

1 MARCH 2012

Foxground and Berry bypass – southern Berry bypass review

The second community Q&A session for the southern Berry bypass review was held on 1 March 2012 at the Berry Agricultural Pavilion (Showground).

Summary – Purpose of the meeting

RMS convened a second question and answer session on the review, to keep the community as investigation work progresses. Community members asked questions and raises issues for further consideration in association with a southern Berry bypass.

The session was opened and facilitated by Lucy Cole-Edelstein of Straight Talk.

Adam Berry, RMS Project Development Manager, described progress of the southern Berry bypass review since the Q&A session on 16 February 2012:

- geotechnical surveys, an important component in developing the cost comparison, had been delayed due to the inclement weather. These investigations help determine what structures will be required to support the road.
- the delay in conducting this fieldwork will result in the cost comparison of the northern and southern routes not being available to the community until end of April or the beginning May. This completion date may change if there are further fieldwork delays due to the weather.
- the route has been refined. Adam emphasised that this route is for cost comparisons only. The interchange location at the southern end of the bypass has been realigned approximately 600 metres north towards Berry. The map of this new route will be posted on the project website on Friday 2 March 2012.
- the southern bypass design is still in early stages and therefore specific details such as the height of embankments, bridges, road height and formation would not be available for approximately three weeks.
- a cross section of the proposed highway and an example of a railway crossing were also presented. The railway line tracks are approximately five metres above sea level. The road at its lowest point would be approximately 2.5 metres above the railway line.

Approximately 120 local residents attended the meeting. Community members, Russell Baldwin from the Fair Process Alliance and Rick Gainford from the Berry Alliance made statements.

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The following is a summary of the issues raised at the meeting and of RMS's response.

Question	Response
How much further north has the alignment been moved at the southern end?	<p>The alignment has shifted approximately 600 metres north towards the township of Berry. The change has resulted from the following design modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The second railway crossing to the south of town has been modified to cross the lines at a right angle to reduce the length and therefore cost of the bridge structure.• A movement to the north helps to mitigate some of the flooding impacts.• The new interchange location has a reduced impact on the cluster of properties located east of the highway between Mullers Lane and the Croziers Road junction.
How far is the new alignment from Schofields Lane?	<p>The adjusted alignment would connect to the existing Princes Highway alignment approximately 600 metres south of Schofields Lane.</p>
What is the estimated average footprint width and height of the southern route?	<p>RMS has not yet completed the design of the southern route and therefore at this time can only provide indicative figures.</p> <p>The height of the road would be at least 7.5 metres above sea level to counter the effects of the 1 in 100 flood. As an example, the height required over the flood plain is 2.5 metres above the existing railway line.</p> <p>The approximate footprint at the base of the embankment at the widest point would be up to 55-60 metres across. This is indicative only until the design is completed.</p> <p>RMS understands the uncertainty this process is causing residents and will publish measurements once the design is complete.</p>
How high will the road be above the railway line?	<p>Again, RMS is only able to provide an indicative figure at this stage. Typical cross sections for a standard rail crossing with measurements are available on the project website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au/fbb.</p>
Will the railway line clearance accommodate the proposed electrified rail and duplication?	<p>Yes.</p>

<p>Has noise mitigation, in terms of cost and visual impact, been included in the design of the southern route?</p>	<p>No noise investigations on the southern route have been conducted to date.</p> <p>RMS is currently working on the design of the southern route and will provide visuals to the community in time.</p> <p>RMS will conduct a high-level consideration of noise impacts, in order to understand the likely need for noise mitigation on the southern route.</p>
<p>What is the height comparison of the southern route to the announced north Berry bypass?</p>	<p>RMS has placed white poles along the north Berry bypass alignment to demonstrate both the height of the noise wall and the distance of the upgrade from North Street.</p> <p>The height of the noise wall fluctuates along the length of route varying from 5.2 metres at the end of North Street closest to the sportsfields, transitioning down to 2 metres near George Street.</p> <p>A direct height comparison between the northern and the southern routes is not simple, as they are at different heights above sea level.</p> <p>The southern route needs to be a least 2.5 metres above the existing railway line to counter the 1 in 100 year flood level.</p>
<p>Has RMS conducted a fog study for the southern route?</p>	<p>Fog has not been part of the current investigations into the southern route. In the original route selection study for the Gerringong to Bomaderry series of projects, the then RTA did undertake fog studies.</p> <p>Fog will not be considered as part of the cost comparison being currently prepared by RMS.</p> <p>Non-cost factors such as heritage, amenity and fog will be investigated if the relative cost comparison leads to a decision to continue investigating the southern route (Phase 3).</p>
<p>What safety measures will be applied to the design of the viaduct?</p>	<p>Road safety measures will not be considered as part of the cost comparison. Whatever alignment is ultimately selected and constructed modern road safety standards will be provided.</p> <p>Investigations would commence if the process progresses beyond the cost gateway (Phase 3).</p>

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Bruce Ramsey's submission does not include noise walls or the use of low noise asphalt material. Does RMS agree with this evaluation?	RMS is governed by legislation and guidelines for acceptable noise levels. Any design undertaken by RMS needs to include noise modelling and where required, noise mitigation measures.
How can the community be sure that RMS is providing accurate cost comparisons if it is not including items already costed for the northern option?	RMS will conduct a like-for-like cost comparison of the two routes.
The north Berry bypass option only extends as far as Schofields Lane while the southern option extends to Croziers Road. Will the extra stretch of highway be included as part of the northern option costing?	The cost comparison will be calculated from the same route start and finish points.
What is the height and length of the viaduct proposed for the southern option?	The viaduct design is being developed. Once complete RMS will provide the community with cross section drawings that detail height and lengths of structures.
How is RMS planning to manage flood water passage through embankments and culverts? Where will this water be directed to?	Embankments and culverts are being designed. Once complete the flood model will be run. The design will be optimised so as to minimise, as far as possible, the impact of the road on flood waters.
Can RMS provide visual images of what the southern route will look like?	RMS is in the process of designing the southern route. When complete RMS will provide a graphical representation of the route. When complete, these images will be available on the RMS project website, in the Berry project office and in the Berry Town Crier.
Has RMS reviewed the socio-economic impacts and multiplier effects on other businesses and the dairy co-op, of running a highway through two dairy farms?	RMS will consider as part of the cost review direct property acquisition costs and, for working properties, these direct costs include compensation to the business. Secondary, or flow on socio-economic impacts will not be considered as part of the cost comparison.
How much money is currently being spent to do this cost comparison of the northern and southern routes?	Costings will be made public when the review is completed, however it is likely to be hundreds of thousands of dollars.

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Will any delays resulting from this review impact on government funding?	<p>The NSW Government has made a commitment to invest \$500 million during its first term to the Gerringong to Bomaderry Princes Highway upgrade project. \$310 million for Phase 1, the Gerringong upgrade design and construct contract, awarded in December 2011.</p> <p>\$190 million remains to complete the planning and commence construction for Phase 2, the Foxground and Berry bypass and to complete the planning for Phase 3, the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade.</p>
A measurement of 2.5 metres above the railway line appears high compared with IPCC sea level rise predictions of 20cm to 88cm by the end of this century.	<p>The flood modelling conducted as part of the review of a southern route shows a 1 in 100 year flood level of approximately six metres above sea level, which is approximately 1 metre above the railway line on the flood plain.</p>
Has a tunnel been considered along the north Berry bypass?	<p>No tunnel has been seriously considered for the Berry bypass due to the prohibitively high cost that could not be justified to the government.</p> <p>RMS did consider a tunnel through Toolijooa Ridge as part of the route option and there was a cost differential of approximately \$80- \$90 million between a cutting and an 800 metre tunnel. At that time, RMS and the NSW government considered the additional cost could not be justified.</p>
Many European cities have tunnels to bypass historic towns, why can't Berry?	<p>The taxpaying population in Europe is much larger than that of NSW where infrastructure dollars are stretched given the relative size of the state and therefore the road network, in comparison to the population. As stated above, the cost of building and maintaining a tunnel are very high and tunnel projects in NSW are rare.</p> <p>Other issues relating to tunnels include the restriction of vehicles carrying dangerous goods and the location of air stacks.</p>
Trucks carrying ethanol would not be allowed to travel through a tunnel.	<p>Dangerous goods carrying vehicles are restricted from using road tunnels in NSW. This would apply to vehicles carrying ethanol.</p>
Is there anything which can be done in the interim to improve pedestrian safety in Berry?	<p>This comment will be passed onto the relevant department in RMS.</p>

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Why is RMS considering building a highway through an area of acid sulphate soils?	The geotechnical investigations will provide more information on the extent of acid sulphate soils. RMS understands acid sulphate soils to be present, and while they may be a factor in the considerations, they are not likely to be a major cost differentiator between the two routes. Since RMS's initial review of a southern bypass in 2007, techniques for handling acid sulphate soils and constructing in them have progressed.
Will the gradient at the north end of the viaduct be suitable for heavy vehicles?	Yes.
What can be done administratively and politically to stop a situation like this happening again?	<p>Fiona Court from RMS addressed this question. She acknowledged this is not a good time for people affected. RMS are taking note on other projects across the state and keeping routes in for consideration for as long as possible until we have sufficient evidence to knock them out.</p> <p>RMS has established a technical information group, consisting of a range of people from a range of organisations that will meet weekly to question the design critically and to have a strong level of assurance.</p> <p>The notes from this group will be posted on the project website. The brief for the technical review group has been posted on the website as will weekly reports.</p> <p>RMS will publish the cost estimates for the two routes in detail and will not attempt to summarise figures (it was noted that this is quite new for RMS).</p> <p>RMS outlined the process leading to a decision on the route:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- RMS will examine the cost comparisons and provide the Minister for Roads with this information and, possibly, a recommendation.- The Minister's decision will be promptly announced to the community. <p>Ms Court acknowledged this southern bypass review has created a very difficult situation for many community members and apologised for the uncertainty this may cause.</p> <p>She stated that RMS is committed to moving ahead as quickly as possible on the cost comparison. She thanked the community and asked them to remain engaged in the process.</p>

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Rick Gainford advised that BoB would hold information session for the community on Thursday 8 March 2012 at the Berry courthouse from 2pm to 6pm. Members of RMS project team and Bruce Ramsay have been invited and will be available to answer questions one-on-one.

Noted.

The next Q&A session is scheduled for 19 March at the Berry School of Arts at 6.30pm. At this meeting RMS will have technical experts in the areas of:

- Flooding and drainage.
- Geotechnical and ground investigations.
- Bridges and structures.
- Construction consideration and methodology.