

FEBRUARY 2012

## Foxground and Berry bypass – southern Berry bypass review

The first community Q&A session for the southern Berry bypass review was held on 16 February 2012 at the Berry School of Arts, Berry

### Summary – Purpose of the meeting

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) convened a question and answer session for local residents in the Foxground and Berry bypass project area. The session was to keep the community updated on the southern Berry bypass review as investigation work progresses. The forum also provided the community with an opportunity to ask questions and raise issues for further consideration in association with the south Berry bypass review.

The session was opened and facilitated by Lucy Cole-Edelstein of Straight Talk. The first speaker was local resident Mr. Stuart Coughlan who set out a sequence of events relating to the request by the NSW Government for RMS to complete a comparison costing exercise in relation to a suggested southern Berry bypass route.

Adam Berry, acting RMS Project Development Manager for the Foxground and Berry bypass, presented details of the proposed southern bypass, an explanation of work currently underway to determine the costings and an overview of the activities RMS will undertake over the next few weeks. The meeting was then open to questions from the community.

Approximately 170 local residents attended the meeting. The Member for Kiama, Mr Gareth Ward, was unable to attend due to Parliamentary obligations. The Shoalhaven Deputy Mayor and local councillor, Mr. Andrew Guile responded to some questions relating to Council's position regarding the southern route suggestion.

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

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>What does RMS mean by review of costs of a southern bypass option? What cost comparisons will be made?</b>	A cost comparison will be prepared on the proposed southern and northern Berry bypass routes. The comparison will consider a range of costs which contribute to overall cost, including construction costs and land acquisition costs. The cost comparison is scrutinising quantity estimates and costing assumptions to ensure a "like for like" comparison.

# Meeting Notes



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<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
<b>Why is RMS reviewing the feasibility of a southern option now? Was it not considered before? Is it just to save money?</b>	<p>RMS received a submission in December 2011 from Bruce Ramsay challenging some of the estimates and assumptions used to discontinue investigations in 2007.</p> <p>A southern option was considered at a high level during the development of route options in 2006 and 2007. A southern option was included in the long list of strategic options but was not progressed through to a short list in 2007 because of estimated high costs.</p> <p>In early 2012 the NSW Government asked RMS to investigate in more detail the cost and viability of the southern suggestion.</p>
<b>Has consideration been given to the fact that Bruce Ramsay is not a government employee and may have an alternative agenda?</b>	<p>RMS considers all feasible alternatives as part of the project development and Environmental Assessment processes. The process of development and refining the project has been iterative, with continual adjustments and improvements made.</p>
<b>Do any costings of the northern route include costs of land purchased to date and will these costings be included in the comparison of the southern route.</b>	<p>Yes.</p>
<b>If the Minister does not believe the engineering work for the Berry bypass is up to scratch how does this reflect on the whole route? Will RMS review the section through Foxground and around Toolijooa Ridge?</b>	<p>The terms of the current costing review are confined to the suggested southern route, as shown on the map available on the project website.</p> <p>There is no intention to re-examine or reconsider any other parts of the preferred alignment between Toolijooa Road and south of Berry.</p>

Question	Response
<b>Were heritage issues considered in the southern route proposal?</b>	RMS acknowledges the significance of a range of non-cost factors such as heritage, amenity and noise. They have not yet been considered as part of the costing review, which is being undertaken. RMS and the NSW Government need to better understand relative costs before a decision is made on whether or not it is prudent to investigate non cost factors in more detail. If the relative cost comparison leads to a decision to continue investigating the southern suggestion then RMS would need to consider a range of critical non-cost factors such as amenity, heritage, noise impacts and ecological impacts.
<b>When will the submission and costings developed by Bruce Ramsey be available on the website?</b>	A four page synopsis of the submission has been available on the project website 9 February 2012. In response to community requests the submission in full is now available on the project website.
<b>Does more work need to be done on the northern bypass? Could environmental and heritage impacts that you haven't previously taken into account effect the location of the northern bypass?</b>	There is more work to be done completing the environmental assessment for the preferred northern alignment and continuing work with the community. There have been a range of technical investigations of the northern bypass route conducted over recent years, which mean RMS has a good understanding of the environmental and other issues associated with the northern alignment. On the basis of the work done it is unlikely the northern alignment would be affected by unknown issues.
<b>Where is the evidence that the proposed southern bypass results in a \$50 million cost saving?</b>	A cost comparison is currently being prepared by RMS and will be made available to the community when completed. RMS aim is to achieve this by early April 2012 however recent wet weather is slowing important geotechnical (ground drilling and exploration) work along the suggested southern route.
<b>When will information on the size of the viaduct, number of bridges and the elevation of a southern alignment be published?</b>	The viaduct design is still being developed.

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<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
<b>Why was a southern route option discounted previously?</b>	A southern option was considered at a high level during the development of route options in 2006 and 2007. A southern option was included in the long list of strategic options but was not progressed through to a short list in 2007 because of estimated high costs.
<b>If heritage impacts are not being considered as part of the costing exercise, when will heritage experts be brought into the process?</b>	At the completion of the costing review RMS and the NSW Government will then need to consider whether or not RMS should continue investigating the southern option and broaden the considerations to non cost factors such as heritage. If the investigations were broadened then heritage experts and the local community would be involved at this stage.
<b>Is fog being considered as a potential impact on the southern route?</b>	Driver safety is a key objective of the project and any future alignment will be designed to meet nationally accepted road safety standards. The matter of potential fog impacts will be considered like the matter of heritage mentioned above. If the cost review leads to the need to broaden the investigations into the southern suggestion, then potential fog impacts would be considered.
<b>Is RMS liaising with Shoalhaven City Council?</b>	RMS has been liaising regularly with Shoalhaven City Council since commencement of the project and will continue to do so as the project progresses.
<b>Will there be an impact on the project completion date if a southern route is progressed?</b>	<p>The planning for the Foxground and Berry bypass has been slower than expected over the last 9 months. However, RMS currently believes it is still able to meet the NSW Government's \$500 million commitment to the Princes Highway during this term of government in the following way:</p> <p>The first step in delivering the commitment is to complete construction of the Gerringong upgrade. A contract was awarded in December 2011, detailed design and utility relocations are currently underway, and major construction work is expected to commence in August 2012 and end in late 2014/early 2015.</p> <p>Once the Gerringong upgrade is completed, work could then commence on the Foxground and Berry bypass in 2015. Planning for both the Foxground and Berry bypass and the Berry to Bomaderry upgrade will continue in the meantime.</p>

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<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
<b>What is RMS doing to prevent this review tearing the community in two?</b>	RMS acknowledges the impact of the review and its potential to cause disharmony within the community. RMS is working hard to complete the review as soon as possible to try and remove some of the uncertainty that people may be feeling. RMS also recognises the review has personal implications for many people in the community.
<b>How much longer will the overall process go on? When will the road get built.</b>	<p>The NSW Government has committed \$500 million in this term of government to the Princes Highway upgrades between Mount Pleasant and Bomaderry.</p> <p>The Gerringong upgrade will be constructed first, with major work due to start in August 2012 and be completed in late 2014/early 2015. Subject to the continued development, planning and approval process, work could start on the Foxground and Berry bypass in 2015.</p>
<b>Why can't the southern route go along the 'Sandtrack'?</b>	For a range of technical, cost, social and environmental issues the 'Sandtrack' route is not feasible.
<b>Will the northern bypass alignment costings include the extra work being considered for urban design, low road noise surface, pedestrian /cycle connectivity?</b>	<p>Yes, there will be a like for like cost comparison of the two made.</p> <p>In relation to pedestrian/cycle connectivity there is currently no pedestrian overbridge proposed for either route. As part of the Northern alignment working group activities planned over the coming weeks, RMS and the community will examine pedestrian/cycle connectivity.</p>
<b>Is RMS considering future planning of Berry as part of the review?</b>	Yes.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>
<p><b>Has the length of the bridge over Woodhill Mountain Road on the Northern Route been shortened, with an associated negative impact on flooding</b></p>	<p>RMS was unable to answer this question on the night and committed to providing an answer through the publication of these meeting notes. The answer follows:</p> <p>Through the community review group process in the second half of 2011 there were a number of changes made to the proposed bridge over Woodhill Mountain Road on the preferred northern alignment.</p> <p>The bridge was lowered by up to 6.4 metres and adjusted approximately 95 metres further north of Berry. The bridge was also shortened slightly at its western end where it comes to ground after crossing the confluence of Connolly's, Broughton Mill and Bundewallah Creeks. The changes to the bridge design were achieved through and supported by the community review group in December 2011.</p> <p>A detailed assessment of the surface and groundwater impacts of the project indicates there will be no increases in flood depth for any residences and only small increases in the depth of the 100 year flood event in the floodplain near the bridge at Berry.</p> <p>This will be detailed in the environmental assessment for the project.</p>