Roads and Maritime Services

Schofields Road upgrade and Extension:
Tallawong Road to Veron Road

Review of environmental factors
21 September 2012
Executive summary

The proposal
The NSW Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) (formerly the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority) is proposing to upgrade and extend 3.6 kilometres of Schofields Road between Tallawong Road and Veron Road from a two-lane road to a four-lane divided road (the proposal). The proposal is located within the suburb of Schofields.

Key features of the proposal include:

- An upgrade from the existing two-lane road to a four-lane divided road with a wide central median allowing for further upgrade to six lanes if required in the future
- Extension of Schofields Road from Railway Terrace to Veron Road
- Provision of a tree lined transit boulevard road type to integrate pedestrians, bicycles, public transport and vehicles in an urban environment
- Signalised intersections at Hambledon Road, Boundary Road/ Alex Avenue, Junction Road, Railway Terrace and Veron Road, including minor realignment of intersection approaches
- A road underpass at Richmond Railway Line including a seven metre deep cutting
- Relocate Railway Terrace intersection about 50 metres to the east and about 30 metres south of the existing intersection to allow the proposal to tie in with the Richmond Railway Line underpass
- Left-in/left-out only access at Schofields Farm Road and to the Schofields Precinct between Railway Terrace and Veron Road
- Five culverts across Schofields Road, two minor culverts across Junction Road and Veron Road, and one culvert connecting table drains east of Junction Road
- Diversion of the existing First Ponds Creek tributary channel around the proposed northern leg of the Hambledon Road intersection
- Stormwater swales between road drainage outlets and receiving watercourses
- Installation of about 40 metre long twin bridges at First Ponds Creek and about 50 metre long twin bridges at the Railway Terrace tributary of Eastern Creek
- A bridge overpass at Bridge Street to connect to the relocated Schofields Railway Station
- Designated right turn lanes at all signalised intersections
- An off-road shared path (for cyclists and pedestrians) each side of Schofields Road for the full length of the proposal
- Bus priority lane approaches at intersections with provision for bus-stops on the departure sides of intersection
- Indented bus stops would be provided midway between intersections together with pedestrian refuges in the median
- Signalised pedestrian/cyclist crossings would be provided at all intersections except Schofields Farm Road
- Improved flood immunity for a 100 year flood event
- Initial posted speed limit of 70 km/h, reducing to 60km/h in the future as traffic increases
- Urban design elements, landscaping works and other ancillary items, as required
- Modifications to property access
- Retaining walls at four locations along Schofields Road
- Temporary site compounds and temporary construction sedimentation basins.

**Need for the proposal**

The proposal forms part of a broader plan to create a new major east-west road corridor for the North West Growth Centre. Schofields Road corridor extends for eight kilometres from Windsor Road through to Richmond Road, via South Street. The upgrade of Schofields Road is required due to the development of the North West Growth Centre. The proposal forms part of an approved road network strategy for the corridor and supporting precinct plans and was developed in conjunction with key stakeholders including Blacktown City Council and Department of Primary Industries.

**Options considered**

A number of options were considered for the proposal including different corridor alignments and different proposal options within the preferred corridor alignment. Corridor alignment options considered routes along Townson Road, Grange Avenue and South Street. The proposal options investigated widening to the north and south of the existing road alignment as well as various intersection approaches and Richmond Railway Line crossing options. The preferred option would widen the existing Schofields Road evenly either side of the existing centreline except between Boundary Road and Junction Road where the road would be widened to the south. The selection of the preferred option took into account social, environmental and economic factors as well as stakeholder input, and is considered to best achieve the proposal objectives and assessment criteria.

**Statutory and planning framework**

Clause 94 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007* permits development on any land for the purpose of a road or road infrastructure facilities to be carried out by or on behalf of a public authority without consent. Furthermore, Clause 18A of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006* permits development for public utility undertakings (which includes road transport undertakings) without consent. Development consent from council is not required and the proposal can be assessed under Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

An Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) under Section 90 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* would be required as the proposal would impact Aboriginal heritage.

The proposal would be a scheduled activity under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*. An environment protection licence would be required under Section 48 of this Act to authorise the carrying out of scheduled development work.

**Community and stakeholder consultation**

During preparation of the review of environmental factors, RMS has consulted with the community and stakeholders including Blacktown City Council, the Aboriginal community and government agencies.
In April 2012 and February 2012 community updates were distributed to 12,000 residences and businesses outlining the key features of the proposed Schofields Road corridor. Two community information sessions were also held at the Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre.

In accordance with the RMS’ Procedure for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation and Investigation (PACHCI), consultation was undertaken with the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council which included archaeological surveys of the study area and an Aboriginal Focus Group meeting.

In July 2011 and January 2012, a number of government agencies and stakeholders were provided with preliminary details of the proposal and offered an opportunity to comment on the issues they would like addressed in the review of environmental factors.

The review of environmental factors will be placed on public display for community input. Any submissions received will be considered in finalising the details of the proposal.

**Environmental impacts**

Beneficial effects of the proposal would include:

- Providing a transit boulevard road corridor that would optimise pedestrian and cyclist access and integrate public transport access and travel with other transport modes
- Providing for additional future road capacity to accommodate the projected traffic growth including the upgrade of Schofields Road to six lanes should it be required
- Enhancing road safety for all road users
- Improving urban design and landscaping along the road corridor
- Improving safety at intersections along Schofields Road

A number of adverse environmental effects are likely to occur during construction, including:

- Noise and vibration impacts to properties adjacent to the proposal site
- Disruptions to traffic flow and access
- Increased risk for spills and contamination
- Increased risk of erosion, sedimentation and water quality degradation
- Potential decline in air quality
- Increased potential of introduction and spread of weed species
- Disruptions to access of road side market farms on Schofields Road

Adverse environmental effects from the proposal include permanent impacts including:

- Changes to access for properties on Schofields Road
- Removal of vegetation including mature trees and 4.76 hectares of communities listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, 0.37 hectares of which is in non-certified areas
- Removal of habitat for threatened flora and fauna
- Impacts to two Aboriginal cultural heritage artefact scatter sites
- Property acquisition impacts to 64 properties
- Permanent change to the visual environment with the introduction of a second carriageway and signalised intersections
- Cumulative impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage, traffic or habitat of threatened flora and fauna.

Adverse environmental effects would be minimised through the implementation of safeguards and management measures outlined in this review of environmental factors. This would include the preparation and implementation of a construction environmental management plan and environmental management sub plans for traffic, air quality, soil and water, noise and vibration, weeds, vegetation, fauna and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

**Justification and conclusion**

The proposal is needed to facilitate development of the North West Growth Centre and is consistent with the precinct planning undertaken by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The potential impacts of the proposal have been further assessed against the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

The proposal would result in both positive and negative impacts, however the safeguards summarised in this review of environmental factors would manage and mitigate the identified negative impacts. The beneficial impacts, including increased capacity on the road network to cater for future developments, are considered to outweigh the adverse impacts associated with the proposal.

The assessment of the proposal and associated environmental impacts are in accordance with Clause 228 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*, Section 111 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

This review of environmental factors finds that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment and RMS therefore is not required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement under Part 5.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. There would be no significant impact on threatened species, as listed under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and/or *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, and therefore no requirement for a Species Impact Statement in accordance with Section 5A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The proposal would not significantly impact on a matter of national environmental significance or Commonwealth land and therefore referral to the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is not required under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

**Display of the review of environmental factors**

This review of environmental factors is on display for comment between 9 October 2012 and 2 November 2012. You can access the documents in the following ways:

**Internet**


**Display**

The documents can be viewed at the following locations:
Purchase
The review documents are available for purchase in hard copy ($25.00) or CD ($10.00) by contacting Jim Campbell (RMS Project Manager) on (02) 8849 2377.

How can I make a submission?
To make a submission on the proposal, please send your written comments to:

RMS Project Manager
Jim Campbell
PO Box 973
Parramatta NSW 2124
Email: Jim.A.Campbell@rms.nsw.gov.au
Fax: 02 8849 2817

Privacy information
All information included in submissions is collected for the sole purpose of assisting in the assessment of this proposal. The information may be used during the environmental impact assessment process by relevant RMS staff and its contractors.

Where the respondent indicates at the time of supply of information that their submission should be kept confidential, RMS will attempt to keep it confidential. However there may be legislative or legal justification for the release of the information, for example under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 or under subpoena or statutory instrument.

The supply of this information is voluntary. Each respondent has free access at all times to the information provided by that respondent but not to any identifying information provided by other respondents if a respondent has indicated that the representation should be kept confidential.

Any respondent may make a correction to the information that they have provided by writing to the same address the submission was sent.

The information will be held by RMS, 27-31 Argyle Street, Parramatta.

What happens next?
Following the submissions period, RMS will collate submissions. Acknowledgement letters will be sent to each respondent. The details of submission authors will be retained and authors will be subsequently advised when project information is released.

After consideration of community comments RMS will determine whether the proposal should proceed as proposed, or whether any alterations to the proposal are necessary. The community will be kept informed regarding this RMS determination.
If the proposal is approved, RMS proceeds with final design and tenders are called for construction of the project.

If you have any queries, please contact Jim Campbell (RMS Project Manager) on (02) 8849 2377.