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Temporary asphalt batch plant – Mororo

Frequently asked questions

December 2018

Why does the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade need temporary asphalt batch plants?

In July 2018, Roads and Maritime Services reviewed the supply strategy for the manufacture and delivery of asphalt for the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade.

More than 240,000 tonnes of asphalt is needed for the upgrade between Glenugie and Ballina. Existing permanent batch plants in Alstonville, near Ballina and Coffs Harbour are already engaged to supply the upgrade north of Devils Pulpit and south of Tucabia respectively. About 40 per cent of all the asphalt needed for the upgrade will be supplied by these permanent batch plants.

Between Tucabia and Devils Pulpit, about 170,000 tonnes of asphalt will be needed between 2018 and 2020. In reviewing the Asphalt Supply Strategy for this section of the upgrade, three options were considered:

1. Using existing permanent batch plants only
2. Using existing permanent batch plants and on-site temporary asphalt batch plant
3. Using two on-site temporary batch plants.

These options were then assessed against a number of technical requirements, including the quantities needed, timeframes for production and capacity of existing permanent batch plants.

Why does Roads and Maritime need two temporary asphalt batch plants?

Due to peak production requirements and considering safety, program and cost, the assessment determined two temporary batch plants were needed to supply asphalt for the upgrade between Tucabia and Devils Pulpit. Locating the temporary batch plants close to where the asphalt is needed helps to minimise the distance trucks are travelling for deliveries.

From the review, the project team has identified:

- One temporary batch plant is needed to supply asphalt between Maclean and Devils Pulpit
- One temporary batch plant is needed to supply asphalt between Tucabia and Maclean.

What sites were considered for the temporary asphalt batch plant between Maclean and Devils Pulpit?

All eight locations identified as possible sites were assessed against the Minister's Conditions of Approval.

Following the review, three sites were identified as best meeting the assessment criteria to supply asphalt between Maclean and Devils Pulpit because they:

- Satisfied all or most of the technical requirements
- Met all or most of the requirements under the Minister's Conditions of Approval or impacts were able to be mitigated
- Either have existing access to the highway or have capacity for intersections to be upgraded.

The three sites were at Harwood, Mororo and Woombah.

How are possible sites identified?

Several factors were considered in identifying possible locations. Sites between Maclean and Devils Pulpit have been assessed against the Minister's Conditions of Approval which outline strict requirements for managing the project's construction impact.

Technical requirements

- Traffic impacts and access arrangements, including access to the highway
- Haulage distances
- Available land (at least one hectare needed)
- Available capacity of batch plant and guaranteed supply
- Proximity to the upgrade.

Environmental factors

- Compliance with the project's Conditions of Approval
- Key environmental considerations including flooding, drainage and air quality
- Potential impacts to threatened species and endangered ecological communities
- Ability to mitigate environmental impacts identified.

Community impacts

- Distance to properties
- Key concerns raised by community members as part of consultation for the proposed temporary asphalt batch plant near Woombah
- Ability to mitigate impacts to the community.

This information has been used to inform how we will supply asphalt for this section of the upgrade as well as considering safety, program and cost.

Why has the site at Mororo been chosen for the temporary batch plant to supply asphalt for the section between Maclean and Devils Pulpit?

Following consideration of community feedback as well as technical and environment impacts, Roads and Maritime's preferred location for the temporary asphalt batch plant is Mororo.

Environmental assessments have found the Mororo site has adequate flood immunity, temporary fencing is already in place to manage impacts on native fauna and additional measures will be implemented to manage and monitor noise and air quality while hazardous materials will be stored and managed in line with Australian standards.

The Mororo site has less impacted residents and is generally located in a more sparsely populated area. Additionally, residents in the area can use an alternative access to the Pacific Highway to minimise interactions with project vehicles.

This site also provides direct access to the Pacific Highway and this intersection has acceleration and deceleration lanes and capacity for the required heavy and light vehicle movements.

On balance, the site at Mororo is found to best meet the technical, environment, community and traffic requirements with any potential impacts able to be mitigated.

What was the community most concerned about for the Mororo site and how has Roads and Maritime addressed this feedback?

Between 22 October and 9 November 2018, Roads and Maritime received feedback from 131 people and organisations raising 26 different matters across the three sites and in relation to the operation of a temporary asphalt batch plant.

Specific comments about the site at Mororo were:

- Impact to ecologically sensitive area near Mororo

- Support due to fewer impacted residents than the other shortlisted sites.

General feedback

Environment:

- Noise from batch plant operation
- Air quality – dust
- Air quality – health
- Air quality – odour
- Impact to flora and fauna
- Impact to waterways from site runoff
- Hazardous materials and emergency management.

Traffic:

- Safety for road users
- Potential damage to local roads
- Impact to Pacific Highway traffic.

How is Roads and Maritime going to manage concerns about environmental impacts?

Noise

Independent acoustic specialists have been engaged to assess the potential noise and vibration impact from construction and operation of a temporary asphalt batch plant.

Initial assessments indicate noise and vibration levels would be within the limits set by the NSW Environment Protection Authority and under the project's Environment Protection Licence (EPL).

Construction and operation of the temporary asphalt batch plant will be carried out in accordance with the project's Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan.

Most activities for the construction and operation of the temporary asphalt batch plant will be done during approved work hours (from 7am to 6pm between Monday and Friday and 8am to 5pm on Saturday).

Some work will be done outside approved construction hours including:

- Starting operation from 6am to maximise asphalt production

- Supplying asphalt during night work, such as traffic changes.

All activities will be carried out in line with the project's out of hours work procedure and impacted residents will be notified before work starts.

Noise and vibration monitoring will be carried out to ensure the levels are within the allowable limits.

Air quality

Temporary asphalt batch plants for the Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade will be built to stringent standards which are regulated by the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

Independent air quality and odour specialists have been engaged to assess the potential impact and will prepare an air quality impact assessment for the preferred site.

To manage air quality impacts at temporary asphalt batch plants, the project team will:

- Install and maintain particulate extraction equipment
- Maintain bitumen products at the lowest possible temperature
- Ensure machinery meets industry standards
- Monitor and spray water on aggregate stockpiles to minimise dust.

The project team will regularly monitor the air quality around the plant to ensure compliance with legislation, air emission standards and the conditions of the project's EPL.

Dust monitoring will be carried out during the establishment, operation and decommissioning of the batch plant and results compared to the criteria provided in the project's EPL.

Flora and fauna

All identified sites have undergone a biodiversity assessment by an ecologist to ensure potential impact to flora and fauna can be mitigated.

Construction and operation of a temporary batch plant would be carried out in line with the project's Construction Environment Management Plan to ensure impacts to environmentally sensitive areas are minimised.

The site at Mororo would be built and operated on a previously established hardstand area with no additional vegetation removal required.

Additionally, fauna fencing is in place already at this site to protect koala and Green Thighed Frog populations.

Flooding

The project's Minister's Conditions of Approval outline strict requirements for the management and mitigation of a potential flood. Detailed flood modelling has been completed for all identified sites as part of assessments to ensure the project's flood impact objectives have been met.

The site at Mororo has a 1 in 20 year flood immunity.

Water management

To mitigate the impact of site runoff, groundwater management and erosion and sediment controls would be implemented in accordance with the project's Construction Environment Management Plan.

What are the access arrangements going to be for the Mororo site?

This site provides direct access to the Pacific Highway and this intersection has both acceleration and deceleration lanes for improved safety and capacity for the required heavy and light vehicle movements. Additionally, residents in the area can use an alternative access to the Pacific Highway to minimise interactions with project vehicles.

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