



Constructing Australia's Future

**Pacific Highway Upgrade
Brunswick Heads to Yelgun
Community Liaison Group Meeting No. 15
5 July 2006**

Attendees:

Pauline Millington
Robert Rosen
Colin Tarbox
Frank Mills
Patricia Warren
Tony Stupka
Jack Taylor
Trevor Watts
Brett Lee
Bill Gardyne (EMR – DoP Representative)

Will MacDonald (Abi)
Rebecca Walker-Edwards (Abi)
Mark Sabolch (Abi)
Rob Blyth (Abi)
Wendy Dooley (Abi)
Kelly McNellee (Abi)

Peter Borrelli (RTA)
Dave Purdy (RTA)

Apologies: Ron Holmes (RTA), Greg Milham, Malcolm Murray, Kathy Norley-Farmer, Sue Stirton, Gillian Secombe and Don Armstrong.

1.0 Welcome

Wendy Dooley welcomed members to the 15th CLG meeting. The new Abigroup Community Relations Officer Kelly McNellee was also welcomed and introduced to the members of the CLG.

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were accepted as noted above.

1.2 Comments on Notes of Previous Meeting

See section 2.0 below.

1.3 Meeting Agenda

Wendy advised that the agenda for the meeting would cover: -

- Any outstanding actions from the previous meeting.
- The regular construction presentation / update.
- A presentation by Environmental Officer Rebecca Walker-Edwards.
- Presentation by Rob Blyth, Paving Project Manager.
- General Business.

2.0 Outstanding Actions from Previous Meeting

The suggestion was made by several members that as it was the final State Of Origin -match tonight, that the meeting be kept relatively concise. It was agreed to do so, with Jack Taylor suggesting outstanding items from the last meeting be addressed at the end of the meeting after the presentations if necessary.

3.0 Construction Update

3.1 Key Areas of Progress

Abigroup Construction Manager Will MacDonald indicated that the project had maintained progress levels consistent with the previous reports.

Preceding the presentation Will advised the group of the monthly statistics: -

- The workforce for the period ending 30 June had averaged 380 people on site.
- The project had accumulated another 630,000 man hours for the same period.
- 20,000m³ of concrete had been poured last month.

Brunswick River Bridges

Will advised that the Brunswick River Service Road Bridge was close to joining. The project was on track and night work would be continuing. It was anticipated that a solid month of work at the same level would progress the project to complete the physical link towards the end of this month / early next month. It was envisaged that work would commence on the south bound pier table at the end of July and that the Northbound bridge deck form traveller work would commence in early August.

Coolamon Scenic Drive Bridge girders have been erected.

The **Marshalls Creek** and **Marshalls Creek Overflow Service Road Bridges** are both entering their final stages. Will advised both bridges had completed concreting works and were approaching the finishing stages. Traffic barrier railings and other finishings would next be installed on the bridges.

Stock Route Road Bridge girders were complete and work on the bridge decks had commenced.

Concrete Paving works would likely begin early August 2006 using the new temporary concrete batch plant which was being established in the Yelgun Rest Area.

Cut 6 (which is essentially the top of the Ocean Shores hill) was ready for revegetation work. The road had been sealed and all drainage work completed. The road was now ready for concrete paving which was programmed to commence in early August.

Work had commenced on the **Billinudgel Pedestrian Bridge**, scaffolding and formwork was in place and the bridge columns are being constructed. Will highlighted that the bridge span over the Service Road was a priority as was construction of the Service Road below and that road surface drainage in the area had been completed and road base preparation work was now progressing.

The **Yelgun Interchange Northbound On-load Bridge** is now under construction with formwork false work underway.

Q Is the animal exercise area for the Rest Area at Yelgun still going ahead?

A Yes, this had been placed in the middle of the plan.

3.2 Upcoming Works

Will MacDonald canvassed the meeting regarding consent for the closure of Tweed Street (Brunswick Heads Road) to allow the Super T girders to be installed for the construction of the Brunswick Heads Road bridge decks.

Q How long was it envisaged that this would take?

A The work could take approximately three (3) days and this would not necessarily be three (3) consecutive days. This was scheduled to commence on 15 August 2006, for six hours starting at 9am to allow for school bus needs.

There would also be a switch of traffic onto the northern service road at Billinudgel to allow the demolition of the existing bridges and construction of the Pacific Highway upgrade carriageways. Will advised that he was targeting the traffic switch to occur late at night to avoid high traffic volumes.

Residents had already been advised of the closure of the northern entrance to Balemo Drive to allow reconstruction of Balemo Drive and its tie in to the local service road.

Q Is there going to be extra signage at the southern end of Tweed Street at the Brunswick Heads South Interchange so motorists exit here rather than getting stranded at the closed intersection similar to what happens when the intersection is closed during peak holiday periods?

A Yes, this will be taken into consideration in the Traffic Control Plan for the works.

Q What was the planned running surface for the Pacific Highway Upgrade sections?

A A Heavy Duty pavement consisting of 30mm of Stone Mastic Asphalt will be used as the running surface over a Continuously Reinforced Concrete Pavement (CRCP).

Q Would this surface be extended to the back road into Riverside Crescent?

A No. Such a Heavy Duty Pavement consisting of Stone Mastic Asphalt surface over CRCP is primarily used in areas of high traffic volumes and heavy traffic and as Riverside Crescent is a local road it would not experience such traffic conditions and hence not require such heavy duty pavement. It has been assessed that a more flexible local road pavement would be more suitable.

Bill Gardyne also advised that the Stone Mastic Asphalt running surfaces were also primarily used to control tyre noise which is more prevalent at highway operating speeds of 80Km/hr and above.

Q Was it possible to extend the Stone Mastic Asphalt surface north of Yelgun?

A No, because the existing concrete pavement is a Plain Concrete Pavement which is not suitable to be overlaid by asphalt as it moves at each of the sawn transverse joints.

A more comprehensive explanation of the pavement would be given in Rob Blyth's presentation later in the evening.

Q Is the removal of the existing concrete pavement from the northern end of the Brunswick Heads bypass because of the new highway?

A Yes, this was being done because of the design of the highway which was not suited to the existing concrete shape.

3.3 Out of Hours Work

Will MacDonald proceeded to clarify what Abigroup is required to do with respect to Out of Hours Work in accordance with its licence with DEC. The CLG needs to understand what was considered as Out of Hours work and raise any issues. Will recapped from previous meetings: -

- Emergency works e.g. potholes, from time to time.
- Safety risk is also classed as emergency work.
- The delivery of materials which is required outside these hours as requested by Police or other authorities for safety reasons.
- Work that does not cause construction noise audible to nearby receivers.
- Saturday hours had previously been discussed with the CLG and extended to 7am - 3pm. It was proposed that this would continue in upcoming months and to date no issues or complaints had been received regarding this work.
- As previously discussed, Brunswick River night work recommenced in June 2006. The night works had received good feedback from residents. Wendy Dooley added that no complaints have been received.

Will restated that all efforts have been made to lower the impact on local residents. Currently work is progressing well.

Will then presented the CLG with a number of upcoming Out of Hours work proposals: -

- Country Energy will be adjusting overhead powerlines. At Country Energy's request this work would be performed on Sundays as they had defined this time as the best to suit minimum power supply load requirements and to minimise power disruptions as well accommodating their staffing. Some work had already taken place and more had been scheduled for upcoming weeks but this would be within Country Energy's timeframes.
- There would be upcoming utility / services adjustments next to or under the existing Pacific Highway. We do these works at night to minimise impacts to Highway and local road users. Normal residential notifications go out to the community to advise them of the works where necessary. In particular water and sewer lines servicing Billinudgel need to be adjusted as soon as possible. This would commence tonight and tomorrow night and would continue throughout the night until the early hours of the following morning.
- Traffic switches would also be performed at night to minimise disruption to the high volumes of traffic on the Pacific Highway. Billinudgel and the Service Road to Brunswick Heads were targeted to be done in the next six months and would be best performed at night.
- Will explained that freshly laid concrete pavement needs to be saw cut at a particular age of the concrete. Unfortunately this normally means early to late evenings the day of the pour. One of the benefits of using Continuously Reinforced Concrete Paving (CRCP) is that there are less overall saw cuts. The other benefit of the approach proposed by Abigroup is the use of a 'Soft Cut' which would minimise noise. It is proposed that this would start on the main alignment some time in September/October 2006 and then would occur more frequently as work progresses.
- Will also presented a proposal for a bridge subcontractor to work on Sundays, to undertake steel fixing and other carpentry work on the Yelgun interchange Bridges. The contractor is from Canberra and wishes to complete the project as soon as possible to return home. It was planned that this would require approximately 8 - 10 workers and would commence on the coming Sunday 9 July 2006 and proceed until early December 2006. Because of the location of the site it is envisaged that this work would be close to inaudible to the nearest residences and not readily visible to these residents.

Q I am interested in the Yelgun Interchange work. Will a permit be required to enter the site to take photos?

A Under safety regulations any non-construction personnel would require an escort on site for their own safety. Wendy Dooley asked the member to contact her and she would organise the escort, or preferably she could organise a photo for the member.

Q Would the Yelgun Interchange work continue through until December and would this include during the week as well?

A Yes.

Will then revisited the agreement on night works and out of hours work, questioning if all concerned were happy with the current arrangements and new proposals. Wendy Dooley advised that the Community Relations team would continue to contact potentially affected residents and provide letter box drops.

Will MacDonald summarised the above points and again opened the discussion for general questions and comments.

Q The CLG are not an approving body.

A The wording of the licence can cause confusion.
It was a DEC requirement that this and other consultations are undertaken and CLG comments are considered.

Q I agree in principle but do not always have the background to 'approve' a particular decision.

A Discussions were held with examples given of how the regulations have previously been interpreted and applied. It is fundamental to the process to consult with groups such as the CLG to gain insight into local issues and areas of concern.

Q What if there is a complaint?

A If there's a complaint, we will notify the CLG and re-assess our work methods.

No further comments or objections were received to any of the foregoing proposals and agreement was sought for the work as tabled viz:

1. Emergency works.
2. Country Energy to work on Sundays for power cut-overs.
3. Service adjustments work, including the upcoming drainage works over the next two nights at Billinudgel.
4. Night works associated with traffic switches to the Service Road like the Yelgun Service Road, the Service Road at Billinudgel, and the Brunswick Heads Service Road linking the Brunswick River Bridge.
5. Continuing with the Saturday extended hours 7am to 3pm.
6. Continuing with the Brunswick River Bridge night works.
7. Saw cutting on the proposed Reinforced Concrete Pavements.
8. Sunday work on the Yelgun Interchange bridges.

The CLG agreed to Abigroup proceeding with the out of hours works as proposed.

4.0 Batch Plant Establishment and Paving Operations

Project Paving Manager Rob Blyth gave details on the construction of the high production temporary concrete batch plant, expected production quantities and how the plant will operate to provide the required concrete mixes for the paving machinery.

With photos detailing the processes involved in the concrete paving operations, Rob detailed how the concrete would be reinforced, spread textured and cured.

Q Would the pavement be laid full width?

A Whenever possible a full width run will be laid so we don't have to go back and tack on a shoulder in a second paving pass.

Rob Blyth detailed the saw cutting process which is used to stop the concrete from cracking randomly. Rob described how the concrete cured and gained strength and the factors affecting the curing process. Advances in technical applications have seen the introduction of cutting blades accompanied by different cutting techniques which allowed the concrete to be cut at an earlier age when it was softer. Rob stated that these processes would be used on the current project and that these were an advantage to the residents as it meant that the cutting process could start earlier than the traditional method and would also be completed in a shorter time period as only longitudinal cuts would be required for the CRCP pavement. Residents would be informed when cutting was planned as required.

Q Was the work contingent on the weather?

A The curing process is naturally quicker in the summer warmer months than in winter but the operators of the cutting equipment are trained to assess this.

Q On this basis, how long would a layer take?

A On a good day with no stops or interruptions to paving, 700m - 1km could be laid, and at this stage the concrete paving should be finished by February 2007.

Q Where are the materials for the concrete coming from?

A The aggregate is being sourced from Teven Quarry.

5.0 Environmental Performance and Accountability

Rebecca Walker-Edwards outlined how Abigroup's environmental performance is monitored, with emphasis on erosion and sediment control.

5.1 Accountability

Both RTA and Abigroup have environmental commitments which must be met in carrying out this project. These include: -

- Compliance with the Environment Protection Licence (EPL) which is issued by DEC. This licence is issued to allow Abigroup to carry out scheduled activities.
- Conditions of Approval which include the Planning Minister's Conditions, NPWS Concurrence Conditions and Byron Shire council Conditions (DA).
- Other conditions, permits and licences such as consents to destroy; heritage permits, groundwater bore licences; REFs, Environmental Impact Assessments, Scope of Works and Technical Criteria etc.

These have been collated and placed into the Abigroup Environmental Management Plan. This Management Plan is divided into many sub-plans including a Soil and Water Management Plan, and all of the sub-plans are audited. The entire EMP is currently undergoing its annual review.

5.2 Compliance

Reporting

1. Monthly Environmental Report is provided to DEC(EPA) and RTA;
2. A Monthly report is also prepared for the RTA;
3. Annual Report to DEC;
4. Six Monthly Report to Department of Planning and EPA;

Auditing

1. Audit against our licences and permits e.g. the EPL;
2. EMP Sub-plans;
3. Work Method Statements;
4. Erosion and sediment control plans etc.

Every three months an audit against the above is carried out to confirm that Abigroup are complying with all the requirements.

Q Who audits Abigroup?

A There are three audit types (Auditors): -

- Internal (Abigroup)
- External Body associated with the project e.g. RTA
- Independent Body e.g. DEC (EPA)

Planning and implementation are audited weekly.

Q Is it unusual to do first party audits?

A No. In conjunction with Abigroup's own self monitoring there are ISO quality system audits as well as joint Abigroup/RTA audits and these not only involve work on the site (product type audits) but how Abigroup are actually going to carry out the work (system type audits).

Peter Borrelli also pointed out that in some areas where Abigroup is self monitoring; the project team is also managing threatened species e.g. not harming the Hairy Joint Grass which is prevalent on the Jagwen property which has worked very successfully to date.

Inspections

Weekly Environmental Inspections are carried out by the Soil Conservationist, Hyder (the Project Independent Verifier), RTA and Abigroup's Environment team, Earthworks Manager and Superintendent. The entire project is examined and issues identified and placed into a weekly list which is then distributed to foremen and trained ERSED crews who cover four different areas.

At least monthly, inspections with government agencies are also typically conducted during the Environment Review Group (ERG) Meeting. The state government agencies involved are DEC (former NPWS and EPA), Department of Primary Industries (DPI) (former NSW Fisheries), Byron Marine Parks and EMR. Representatives of Byron Shire Council are also invited to attend the meetings / inspections.

Other regular daily inspections occur, especially during and after rainfall events.

- Q** What have been the results from the water quality monitoring undertaken in the Brunswick River?
- A** Everything is compliant. We have measured the water quality both upstream of the Caravan Park and downstream of the Boat Ramp and there have been no increases in turbidity.
- Q** Given recent media articles re this issue, what is Council's view in relation to this matter?
- A** Brett Lee advised that at previous Council meeting a Councillor had moved an emergency motion to direct Bryon Shire Council to write to various agencies to look at the licensing requirements for the project. The suggestion was that maybe the project requirements aren't stringent enough. This request sent last Thursday. Brett advised the meeting that the motion was not based on technical assessments but came as a result of matters raised by groups in the community and individual observations. This action was not based on any factual testing or monitoring results.

Rebecca Walker-Edwards stated that Abigroup are putting a great deal of effort into the control of sediment run off and with all this and all other environmental work that has been implemented to this point the project team has not had a single environmental group approach it and ask any questions.

Rebecca presented slides depicting various inspections such as a visit by Joanne Green from Wetlands Care Australia and Max Enklaar, DPI Fisheries Division, who checked a recently completed fish friendly culvert.

Monitoring and Other Measures

Constant monitoring takes place. Rebecca gave some examples such as water quality, dust and noise monitoring.

Rob Blyth added that the implementation of the plans and audit requirements involved is progressive as Abigroup adjusts and amends them all the time as the job changes each day as well. These changes are also covered through Work Method Statements, Progressive Erosion and Sediment Control Plans and soil testing etc.

- Q** Given the rain we've had, what have you done to mitigate erosion on batters?
- A** Rebecca informed the meeting that where scouring had occurred; they would be re-topsoiling and spraying batters. Advice had been sought from specialist contractors who carry out the hydro mulching and the response had been that it was not considered appropriate to do erosion control at this time, but would be better to wait until spring.

Mark Sabolch stated that the standard principles were to reapply top soil and establish revegetation as early as possible as vegetation was the best method to control erosion. If there is limited vegetation on the batter, you have the option to use other control measures, eg put sealant (a polymer) over the area or to use some other material to cover the batter which also adds in another level of erosion and sediment control.

- Q** With regard to the rainfall, has the slope of the batters been questioned?

A Slope stability is not in question. This area was always difficult to manage during the construction process but long term stability was not considered a problem. Light rain is OK as it's ideal growing weather but with heavy rain the project team are much more dependent on luck (i.e., that the rain doesn't hit at the incorrect time, or isn't too heavy).

The areas involved had to this point stood up very well. Stability has been pretty good considering the size of some rain events.

Rebecca assured the CLG that the last thing the project team wants is scours on the batter so the aim is prevention. She concluded her presentation by stating that Abigroup is committed to protecting the environment and mitigating the impacts of construction on all activities associated with the project.

Will MacDonald also noted that this job, with regard to planting and landscaping, is fairly dense. So once established there should be no real problems in the future. He also added that Abigroup have to look after and maintain the project for 10 years so it is in Abigroup's interest to do the right thing.

Comment We don't want a repeat of the poor landscaping and batters at Yelgun – Chinderah on this project.

Q When will the final landscaping plans would be finished?

A The 100% complete Drawings should be completed next week. The final plans were not yet ready but their finalisation was imminent.

Q When are you planting?

A Planting would be in stages and the first stage is ready. It is expected planting would start before the end of the month.

Comment Would it be possible to plant *Aristolochia praevenosa* (the Richmond Bird Wing Butterfly vine), adjacent to the fauna fence in conjunction with one or two pioneer plants and do a full distance of say, 20-25m apart? There is a population of Bird Wing Butterflies in Billinudgel Nature Reserve and further north there's a significant stand of the vine. If we can bridge the two, there's a good chance of helping the Butterflies.

A Mark Sabolch agreed in principle with the idea. He was not sure if it would be possible on the fauna fence though as this may allow fauna to breach the fence.

Q Given the media attention could another inspection of the project be organised as soon as possible?

Comment It had been a number of months since the last inspection and it would be good to see the project again.

A Another site visit had been included into a future schedule, during daylight saving time. However, at the Group's suggestion, a 4pm drive through for anyone who was interested prior to a meeting might be workable and could be organised shortly. Names of interested members should be given to Wendy Dooley. A more formal inspection would be arranged for September 2006.

6.0 General Business

6.1 Habitat Boxes

Wendy Dooley gave a quick update of the project. Funding of \$10,000 had been granted from the original amount of \$14,000 requested. The grant had been made out in the wrong name, however that was currently being rectified. Wendy also gave a quick run through of the Awareness day planned for Saturday 29 July 2006 and hoped that the CLG would be well represented by as many members as possible. Promotional posters were distributed.

6.2 Rotary Walkway

The local Rotary group had approached Wendy in an effort to gain more information about the walking track from the site to the Fishing Co-op in order to possibly regain the naming of any re-established walkway. Rotary had made the track after a tragic road accident involving a local girl and wanted to know if anyone had any further information particularly with respect to a marker / name board for the track.

Brett Lee advised that the land in question was Sepp 14 and as such development approval is extremely difficult. Council had made representation for a separate grant for the land to the Department of Planning regarding the proposed coastal cycleway which was to be built on the north side of Tweed Street and links the path to the Brunswick River.

No-one was familiar with the naming of the path although it was suggested that Keith Bateson of Brunswick Heads may have some knowledge.

7.3 Final Questions

Wendy Dooley opened the floor to members for any final questions and to discuss items from the previous meeting. Nothing further was added.

Q When would Tunnel Road be re-opened?

A Will MacDonald stated that he thought it would be soon but would confirm the date at the next meeting.

Comment Please place on record that Abigroup is doing a brilliant job.

8.0 Close

The meeting closed at 8.10pm and the next CLG meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 2 August 2006.