

## Meeting Notes

Project:	Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project	Reference:	<b>1093.40.GE</b>
Location:	Woolgoolga Community Hall, Boundary Street, Woolgoolga	Date:	7 May 2003

Present: Apology: Copy: Name:

<b>NORTHERN CFG (Woolgoolga Area)</b>			
✓			Graham Ashton
✓			John Beales
	✓		Mark Beard
✓			Gregory Benson
	✓		Jasmer Bhatti
✓			Ron Gray
	✓		Karrena Joass
	✓		Kevin Knott
✓			Steven Moody
	✓		Phillip Pearce
✓			Des Saunders
✓			Bruce Scanlon
✓			John Tozer
			Manjit Sidhu <b>(WITHDRAWN)</b>
			Robert Watson <b>(WITHDRAWN)</b>
✓			John Langhorn
	✓		Pam Stone
	✓		Coffs Harbour & District Local Aboriginal Land Council (Mark Flanders)
	✓		Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation
✓			Sapphire/Moonee observer
<b>NORTHERN CFG (Sapphire/Moonee Area)</b>			
	✓		Keith Adams
	✓		Peter Loxley

✓			Jim Browne
✓			Vincent Brooker
✓			Steve Clemesha
	✓		Ray Faggotter
✓			Jill Heris
	✓		Peter Lubans
	✓		Ernie Armstrong (proxy)
✓			Tammy Mills-Thom
✓			Shinichi Otani
✓			Phil Price
✓			Colin South
✓			Gary Davey
	✓		Coffs Harbour & District Local Aboriginal Land Council (Mark Flanders)
	✓		Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation
<b>PROJECT TEAM</b>			
✓			Chris Clark RTA
	✓		Bob Higgins RTA
✓			Peter Hurst RTA
✓			Tim Paterson Connell Wagner
	✓		Rosemary Russell Connell Wagner
	✓		Barry Hancock Connell Wagner
✓			Andrew Smith Pramax Communications
✓			Bill Wood Coffs Harbour City Council
	✓		Rick Bennell Coffs Harbour City Council
✓			George Stulle Coffs Harbour City Council
✓			Jo Gardner Planning NSW
Recorded By: Pramax Communications			Total Pages: 14
Subject: Community Focus Group Meeting No 11 (combined meeting of Woolgoolga & Sapphire/Moonee areas)			

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Andrew Smith opened the meeting at 5.52pm.
- 1.2 **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Mark Beard, Jasmer Bhatti, Kevin Knott and Pam Stone. Two resignations also had been received for the Woolgoolga group from Robert Watson and Manjit Sidhu.
- 1.3 Chris Clark (RTA) also introduced Peter Hurst, Acting Pacific Highway Manager.

## 2. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 CFG member referred to an item in his copy of the verbatim Notes.
- 2.2 Andrew Smith indicated the process agreed to by the member regarding his verbatim Notes was that he would provide his comments three days after receiving them to enable them to be incorporated if necessary before the Notes were distributed to other members. The meeting needed to deal with the final Notes sent out to members.
- 2.3 A number of members indicated they had not received hard copies of the Notes.
- 2.4 Tim Paterson (Connell Wagner) said he believed they had been sent.
- 2.5 Andrew Smith indicated it was usually recorded when the Notes were sent out to members. Pending further comment from anyone who usually only received hard copies when they had done so, the Notes of the meeting were accepted.

## 3. MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 **Observers at Steering Committee Meetings**
- 3.2 Andrew Smith said a discussion had been held with the Coffs CFG group the previous week regarding observers.
- 3.3 Cr Bill Wood (Coffs Harbour City Council) said Council had resolved to hold a forum with members of the CFGs, representatives of some other groups such as Chambers of Commerce and the executive of lobby groups such as WAR, PANIC and Bucca Off. The first one was expected to be held on May 20, probably at the Norm Jordan Pavilion.
- 3.4 CFG member asked if the forum was in lieu of having observers at Steering Committee meetings.
- 3.5 Cr Wood responded yes. The view had been expressed by CFG members and their community groups that they wanted more involvement of Councillors. Council believed that, since having observers at Steering Committee meetings would mean they would not be participants, a forum involving Council staff, officers, Councillors and community groups would allow them to participate and seemed to be a way of perhaps achieving a range of objectives.
- 3.6 CFG member: *I can see no objection to the forum but I am bewildered by a couple of things: (1) by how a forum can replace the CFG just sitting up and talking and seeing what happens on the Steering Committee. (2) I would have thought that the Steering Committee would have decided who would attend Steering Committee meetings. You say Council decided. I thought RTA was the dominant party in this. And now Council is the dominant party who has decided about observers at the Steering Committee meeting.*

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- 3.7 Cr Wood: *Council is the dominant party in this particular issue. Without putting words in people's mouths, Council withdrew their support for having CFG members present at Steering Committee meetings. It was felt that it was not a productive thing to do, particularly for community members and it probably was not an ideal thing for members of the Steering Committee too, that there may be some inhibitions about what would have otherwise been a robust discussion. So Council were the initiators in this instance.*
- 3.8 CFG member: *Does that mean that having CFG members as observers was not even discussed by the Steering Committee because Council said no we won't?*
- 3.9 Cr Wood: *It was discussed and Council considered there was a better way to meet this objective.*
- 3.10 George Stulle (CHCC) indicated the forum could possibly be held once a month.
- 3.11 Further discussion followed.
- 3.12 Jo Gardner (PlanningNSW) said the issue of having observers at Steering Committee meetings had arisen out of the Peer Review which Council had commissioned. The CFGs had raised the issue that they did not feel Council was an active player in the process and that they considered PlanningNSW and the RTA needed to be more open and transparent. The exact wording was in the Peer Review report. Council had asked the Steering Committee to consider a mechanism to address that. Discussions had been held in regard to that, which included the frustration of the Woolgoolga CFG's observer at Sapphire-Moonee CFG meetings with his "observer" status. At the following meeting of the Steering Committee, the Council had suggested that a better way to address the issue and the recommendation made in the Peer Review report was for it to organise a forum. She said if there were any further issues with Council's decision, it should be taken up with Council at its forum on May 20.
- 3.13 Further discussion followed. Members questioned what information would be discussed at the forum that couldn't be passed on at a normal CFG meeting and that the Peer Review recommendation had been to increase the transparency. "Keeping the door closed" had not increased the transparency at all. Council had accepted the recommendation of the Arup Report and was now going against the recommendations. The General Manager also had said it would be a good idea to have observers. More damage had been done to the transparency process by saying observers would be allowed and then not allowing them.
- 3.14 Andrew Smith suggested Jo Gardner's comments about taking up the issue at the forum was pertinent.
- 3.15 A CFG member said she had suggested one way of addressing the transparency was to provide Notes of Steering Committee meetings to members.
- 3.16 Another CFG member said Council had not been asked to make a decision on the issue, the Steering Committee had. He did not understand why the CFGs were now being told that was the end of it and they now had to talk to Council.
- 3.17 Another CFG member asked Cr Wood to explain why the Council had accepted a recommendation in the Peer Review report and then gone against it?
- 3.18 Cr Wood responded that Council had not pushed the presence of members of the CFGs at Steering Committee meetings. It had put forward the forums as a mechanism which would allow interaction between the CFGs and the community

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and Council.

**3.19 Introduction of new member for Sapphire-Moonee CFG**

3.20 Andrew Smith introduced the new member and asked him to talk about his representation.

3.21 The new CFG member said he lived at Crystal Waters Estate. He had moved to the area three and a half years ago to retire. While he held no formal office in any community group, he was a member of the Crystal Waters Community Association and had started a survey of the 94 homes in the estate which resulted in 98 residents signing a petition in favour of Option A, provided it join the Sapphire route along the lines of the Coastal Ridge Way bypass.

**3.22 Others**

3.23 CFG member queried whether Item 2.7 from the previous meeting regarding Council organising another bus trip to inspect just the northern section had been followed up.

3.24 Cr Wood said he had raised it. It had been agreed that there probably was not sufficient time on the previous bus tour to fully deal with the northern section but he did not recall whether having another bus trip had been discussed.

3.25 George Stulle said invitations had been sent to the participants of the Value Management Workshop (VMW) prior to the workshop as to whether they wanted another bus tour.

3.26 The CFG member said he thought the participation was going to be broader than just the VMW participants.

3.27 Cr Wood said the matter could be brought up at the Council forum for a direct response.

3.28 CFG member referred to Item 3.39 of the Notes of the previous meeting and asked if an update on the report into the Coastal Ridge Way (CRW) could be given.

3.29 Chris Clark responded that investigations into the CRW were continuing in parallel with investigations into the inner bypass of Coffs Harbour and the upgrade of the existing highway through town. It was expected the report on these investigations would be put on display for comment about the middle of the year.

3.30 CFG member: *Is that before or after the route selection is made for the northern section?*

3.31 Chris Clark: *It is going to be similar in time. At this point it's not possible to advise whether it will be before or after.*

3.32 CFG member referred to Item 3.45 of the previous meeting Notes regarding the involvement of indigenous representation at CFG meetings. What had been done about it?

3.33 Andrew Smith responded that a new representative had attended the Sapphire-Moonee CFG meeting which had been held the night after the last Woolgoolga CFG meeting. The representative received meeting invitations, agendas and Notes. It had been previously discussed and acknowledged that the forums did not always meet the communication needs of this stakeholder group.

3.34 A CFG member said the indigenous community had issue with Option A being less

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than a kilometre from Mary's Waterhole and yet anyone could go and have a look at the site and logging was being carried out within 200 metres of the site. Unless it was made a National Park, logging would continue there.

- 3.35 Chris Clark said the indigenous community had expressed concerns about the proximity of Option A to Mary's Waterhole. They had also expressed concerns about Option A going through the ridgeline country in that general vicinity which also was of special significance to them. The formal advice received from the community was that the buffers they would consider acceptable were 1.5-2km from Mary's Waterhole.
- 3.36 CFG member: That is ridiculous while logging continues within 200 metres of the site.
- 3.37 Another CFG member asked whether it was required to take note and agree with advice given by such Aboriginal communities?
- 3.38 Chris Clark responded that notice was taken of all submissions and comments received so that the process ended up with the option with the best balance across all issues. There also were very specific legal and indigenous requirements that had to be complied with.
- 3.39 Further discussion followed.
- 3.40 A CFG member said there also were significant Aboriginal sites along the existing highway at every creek crossing, especially at Bare Bluff, the southern turn-off at Graham Drive.
- 3.41 Chris Clark responded that there were natural sites of special significance, such as Mary's Waterhole, and there were other sites of lesser significance. It was a matter of identifying them, working with the community and finding out what mitigation measures could be incorporated into projects.
- 3.42 A CFG member said surely the credibility of a 2km buffer should be examined when car rallies were held within 3m of Mary's Waterhole without objection, when objection could be made and the rally re-routed.
- 3.43 Chris Clark responded that the indigenous community was entitled to make a submission and he had no intention of discussing (the validity) of anybody's submissions in a public forum such as this.
- 3.44 Other CFG members indicated they believed the discussion was beyond the scope of the CFG.
- 3.45 CFG members said there had also been discussion at the last meeting regarding representation from the Sikh community in the decision-making and consultation process. A replacement had been suggested for a previous member.
- 3.46 Another CFG member said the replacement had been notified that the meeting was on but he was attending a banana growers' meeting because he was a delegate for Woolgoolga.
- 3.47 Discussion followed, including the experience of one member who served on a number of committees where appointees often did not attend meetings. It was suggested that the CFG's banana industry representative ask the replacement to contact the project's Freecall number.

Manjit Sidhu's resignation was notified at the start of the meeting. The replacement suggested has been contacted.

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## 4. PROJECT UPDATE

### 4.1 Summary of Submissions on route options exhibition

Overhead presentation by Chris Clark

- 4.2 Chris Clark indicated a report summarising the community submissions should be available for distribution the following week. All CFG members would be provided with a hard copy. In regard to the community feedback, one of the trends was that respondents saw the same issue as having a positive and a negative impact on a route option. For example, noise and vibration for Option A, some 250 people considered there would be positive impacts but 120 believed there would be negative impacts. When assessing the submissions received, if less than 100 submissions had raised an issue, it was not considered to be of major importance to the community. Impacts were considered significant if twice as many submissions considered the issue had positive impacts compared with negative impacts or vice versa. Option A was seen to have significant positive impacts for noise and vibration and significant negative impacts for visual and urban design, indigenous heritage, flora and fauna, traffic flow and efficiency, water quality, cost of construction, and the ability of the option to represent a fire break. Options B1 and B2 were both seen to have significant negative impacts on agriculture, business and tourism, noise and vibration, flora and fauna, community impacts, access, and cost of construction. Option C was seen to have significant positive impacts on access, travel time and efficiency and waterways quality and significant negative impacts on noise and vibration and the community. Option D also was seen to have significant negatives – noise and vibration and air quality while its significant positives were seen to be impacts on agricultural land, effects on business and tourism, indigenous heritage, flora and fauna, access, travel time and efficiency and waterways quality. For each of the impacts cited, the report also presented the summation of respondents' positive and negative views on each of the options. For example, effects on residential property for Option D was considered positive while for B1, B2 and C it was considered significantly negative. Other examples were the noise and vibration assessment which showed a strong positive for A and strong negatives for B1, B2, C and D. Submissions for the Sapphire to Moonee area had also been collated and included the need for additional access on to the highway, preferences for the interchange location, the need for visual mitigation, and cycleways. Other issues raised included requests to reduce speed limits and additional service roads over and above those shown in the display material. As far as the options themselves were concerned, some respondents had expressed both first and second preferences. The strongest choice was for Option A: First preferences recorded were :- Option A – 839; D – 222; C – 99; B2 – 45; B1 – 69. There was a public perception that Option A and the CRW were linked together. The report had tried to be as faithful as it could be to the submissions received. People had expressed a choice for Option A and a choice for the CRW. In most cases they did not explain why they differentiated.
- 4.3 CFG member: If you add the two together, it arrives at 61 per cent total first preferences.
- 4.4 Another CFG member responded that it was also important to consider the context in which the submissions had been collated. They had been collated on the proposal put out in a document which gave the Options A, B, C, etc. There was no option there for the CRW. It was something that came in from the outside. When people put their proposals in, they put them in on the basis of the proposal documents. The relatively small figures for the CRW were therefore not because

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people didn't want it, but rather because it was a perception.

- 4.5 Chris Clark: We specifically asked for submissions on the options put on display, no doubt about that.
- 4.6 Another CFG member said they were told not to vote for an option but to express what was wrong with options. Obviously they had been misled.
- 4.7 Chris Clark said the form had been used by some respondents to express their preference for an option. While the preferences were important, what was more important was what was seen as the issues associated with the options. At the end of the day, there was no option that was able to be all things to all people and by receiving information on what an option's detrimental impacts might be, they could be minimised as much as possible.
- 4.8 A CFG member said the graph which showed respondents' choice/s of options "looked" like a voting process and, in isolation, was misleading. She believed expressing what was wrong with the options had been the correct way to respond.
- 4.9 Further discussion followed on the number and type of responses.
- 4.10 CFG member: *A form that came in said, "My preference is for Option A, but with a southern link to the Coastal Ridge Way bypass." How did you record that?*
- 4.11 Andrew Smith responded that how such a form was recorded would be checked.

Response to be provided at next CFG meeting.

## 5. VALUE MANAGEMENT STUDIES

### 5.1 Value Management Workshop Outcomes

Overhead presentation by Chris Clark

- 5.2 Chris Clark indicated he would go through the process used in the VMW held late March/early April and then its outcomes. He explained that as chairman of the Steering Committee, Cr Wood, had welcomed attendees. This had been followed by a description of the process involved and then the objectives for the VMW had been set. An initial Information Phase had involved Jo Gardner of PlanningNSW outlining the strategic context, Coffs Harbour City Council providing its perspective and RTA providing its perspective in regard to the Pacific Highway Upgrading Program and specific objectives for the project itself. This was followed by the Analysis Phase where there was discussion and, by consensus, agreement on what was important about the project itself, what were the problems that had to be addressed, the project objectives and the assumptions on which they were based, and an assessment of whether or not these assumptions were valid. Criteria for assessing the project were developed as were weightings for the assessment criteria. The Analysis Phase had been followed by the Evaluation of the Options themselves. The workshop participants had evaluated the options against the three categories of assessment criteria established - functional assessment criteria, environmental assessment criteria and socio-economic criteria (or 'human' criteria). The Evaluation had then been collated into a Summary. The final part of the workshop was to bring all that work together to identify the outcomes and, as much as possible, to look at recommending a preferred option, or a series of options, and a direction forward.
- 5.3 Questions followed.
- 5.4 A CFG member said he believed the project objectives should have included road safety. He suggested it was a presumption that dual carriageway automatically

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meant road safety. It really depended on the design. With the increase in road traffic, centre-of-the-road turns were dangerous. Road safety therefore should have been built into the objectives. Discussion followed.

- 5.5 Chris Clark indicated road safety was one of the prime drivers for the upgrading of road to dual carriageway. While it would be ideal to provide grade-separated interchanges everywhere, at the end of the day, if money was spent on a grade separation where it was not required, it represented money that was not being providing on the road network elsewhere in the State (where it could provide greater benefits). It was necessary to balance what could be achieved on a State-wide basis with the limited amount of money available to spend.
- 5.6 Other CFG members said road safety had been given a high rating by the workshop and been fully assessed.
- 5.7 CFG member: *Can you provide a percentage of roads which are head-on crashes and which are same-side crashes? Surely that would be crucial to deciding whether dual carriageway does provide safety or not?*
- 5.8 Chris Clark responded he could get back to the CFG on that: There was however no doubt that there were very significant reductions in head-on crashes by going to dual carriageway. The target was to provide a dual carriageway route with a potential to reduce crash rates to 15 crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometres. It was something that was examined as part of the detailed design process and it was important to understand that, in developing a design, the accident outcome was a theoretical target that was pursued. The real focus of the design was to look at all the intersections or junctions along a road and to determine what type of treatment was required to meet that target. The assessment in the VM Workshop not only looked at the accident rate on the upgraded highway but also the accident rate on the remaining section of the highway that would be bypassed.
- 5.9 A CFG member said he believed figures on road traffic were outdated, including the 'functionality' observations 12 months ago. He was concerned that the current planning did not look far enough ahead or had taken into account the traffic that might be generated by development at Moonee or Boambee.
- 5.10 Chris Clark responded that the planning had been based on projected traffic figures through to 2021. They took into account the growth of traffic caused by developments along the full length of the highway, the populations and traffic generated by new urban release areas in the (Sapphire to Woolgoolga) area, traffic that was likely to be attracted off other roads on to the Pacific Highway as a result of the upgrade of the Highway, and the amount of additional traffic likely to be generated through the enticement of reduced travel costs.
- 5.11 Tim Paterson added that "level of service" also was a measure of how the new road in 2021 would function. It included capacity of the road and the ease with which people could access and leave the road with safety at each of the major junctions from Sapphire to Woolgoolga. The Working Paper which assessed this demonstrated that in 2021 there would be a good level of service to ensure that the high cost of that investment was going to last well and truly into the future.
- 5.12 Chris Clark said that in terms of looking beyond 2021, particularly in the area from Sapphire to Moonee, a sufficiently wide enough corridor would be acquired to enable the road to be further upgraded at that point in time, whether through the provision of service roads or an upgrade of the highway.

Chris Clark to respond on head-on and same-side crash statistics

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- 5.13 A CFG member said he wanted to hear a definition of what constituted a bypass when one of the objectives of the workshop was to achieve 80km/h in urban areas. This didn't seem to match up with the concept of a bypass.
- 5.14 Chris Clark responded that that had been a specific recognition of the fact that option D was the highway through Woolgoolga. To try to put a 100km/h design speed through Woolgoolga would be quite devastating for that section of Woolgoolga.
- 5.15 CFG member: *So what is the RTA definition of a bypass?*
- 5.16 Chris Clark: *We are investigating a number of options, three of which are bypassing the urban areas of Woolgoolga and one is upgrading the existing highway through town.* He continued with his overhead presentation showing the assessment criteria adopted by the workshop, their weighting, and the route options evaluation. In summary:
- Functionality C the best  
Then D, B1 and B2  
Then A – considerably lower
  - Environment D the best  
Followed by C, B1 and B2  
A performed worst
  - Socio-economic A best  
C  
D  
B1 and B2
- 5.17 Chris Clark said recommendations had been made concerning a preferred direction by the workshop participants which included that C and D, on balance, were considered to perform better than the other options, that there was potential to more effectively integrate noise management measures with C and D, and that C and D created minimal land loss and impact on the “ability to farm” agricultural land. On balance, C and D were considered to perform better than the other options subject to a number of recommendations including supplementary studies and other assessments.
- 5.18 A CFG member queried how the workshop participants had determined what was critical in a list of some 40 or so items considered to be important about the project, eg community severance.
- 5.19 Chris Clark responded that the attendees were split into four groups to come up with what they saw as being important about the project. Each group came up with about 10-15 items they saw as important. Although acknowledging that all items were important, they ranked or prioritised the top five by allocating a star to them.
- 5.20 Tim Paterson added that in the assessment of the options, all the issues raised as being important were cross-checked to ensure they had been covered.
- 5.21 **Value Engineering Workshop Outcomes**

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Overhead presentation by Chris Clark

- 5.22 Chris Clark moved on to the Value Engineering Workshop (VEW) using overheads in his presentation. This workshop had concentrated exclusively on the Sapphire to Moonee section of the highway. The section was split up into three sections: Moonee to just north of Wakelands Road, just north of Wakelands Road to Sapphire; and southern Sapphire to Korora. The main outcomes/recommendations of the workshop were that: the Moonee interchange was in the appropriate location to service that community, there was a need to consider improving the junction of Hoys Road, and a need to limit the environmental impact on Cunninghams Creek. Some of the key points for the Moonee to Wakelands Road section were that the compatibility of the urban area was seen as important, noise treatment was also important and that the proposed location with Maccues Road was appropriate. Other key points were that there also was a need for cycleways and pedestrian access up and down the highway, connectivity to the school site on the western side of Moonee and access to the Sapphire Service Station. For the Wakelands Road to Sapphire section, the workshop was unable to come up with a clear preference for the location of the interchange at either Headlands Road, or Gaudrons-Split Solitary Roads. In the area from Sapphire through to Nautilus, access to Sapphire Pines was considered as well as urban design around and over the highway, cycleways, and access to the Sapphire Service Station and the Sapphire area itself. There were a number of suggestions which the Project Team had taken on board.
- 5.23 CFG member said he knew an underpass suggested in the latter area was difficult. Was an overpass option considered?
- 5.24 Chris Clark responded that a number of suggestions had been considered. The Project Team was working on them at the moment. The investigations had not been progressed enough at this point in time.
- 5.25 CFG member said overpasses and underpasses and the location of the interchange in that area had been a big discussion point at the workshop. Some of the design issues had been difficult and that was why the workshop did not make a decision.
- 5.26 Another CFG member said he believed wherever the interchange was located, there was still an argument for providing a service road for all of the community on the eastern side of the highway which could feed in from the Coffs Harbour end.
- 5.27 Chris Clark responded that the viewpoint had been expressed in submissions and would be taken on board.
- 5.28 CFG member asked who attended the VEW?
- 5.29 Chris Clark indicated there were three members of the Sapphire-Moonee CFG, a representative from the Environment Protection Authority and a number of experts in traffic issues, urban design, noise issues and construction issues. He emphasised that neither the VMW or VEW were decision-making forums. The input from both would be an input into the decision on a preferred option.
- 5.30 A CFG member asked what the Woolgoolga group's participants thought of the VMW? He said even though the outcomes of the workshop were not final, options C and D had certainly been given publicity in the press.
- 5.31 A CFG member responded that the positives of the workshop were that it recognised the value of the landscape, rural lands, tourism and future growth of the area. It took account of the growth rates of communities and the accident rates that

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could occur on the section of the Pacific Highway that might be bypassed, an aspect that tended to be overlooked by a lot of people. It also took into account the need for an acceptable level of service on the bypassed section of highway. It was no good putting in a bypass and then putting in a road that did not provide an acceptable level of service for the community. The negative aspects of the workshop included its timing. A lot of the input was based on the Working Papers and the VMW was carried out prior to the publication of the public inputs. There were more public submissions that would have conveyed concern about noise. There were a number of submissions put in by the community relating to specific issues: environment, urban development, etc. The VMW should have been carried out after the public submissions had been investigated and that information made available to the participants. He believed the workshop also overstated the environmental impacts of Option A, because A went through State Forest and had had far greater scientific study than any of the other Options. It also was important to note that the workshop outcomes were based on the premise that further assessments would be carried out and noise mitigation would be adequately addressed and in a way that was visually acceptable to the community. The workshop was opposed in general to concrete walls everywhere. He wanted to see a focused effort on looking at noise mitigation and what was acceptable to the community.

- 5.32 Another CFG member said he had attended the workshop and thought the process was a good one in terms of identifying the criteria and having a say. Criteria were established, agreed on and rated. The workshop had recognised there were some further assessments needed in relation to options C and D. He had no doubt that whatever option had come up, there would still be a whole list of points it would be subject to. He did not believe a road could be built that would meet everyone's needs. It was however only one step in the process. Ultimately, the decision would be made by the Minister.
- 5.33 Another CFG member said he also had attended the workshop and agreed that the process had been a good one and was objective.
- 5.34 A CFG member said one of the four groups at the workshop had stated they could not give an opinion on a preferred route. He also was curious to see what would happen regarding the 10 points Council had presented at the workshop and the objectives stated there.
- 5.35 Jo Gardner indicated that an overview of the critical issues raised in the public submissions had been provided to the VMW. She said every one of the critical issues raised was covered and cross checked. The workshop participants had known what the issues raised in submissions were in terms of their positive and negative impact.
- 5.36 A CFG member said he did not agree and believed a number of the submissions made had not been picked up by then. The Project Team would not have had time to comment on a lot of the submissions anyway that required further investigation. He said he knew that a table had been prepared which itemised the issues raised in submissions and the Project Team's response to them and that information had not been available to the workshop participants.
- 5.37 Chris Clark responded that meetings had been held prior to the workshop with participants who had raised issues in their submissions. The purpose of the meetings had been to go through their issues with them in considerable detail. A review also had been carried out on the submissions which had raised issues to

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check if any were significant enough to have a major impact on the decision-making process. Quite a few were referred to the relevant experts. The assessment was that there wasn't any issue raised that would have a significant impact in terms of making a major change to the overall assessments in the Working Papers. He also indicated that, in regard to the 10 points Council had raised, further discussions were being held by the Steering Committee with Council and Council was doing more work on their objectives as a result of those discussions.

- 5.38 CFG member said while it was being stated that the VMW was not the 'be all and end all', what he was hearing was that, as a result of the Value Management process, C and D were moving forward and the other options had fallen by the wayside.
- 5.39 Cr Wood said the outcome of the workshop was that options C and D be given further consideration. It was not appropriate to make definitive recommendations.
- 5.40 CFG member said that "worthy of further considerations" inferred that the other options were not worthy.
- 5.41 Cr Wood: *Other options have not been discarded. I know that Council are interested in looking at some further variations of the B options.*
- 5.42 CFG member said there was confusion in the community about what was happening and there needed to be clarification.
- 5.43 Chris Clark indicated the Steering Committee needed to meet and agree on a way forward. Part of that involved looking at the additional work that the VMW had identified in regard to the options. Parallel with that was the additional studies that needed to be done including the interchange locations through Sapphire, access arrangements, service road issues etc. All that work would be brought together with the outcomes of the VMW and the VEW to the Steering Committee with the desired intention for it to make a recommendation on a way forward. It might or might not involve a recommendation as to a preferred option. It was hoped this would occur in May or early June. It was expected a preferred option could be announced mid-year.
- 5.44 Discussion followed.
- 5.45 Tim Paterson indicated the recommendation from the VMW would go to the Steering Committee, as would a whole host of other analyses that the Steering Committee was privy to. The Steering Committee would not act solely on a recommendation of a VMW. It would have its own checks and balances over the whole range of pros and cons for all the options. It was not going to be dictated to by the outcome of a VMW. It was above that.
- 5.46 Andrew Smith said it had been well-flagged that the VMW was only a single element in the process and the process forward had been outlined by Chris.
- 5.47 CFG member asked what were the other specific inputs into the decision-making process?
- 5.48 Chris Clark responded they included the Route Options Development Report and all the Working Papers associated with that, the reports from the VMW and the VEW, the submissions report, and the additional investigations to be undertaken and the reports associated with those.
- 5.49 CFG member asked whether there was a procedure that would be gone through to

Details:

Action By/Date:

analytically and objectively come up with a recommendation?

- 5.50 Chris Clark responded that the Steering Committee had agreed to hold a formal, facilitated workshop similar to the VMW.
- 5.51 Tim Paterson said it should be noted that that was not the conclusion. The Steering Committee made a recommendation which would be referred to the Minister for Roads. The Minister became the owner of the project and followed an established process to make the final notification.
- 5.52 CFG member said he had recently heard that options A, B1 and B2 were all going to be part of a new National Park that was going to be created. If that was correct, didn't that mean that the only options left to be examined were C and D or did it mean some other western bypass could be examined as an alternative option?
- 5.53 Tim Paterson said there had been no decision to discard any Option.
- 5.54 A CFG member said he believed the VMW process was flawed because it involved participants who would later be involved in making a recommendation.
- 5.55 Tim Paterson indicated it was important to note that the process was conducted by independent facilitators accredited by the State Government and in accordance with the Australian Standard.
- 5.56 CFG member said he did not believe he had had an answer regarding the National Park and its impact on A and B.
- 5.57 Jo Gardner said her understanding was that the area identified for inclusion in National Parks was close to Option A but it was one consideration in a whole range of considerations regarding the option.
- 5.58 CFG member said he believed Option A would pass through the proposed Nature Reserve Area. The B options were not affected. However, the highway also passed through what would soon be National Park at Pine Creek and a satisfactory arrangement had been worked out for that.

## 6. OTHER ISSUES

- 6.1 **Media Release from this Meeting**
- 6.2 Andrew Smith invited suggestions for a media release. Discussion followed.
- 6.3 Chris Clark indicated the next media release would include that the submissions report was available to the community. CFG members would receive copies.
- 6.4 Agreement regarding the media release was that it should include the process forward, that the recommendation-making process involved a number of inputs and the VMW was only one of them, and an update on the Coastal Ridge Way.

## 7. NEXT CFG MEETING

- 7.1 Chris Clark said the date of the next CFG meeting would depend on how long a number of inputs took but it would be held prior to any announcement.

## 8. CLOSE OF MEETING

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

**Next Meeting: To Be Advised**

**APPENDIX**

Ideas and suggestions taken from the floor on butchers paper notes

**CFG No.11 – COMBINED MEETING OF SAPPHIRE TO  
WOOLGOOLGA GROUPS**

Woolgoolga Community Hall, Woolgoolga

7 MAY 2003

Matters arising:

1. Bus tours (→ CHCC forum)
2. Coastal Ridge Way investigation? (mid 2003)
3. Involvement of Indigenous representatives
4. Sikh representation

Media release:

1. VMS/VE outcomes
2. Submissions report
3. Where to? Process from now
4. Coastal Ridge Way