

Record of Meeting



Purpose of Meeting	Grafton Community Liaison Group Meeting No. 1		
Project	Wells Crossing To Iluka Road - Upgrading the Pacific Highway		
Prepared By	Jenny Bailey	Phone No	9928 2228
Place of Meeting	Grafton Civic Centre	Date	8 December 2004 7-9pm
Present	Scott Flynn (SF) David Foster (DF) Des Harvey (DH) Colin Milne (CM) Bill Noonan (BN) Tony Wade (TW) Peter Morgan (PM) Henk van der Merwe (HvdM) James Lloyd (JL) Dave Morrison (DM) Helen Busby (HB) (visiting from Tucabia CLG)		
Apologies	None		
Distribution	All of the above		

General

The meeting commenced at 7.10 pm. TT welcomed all and outlined the Agenda for the Community Liaison Group (CLG) Meeting No. 1 as follows:

- Introductions
- The CLG process
- RTA commitment to consultation
- Pacific Highway Upgrade Strategy
- Background to the Project
- Project overview
- Community information sessions feedback
- Brainstorming and ranking activity
- Close

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Introductions

- TT welcomed CLG members and introduced herself as being from SKM and as the Community Liaison Manager for the Wells Crossing to Iluka Road Upgrade Project. TT will facilitate meetings of the CLG.
- PB welcomed the CLG members and introduced himself as the Project Development Manager (Pacific Highway Office, RTA). PB is responsible for the delivery of this project and is looking forward to working with the community.
- JM, from SKM, introduced herself as Project Manager for this project.
- JB introduced herself as an Environmental Engineer from SKM.

TT then invited those in attendance to introduce themselves and to talk to the following points:

- “name and where you live”
- “why you chose to become a member”
- “who you are representing and how you will represent them”
- “any previous CLG experience”

Participants then introduced themselves and responded to the above prompts.

- Henk van der Merwe
 - representing Clarence Valley Business Enterprise Centre (BEC) (which is affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce) and Grafton and District Business Development Board
 - he is concerned about any potential impact on small businesses
 - will distribute information through newsletters, meetings etc
 - used to work for an environmental consultancy
- Peter Morgan
 - lives in Four Mile Lane south of Grafton
 - representing National Parks Association
 - he will distribute information to neighbours
 - was involved in the Grafton Bridge CLG
- Scott Flynn
 - lives in Grafton
 - is a local solicitor
 - he is concerned about the impacts (environmental and economic) on the Valley
 - was involved in the Grafton Bridge CLG
 - believes community can have valuable input into project through the CLGs'
 - will write letters to the Editor of local papers as a communication medium
- Bill Noonan
 - lives in Grafton
 - he is concerned about protection of natural environment and business impacts
 - representing Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition (President)
 - will distribute information through newsletters

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- was involved in the Grafton Bridge CLG
 - Board member of CPA
 - President of Clarence Bird Club
- Col Milne
 - lives in Wells Crossing
 - representing Rural Fire Service
 - been involved in Halfway Creek Realignment project CLG
- Tony Wade
 - representing South Grafton Progress Association
 - been involved in many organisations
 - would like to get accurate information about the project which can be passed onto the local community
 - involved in the Halfway Creek Realignment project CLG
- Helen Busby
 - geography teacher at South Grafton High School
 - lives between Tucabia and Pillar Valley
 - will pass on information to students at the school
- Dave Morrison
 - Clarence Valley Council representative on CLG
 - has a land use planning background
 - will provide a link between Council and the project team
 - involved in many CLGs' for various projects
- James Lloyd
 - lives near Wells Crossing
 - representing neighbours whose properties border the study area boundary
 - has a military background
- Des Harvey
 - active member of Grafton Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce
 - concerned with economic impacts
 - lives west of study area
- David Foster
 - retired truck driver
 - has an interest in the project and community impacts
 - no prior CLG experience
 - would like to help project team in any way he can

CLG Process

TT distributed and drew members' attention to key points in the CLG Charter (Attachment A) including the Terms of Reference and the roles and responsibilities of the project team and CLG members. In particular the following aspects were discussed:

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- emphasised the need for CLG members to represent the broader community and not individual concerns
- will endeavour to ensure communication is in plain English and free from jargon
- need commitment from both parties (Project team and CLG members) to make this an effective process
- CLG members should let SKM know if they are unavailable to attend CLG meetings so that a briefing can be arranged. This will ensure everyone is up-to-date and CLG meetings are productive
- need CLG members to advise on any community issues which they are aware of
- apologised for late notice for this CLG meeting and explained the need to avoid the Christmas period to minimise intrusion into CLG members lives
- as a general rule CLG members will be given a minimum of one week's notice but preferably 2-3 weeks notice about upcoming meetings. CLG members will be contacted in writing and by phone
- Record of Meeting notes from CLG meetings will be distributed within two weeks
- SKM will schedule the Maclean, Grafton and Tucabia CLG meetings on consecutive nights
- CLG members except BN, TW, CM and DF indicated they have access to email and are happy to receive electronic correspondence
- DF volunteered to check the Record of Meeting notes on behalf of CLG members prior to distribution

– Question

Can the CLGs receive feedback about the other CLGs? *Note: HB offered to attend both the Tucabia and Grafton CLGs to help information transfer.*

Response

PB: The Record of Meeting notes from each CLG could be emailed to CLG members (note: all Record of Meeting notes will be posted on the website as well) and that HB was welcome to attend both CLG meetings

– Question

Will the three CLGs ever meet at the one time?

Response

TT: The three CLGs would generally meet separately, however, if the CLGs expressed a desire to meet together, it could be arranged.

– Question

Can the charter be amended to include the built and natural environment and economical issues?

Response

TT: It is important to have consistency between the CLGs and therefore, the content of the charter should be the same for all three CLGs. The intent of the charter is not to include an exhaustive list of all issues (it only shows some issues as examples) which may be encountered and therefore is quite broad.

PB: However your suggestion will be included in the Record of Meeting notes.

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– Question

How often will the CLGs meet and will it always be on a Wednesday night?

Response

PB: The CLGs will initially meet every few months, then at longer intervals as the project develops. The next meeting will probably be held in February. At this stage, the Grafton CLG would probably meet on a Wednesday night, however, the day of the week was dependent on CLG members commitments. CLG members are to advise of any conflicts.

- The CLG charter was accepted by the CLG

RTA Commitment to Consultation

PB outlined the RTA's commitment to community consultation and covered the following points:

- expressed appreciation to CLG members for their attendance
- emphasised the need for two-way communication between project team, CLG members and communities they represent
- project has been going for approximately six weeks – currently gathering information – no route options have been identified yet
- emphasised need for early community involvement from a broad cross section of the community across the whole study area
- every call and email will be entered into a database and then considered
- community concerns will be considered and assessed against project criteria, (social, environmental, economic and functional) as will all other concerns
- the preferred route will be identified and concept design completed by July 2006 taking into account social, environmental, economic and functional issues
- for the communication needs of the CLG to be met the project team needs to be aware of the members requirements. For example, we can provide information to be included in members organisational newsletters

Pacific Highway Upgrade Strategy

PB provided a presentation on the planning and development for this project. Key points were:

- summarised the “gaps” in the planning and development of the Pacific Highway Upgrade between Coffs Harbour and Tweed Heads
- the RTA is aiming to fill in the “gaps” so that planning (preferred route and concept design) is complete for the whole Highway by July 2006
- the upgrade is being fast-tracked primarily for safety reasons and to identify corridors in a rapidly developing area
- both the State and Federal Governments have committed to provide funding for the upgrade
- handout of project related maps (Attachment B, C and D)

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Program and Project Objectives

PB handed out the Program and Project objectives (Attachment E) and explained the importance and utilisation of the program and project objectives. The purpose of the presentation was to convey to the CLG members the process that the RTA takes in selecting a preferred option. The route options are assessed against the project objectives and the preferred option is the one that 'on balance' meets the project objectives. This is a standard process for the RTA for development of route options and, in response to concerns from members of the community within the study area, confirms that the RTA cannot make decisions on route options at this early stage of investigations. The purpose of the presentation was also to convey to the meeting that all community concerns raised are considered, measured against the project objectives, and incorporated into the project if the suggestion contributes towards the objectives.

- target of minimum 15 crashes per 100 MVK (million vehicle kilometres). PB gave this example:
 - say there are 10,000 vehicles/day (vpd) travel between Wells Crossing and Iluka Road
 - this stretch of highway is 80km long
 - 10,000 vpd x 80km is 800,000 vehicle kilometres per day
 - 365 days per year x 800,000 is approximately 300,000,000 vehicle kms
 - 300 million vehicle kms (MVK)
 - if the target is a minimum 15 crashes per 100 MVK, the target for this stretch of highway would be 45 (i.e. 15 x 3).
 - by comparison, the current accident rate on the existing equivalent stretch of the Pacific Highway is well above this.
- vertical and horizontal alignment – the alignment needs to be of a certain design to enable vehicles to travel comfortably at 110 km/hr. Horizontal alignment relates to the radius of curves (there would be a minimum radius of 1200m). Vertical alignment relates to the gradient – sufficient sight distance would be provided to enable vehicles to see obstacles and stop in time
- there would be minimal access points to improve safety (underpasses and overpasses would be provided for local traffic)
- Between Wells Crossing and Harwood Bridge the highway upgrade would be of Type A standard - ie. there would be no direct access from properties to and from the highway. Interchanges for access to regional areas (via local roads) would only be considered at this stage at Wells Crossing and in the vicinity of Harwood Bridge. By way of explanation, an interchange provides ramps on and off the highway, including overbridges, and facilitates separation of through and local traffic at that point, to provide a safe access to major destinations.

Between Harwood Bridge and Iluka Road the Highway would be of Type B standard, ie. intersections would be considered between the upgraded highway and local access roads where they already exist (for example, at Watts Lane). These intersections would be designed so that they could be upgraded in the future to Type A standard. The ultimate design would make provision for interchanges, local road access and service roads to access properties. The upgraded highway would be designed to have a desirable flood immunity of 1 in 20 year and an optimum flood level of 1 in 100 year

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– *Question*

How will local residents be able to access the upgraded Highway?

Response

PB: The upgraded Highway would cater for long distance transport rather than local traffic, hence interchanges would only be considered at this stage at Wells Crossing and Harwood. Local traffic would still be accommodated via existing local roads.

– *Question*

Is it a specific objective of the project to separate local and through traffic?

Response

PB: The separation of traffic is one of the community issues that is driving the Government's strategy for upgrade of the Pacific Highway, as it would provide a safer road. This would be considered as part of the upgrade.

– *Comment*

The project objective should be a maximum of 15 crashes per 100 MVK rather than a minimum.

Response

PB explained that the accident rate was a target and zero could not be achieved due to driver behaviour.

– *Question*

When will the CLGs involvement end?

Response

PB: The CLGs involvement will continue over the next 18 months, past the selection of the preferred route and the environmental impact assessment. Community consultation by the RTA will continue for the full duration to the completion of construction.

– *Question*

Is the upgrade of the existing Pacific Highway still an option?

Response

PB: Yes. It will be investigated as part of this study as the RTA has a legal requirement under environmental legislation to consider all feasible options.

– *Question*

Are the objectives fixed?

Response

PB: Generally they are fixed to provide consistent decision making throughout the project, however, they could be fine-tuned to incorporate community concerns. These suggestions would need to be made as soon as possible.

– *Question*

Where is the eastern boundary of the study area?

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Response

PB: The eastern boundary is defined by the hill terrain and areas of high vegetation to the east. If it were extended further east, it may encroach on the National Park.

– *Question*

How will emergency services access be affected?

Response

PB: Access for emergency services will be considered as the project proceeds during the route selection and concept design phase.

Project Information

JM described the SKM team, which includes a Project Manager (JM) and Team Leaders for Community Consultation, Environmental and Social, Traffic, Transport and Economics and Design

JM presented an overview of the project and the process:

- the RTA has commissioned SKM to undertake this project
- the investigations will include transportation, economics, environmental, land use, planning and zoning, social and design
- work on this study commenced in October 2004
- anticipated timing is as follows;
 - route options display - mid 2005
 - a preferred option display - late 2005
 - the concept design of the preferred route - July 2006
- there will be approximately eight CLG meetings over the next 18 months at each of the project milestones and some in between
- as an example of what the community might expect when this project is at the route options display stage an extract from the Macksville to Urunga, Upgrading the Pacific Highway Project Route Options Display Community Update (Attachment F) was handed out. This handout shows the nature of the information which will be developed during the route option assessment phase for this project

Community Information Sessions Feedback

TT presented the most common concerns identified by the community at the Community Information Sessions held at Grafton on 30 November 2004 and Maclean on 1 December 2004. These are listed at Attachment G

CLG members were asked to choose (with a coloured dot) the three issues they considered the most important to their area. For the Grafton CLG, the most important issues are:

- Impact of bypass on towns
- impact on businesses that currently rely on highway trade
- impact on Grafton
- impact on wildlife corridors

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- impacts on flora and fauna
- reduction in motor vehicle crashes

Evaluation Form

CLG members were invited to complete an evaluation form (Attachment H) in order to assist the project team assess communication activities.

TT thanked everyone for coming and indicated that the next CLG meeting would be held in February.

Meeting closed 9.15pm

Handouts

Attachment A – Community Liaison Group charter

Attachment B – Route selection study area map

Attachment C – Route selection study area map and National Parks/State Forests

Attachment D – Route selection study area map and SEPP 14 wetlands

Attachment E – Program and Project Objectives

Attachment F – Extract from “Macksville to Urunga Upgrading the Pacific Highway Community Update – Route Options. November 2004”

Attachment G – Key issues from the Community Information Sessions

Attachment H – Evaluation form

Attachment I – PowerPoint presentation delivered at the CLGs