

HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

A copy of the EIA document is available for viewing on the RTA website (www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.htm) or at the following locations. Copies are available for purchase in hard copy (\$25.00) or CD (\$10.00) at the locations marked with a hash [#].

Exhibition Locations

The EIA will be on display for comment from 6 November 2002 to 6 December 2002 at the following locations:

- RTA Head Office, Surry Hills [#]
- RTA Northern Regional Office, Grafton [#]
- RTA Pacific Highway Office, Grafton
- Motor Registries (Murwillumbah, Ballina, Lismore) [#]
- NSW Government Information Centre, The Rocks
- Nature Conservation Council, Sydney
- PlanningNSW Information Centre, Haymarket
- PlanningNSW, Grafton
- Byron Shire Council, Mullumbimby
- Byron Bay Library
- Brunswick Heads Library
- Ocean Village Shopping Centre, Ocean Shores
- Billinudgel General Store

The project team will be available at the Ocean Village Shopping Centre to discuss the EIA with the community between 10am and 2pm on the following dates:

Saturday, 16 November 2002
Saturday, 23 November 2002

Written submissions on the EIA for the design modifications should be sent to:

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

All submissions will be considered by the RTA and PlanningNSW in determining whether the proposed modifications should proceed.

All information in representations received may be published in subsequent assessment documents. Where the supplier indicates at the time of supply of information that it should be kept confidential, the RTA will attempt to keep it confidential but there may be legislative or legal justification for the release of the information, for example under the Freedom of Information Act 1989 or under subpoena or statutory instrument.

Submissions close on Friday 6 December 2002.

FREECALL 1800 071 144



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

NOV
2002

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, Cooperook Bypass and Taree to Cooperook Upgrade. A further 15 are at various stages of planning and development including the Bulahdelah, Moorland to Herons Creek and Kempsey to Eungai upgrades.

The program has brought enormous improvements to 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 the incidence of serious injury accidents.

For more information contact:

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RTA Project Manager

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Or go to the RTA website at:

www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.htm

RTA/Pub. 02.212

UPGRADING THE PACIFIC HIGHWAY

BRUNSWICK HEADS TO YELGUN UPGRADE

Newsletter No 9

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is exhibiting an environmental impact assessment (EIA) for proposed design modifications to the Brunswick Heads to Yelgun upgrade of the Pacific Highway.

Planning approval was granted for the previous design in August 1999. Following community consultation including a public display, the design of the project was changed at three locations: Brunswick River, Billinudgel and Yelgun.

The RTA will be seeking planning approval for the sections of the upgrade where the design has been modified. Exhibiting the EIA for comment is part of the process.

The EIA will be on display for comment from 6 November 2002 to 6 December 2002.

About the assessment

The EIA outlines the background and development of the modifications. It assesses the impact of the modifications on the local environment including aspects that have improved as a result of these changes. It looks at measures to protect the environment during construction and assesses their likely effectiveness.

The following issues have been considered:

- Traffic Noise.
- Flora and fauna.
- Visual and landscape.
- Business and community.
- Traffic and transport.
- Water quality and hydrology.
- Indigenous and non-indigenous heritage.
- Air quality.
- Geology and soils.
- Present and future landuse.

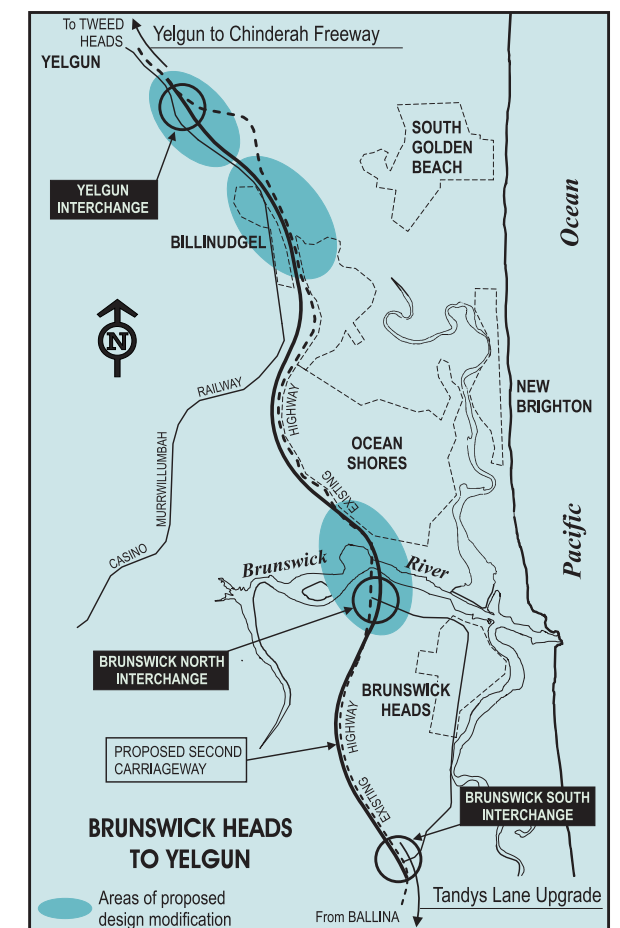
The EIA explains the legislative requirements and approvals needed before the proposed modifications can proceed. There have been some legislative changes since planning approval was granted in August 1999 and the EIA outlines what impact these have on the design modifications.

About the project

Following the opening of the Yelgun to Chinderah freeway in August 2002, the Brunswick Heads to Yelgun upgrade is the next major project on the far north coast of New South Wales to be constructed as part of the \$2.2 billion joint Federal-State government upgrading of the Pacific Highway. The 8.7km project includes duplication of the Brunswick Heads Bypass.

The highway needs to be upgraded to provide safer and more consistent overtaking opportunities as well as improving traffic flow and access arrangements.

Substantial environmental management works are proposed. They include fauna crossings, water management structures, compensatory habitat and noise protection.



DESIGN MODIFICATIONS

The proposed modifications for the Brunswick Heads to Yelgun upgrade would further reduce the impact on the surrounding natural and built environments.

During November-December 2001, the RTA displayed and sought public comment on the approved design and an alternative design as well as a number of bridge types for the Brunswick River crossing.

The RTA received 280 submissions and comments. Many ideas and suggestions received during the display period were incorporated into a 'modified alternative' design, which the RTA adopted and displayed for further public comment in May 2002.

The RTA will be seeking formal planning approval for the design modifications before proceeding to construction.

The following sections outline the comparative benefits and overall impact of the design modifications, compared to the approved design.

At the Brunswick River

The design at the Brunswick River was modified to include a simplified interchange and a 180 metre long *balanced cantilever* bridge.

Compared to the approved design, the design modifications at the Brunswick River would result in:

- Less environmental impact (reduced road footprint).
- Simplified Brunswick Heads North interchange (only two roundabouts and south-facing ramps).
- Less community impact (less construction).
- Less impact on the nature reserve.
- Less impact on sensitive saltmarsh area.
- Less overall visual impact (simplified interchange, aesthetic bridge design, slightly lower retaining wall north of Rajah Road).
- Less impact on the Brunswick River (improved hydrology due to fewer pier sets).
- Less impact on estuarine habitat (fewer piers, reduced area of shadow on the river).
- Opportunity for greater wildlife connectivity (northern bridge abutment moved north).
- More direct access to/from the local road system for Riverside Crescent and Ferry Reserve Caravan Park residents.
- Broader community support.

At Billinudgel

At Billinudgel, the design was modified to include highway access from the northbound carriageway

(left-in, left-out) at Wilfred Street. The previously approved Wilfred Street overpass would be replaced by a local road underpass 300m south of Wilfred Street with facilities to maintain a connection for pedestrians and cyclists between North Ocean Shores and Billinudgel.

In comparison to the approved design, the modifications at Billinudgel would result in:

- Less economic impact (highway access).
- Improved transport efficiency (more direct access to Billinudgel).
- Safer pedestrian/cycle facilities.
- Less visual impact (removal of overpass, roundabout, ramps, retaining walls).
- Broader community support.

At Yelgun

The design at Yelgun was modified to include a simplified interchange arrangement.

Compared to the approved design, the design modifications would result in:

- Improved traffic flows on and off the highway.
- Less environmental impact (reduced road footprint).
- Less visual impact (reduced footprint).
- Improved access from Stock Route Road to the local road system.
- Opportunity to create a single 'gateway' to adjacent local communities (at roundabout).
- Broader community support.

OVERALL IMPACT

Traffic Noise

Noise levels for the design modifications would be similar overall to that of the approved design. The RTA would provide noise reduction measures at locations where Environment Protection Authority goals are exceeded. Additional post-construction noise and traffic studies will be undertaken to verify predicted noise levels and the effectiveness of any noise reducing measures.

Flora and fauna

The overall net ecological impact of the design modifications would be positive, due to the reduced road footprint. The modified design would not have a substantial impact on any listed threatened fauna species or ecological community, nor would it cause an overall increased impact on flora.

Visual and landscape

The design modifications would provide a net reduction in visual impact, mainly due to the simplified interchange arrangements and modifications to the design of the Brunswick River

crossing and the removal of the Wilfred Street overpass at Billinudgel.

Business and community

The design modifications would reduce the impact of the upgrade on local business and the community, e.g. provision of northbound highway access at Billinudgel and more direct local road connection for Stock Route Road residents.

Traffic and transport

Overall, traffic and transport would be improved by the design modifications, e.g. northbound highway access to Billinudgel.

Water quality and hydrology

The reduction of pier sets from four (previously approved design) to two (modified design) at the Brunswick River would improve river flows. The new balanced cantilever bridge design would also cast a smaller shadow on the river. The design modifications would not increase the overall impact of the upgrade on water quality.

Indigenous and non-indigenous heritage

The upgrade would not have a direct or indirect impact on a series of shell middens on the north-west bank of the Brunswick River, however protective measures such as fencing would be used during construction. Overall, there would be no change to the impact on indigenous or non-indigenous heritage.

Air quality

There would be no overall change in air quality as a result of the design modifications.

Geology and soils

There would be a potential slight increase in disturbance of acid sulphate soils. Appropriate management measures would be adopted.

Present and future land use

There would be no overall change in the impact on present and future land use.

SEPP 14 WETLANDS

As the upgraded highway will impact on SEPP 14 coastal wetlands Nos. 62 and 65, the EIA (section 6) also incorporates an Environmental Impact Statement which is required to accompany an application to Byron Shire Council for a development consent.

In September 1999, Byron Shire Council granted the RTA development consent for work to be undertaken in these areas. Council granted the consent on the basis that work was to commence within two years.

During 2000 and 2001, the RTA undertook further

studies, consultation and reviews to address community concerns. In the meantime, the development consent has lapsed and the RTA will be re-applying for development consent.

Overall, the impact of the design modifications are similar to those associated with the approved design, for which the RTA previously received development consent from Byron Shire Council.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The EIA exhibition provides an opportunity for members of the public to make submissions on any aspect of the proposed design modifications. Information on how you can make a submission is provided on the back page.

Following the EIA exhibition period, the RTA will seek a modified planning approval for the project from the NSW Minister for Planning.

Note: Byron Shire Council will also exhibit the EIA in relation to the RTA's application for development consent to undertake work in coastal wetlands.

Below is an updated flowchart for the project.

