

Meeting Record

Project:	Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy	Reference: 1093.50
Location:	Coffs Harbour Catholic Club, West High Street, Coffs Harbour	Date: 23 May 2002

Present: Apology: Copy: Name:

SOUTHERN CFG			
✓			David Doyle
			Wayne O'Brien (WITHDRAWN)
	✓		Bob Bunting
✓			Trish Welsh
✓			Murray Williams
✓			Bruce Partridge
✓			Gillian French
		✓	Jenny Oliver (proxy)
✓			Gail Latham
✓			Marlene Jacobs
✓			Peter Lubans
		✓	Ernie Armstrong (proxy)
	✓		Hugh Saddleton
✓			Paul Norton
✓			Ron Smith
✓			David Pike
✓			Ron Gray (proxy)
✓			Tom Hamilton-Foster
✓			Peter Jackson
		✓	Jack Brown

PROJECT TEAM				
✓			Wes Stevenson	RTA
	✓		Bob Higgins	RTA
✓			Robert Kook	RTA
✓			Martin Howard	RTA
✓			Tim Paterson	Connell Wagner
	✓		Rosemary Russell	Connell Wagner
	✓		Bruce Penman	Connell Wagner
✓			Barry Hancock	Connell Wagner
✓			Alison Clausen	Connell Wagner
✓			Andrew Smith	Pramax Communications
	✓		Bill Wood	Coffs Harbour City Council
	✓		Rick Bennell	Coffs Harbour City Council
	✓		George Stulle	Coffs Harbour City Council
	✓		John Finlay	PlanningNSW
✓			Jo Gardner	PlanningNSW
Recorded By: Pramax Communications				Total Pages: 9
Subject: Community Focus Group Meeting No 5 (Southern CFG)				

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Andrew opened the meeting at 5.35pm
- 1.2 Andrew welcomed Martin Howard, Property Manager for the RTA, guest speaker to address the group on land acquisition policy.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 The minutes were amended to correctly identify Englands Road.
- 2.2 The minutes were amended to note that Paul Norton was in attendance.
- 2.3 On page 5 dot point 4 - where it says travel times will be longer, the minutes were amended to read travel times are expected to be longer. Also add that there will be further investigations in peak period times.
- 2.4 page 5 dot point 5 – amended to note that the CFG did a variety of travel times at

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various times of day and on different days.

- 2.5 page 6 dot point 1 – amended to note that long term option is a tunnel.
- 2.6 page 7 dot point 2 - change 'higher cuts' to deeper cuts'. Add 'the cuts are approximately 50 - 60 metres'.
- 2.7 page 7 dot point 3 - that this is in regards to the inner corridor and that no EIS study would be done at this stage.
- 2.8 Under discussion of the inner corridor - add concerns of landslides north of railway.
- 2.9 page 8 dot point 3 - add (200 metres from residential land).
- 2.10 page 8 dot point 5 – note that some CFG members lacked confidence in the effectiveness of noise barriers.
- 2.11 page 8 dot point 6 - add other noise measures may need to be taken into consideration e.g. double glazing.
- 2.12 last bullet point - amend to – it is too early to make a selection because additional costing and other relevant data will need to be collected to make an effective decision.
- 2.13 The minutes were accepted with these amendments.

3 MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 There had been a request for a PANIC representative on CFG. The PANIC group are interested in the People's Choice corridor and have been very active gathering information. The CFG accepted the inclusion of a representative (Jack Brown) from this group.
- 3.2 CFG member stated that at the last meeting we talked about a media release but the media release had no information on why the decision to eliminate this option from further consideration was made.
- 3.3 CFG member stated that the fact sheet should be released to the media as this would explain the decision.
- 3.4 Tim Paterson said the People's Choice corridor has continued to be out there in terms of public interest even though the steering committee has decided not to pursue further investigation of this option. Tim showed overheads regarding the People's Choice corridor and spoke briefly about its key features but confirmed option was not being revisited in terms of specialist investigations etc.
- 3.5 Andrew Smith confirmed that the fact sheet had been released to the media but said he would chase up press coverage of information contained in the fact sheet.
- 3.6 The CFG felt very strongly that a Council representative should be present at every meeting and suggested CFG meetings dates should be checked so they do not clash with Council meetings. The council are reacting to the PANIC group but they do not know the information that needs to be passed on to this group.
- 3.7 It was agreed that Andrew Smith would make a written request to inform council that the CFG have requested a council member to attend all meetings for the duration of the meeting.
- 3.8 Wes told the CFG that the RTA do brief councillors from time to time. We probably

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need to do this more and make sure that they are aware that they are welcome to come to CFG meetings.

3.9 CFG requested minutes be sent out to each councillor rather than just to Bill Wood.

3.10 Jo Gardner (PlanningNSW) confirmed that all councillors have the opportunity to be present at any of the meetings.

3.11 The steering committee met today. The Council has resolved to have a Peer Review. A brief is in the process of being developed to enable Council to employ a consultant to review the information to date. A brief will be offered to skilled consultancy firms who have the expertise and skills to do this job. This will assure Council that the process is being followed and nothing is being missed.

3.12 CFG member commented that the RTA has the ability through their own internal process to go down this line. As a ratepayer they are not interested in paying for a Peer Review.

3.13 Jo Gardner advised that these are Consultants to Council. The whole idea of a Peer Review is that it is carried out independently and without connection to existing project team. Council has decided it needs this expert advice to assist it validate the progress of the project to date.

3.14 CFG member applauded the Council for what they are doing.

3.15 Andrew said there were obviously varying attitudes to the Peer Review and it was Council who need to hear these comments.

3.16 A CFG member felt that the consultants would get a lot of information from the RTA anyway, they would just look at what was provided and not re-figure it.

3.17 Wes Stevenson indicated that part of the consultants job is to review work that RTA has done and they will look at and talk to many groups.

3.18 CFG member asked if information is going to be released in July how can a review be done before that time. Will the review have any influence on decisions?

3.19 CFG member stated that in the process we are going through at the moment there were review periods. We are going through a process that has certain reviews in it so why are we spending money. Why do we have to turn around and question the credentials of the people most qualified to do the work.

3.20 CFG member stated that they have had all these months, one day before the submissions close they decide to start again and it is not fair to say that corridors that have been eliminated are going to be reviewed again. The picture would have been different if the council had done this two weeks ago.

3.21 Andrew indicated that all we can do at the moment is adhere to the process that has been established and pursue the identified task set out for the CFG.

4 LAND ACQUISITION PROCESS

4.1 Martin Howard, Property Manager RTA, gave a presentation on property acquisition.

Attach: Land Acquisition Policy summary used in overhead

4.2 Martin also invited CFG to take his business card and call him at any time with questions.

4.3 RTA Land Acquisition Policy booklet available with information regarding land acquisition.

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Questions and answers:

- 4.4 Martin Howard confirmed that property owners are only entitled to compensation if land is directly affected.
- 4.5 If your land is in the corridor how do you get on with capital improvements? *You can continue with improvements because it is the value of your property on the date of acquisition that is used for valuation purposes, so any improvements will be counted in this value.*
- 4.6 If you have properties and when the corridor is identified it goes on the LEP and the prices plummet how is it relevant in 20 years time if that the value was affected immediately when the route was chosen? *The effect of the proposed road includes the effect of the zoning. You have to assume for the purposes of valuation that there is no corridor and so the value is drawn with a comparison in the market place.*
- 4.7 CFG member stated that properties within ½ km will be affected so they would not reasonably represent unaffected property values. In Coffs Harbour values can change within 500 metres. *That is why you have a valuer for the owner and a valuer for the RTA to take this into account and come to an agreement.*
- 4.8 Has there ever been a highway built in a regional area of New South Wales that has affected residential buildings? Ocean Shores was very depressed as far as development goes, have had a major development since the highway up to Brisbane. Armidale, Raymond Terrace, Kiama all go through residential areas.
- 4.9 If a particular route is chosen and announced in July and then in six months time someone wants to sell the property and no one wants to buy it, what happens? *The owner can apply to the RTA under hardship provisions of the Act.*
- 4.10 Tim confirmed that we are not going to arrive at a preferred route in July, a preferred route decision or announcement would not happen until at least December this year.
- 4.11 There are concerns that once the highway is announced people will not be able to sell their houses. You also only get compensation if it goes through your property so a lot of people will lose value on their house and they will lose out. *Martin had found in his experience there are a lot of buyers in the market who do not mind buying near the highway, they are a different type of buyer.*
- 4.12 Banana growers have been approached if a highway goes through their properties are they interested in selling. They are also of the opinion that they could sell to the RTA and lease it back. *The RTA have not approached anyone to purchase land, this looks like other people may have seen opportunity (eg. possibility for a service station on the highway)*
- 4.13 If I own 25 acres, I have a dam that provides water to a number of properties is there compensation for that dam. If they are getting it free no. *If it is of commercial value, then that is taken into consideration.*
- 4.14 If land was zoned next year for future use and someone is selling their house when potential buyers do searches what will the RTA tell them? *The RTA would advise that land is directly affected if that is the case.*
- 4.15 Do you construct accesses for people who can no longer use their original access? *Yes these people must be considered, their access is part of the development. There are instances where access is changed or lost because of acquisition and if it is*

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impossible to provide access then an acquisition ensues.

5 UPDATE OF ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 Connell Wagner has been working on the development of the inner corridor and are still looking at it in terms of optimising the route alignment to minimise impacts on land use. They have spoken to groups such as Isles Industrial Estate and Bishop Druitt College etc. representatives and are discussing what the issues are.
- 5.2 Barry Hancock ran through overheads showing potential interchanges for the inner corridor. These possibly include a flyover at Englands Road and a half interchange at Boambee Road. This area has population growth potential and therefore the need to access highway.
- 5.3 There is a need to provide connectivity at Coramba Road. Two types of interchanges were shown as examples. Options in this area are still being developed.
- 5.4 There may be a half interchange at the extension of Mastracolas Road. No decisions have been made, just thoughts about what access needs to be provided.
- 5.5 Northern end of the inner corridor onto Korora Road has issues in terms of traffic flow. Here we need to determine traffic flow and relative proportions that might be on the bypass, ie. who was coming into the CBD or going around. This could influence interchange design.
- 5.6 Barry pointed out that they had only used one route within the corridor. Even though there are numerous routes there are key points for interchanges no matter which route all these spots are crossed by the inner corridor.

Existing highway

- 5.7 Barry presented concept drawings of potential interchanges at key points along the highway.
- 5.8 At Englands Road the Highway could be developed as a bridge over existing roundabout, with ramps going up to bridge and exit lanes going off sides.
- 5.9 Possible graded interchange at North Boambee Road. This could cater for future development potential and the major industrial area on Cook Drive. Here there is a degree of logic to build a bridge over this intersection with an elongated roundabout underneath (similar to Arthur Street). There would be no cross conflict between through traffic and local traffic.
- 5.10 North of the 'Windmill' there is a tight curve where widening would be required. A tunnel is unlikely to be feasible here because of topographic constraints.
- 5.11 From Combine Street to Albany Street some form of widening may be required.
- 5.12 If an inner corridor is chosen the time frame for construction would be approximately 20 years and must last up to 50 years. Therefore the existing highway will still have a minimum upgrade scenario which will need to happen prior to 20 years.
- 5.13 CFG member said that they had not seen any census data on how we have grown over the last few years. *This data should be on the internet, population growth and initial figures are out.*
- 5.14 CFG queried how long did it take to construct Bray to Arthur Street section? *2.5 to 3*

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years.

- 5.15 The upgrade of the Highway through the CBD is difficult. If you take away the parking and the medium strip the highway has effectively 7 lanes curb to curb. An option is a four lane highway with a local lane on the outside in either direction. There is local traffic flow to consider around town.
- 5.16 In the CBD section, the cross streets would revert to left in left out only. It would also possibly be necessary to do some acquisition of local property.
- 5.17 It is likely that the existing highway at the CBD is too close to sea level for tunnelling. It is soft soil country and has a high water table. Attach: overhead for tunnels (Tim Paterson).
- 5.18 An overhead was presented explaining why a raised viaduct from Combine Street to Bray Street was not viable. It would be expensive. Attach: overhead Elevated Road (Tim Paterson)
- 5.19 A flyover the highway at Bray Street and Orlando Street may be appropriate. Very heavy traffic movement on this intersection. This should be reduced when the Mastracolas link is finished.
- 5.20 CFG member said that according to the traffic models an inner corridor would only take about 10% of the traffic off the existing highway. CBD is where most traffic is most heavy because people are going about their daily business. 3,000 to 4,000 vehicles a day. Providing interchanges at various locations would provide access for locals to get onto a bypass and allow a lot more local traffic to use the existing highway for getting around.
- 5.21 CFG member asked if there was any information on how many trucks travel through Coffs Harbour compared to how many have to stop and deliver? Will there be a study done on this? If you are trying to take trucks off the highway but they need to stop in town there is a conflict of purpose. Coffs Harbour is an attractive destination for a lot of people. Action: Connell Wagner to look into destination of trucks on highway to Coffs or around
- 5.22 Tim Paterson stated that the proportion of truly long haul trucks from Sydney to Brisbane is probably quite small. Trucks have origins and destinations all up and down the Highway.
- 5.23 CFG queried whether we know how many trucks that currently use the New England Highway will come onto the Pacific Highway after it is upgraded? *Wes Stevenson indicated that this is currently being investigated. Newcastle to Brisbane trucks are the only trucks you are talking about. As the upgrade progresses it is more attractive to travel via the Pacific rather than New England.*

Technical Investigations

- 5.24 Alison Clausen indicated that a specialist firm in acoustics and noise, called Wilkinson Murray has been engaged. In the next couple of weeks will begin initial reconnaissance work and provide initial feedback. Also they will be attending the next CFG meeting to give us a presentation on their preliminary findings, explain how the investigations were done and answer questions.
- 5.25 Wilkie Fleming, agriculture land use experts, will be investigating agricultural land use.
- 5.26 In house ecologists to look at flora and fauna. Have a lot of information from Council on key areas of sensitivity.
- 5.27 Jacqui Collins (archaeologist) will be looking at indigenous heritage.

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- 5.28 Visual aspects, electronic drawings, land use and socio economic issues will be looked at. Further discussion with Council and other stakeholders planned.
- 5.29 Tim Paterson stated that a decision has been taken to not proceed with field-based geotechnical investigations as they would be highly expensive. Steering Committee felt that desktop reconnaissance geotechnical work can draw a broad inference of existing geotechnical conditions.
- 5.30 CFG member asked if there would not be geotechnical information on record. Tim indicated that there is some but not much. The desktop work will pick up what information is available. This includes public geological mapping and reports, and physically going out and looking at areas.
- 5.31 If an inner bypass is feasible then there is time to do additional geotechnical work before any commitment to reservation is done.
- 5.32 Project team is putting together some montages of what the road would look like around Coffs Harbour from visual vantage. This is a very strong tool visually. We will be able to show where cuts are visible from and how the highway bypass would look from different vantage points.
- 5.33 Barry's team are looking at water issues and can calculate a lot of valuable information from catchment areas, land characteristics, storm and flooding data.
- 5.34 CFG member asked about whether noise from trucks around Shephards Lane would be monitored. The specialists will be going out there and look at the environment and work out the acoustic patterns and possible effects.
- 5.35 Project team stated that these tests are appropriate ones for this stage of the project.
- 5.36 CFG member raised cloud/fog issues on the inner corridor in relation to safety and whether or not this affected feasibility of this route. *Tim responded by saying that they were not anticipating looking at that detail at this stage as many sections of highways have to deal with these sorts of environmental conditions all the time ie. where there are foggy and wet terrains. It is unlikely to be of consideration when determining the fundamental feasibility of the route.*

6 OTHER ISSUES RAISED

- 6.1 A CFG member complimented the consultants on the working papers that were put together.
- 6.2 Concern that the media are not getting enough information out to the public.
- 6.3 The myth of the possibility that a road can be built further west. It would be nice if someone with authority could state that this is impossible.
- 6.4 CFG member concerned about the affects on agriculture in relation to micro-climate changes/impacts caused by putting cuttings through certain ridges.
- 6.5 Last meeting member requested if they could have a copy of two possible routes of the inner corridor, are you in a position to let us have this information? *No, there is no press release until July, this falls into the category of privileged information.*
- 6.6 A CFG member said at the last meeting she had asked for investigation into a bypass through Hogbin Drive east of the current highway, have they done anything in the last three weeks? *Wes - the RTA is NOT going to investigate a highway route along Orlando Street/Hogbin Drive. Trucks would not use a highway that goes along*

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an alignment like that. They would stay on the existing highway. Strategically the government abandoned an eastern distributor 11 years ago.

6.7 There is talk of a tunnel through Macauleys Headland because we cannot widen due to population. The inner corridor is heavily populated and yet it is still OK to consider going through there.

6.8 Why would acquisition costs not be included in cost estimates to get overall costs for the inner corridor. These costs have to come into play.

6.9 Request not to have dot points but numbers in the minutes of the CFG meetings

Action: Andrew to change template for minutes to have numbers not dot points.

7 CLOSE OF MEETING

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, 4 July 2002