



# Gerringong to Bomaderry Princes Highway upgrade

---

## Consultation report

2006

## Contents

---

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Context	2
3.	Method and responses	2
3.1	Awareness	3
3.2	Feedback provided	5
3.2.1	Technical issues	5
3.2.2	Consultation process	6
3.3	Conclusion	6
3.3.1	Principles and outcomes	7
3.3.2	Actions agreed	7

## Attachments

Attachment A	Community Update March 2006
Attachment B	Community workshop and information display advertisements
Attachment C	Sample feedback form
Attachment D	Workshop presentation
Attachment E	May 2006 community workshop meeting notes
Attachment F	Media clippings
Attachment G	Media releases

## 1. Introduction

The Princes Highway is the main link from Sydney and the Illawarra region to the Shoalhaven, far south coast of New South Wales and north eastern Victoria.

The Princes Highway is:

- A major tourist route with peak traffic flows in holiday periods.
- A link for local industry and agriculture.
- A link to services in Nowra for communities in the surrounding smaller towns.
- A commuter route to Nowra, the Illawarra and metropolitan Sydney.
- A freight and bus route, particularly for the south and far south coast of New South Wales and north eastern Victoria where there are no rail services.

## 2. Context

Several studies have been undertaken since the early 1990's to identify a preferred route to upgrade the Princes Highway between Kiama and Nowra and provide a bypass around the town of Berry.

These studies include:

- The 1991 Gerringong to Berry route study
- 1998 North Street Berry Bypass Corridor
- 2004/05 Quantm study from Kiama to Nowra

Sections of the highway between Kiama and Nowra have a poor accident record and limited safe overtaking opportunities.

There have been significant changes in traffic, land use and population since the early 1990's.

In March 2006 the NSW Government committed to investigating an area where it is likely a preferred route will be located to upgrade the Princes Highway to meet current road standards between Mount Pleasant at Gerringong and Moss Vale/Cambewarra Road at Bomaderry.

## 3. Method and responses

The objectives and approach to community involvement for this process is to:

- Raise community awareness/provide information.
- Engage in two way exchange of information.
- Document feedback and institute change management processes.
- Provide regular feedback, not milestone based.

The initial phase of the consultation process commenced in May 2006 with three workshops and three information stands at each of Bomaderry, Berry and Gerringong.

Approximately 350 stakeholders attended the combined three workshops with many more attending the information stands.

The majority of attendees at the workshops were property and business owners with a mix of private and government agency representatives.

The purpose of these forums was to engage and establish links with the affected communities to obtain an understanding of how they wanted to receive information, how they wanted to input into the process and what was important to them. This information will enable the appropriate design of future community involvement forums.

The following mix of questions by both the RTA and the community were discussed at all three workshops:

- How do you want to be informed and how do you want to participate?
- What information does the community need to participate effectively in this study?
- What is the process to select the route options and then the preferred option?
- How do we compare options?
- What happens if there are differing views in the community?
- How do we value and compare different types of land? e.g. urban, rural, semi-rural, agricultural or special uses such as hospitals?
- What are the local community values that are important for this study?
- What does this community see as the objectives for an upgrade of the highway?

It was clear from all three workshops and information stands that the community has a genuine interest in this project and a need to be involved.

It was also clear that the majority of the participants expressed their appreciation and acknowledged the importance of such forums to be able to articulate their own views and values and listen to others who may differ.

Some of the community values and views expressed during the workshops and through the feedback forms include:

- Maintaining local community connection and identity.
- Minimising the impact of property acquisition.
- The importance of ensuring the viability of agricultural operations by minimising land severance and/or acquisition.
- Land use – lifestyle choice - property owners have invested money and time into hobby farms in this area. Concern was expressed about a potential loss of this lifestyle choice. Opportunities in this location for such lifestyle choices are rare.

### 3.1 Awareness

The following activities were implemented to create awareness within the community for the initial stage of this process.

#### a) Media Release

The Parliamentary Secretary for Roads and Member for Kiama, Mr Matt Brown, issued a media release at an event to raise awareness of the upcoming activities (a copy of the release can be found in Attachment G).

**b) Stakeholder briefings and invitations to participate**

Project team members briefed officers and elected representatives from Shoalhaven City Council and Kiama Municipal Council on the process on 10 and 24 April 2006 respectively.

At the same time a wide range of community organisations were provided with project information and invited to participate in the process.

**c) Newspaper advertisements**

Advertisements were placed in the following newspapers during April and May 2006.

Kiama Independent	12, 19, 26 April 06
Illawarra Mercury	7, 14, 21, 28 April 06
South Coast Register	12, 19, 26 April 06
The Koori Mail	12, 26 April 06
The National Indigenous Times	6, 20 April 06
Deadly Vibe	17 May 06
In vibe	17 May 06
The Land	6, 13, 20 April 06

**d) Newsletter**

In March 2006 a community update was distributed to all stakeholders within the area of investigation by a mailbox drop through Australia Post.

**e) Workshops**

Three workshops and three information sessions were programmed in May 2006 to provide an opportunity for the local community and other key stakeholders to obtain information on the investigation and to provide feedback on how they wished to receive information and input into the process of selecting a preferred route.

The community workshops were held at the following locations:

- Wednesday, 3 May 2006. 6pm to 8.30pm at the School of Arts Hall, Alexandra Street, Berry.  
Berry workshop attendance - 160
- Thursday, 4 May 2006. 6pm to 8.30pm at Gerringong Town Hall, Gerringong.  
Gerringong workshop attendance - 120
- Tuesday, 9 May 2006. 6pm to 8.30pm Bomaderry RSL, Bunberra Street, Bomaderry  
Bomaderry workshop attendance - 70

**f) Information stands**

Information stands involving the project manager and project team members were held at the following locations:

- Saturday 6 May 2006. 10am to 1pm at Queen Street, Berry.
- Saturday 13 May 2006. 10am to 1pm at Fern Street, Gerringong.
- Saturday 20 May 2006. 10am to 1pm outside 63 Meroo Street, Bomaderry.

### g) “Have your say” feedback forms

Feedback forms were distributed at each workshop and available at each information stand. Feedback received was both verbal and written. Project team members facilitated feedback at each event and 147 feedback forms have been received.

### h) Website

Information on the process and contact details were posted on [rta.nsw.gov.au](http://rta.nsw.gov.au)

### i) Community contact line

A free call information line (1800 633 332) was established to provide information and receive phone comments from the community. The project manager’s contact details were also communicated in the workshops.

### j) Project email address

A project email address [Gerringong\\_toBomaderry@rta.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Gerringong_toBomaderry@rta.nsw.gov.au) was established to facilitate the receipt of written enquiries and to advise stakeholders of updates to the website.

## 3.2 Community feedback

The issues raised by the community have been grouped by the how they relate to technical aspects of the project or how they relate to the communication process.

### 3.2.1 Technical issues

#### Key issues

- **Access** - to towns, rural properties, local road network, pedestrian facilities, public transport, emergency services, garbage collection and delivery of services. When in the process will access issues be resolved?
- **Road Safety** - strategies for upgrading or fixing existing highway black spots. Route alignment and camber, future school speed zones on an upgraded highway, rest areas, cycleway facilities and construction impacts.
- **Increased heavy vehicle movement factors** – Traffic on the Highway likely to be generated as a result of the upgrade of Main Road 92, the lack of local infrastructure alternatives to road freight transport and Port Kembla truck access via Macquarie Pass.
- **Environment** - European and Indigenous heritage, flooding, noise, social impacts, including community severance, water, air quality and visual amenity.
- **Property impacts and land acquisition** - uncertainty for real estate values, the impact of this study on property transactions, width of future corridor. More information was requested on the land acquisition process.
- **Impact on rural industries** – stock movement safety, reduced agricultural production capacity, land use changes.

- **Design constraints** - Eastern gas pipeline, South Coast Railway, heritage, environmentally significant areas, including wetlands, sensitive habitat etc.
- **Previous investigations** - lack of information available concerning the 2005 Quantm studies, the need to consider the viability of “The Sandtrack” as an upgrade route, existing highway accident statistics, Council studies and reservations, the Shoalhaven River crossing study and Berry bypass study.
- **Project uncertainty** - role of the Planning Minister in the approval process, the pace of process (felt to be too slow), fast tracking benefits and construction funding.
- **Project funding** - current project planning and construction allocations, final project costs, Federal Government funding, future maintenance responsibility for an upgraded route and opportunities for private funding.
- **Study parameters** - study termination at Bomaderry, status of the Shoalhaven River Crossing Study and definition of what a *bypass* is.
- **Location specific concerns** - Traffic impacts on Nowra, Cambewarra Road links, Omega Crossing and the Kiama bends.

### 3.2.2 Consultation process

The RTA has commenced a community involvement process that had equity and transparency. The following approach must be incorporated into the ongoing community involvement process:

- Raise awareness/provide information to the community.
- Engage in two way dialogue with community.
- Document feedback and management of project change in relation to community issues.
- Provide regular feedback to the community on how their concerns were addressed.

Community feedback through the initial stage has raised the following as issues to be included in the ongoing community involvement process:

- Involve all residents, business and stakeholders early and equitably.
- Demonstrate the veracity of the process.
- Be innovative in consultation process.
- Employ issues mapping to assist individuals to understand the differences in ideas and priorities across the study area.
- Design online information to be easy to find.
- Document community input into the process.
- Liaise with community representatives.
- Provide meaningful opportunities to receive information and provide comment.
- Encourage communication between discrete communities.
- Address concerns about the potential for real disharmony between communities.

- Contact land owners when route options and then the preferred route is displayed.
- Explain the reasons for engaging consultants.

### 3.3 Conclusion

The process has also resulted in the RTA adopting a set of principles to guide engagement with the community and a range of tools for community involvement.

#### 3.3.1 Principles and outcomes

- Acknowledge all community involvement commitments made to the community.
- Be clear about whether we are engaging in information, involvement, consultation, collaboration or empowerment with the community.
- Establish and maintain a process that encourages strong equitable participation.
- Undertake a process that is fair and transparent.
- Encourage and support the exchange of different views and opinions within the study area community.
- Identify and anticipate emerging issues to avoid unnecessary conflict and community division.
- Establish regular communication with the community, not milestone based communication (no long silences).
- Establish a process that engages the whole community in an equitable process but recognise and implement issue specific tools that would work best in some cases.
- Develop easy to read, well set out and visual communication materials (e.g. pictures, graphics, models and videos) to enable the community to understand the project and provide informed feedback.
- Provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision making process.

#### 3.3.2 Actions agreed during consultation

The RTA canvassed a range of tools to be used during the process to select the preferred route. The following is the outcome of these discussions.

##### Tools supported

- Reply paid postal surveys.
- 1800 information line.
- Regular whole of community workshops.
- Issue specific reference groups (e.g. flooding in a particular area) with reporting back to whole community.
- Advertisements in local papers (particularly the Berry Town Crier).
- Website information with low resolution content.
- Project emails when the RTA website has been updated.

- Issues mapping in public places.
- Field inspections.
- Realistic artists' impressions and 3D models.
- Summary newsletters and fact sheets.

#### Tools rejected

- Telephone surveys.
- Consultative committees with restricted membership.
- Shopping centre surveys.
- A single shopfront with ongoing information.

The agreed actions and RTA commitments made during the initial community involvement stage are listed below:

Make the project presentation and contact details available on <a href="http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au">www.rta.nsw.gov.au</a> .	Completed
Present the Shoalhaven study to Shoalhaven City Council.	Completed
Negotiate with councils to attach study information to s149 certificates.	Completed
Put more detailed information concerning the planning process on the project website.	Completed
Release information on the North Street road corridor purchased by the RTA.	Outstanding
Provide transparent reasons for not studying the Sandtrack.	Detailed in September 2006 community update
Regular advertising in the Town Crier.	Outstanding
Make an origin destination survey of the mix of traffic using the Sandtrack and the Princes Highway available.	Outstanding
Release more detailed information about the process.	Ongoing
Put workshop meeting notes on <a href="http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au">www.rta.nsw.gov.au</a>	Completed
Include the route of the Eastern Gas Pipeline in future maps.	Completed
Circulate future unaddressed mail outs to all residents.	Ongoing
Consultants to consider MR92 traffic movements.	Requirement of the consultant's brief
Raise with Kiama Council the potential issue for acquired property owners of not being able to access small blocks in areas away from the future upgraded highway.	Requirement of the consultant's brief
Email registered parties whenever there is an update to the website.	Ongoing

Consider the preferences for community involvement tools and use these techniques to engage local groups and address wider issues throughout the process.	Ongoing
Ensure maps are correct. Show features such as timelines clearly.	Ongoing
Continue to be transparent throughout the study.	Ongoing
Publicly release information concerning fatalities on the Sandtrack.	Requirement of the consultant's brief
Provide a toll free 1800 telephone number for information on the project.	Completed
Provide indicative costs when route options are displayed.	Requirement of the consultant's brief
Liaise with other government agencies.	Ongoing
Clearly document reasons for decisions.	Ongoing
Consider property access to the highway during design studies.	Requirement of the consultant's brief
Consider garbage collection capacity in future highway design.	Requirement of the consultant's brief

### 3.3.2 Process from here

The RTA will engage a consultant to undertake detailed studies within the area of interest.

#### Attachments

Attachment A	Community update March 2006
Attachment B	Community workshop and information display advertisements
Attachment C	Sample feedback form
Attachment D	Workshop presentation
Attachment E	May 2006 community workshop meeting notes
Attachment F	Media clippings
Attachment G	Media releases

