

Community Update

December 2003



Brunswick Heads to Yelgun Upgrade Upgrading the Pacific Highway

This project entails the provision of 8.6 km of dual carriageway between Brunswick Heads and Yelgun and links the recently completed Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway and Tandys Lane Upgrade. It is jointly funded by the NSW and Australian Governments, as part of the \$2.2 billion 10-year Pacific Highway Upgrading Program in New South Wales, comprising \$1.6 billion from the NSW Government and \$600 million from the Australian Government.

Background

The Brunswick Heads to Yelgun Upgrade is the next Pacific Highway upgrading project to get underway on the NSW Far North Coast, and includes duplication of the Brunswick Heads Bypass. When completed, it will significantly improve safety and travelling conditions on the Pacific Highway by eliminating the only single lane section between Byron Bay and the NSW/Queensland border, a distance of 59 kilometres.

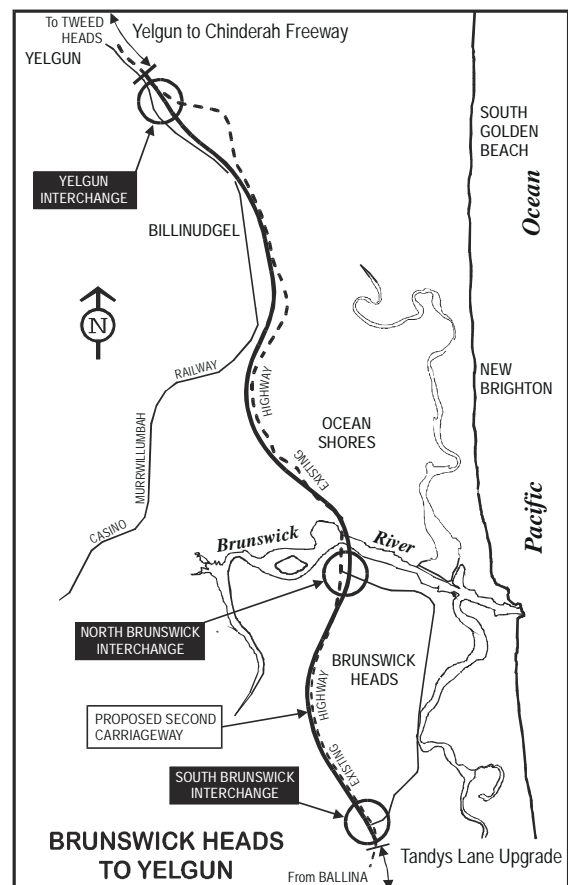
Major interchanges will be constructed at the Brunswick River and Yelgun, and the existing highway will be retained to provide off-highway access between local communities.

The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is managing the project.

Planning process

Although planning approval was received for the preferred route for the upgrade in August 1999, further community consultation was required before proceeding. Extensive consultation, investigation of an alternative community-proposed route and a thorough review of the design for the upgrade, were undertaken during 2000 and 2001. Following further consultation and technical investigations, the RTA exhibited an environmental impact assessment (EIA) for proposed modifications at the Brunswick River, Billinudgel and Yelgun in November/December 2002. The EIA assessed the impact of the design

modifications in preparation for seeking a modified planning approval for the modifications. During 2003, the RTA has been reviewing community comments received during the EIA exhibition and undertaking further detailed site investigations.



Modified planning approval

The NSW Minister for Infrastructure and Planning granted a modified planning approval for the design modifications on 26 November 2003. The RTA will now commence pre-construction activities required for the roadworks.

The community is invited to inspect the various documents associated with the modified planning approval. They will be on public exhibition from 10 December 2003 to 30 January 2004 at the following locations:

- Brunswick Heads Library
- Ocean Village Shopping Centre
- Billinudgel General Store
- Byron Shire Council, Mullumbimby
- Byron Bay Library

They are also available for viewing on the project website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific (click on *Brunswick Heads to Yelgun* next to the map, then click on *Environment*).

Other exhibition locations outside the local area are being advertised in the local press. A copy of the advertisement is also available for viewing on the project website.

Development Application (wetlands)

In November 2002 the RTA submitted the EIA to Byron Shire Council, in conjunction with a Development Application (DA) to undertake work in SEPP 14 – Coastal Wetland Nos. 62 and 65 at the Brunswick River, as the previous consent had lapsed. The consent only applies to the areas of wetland directly affected by the upgrading works. Byron Shire Council placed the EIA on exhibition in November 2002, seeking public comment.

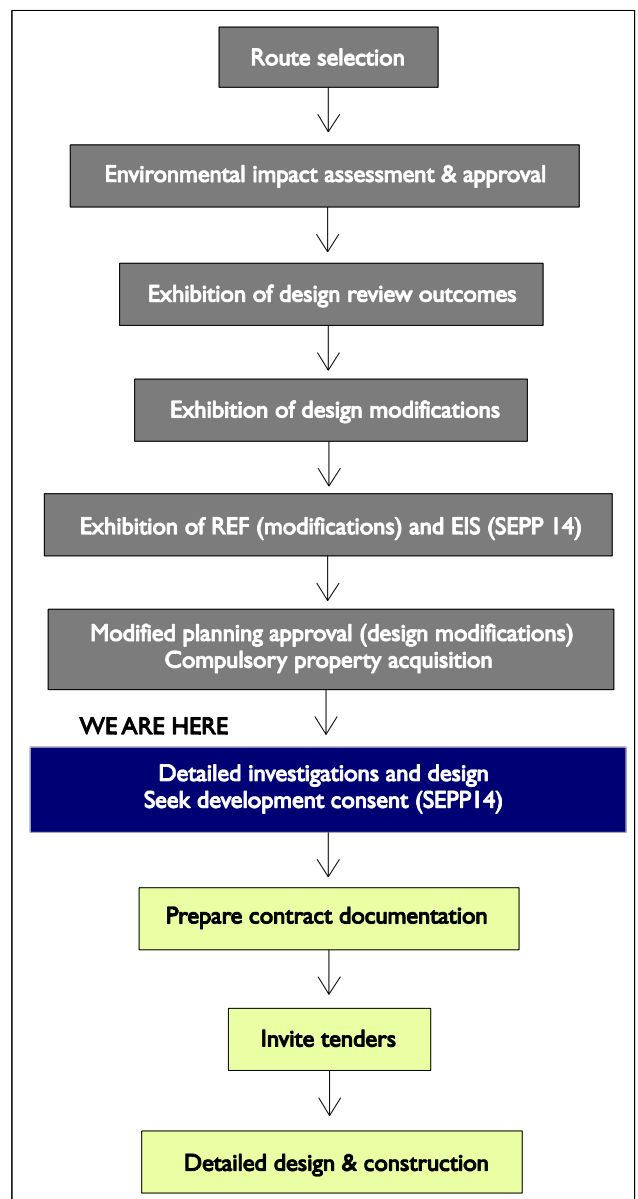
At its meeting on 27 May 2003, Byron Shire Council declined to approve the RTA's development application. Following a mediation meeting, the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning has advised Byron Shire Council that he is not in agreement with council's refusal of the DA, and that council's reasons for refusal have been sufficiently addressed by the RTA. The RTA is awaiting formal advice of council's approval and consent conditions relating to impact on the areas of SEPP 14 Coastal Wetland.

Progress update

Since November 2002, the RTA has continued to undertake various technical studies including:

- Field surveys (including detailed bridge surveys).
- Geo-technical investigations (to verify ground conditions).
- Traffic assessment.
- Noise assessment.

The flow chart below outlines the planning and development process:



Signposting scheme on display

The proposed directional signposting scheme for the upgrade is being displayed for community feedback. The scheme has been developed in line with RTA signposting guidelines.

A copy of the proposed scheme will be available at the following display points from 10 December 2003 to 30 January 2004:

- Brunswick Heads Library
- Ocean Village Shopping Centre
- Billinudgel General Store
- Byron Shire Council, Mullumbimby
- Byron Bay Library

It is also available for viewing on the project website www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific

In addition to feedback from the broader community through the public displays, the RTA will meet with the project Community Liaison Group, Byron Shire Council, and local business representatives to seek their comments.

Members of the project team will be at the following locations to discuss the directional signposting scheme with the community:

- Ocean Village Shopping Centre – Thursday 11 December (10am – 3pm)
- Billinudgel General Store – Friday 12 December (10am – noon)
- Brunswick Heads Library – Friday 12 December (2pm – 4pm)

Community comment on the signposting scheme is invited by 30 January 2004. Please send comments to:

RTA Project Manager
Brunswick Heads to Yelgun Upgrade
PO Box 576
Grafton NSW 2460

Community feedback facilities will be available at each display location. All community feedback will be fully considered before finalising the scheme.

What happens next

The project is now proceeding towards construction, with a number of activities to be completed over the next six months (see flowchart on previous page).

Registrations of interest have been sought from suitably qualified construction companies. Registrations of interest will be short-listed and short-listed companies will be invited to submit a tender. The RTA is currently preparing documentation for a DCM contract (design, construct and maintain for ten years).

It is expected that a contract will be awarded in mid 2004. The RTA and its contractor will subsequently establish on-site facilities and finalise

the detailed design for the upgrade. Construction activities are also expected to get underway towards the end of 2004, with the upgrade expected to open in late 2006.

Project website

The project website has been visited by nearly 12,000 people since its establishment in November 2001. The website has extensive information about the project, its progress, community consultation activities, environmental considerations and a feedback facility. You can also register to be alerted when new information or documents are added to the site.

Community involvement

There are a number of ways you can keep up to date on the project. These include:

- Visiting one of the staffed displays.
- Calling the Project Information Line.
- Registering your details on the mailing list via the Project Information Line or the website.
- Contacting the project team via phone, fax, email or the website.

Project contact details are listed on the back of this Community Update, if you need more information about any aspect of the project.

Frequently asked questions

Through the Project Information Line, website and staffed displays, a number of frequently asked questions have been recorded and the answers placed on the project website. For the benefit of those who do not have access to the internet, some of these questions are reproduced below. If you need further information about any aspect of the project, please contact the project team who will be happy to assist. Feedback from the community is always welcome, so if you have any suggestions about what you would like included in these community updates or on the project website, please contact the Project Information Line.

How do I find out how the upgrade will affect a property I own or am thinking of buying?

If you want to find out how the upgrade will affect your property or a property that you are considering purchasing, you need to contact the RTA's Project Manager (details on back page).

How will traffic delays and property access be managed during construction?

The RTA will be developing strategies during the detailed design phase to ensure that traffic delays will be kept to a minimum and access is maintained to all properties during construction. Directly affected residents will be advised in advance of any change in access or traffic conditions. Major changes to traffic conditions will be advertised via local media and roadside electronic message signs.

How will road safety be maintained during construction?

Maintaining safe travel for local residents and highway users during construction is a key issue for the RTA that will be addressed during the detailed design and construction phases of the project. The RTA will require comprehensive traffic management plans from its contractor in advance of any changed traffic conditions, to ensure the safety of road users at all times during construction.

How will the Brunswick River be protected during and after construction?

The detailed design will look at ways to ensure protection of the Brunswick River and adjacent areas during and after construction. The construction contractor will be required to develop an environmental management plan that is endorsed by the relevant environmental authorities prior to major construction activity.

When will construction start?

Construction is scheduled to start in late 2004.

How long will the construction of the upgrade take?

The upgrade is expected to open in late 2006.

How will the RTA manage noise, dust and vibration during and after construction?

The RTA's construction contractor will be required to develop an environmental management plan that includes measures to minimise noise, dust and vibration during construction. For some adjacent properties that will be affected by construction noise, residences will be treated with noise reducing measures. In areas less affected, noise will be monitored at key locations before, during and after construction to gauge whether any additional noise mitigation measures are required.

Pacific Highway Upgrading Program

This is the single largest construction program in NSW for the last 40 years. Twenty-one major projects and 19 smaller projects have been opened to traffic. Four major construction projects are underway including Karuah Bypass, Halfway Creek Realignment, Coopernook Bypass and Taree to Coopernook Upgrade. A further 15 are at various stages of planning and development including the Bulahdelah, Kempsey to Eungai and Macksville to Urunga Upgrades.

The program has brought major improvements to safety, road conditions and travel times. From 1997 to 2002, travel times between Hexham and the Queensland border have been reduced by around 55 minutes for passenger vehicles and just over an hour for heavy vehicles. Notorious accident spots have been removed with the completion of the Bulahdelah to Coolongolook Freeway, Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway, Raleigh Deviation and Ewingsdale Interchange.

As well as boosting tourism and transport efficiency, providing safer and more consistent overtaking opportunities has saved lives and reduced serious injury accidents.

For more information contact:

Community Liaison Manager
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Freecall: 1800 071 144
Fax: 02 6687 7782
Email: rvi@geolink.net.au

RTA Project Manager
Peter Borrelli
Roads and Traffic Authority
PO Box 576, Grafton NSW 2460
Phone: 02 6640 1022
Freecall: 1800 653 092
Fax: 02 6640 1003
Email: peter_borrelli@rta.nsw.gov.au

Or go to the RTA website at:
www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific

**Project Information Line
1800 071 144 (Freecall)**



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----- BUILDING A SAFER HIGHWAY -----