		✓
Sirhan S. Singh Badhu	68 Nightingale St Woolga	0266542664	Retired	
G. Ahmed	28 Market St Woolga	0266541571	Retired	
R.S. Hundal	9, High St Woolga	0266541711	Retired	
GURPREY S. SIDHU	67 TURON RD WOOLGOLGA	0266541443	Retired	

Kashmir Singh
Kashmir Gill
Chawan Kaur
Gulmeer Kaur Gill
Simran Kaur Gill
Sirhan S. Singh Badhu
G. Ahmed
R.S. Hundal
G. Sidhu
R.S. Hundal
G.S. Sidhu



..APPENDIX D letters of support submission





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GURU NANAK SIKH GURUDWARA (TEMPLE) WOOLGOOLGA

13 RIVER STREET
PO BOX 96
WOOLGOOLGA NSW 2456
AUSTRALIA

SERIAL No. 092

DATE.....

27 July 2006

The Hon, Eric Roozendaal
Minister for NSW Roads
Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney.

Dear Minister,

We, on behalf of the congregation of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara (approx 85% of Punjabi Sikh community in the Coffs Harbour LGA) express our support for the attached submission highlighting the social and cultural impacts upon the local Punjabi Sikh community as a result of the proposed Pacific Highway by-pass Option E.

The RTA's proposal will impact heavily upon a significant number of extended Punjabi Sikh family units by devastating their valuable agricultural concerns, which form the basis of their social, cultural and family existence. The ownership of land and agricultural livelihood is of deep traditional and heritage value to the Punjabi Sikhs and cannot be replaced. In fact, even 3-generation local families still own their ancestral land in the Punjab. The by-pass proposal will result in loss of this land, loss of heritage tradition, income, severe displacement, break down of family units, unemployment and flow on social and cultural impacts upon the Punjabi Sikh community as a close knit successful and vibrant community.

We request, that the RTA give the utmost consideration and respect to the issues outlined in detail in the submission. The by-pass is not a suitable option for the Punjabi Sikh community because of its potential to displace and erode a heritage rich, culturally vibrant and successful icon of multicultural Australia.

Management Committee of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara

M. S. D. S. President
J. P. J. P.

Sikh Council Of Australia Inc

170- Ninth Avenue Austral N.S.W 2179

Inc. No: INC9877869

Web:<http://www.sikhcouncil.org.au>

Thursday, 27 July 2006

To Hon Eric Roosendaal
Minister Of Roads
Parliament House,
Sydney N.S.W 2001

Dear Minister,

Ref: Pacific Highway Upgrade Woolgoolga Bypass

The Sikh Council Of Australia Inc is the apex representative body of the Sikhs in Australia, established to act as a spokes body of the Sikhs in Australia. It safeguards the interests of the Sikh community, Sikh religion and its member organizations, and raises awareness of Sikh culture and cultural heritage amongst interested communities.

The Sikh Council is aware of the long-running dispute between the Woolgoolga Sikh / Punjabi community and the RTA regarding the Pacific Highway Project Woolgoolga Bypass. At the request of the concerned members of the Woolgoolga Punjabi Community group, it has been involved in the mediation and consultative processes facilitated by the Community Relations Commissioner.

A joint meeting between the representatives of RTA, Woolgoolga Punjabi Community and the Sikh Council Of Australia, chaired by Mr. Kerkyasharian, held on 13th September 2005 at Pelican Beach Resort Coffs harbour. At this meeting, Mr. Kerkyasharian, after listening to the arguments put forward by all the parties concerned, ruled that in view of the Sikh community's strong concerns on the consultation mechanism and on the lack of representative Sikh input in the consultative process, a working group should be formed between the RTA and the Punjabi Sikh community of Woolgoolga and the Sikh Council and Option E should not be taken as the Preferred Option. Despite this ruling RTA ignored that decision and at a subsequent meeting told the Sikh community that Option E was not negotiable. This was a high handed to say the least. His ruling was not accepted

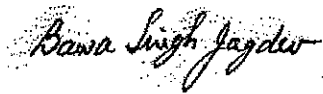
The Sikh Council is worried and views with concern that if the preferred Option E is accepted, the social order of the Sikh community and their traditional values, heritage and culture will seriously be eroded or virtually lost in the process. The acquisition of land from the farmers will impact the Sikh community in economic terms as well as the contribution of their produce to their community identity (Banana producers).

The fact that the first Sikh settler settled in this area in 1885, and the future settlement of Sikhs subsequently expanded to a major Sikh community here, the Sikh heritage, social, cultural and historical values associated with it have been preserved, nurtured and kept for posterity.

As a matter of fact, **Woolgoolga is the birth place of the Sikhs** in Australia. Not only all these values will be lost for ever if these farmers are forced to move out by reason of RTA acquiring their land these uprooted families, no matter where they decide to settle, will be subjected to the harsh cruelties of resettlement such as religious vilification, racial persecution, bigotry and cultural intolerance which will have devastating affect on them and the future of their children. It is a fact of life that in resettlement, people, specially those who look different from the common norm in a new environment always attract rejection and hostile reception. Religious and cultural discrimination, which is widely seen to be an outdated legacy of the past is still very prevalent in our tolerant society whether we agree with it or not. Children, the innocent victims, of these uprooted families, will be deprived of their birth right to have access to proper education, not because no school will accept them but because they won't be welcome in the classes. And no amount of force, persuasion or pleadings by their parents will persuade them to go to school for fear of being bullied, harassed and intimidated by other students in school. The biggest social impact of this unjustified forced eviction will be the social moral and psychological breakdown of the dislocated families. Families will split and in the broken homes children will have no future.

The Sikh Council fully supports the Woolgoolga Sikh community in out rightly rejecting the preferred Option E and proposal to renegotiate route involving full participation of the Sikh community in the consultation and decision making process.

Yours sincerely



Bawa Singh Jagdev
Secretary
For and on behalf of the Sikh Council Of Australia



Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW Inc.

221 COPE STREET WATERLOO NSW 2017 TEL: (02) 9319 0288 FAX: (02) 9319 4229
Email: admin@eccnsw.org.au

25 July, 2006

The Hon Eric Roozendaal
Minister for Roads,
Level 30 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY. NSW 2000

Dear Minister,

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECC) has just been made aware of a plan to divert the Pacific Highway at Woolgoolga through a number of properties on which members of the Sikh community live and have agricultural concerns. This involves about 17 family owned properties on which about 30% of the local community live and work. This Sikh community has lived in the area for many years, being productive and supportive of the local community at large. The bananas grown there, for instance, are widely known throughout NSW and the town is a noted tourist site.

It seems to us in the ECC that it is short sighted to cause such division within a community which has been so productive and cohesive over many years. In fact, although there has been some local consultation, locals do not believe their cause has had a fair hearing. A decision has been made which is clearly lacking in deeper consideration of the consequences and against the wishes of the local community.

The Sikh community is widely regarded as a stable, productive and culturally strong group, family oriented and good Australian citizens. The fact that they have established temples in Woolgoolga indicates their desire, if not determination, to settle permanently.

The ECC of NSW has worked continuously for over thirty years to promote and support multiculturalism in Australia –with governments and its departments, as well as with the broader community. Working together with all groups has ensured that people who have come from other places can work and live together in harmony. Woolgoolga has been 'lighthouse' community for its unity and strength in welcoming and living evidence of how Australian values can be shared.

We believe that without some change in this high-handed approach, a great deal of goodwill and cohesiveness will be lost to this town. Minister, we believe that on further consideration a much better outcome can be achieved for Woolgoolga and for the many tourists who travel through this beautiful area.

Thank you for your further consideration,

Yours sincerely

Jack Passaris

Jack Passaris,
Chair

PP Edward Gill



Cnr Kite Street & Lords Place
PO Box 1314
ORANGE NSW 2800

Phone: (02) 6393 0000
Facsimile: (02) 6369 0987

The Hon Eric Roozendaal
Minister for Roads
Parliament House, Macquarie Street Sydney 2000.

Dear Minister,

The Regional Communities Consultative Council (RCCC) is the peak rural advisory body to the NSW Premier and Minister for Rural Affairs. The Council members are nominated by the peak Not-for-Profit organisations that represent the diversity of interest that are within a county town, Education, Youth, Business & Industry, Health, Farmers, Women, Social, Aboriginal, Religious, Local Government, Ethnic and the Environment.

The Role of the Council is to:

- To advocate on behalf of and raise the views of country people to Government;
- To advise on service provision, rural policy and initiatives;
- To offer advice on access and delivery of Government information to country communities; and
- To identify opportunities to enhance the quality of life for country people.

Members of the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh Community raised their concerns to the Council in relation to the process and inclusiveness of consultation within the Pacific Highway upgrade within the Woolgoolga area.

The Council members have a very strong view on consultation, especially within rural areas, as it is often a communities only mechanism to have input into the decision making process. The importance of ensuring that an open and transparent process is undertaken is vital for a true government and community partnership when making decisions that may have a critical effect on a community.

True consultation processes must respect the diversity of communities and develop appropriate strategies that ensure their inclusiveness within the process.

Consultation between Government agencies and communities:

- *provides a true two-way channel of communication;*
- *establishes a feeling of ownership (of the outcome) amongst the community affected by that decision;*
- *leads to decisions being made that reflect local knowledge; and,*
- *which serves to maximise net benefits resulting from the decision.*

Members of the Woolgoolga Punjabi Sikh Community expressed their views to the Council that they did not feel that the process was respectful, inclusive or transparent and this has led them to feel disempowered.

The task of consulting with communities is one of the most important roles for democratic governments and should be undertaken as such. It should be recognised that communities realise that the decision may not always be the one they desire but it is their right to have an opportunity to participate, have their views heard and included within the decision making process in a meaningful way.

The RCCC have developed a short guide to assist agencies and government to consult with rural communities and I have included a copy for reference.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana Gibbs". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Diana Gibbs
Chair

28 July 2006



Shop 2/132 Main St (PO Box 775)
Murwillumbah NSW 2484

Ph: (02) 6672 6269

Fx: (02) 6672 6633

Email: bob@bananasnsw.org.au
www.bananasnsw.org.au

SUPPORT LETTER FOR:

**Woolgoolga Sikh Community Submission
To the Roads & Traffic Authority.**

**Re: Cultural Impact Assessment for the Proposed Route;
Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway Upgrade (Option E).**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

On behalf of the Banana Industry Committee (B.I.C.), I would like to express our concern for the impact of the proposed 'Option E' on valuable Woolgoolga agricultural land. To directly impact on the 30 % of the local banana farms and remove such a large portion of prime agricultural land in the fastest growing region in NSW, is economically counter-productive.

The greater majority of banana farmers in the Woolgoolga district are Indian Sikhs, who are dependent on agriculture for extended family incomes and contribute a great deal to the local economy and NSW banana industry.

Of major concern is the unmeasured impact of the four-year construction period and long-term ramifications of an altered agricultural environment eg, dust, and other airborne pollutants on produce (consequent inability to meet regular quality assurance requirements for blueberry and banana crops); alteration and pollution of existing drainage and irrigation/creek/dam systems; changes to the micro-climate (wind direction, temperature, strength and increased exposure to eastern cyclonic winds, with consequent increased vulnerability to serious crop damage) caused by earth works and formation of cuttings; increased difficulty in containing and managing crop disease and soil contamination; and difficulty in managing and coordinating aerial spraying of crops due to the required highway buffer zones.

The flow-on effects of the above issues to the unique close-knit Sikh community and wider Woolgoolga economy need to be considered in more detail, as are the indirect impacts on neighbouring farms. Due to the agricultural basis of the Sikh community, economic, social and cultural impacts of the proposal are inseparable and their contribution to the banana industry should not be underestimated.

We therefore fully support the Cultural Impact Assessment feedback developed by concerned members of the Woolgoolga Sikh community, and urge the RTA to seriously consider the consequent impact on the Banana Industry.

Yours faithfully,

Bob Campbell
Executive Officer
21st July 2006

Naturally Growing

HAMLINE
UNIVERSITY
College of Liberal Arts

Department of Anthropology

July 29, 2006

The Hon. Eric Roozendaal
Minister for Roads
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir:

I write with concern over news that the route chosen for the reconstruction of the Pacific Coast Highway will adversely affect the Punjabi Sikh community in Woolgoolga, New South Wales.

As an anthropologist who has conducted fieldwork with the Sikhs of Woolgoolga and co-edited a book on the community -- *A Punjabi Sikh Community in Australia: From Indian Sojourners to Australian Citizens* (2001), I know the community and its concerns quite well. Moreover, as a long-time scholar of Sikh religion and Punjabi culture, I am also aware of the background of the community and can perhaps shed some light on why the proposed highway is so troubling.

Most Punjabi Sikhs in Woolgoolga come from the Jat caste, which has traditionally been the dominant agriculturalist group in Punjab. Early Sikh immigrants to Woolgoolga originally worked in agriculture in India and later in Australia. Even the more recent immigrants largely come from families whose livelihoods have depended upon and been bound up in agriculture.

As you know, the Punjabi Sikh community in Woolgoolga was founded by men who previously cut cane and did agricultural labour in Queensland and northern New South Wales. In the late 1940s and 1950s, they were able to purchase banana farms in Woolgoolga. This led to the development of a multigenerational Punjab Sikh community in Woolgoolga whose livelihood and social life revolved around banana farming. When Queensland bananas began to challenge the economic viability of New South Wales bananas in the 1990s, rather than sell their farmlands, the Punjabi Sikh community in Woolgoolga adapted by adding blueberry cultivation to their agricultural base.

It is important to observe that rather than switch out of agriculture the Punjabi Sikh community in Woolgoolga has shown a strong commitment to staying on the land. Sons apprentice with their fathers and look forward to inheriting the family farm. Women participate in agricultural pursuits along side their menfolk. In many ways, the Punjabi Sikh community in Woolgoolga, unlike their urban counterparts, has been able to replicate significant aspects of the agriculturally-based social life of a Punjabi village because of its agricultural base that allows for participation in community activities.

The proposed highway, as I understand it, would uproot a significant number of local Punjabi families from the agricultural lands that they have farmed for more than a half a century. It would deprive these families not only of their economic livelihoods but also of their basis of participation in the social life of the Punjabi Sikh community. Monetary compensation for lost

MB217 • 1536 Hewitt Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104-1284 • 651-523-2295

651-523-3170 fax • www.hamline.edu/cla/academics/anthropology

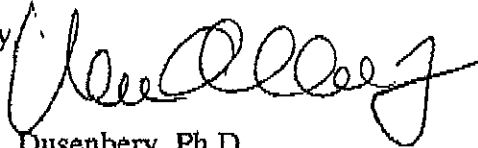
Minnesota's First University • A Tradition of Pioneering Since 1854

farmland cannot compensate for the cultural losses that these families will likely experience if deprived of their family farms.

The Punjabi Sikh community has been a model of Australian Multiculturalism. Indeed, that was the basic thrust of our volume on the community, produced as part of the Centenary of Federation Project. It would be a shame if the example of multicultural harmony in New South Wales should falter on over a public works project.

In light of the negative impact it will have on the local Punjabi Sikh community, I hope very much that your Ministry will re-consider its decision on how it will locate the Pacific Coast Highway through or around Woolgoolga.

Sincerely,



Verne A. Dusenbery, Ph.D.
Professor of Anthropology and Chair of the Global Studies Program
Hamline University
St. Paul, MN 55104
U.S.A.

Woolgoolga Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Tourism Inc.



PO BOX 483 Woolgoolga NSW 2456

Email Address: wccit@ceinternet.com.au

ABN: 91 062 146 150

Web Site: www.woolgoolga.org

Ph/Fax: 0266 548080

Pres:	Steve Moody	Ph: 0266 542012
V/Pres:	Jorahvar Arkan	Ph: 0266 547673
Sec:	Gordon Abbott	Ph: 0266 542012
Treas:	Margaret Murphy	Ph: 0266 549211

Testimonial in Support of the Woolgoolga Sikh Community

Banana growing is a long established industry in Woolgoolga that in more recent times has been supplemented with blueberries and other tropical fruit. According to a Coffs Harbour City Council Report and Banana Industry Council estimates; gross value exceeds \$20M per annum with an industry adopted flow on effect of 2.5 into the local economy where the light industrial and trading segment is strongly dependent. The only other significant industry in Woolgoolga is tourism contributing to \$19M p.a. to the local economy. Both these industries will be significantly adversely affected by the RTA Pacific Highway Upgrade preferred route option E around Woolgoolga.

The success of the banana and now blueberry industry in Woolgoolga has been primarily due to the cohesive dedication of the Sikh community where the farms are family run and have been held for generations. It enables the use of unskilled labour, provided employment for the whole family and migrants with limited language ability. Over the years the Sikh community has become an important part of Woolgoolga society and contributed significantly to the growth and wealth of the township.

The fruit growing activities in Woolgoolga that benefit from the warm winter microclimate on the coastal hill slopes are also totally dependent on shared resources and infrastructure enhanced by the close family and cultural relationship enjoyed by the Sikh community. It is important to note that the viability of individual tropical fruit farms are dependent on sharing such operational cost as human resources, packing, shipping, farm equipment and aerial spraying. If the numbers of farms are reduced to the level predicted by the proposed highway upgrade, then it is extremely unlikely that the remaining few farms will be able to bear these cost alone bringing about a total closure of the industry and demise of the Sikh community in this area.

The proposed highway upgrade route option E will transform 10 kilometres of landscape half a kilometre wide and cut through several hillside ridges. Apart from the 30 to 50% of banana and other fruit farms that will be sacrificed, the highway cuttings will expose previously sheltered hillside slopes to severe weather events that will jeopardise the remaining few farms. Farms that provide the livelihood and unity for the Sikh community.

The Woolgoolga Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Tourism by resolution of its members deplore the proposed route option E for Woolgoolga due to its negative impact to its economic sustainability and severance of the resident Punjabi Sikh community.

Yours sincerely,

Steven M Moody, B.Eng.
President.
27th July 2006.

*Woolgoolga - The Missing Piece of Paradise
Do your business locally, it will make a difference*



To whom it may concern

On behalf of the Red Cross organisation I am pleased to acknowledge the role played by the Sikh members of the community of Woolgoolga and district.

This is reflected in the contributions made to Red Cross in response to national and international disasters in recent years. When Australian Red Cross opened an appeal for the victims of the Tsunami, members of the Sikh community responded with an amazing donation in excess of \$24 000. After the Pakistani earthquakes they again responded with fund raising dinners and general collections and raised over \$6 700. Since then a further \$1400 has been added to that amount. When the local Red Cross Branch conducts its annual Doorknock Appeal each year to help provide local community services for people in need, school-aged members of the Sikh families are willing volunteers and are encouraged to participate by the parents.

I believe that these tokens of generosity and awareness of the needs of others reflect the involvement of the Indians in the local community and their commitment to becoming part of a cohesive population in Woolgoolga. Their actions are entirely consonant with the Principles and aims of Red Cross and we are pleased to have their involvement.

However, we are aware that the proposed upgrade of the Pacific Highway by the RTA involves a deviation (Option A) that will pass through approximately 18 Sikh family - owned agricultural holdings. This would heavily impact upon the Sikh community in terms of viable employment and hence would be detrimental to the rich social, cultural and religious life of that community. In turn the ability of the Sikh community to support charities such as Red Cross and its involvement in the wider community would be sorely effected.

I have no hesitation in fully supporting the submission of the Sikh community to the RTA regarding the significance and impact of these proposals for Option E and trust that the RTA will consider seriously the impact this would have on the wider social fabric of this area.

Sincerely

Robyn Rooth
Vice Chairman ARC NSW Division
Zone 3 representative

21 July 2006

Norco Co-operative Ltd
Rural Store
16 Featherstone drive
WOOLGOOLGA. N.S.W. 2456.
Thursday 20th July, 2006.

SUPPORT LETTER FOR:

**Woolgoolga Sikh Community Submission
To the Roads & Traffic Authority.**

**Re: Cultural Impact Assessment for the Proposed Route;
Sapphire to Woolgoolga Pacific Highway Upgrade (Option E).**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

As a Woolgoolga-based business reliant on the local agricultural industry, we would like to express our concern for the consequences of the area losing prime agricultural land to the proposed Woolgoolga Bypass. Our concern also extends to neighbouring agricultural properties, and the unmeasured impact on their production and quality assurance for produce such as bananas and blueberries.

Naturally our business fluctuates with the market (ie; demand for certain produce; low production periods due to drought, etc). However, currently 80% of our business comes from Sikh farmers who utilize Norco Rural Store for farming supplies such as chemicals, fertilizer, banana boxes/ liners/slip sheets, household dairy products, and for transport of produce to metropolitan-based markets.

There appears to be very little consideration for the potential impact on the viability of farms directly and indirectly affected by the estimated four-year construction period and eventual opening of the proposed motorway. Example issues of concern include; access for individual property owners; control of dust; machinery emissions; pollution and alteration of waterways and irrigation systems; and containment of potential spills and other pollution/run-off from the motorway.

The local Sikh farming community contributes a great deal to the local economy and wider community. The majority of local farmers are Sikh, and their ongoing survival and success in mainly bananas and (more recently) blueberries, is clear evidence of their cultural connection and commitment to agriculture and consequent influence on local businesses and the local economy.

We therefore support the Cultural Impact Assessment submitted to the R.T.A. regarding the proposed Option E, Pacific Highway Upgrade, by concerned members of the Sikh community.

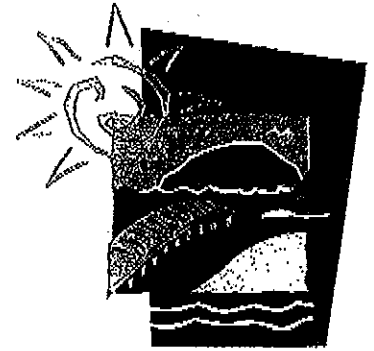
Yours faithfully,



Lou Maione

Manager, Woolgoolga Norco Rural Store

COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL



25 July 2006

Submission by Councillor Keith Rhoades on Preferred Option E for the Pacific Highway Woolgoolga Bypass in support of the submission of the Woolgoolga Sikh community.

I have been an elected representative on Coffs Harbour City Council since 1991. In that time I have been an active participant in the debate over the proposed upgrade of the Pacific Highway through and around Coffs Harbour. While I remain convinced that the best long-term option is a full western bypass of the city, I wish to make the following comments about the preferred option (Option E) for the highway bypass at Woolgoolga.

If pursued, Option E will have a serious impact on the social, economic and environmental standing of the west Woolgoolga area.

This area is a viable and productive agricultural centre, which has supported a great many local families for generations. Option E will fragment much of this land, reducing its ability to sustain the local banana and blueberry industries and other businesses, which provide services for the farm sector.

The local community cannot afford to lose the employment opportunities created by agricultural production. This is especially true for the local Sikh community – farming provides employment for extended family networks and represents an important part of the Sikh culture and way of life.

The Sikh people have a close association with farming in Woolgoolga - this has played an important part in shaping the identity of the town. The disruption caused by developing Option E will have a significant impact on the social structure of this community – jobs will be lost, family cohesion will be strained and cultural stability will be at risk. There is a very real likelihood that members of farming families who currently support themselves will end up on the welfare queue if Option E goes through.

The west Woolgoolga area is an important part of our city's 'green backdrop'. The natural reserves sit comfortably with well-managed agricultural holdings and residential land. The fragmentation of this area by the Option E roadway would pose significant environmental threats in terms of air and noise pollution, drainage issues, habitat destruction and loss of amenity.

After considering all these factors, I can see little to commend Option E. In my opinion, a much better (though more expensive) outcome would be achieved by developing the roadway on Crown land - not private land – as proposed in Option A.

Thank you for the opportunity to make these comments.

Keith Rhoades AFSM
Councillor
City Of Coffs Harbour

- Communications to: The General Manager, Locked Bag 155, Coffs Harbour 2450 • Administration Building, 2 Castle Street, Coffs Harbour • Tel: (02) 6648 4000
- Fax: (02) 6648 4199 • DX: 7559 • ABN 79 126 214 487
- Email: coffs.council@chcc.nsw.gov.au
- Website: www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au

DORRIGO SHIRE 1906 - 1956
COFFS HARBOUR SHIRE 1956 - 1988
COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL 1988 - 2006



11 July 2006

The Hon Eric Roozendaal
NSW Minister for Roads
Parliament House
Macquarie Street Sydney NSW 2000

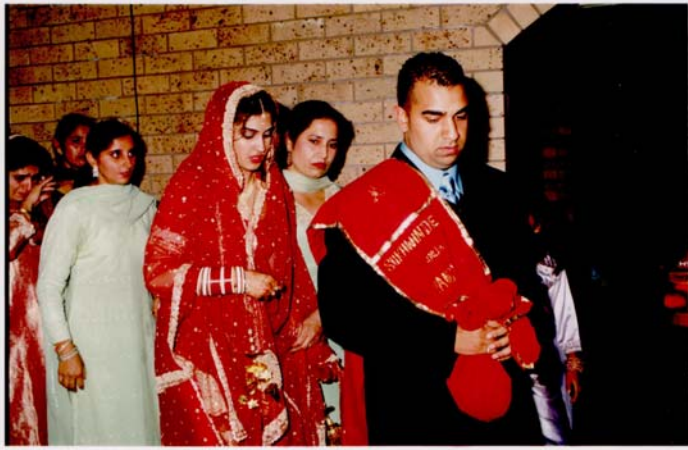
Dear Minister

Pacific Highway through Woolgoolga

First I should introduce myself as this should indicate my qualifications for commenting on the upgrade of the Pacific Highway through the township of Woolgoolga. I am a third-generation New Zealander who has spent nine years living in the Punjab together with frequent return visits and a lively correspondence with people living there. My work there was teaching, at first in a higher secondary school and then in a university where I taught Punjab history. For the past 48 years my research interest has been Sikh history, religion, and society, and I have published 16 books plus numerous articles. Many of the books have been published by the Clarendon Press in Oxford and the Oxford University Press in New Delhi. Other university presses which have been responsible for books of mine are Guru Nanak Dev University, Columbia University in New York, the University of Chicago and the University of Manchester. The intention of listing these qualifications is not in order to boast, but simply to claim a genuine standing among the Sikhs. I believe that I have attained through this life-long interest a thorough understanding of Sikh society.

I am writing to you as I have become aware of changes in the Pacific Highway which would result in a serious loss of land by Sikh families who live in Woolgoolga. A large majority of Sikhs come from the Jat rural caste and it is quite clear that an even larger segment of the Sikh community of Woolgoolga are in fact Jats. As such they are people with a powerful attachment to land, something which ordinary Australians or New Zealanders would find very difficult to understand. I was brought up on a farm myself, yet the attachment which I still feel towards the land comes nowhere near the Jat sense of belonging. If present plans for the upgrade of the Pacific Highway through Woolgoolga go ahead the sense of loss which must be felt by these Jat Sikh families is something which we simply do not understand.

The upgrade of the highway would also drive the dispossessed elsewhere, with the result that Woolgooga would lose much of its very real significance as a Sikh settlement. This too is something that ordinary Australians and New Zealanders would find quite impossible to understand. I have visited Woolgoolga and by being there have learnt what



..APPENDIX E community meeting submissions of concerns



COMMUNITY MEETINGS ~ Summary of Comments

- ❖ Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Temple Meeting
Sunday 16th July, 2006
- ❖ General Meeting, Woolgoolga Bowling Club
Tuesday 18th July, 2006

Open meeting held in the temple, with men and women of the Woolgoolga Sikh community from 1-2pm and general meeting held at the local Bowling Club at 5pm two days later.

Points of Discussion :

- 1 No positive impacts could be identified for discussion
- 2 Heritage
 - The Woogoolga Sikh community is strong and unique. It promotes cross-cultural activities and access to the Temple for the wider community eg; school & TAFE visits; and other organisations.
 - Visitors to the Temple are encouraged and welcome, with regular tours given to visiting tourists.
 - Agriculture & proximity of farms to households, services, supplies, and the Temple is very important. Farming also has the flexibility to allow people to follow cultural religious practices, especially important religious events which do not necessarily correspond with public holidays and weekends.
 - Land is passed on to children, as an essential part of the culture and Sikh traditions. What of the future for the community's young people?
 - The two Sikh Temples cannot survive without a stable and active congregation. The strong cohesion of the community facilitates generous donations to not only their own community projects. The congregation also supports and participates in the wider Woolgoolga community, national and international events (as per one of the Sikh religious beliefs of 'sharing with the needy) eg; annual Red Cross donation; Curry Festival; and natural disaster donations such as the recent cyclone in Queensland, and overseas Tsunami.
 - Three day religious celebrations are held about 16 times each year, where \$2-3,000 is spent locally on food and groceries alone.
 - Young people are supported to participate in Sikh Youth Camps held in other cities each year.

3 Employment

- Traditional ties with the land ensures employment and prosperity for future generations. Moving elsewhere is not an option.
- Successful employment and income support for the extended family provided through the farms guarantees 'quality of life'.

4 Economics & Agriculture

- The 'flow-on' effect to local businesses with 20 farms removed or depleted from the local economy has not been considered, ie; to businesses such as; hardware, transport (freight); NRMA; fuel suppliers; Handy Hire and Norco Rural Store.
- The region & local area needs the agricultural land to be taken by the proposed motorway. It is A1 agricultural land ie; economies of scale.
- Most farms are mixed in what is grown, depending on the market. Blueberries and lady finger bananas provide a valuable export.
- Although most of the effected area is currently zoned for agriculture, what about the impact on residential zonings? Woolgoolga is expanding west.
- The majority of banana & blueberry farms in the area are Indian owned.
- Need to measure the practical impact of effecting so many Sikh families and local actively producing farms.
- Few other alternative local employment options for displaced families.

5 Amenity and the Environment

- The proposal will surround established western residential areas with roads (existing Pacific Highway to the east and motorway to the south, west & north).
- In which direction will the rapidly growing Woolgoolga expand to?
- Concern about the dust construction work will cause and potential for it getting on crops, thus affecting annual MRO test and suitability for sale.
- Can't wash blueberries and can't pick them when they are wet.
- The impact of the construction stage has not been measured eg; contamination of farm water sources and supplies; pollution (fuel emissions, dust, spills, fumes); viability of acreages once part is taken or impacted by the motorway.
- What impact will it represent for local wildlife and established corridors?

6 Social, Cultural and Welfare

- Removing such a large proportion of viable land will erode the basis of the Sikh community, and an individual's social standing and status.
- Not only individual farmers and their extended families will be affected. All the community will be.
- Some members of the community and younger people, will be forced to move elsewhere to find work.
- The psychological and emotional impact of splitting families up and not having a connection with the land should not be underestimated.
- The community then will find it difficult to maintain its culture and self-supporting traditions eg; childcare and care of the elderly within the extended family unit; creation of many barriers to accessing the Temple (time, distance, erosion of traditional ties with Sikh culture).
- Potential subsequent impact on welfare services.

7 Access & Equity

- The government is hypocritical and discriminative in not taking the cultural impact seriously.
- The significance of the connection with the land is similar to other indigenous cultures such as for Aboriginals. It means identity.
- Access to the Temple is important, with some key cultural beliefs being; do you work; do you work hard and honestly; do you share with the needy; and do you meditate.
- Rural migration and access, and promotion of rural communities for migrant settlement is being advocated by current government policy via the Dept of Immigration Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), yet this proposal in the long-term has the potential to erode a long-established (4th generation), self-supporting CALD (Culturally & Linguistically Diverse) community! The largest Sikh community outside the metropolitan areas of Australia.
- Migrants to Australia cannot receive Australian Citizen entitlements for two years after their arrival. The community and the extended family network currently support new migrants from India.
- Who is going to support such a 'minority' group within the political system?

❖ Sikh Youth Meeting

Sunday 16th July, 2006.

General meeting held in the Woolgoolga Bowling Club Boardroom from 4.30 to 5.30pm.

Points of Discussion :

1 Heritage

- Four generations of tradition would be broken by Option E, with serious social impact due to the breaking up of the family unit.
- The First Sikh Temple was the first Sikh temple built in Australia, and the Guru Nanak was the second.
- Biggest Sikh community outside Australian cities because of the community structure, background and quality of life.

2 Employment

- Family members are trained for agriculture.

3 Economics & Agriculture

- A1 agricultural land is in short supply
- Pressure for residential land west of the existing highway
- Agricultural land must be protected and encouraged to remain viable and flexible to market demand for different produce.
- Agriculture for many Sikh families is the only source of income.
- The impact of long-term investment in some of the land effected will not be realized, despite short-term outlay eg; recent expansion of some properties to establish blueberries, which requires a big outlay initially.
- Flow-on effect to Woolgoolga & Coffs Harbour businesses.
- An estimate made by the Woolgoolga Resident Action Group is that Option E would mean economically, a \$2million loss to the area.
- Future for young people important also for maintaining the community, with the higher percentage of people in the retiring age group.
- The Queensland banana industry has had a big impact since the 90's on making it hard to survive in competition. Only two non-Sikh farmers still operate farms around Woolgoolga, a reflection of the resilience and cultural link Sikh farmers have with the land. The recent devastation of the Queensland banana industry has demonstrated the importance of

having alternative banana growing areas, especially when it comes to the Australian banana industry being able to resist the introduction of overseas banana imports

4 Amenity & the Environment

- Specific concerns about Option E include; impact on neighbouring properties; omission of noise barriers from design of the motorway; removal of trees; pollution of soil, air and waterways (oil/fuel/tar/grease/dissolved substances/chemical spills/run-off); impact on creeks, dams, flora, fauna and the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve.
- Construction stage issues; dust (blueberries can't be washed during harvesting process); machinery emissions; unable to sell fruit due to impact on quality of produce.
- The motorway will have a huge impact on local farms adjacent to the motorway eg; extra fuel costs; time; inconvenience; hassle; transport and produce quality.
- Degradation of the visual amenity of the area, especially from a tourism point of view.
- Impact on 'green backdrop' and peaceful environment advocated by locals via strategic planning consultations with Coffs Harbour City Council.

5 Social, Cultural & Welfare

- There are currently no Sikh elderly in Aged Care facilities due to the self-supporting culture where little outside support is needed. This will be affected by the loss of properties.
- The Sikh culture instills strong moral values and standards in young people, with respect for tradition. As a consequence, there are fewer social problems and juvenile crime compared to mainstream youth.

6 Access & Equity

- Farmers have not as yet been consulted about access requirements to properties with the proposed motorway. Will there be a right of way for everyone?
- The Federal Government recently provided local blueberry farmers a \$240,000 grant to assist in developing the industry. The State Government now plans to erode this initiative by degrading the viability of local agriculture in both the short and long-term!



..APPENDIX F case study results/profiles



FAMILY PROFILES

FAMILY A

- 2-3 generations living together (elders, sons, wives from Punjabi & 7 children)
- Large scale banana & blueberry production
- All children attend private schools
- All the family work & assist in farms

FAMILY B

- 3 generations living and farming together in large scale banana production
- Only one son, who has a University education and is choosing to live & work on the land to carry on family traditions & welfare obligations to the family
- Wife from the Punjab, and working in agriculture
- Part of the family living on the farm

FAMILY C

- 4 generations living together, consisting of elderly, mother, son & two grandsons, plus their wives and children
- Large scale blueberry production
- All the family work together on the blueberry & banana farm
- Commitment to maintaining the Sikh cultural way of life
- Extensive employment of Punjabi women on the farm

FAMILY D

- 4 generations living & working together, including elders, women from the Punjab, father, son, and children
- Extensive banana farm, with some of the best quality fruit in NSW
- Supporting university student and daughter, son-in-law and extended family living in Brisbane
- Extensive part-time & casual employment of locals

FAMILY E

- 3rd generation farmer, wife, son, and other family members working extensive banana farm
- Developing blueberry acreage in partnership with sister and brother-in-law
- Supporting daughter at university
- Maintain culture & tradition by supporting arranged marriage of daughter to NZ citizen, including trips to India & NZ (catering for 700 wedding guests in Woolgoolga)
- Permanent part-time employment of 2 workers & additional year-round casuals

FAMILY F

- Professionals investing in agriculture & establishing substantial blueberry farm to maintain traditional cultural context with the land
- Maintaining smaller acreage of bananas & employing casual worker year round
- Supporting son at university

FAMILY G

- 3rd generation son working extensive banana farm and other crops
Employment of at least 3 casuals a day year round

FAMILY H

- 2 generations including elders and 2 sons & their families working banana farm
- Also banana wholesalers
- Supporting extended family & university student

FAMILY I

- 3rd generation son & wife working banana & blueberry concern
- Elderly parents living with and supported by son. Elders assist on the property and with child care

FAMILY J

- Originally settlers from Queensland
- Substantial property leased to newly arrived migrants, who have developed it into prosperous blueberry concern supporting elders, wife & young family

FAMILY K

- 3rd & 4th generation father & son working banana plantation & establishing blueberry concern.
- Living in extended family with parents caring for son's younger children.
- Both mother-in-law and bride from the Punjab working on the farm

FAMILY L

- Young migrant family relocated from the Riverina
- Working banana farm & establishing blueberry concern
- Large extended family living in Woolgoolga, including elder parents

FAMILY M

- 3rd generation father & son team working extensive banana farm & living in extended family unit
- Young bride from Punjab assisting in banana farm & household duties
- Establishing blueberries, and employing casuals all year round

FAMILY N

- 3RD generation, Australian born son with extensive blueberry concern, assisted by wife from the Punjab
- Teenage children & elders living in extended family
- Major player in blueberry industry, providing assistance to new growers as needed.
- Extensive casual employment during picking season

FAMILY O

- Migrated from UK with family
- Established extensive blueberry concern supporting young adults.
- Son & young professional bride also assisting with farm
- Employing 6 people for peak-season picking

FAMILY P

- Migrant (1960's) son-in law & Australian born son established & work extensive blueberry concern
- Employ year round caretakers, maintenance workers & blueberry pickers

CASE STUDY RESULTS ~
Profile of Families Directly Affected by Option E

The following information was collected in order to develop a profile of the families affected by Option E, and to substantiate the cultural and social impact statements made within the submission.

The first family profile is more detailed in describing the economic and employment links within the Woolgoolga community.

CASE STUDY 1 ~ *Local Indian property owner affected by the proposed route.*

Family Profile : Married couple with 5 children & elderly parents.

- Economic Impacts on Individual Families.
 - The livelihood of 19 Sikh families directly affected by the proposal is under threat, as their A1 agricultural land (North facing slopes, protected from the majority of bad weather) will be acquired by the RTA, or the viability seriously effected.
 - The impact on local business in Woolgoolga, and to a smaller extent Coffs Harbour, needs to be considered (in terms of the loss of business with 19 farms no longer operating and/or operating at on a smaller scale).
 - Other local expenditure by farming families to be considered include groceries (approx. \$250 per week)
 - In particular, Norco Rural Store, Bennings, Bogas, Mechanical Repair businesses, Woolgoolga Produce, vehicle suppliers in Coffs Harbour (Toyota, Ford, Nissan), overseas travel companies (regular visits to India), would impacted by reduced business and turnover.

- Economic Case Study of a Sample 30 acre Property.

Employment : extended family (husband & wife, 5 children, grandparents)
@ an average income of \$45,000 p.a.

: 2 permanent part-time employees @ \$17 p.h. (24 hours p.w.
x \$17 = \$408 p.w.) and a pool of casuals.

Recurrent Costs : Fertiliser 600 t.p.a.
: Dolomite 150 t.p.a.
: Chemicals 10 l.p.a. @ \$3,400 (2x5 litres p.a.)
: Roundup 100 l.p.a. @ \$550 (5x20 litres p.a. @ \$110
each)
: Bags 4,000 p.a. @ \$ 80 (@ \$2 x 100)

- : Cartons 10,000 p.a. @ \$25,000 (@ \$2.50 each)
- : Fuel \$12,000 p.a. @ \$ 1,000 per month
(2x unregistered & 2x registered farm/work vehicles;
1x family car; 1x 4 ton truck)
- Sundries : Slip Sheets (packing) @ \$60 per 1,000
: Blue-liner (packing) @ \$40 per 1,000
- Other Costs : Timber Props (one off) @ \$12,500 (10,000 @ \$1.25
each)
- : Vehicle repairs @ average \$5,000 p.a.
- : Aerial Spraying (helicopter) @ \$80 per acre
*Usually a shared cost with other families due to
minimum
Acre requirement to make spaying viable.*

Potential Impact on Agricultural Land

- Concern that the impact of changing the landscape for the proposed Option E, has not been properly considered or measured, from the farmer's perspective. What of the 'flow-on effects'? This is a vital part in the process of considering adequate compensation to farmers, including during the estimated 4 year construction phase.
- Cultural Impact
 - Temple would find it difficult to function without it's congregation. Large religious events have a significant impact on the service economy, especially the local shops (groceries).
- Local Agricultural Industry.
 - More & more local banana farmers are diversifying in order to remain viable. Although current prices for bananas are exceptional due to the recent destruction (cyclone) of the Queensland farming industry, since the mid-nineties, drought and banana prices have been poor.

As a consequence, approximately 20% of local farms grow only bananas. 70-80% are mixed (avocados, blueberries, raspberries), with an increasing percentage planting blueberries, in response to consistently high prices for the product. Although blueberries are very labour-intensive and require a large initial financial outlay (preparing land, posts, netting, plants, etc), ongoing costs are less than for bananas.

- Once the Queensland banana industry recovers, it is likely that mixed farms will continue to be on the increase.

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