

Meeting Notes

Project:	Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project	Reference:	1093.40.GE
Location:	Cinema Room, Woolgoolga Bowling Club, Boundary St, Woolgoolga	Date:	26 February 2004

Present: Apology: Copy: Name:

NORTHERN CFG (Woolgoolga Area)			
✓			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
✓			John Langhorn
		✓	Pam Stone
	✓		Coffs Harbour & District Local Aboriginal Land Council (Mark Flanders)
✓			Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation – Dee Murphy
✓			Jas Benning
NORTHERN CFG (Sapphire/Moonee Area)			
	✓		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
PROJECT TEAM			
✓			Chris Clark RTA
✓			Bob Higgins RTA
✓			Adam Cameron RTA
✓			Tim Paterson Connell Wagner
✓			Rosemary Russell Connell Wagner
	✓		Barry Hancock Connell Wagner
✓			Jo North Connell Wagner
✓			Andrew Smith Pramax Communications
✓			John Finlay DIPNR
	✓		Steve Murray DIPNR
Recorded By: Pramax Communications			Total Pages: 7
Subject: Community Focus Group Meeting No 12 (combined meeting of Woolgoolga & Sapphire/Moonee areas)			

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Andrew Smith opened the meeting at 6.00pm, welcoming everyone back after 9 months and thanking everyone for coming at such short notice.
- 1.2 Apologies: Apologies were received from Ron Gray, Steven Moody, Des Saunders, Gary Davey, Barry Hancock and Steve Murray.

2. INTRODUCTION OF NEW CFG MEMBER

- 2.1 New member Jas Benning – Jas represents Bananas NSW, who represent banana growers from Queensland border and as far south as Nambucca. Jas spoke about the uncertainty in the local banana industry and the need to protect viable banana growing land.

3. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 Andrew Smith proposed a variation to the meeting agenda - he suggested looking at the Notes after moving through Agenda items 3 and 4 because it was important to get up to speed with what had been happening and some matters could be covered in the presentation by Chris Clark. This was agreed to by all present.
- 3.2 CFG member: *Are all meetings likely to be at such short notice in the future? Charter states that two (2) weeks' notice should be given.*
- 3.3 Andrew Smith – *No, there was a need to convene this group as quickly as possible following the ministerial announcement. We will always try to give you at least two (2) weeks' notice.*

4. CURRENT STATUS

- 4.1 Overhead Presentation by Chris Clark (RTA)
- 4.2 Chris Clark welcomed back members after such a long break.
- 4.3. Bob Higgins (RTA) said the Steering Committee had been comprised of representatives of Coffs Harbour City Council, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources and the RTA. Following Council's adoption of a preferred corridor, the Steering Committee had been placed in an untenable position. Last Monday, all parties had agreed that the best way forward was to disband the steering committee. Cr Bill Wood chaired the meeting, the Mayor was there and a press release was issued. Now this had occurred, DIPNR and the RTA had to resolve the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy and take it forward for discussions. Both departments were still working with Council. Council was invited to attend CFG meetings. It would be invited to be part of the Value Management Workshops to be held too. Monthly briefings of Council would continue to be held and Council was invited to all CFG meetings. A councillor had attended the CFG meeting held last night. Both departments wanted Council's continued involvement. There would be other assessments with focus groups where government agencies would participate as well. DIPNR and the RTA were trying to get to the point of an announcement of a preferred route. The minister had said he had not made a decision at this stage.
- 4.4 CFG member questioned whether the Value Management Workshop and the Value Management Study were the same thing?
- 4.5 Chris Clark: *The Value Management Workshop forms part of the Value Management Study. At the Workshop we have to manage a large group of representatives from various areas.*

Overheads previously provided to CFG members

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- 4.6 CFG member: *What about additional representation?*
- 4.7 Chris Clark: *Can't say at this stage.*
- 4.8 CFG member: *– Are there still some opportunities for members of the CFG to be active in the study?*
- 4.9 Chris Clark: *Yes, Andrew will work through the nomination process with this group. Those people who attend CFGs may represent interests in the community. Representatives of Government agencies will also take part in the value management study. Having representatives of the community at the formal workshop is a key part of the whole value management process.*
- 4.10 CFG member *– How long does the RTA feel it is going to take to assess Council's preferred corridor?*
- 4.11 Chris Clark: *– We anticipate considerably shorter than it took for the Coastal Ridge Way, as there is less new data to collect and go through.*
- 4.12 CFG member asked how long the assessment of the preferred corridor would delay the announcement of a preferred option?
- 4.13 Chris Clark responded that it was hoped an announcement on a preferred option would be made by the middle of this year.
- 4.14 CFG member asked whether there was a viable route in the corridor?
- 4.15 Chris Clark indicated that if the assessment did not find a viable route, consideration would need to be given to the next steps.
- 4.16 CFG member: *Regarding Council's corridor – I don't know that much without looking into it – they consider the Coastal Ridge Way not viable. It is like putting a highway straight up the side of Dorrigo Mountain – impossible – CRW could be done but it will have an enormous impact.*
- 4.17 CFG member: *It is not the Council's job to be engineers; the Council merely do the job they were elected to do. Proposals that are closer to built-up areas are not acceptable. The CRW- Option A proposal is very much on the table. They are looking at an alternative possibility – nothing will be excluded in the assessment. There are a lot of issues – high mountains, NPWS etc. It has to be looked at, not just dismissed.*
- 4.18 CFG member: *–Is Option A still on the table? What about option C and D and option B1 and B2 – are they not worth of any further consideration?*
- 4.19 Chris Clark: *The findings of the VM workshop and subsequent investigations indicated that Options B1, B2 and D did not merit further consideration. Option A however is still on the table.*
- 4.20 CFG member: *What if there is not a viable option through Council's corridor, what happens to A?*
- 4.21 Chris Clark: *–That's not possible to say at this stage.*
- 4.22 CFG member: *Option A is not favoured by who?*
- 4.23 Chris Clark: *Due to its environmental constraints. B1 & B2 did not merit further consideration due to the need to protect valuable agricultural land and Option D was not acceptable due to its social and economic impacts on Woolgoolga.*

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- 4.24 CFG member: *Does this mean Council's corridor is being pursued?*
- 4.25 Chris Clark: *When the Minister announces a preferred route, it is a very important milestone. The minister has not made this decision yet. We have to look at the whole Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy. In order to get to that point, we have to go through the Value Management process. What these reports do is put on the table what options we have at this point in time. Based on all the things we have done, there are some problems with the Coastal Ridge Way so in short, like Options A, B and D, it is not favoured but no decision has been made.*
- 4.26 Chris Clark indicated that the staging of the project was important. There was a need to determine the preferred route for a bypass of Woolgoolga. Connell Wagner had been engaged to carry out the environmental assessment of the preferred option and they were ready to start as soon as the announcement of a preferred option had been made. Once a decision had been made on a preferred option for the Coffs Harbour section, there was a need to protect that route for the future. When the EIS had been completed for the northern section, there was a need to progress to implementation with provision for the Coffs Harbour end being implemented later on.
- 4.27 Chris Clark then continued with his overhead presentation.
- 4.28 CFG member asked if consideration had been given to an option going under Sherwood Nature Reserve?
- 4.29 Chris Clark responded that if it (Option A) was the preferred option, this could be looked at.
- 4.30 CFG member: *This is a good option and would keep a lot of people happy.*
- 4.31 CFG member: *If an option within Council's preferred corridor was chosen, would that mean linking with Option A?*
- 4.32 Chris Clark responded that, as with any of the options, this would need to be looked at.
- 4.33 CFG member asked if it would be possible to have a look at the existing highway through Coffs Harbour and identify what would need to be done prior to any preferred bypass being built?
- 4.34 Chris Clark replied that information on this was being collected at the moment.
- 4.35 CFG member responded that they were concerned about the capacity of the existing highway to cope with local traffic once a bypass was built. Did the Government consider that section was up to the standard they have promised?
- 4.36 Chris Clark: *We are prioritising. Other sections have been fixed up from a safety point of view and now the next sections are being examined.*
- 4.37 CFG member: *Is the time-frame for the start of construction the same as a year ago, being 2006 for Woolgoolga?*
- 4.38 Chris Clark: *It depends on how long the process of announcing a preferred route and completing the environmental assessment will take. We are going as fast as we possibly can so that when funds become available we can take advantage of them. Both the Bonville and Ballina bypasses are pending and the next wave of projects, Kempsey to Eungai, and Macksville to Urunga, are being prepared.*
- 4.39 CFG member: *Will Council allow us to look at modifications?*

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- 4.40 Chris Clark: Yes.
- 4.41 CFG member: *How much investigation has there been on option E?*
- 4.42 Chris Clark: *It's all in the report which will be distributed this evening.*
- 4.43 Discussion followed on the use of the word 'favoured' in relation to an Option. Chris Clark indicated it was the wording the Minister had chosen to use. The Minister however had not made a decision on any of the options as yet.
- 4.44 Chris Clark indicated that once the environmental assessment had been completed, the RTA would be in a position to look at how the preferred option could be delivered. This wouldn't be decided until further down the track. Perhaps it would be built all in one go or staged in sections.
- 4.45 Chris Clark continued with his presentation. Regarding the Sapphire to Moonee section, only a limited amount of work had been carried out. Once a preferred option for the Sapphire to Woolgoolga section of the strategy had been identified, a concept design would be developed and a range of key planning matters would be addressed for the preferred option including the location of interchanges, service roads and location of noise mitigation measures. He showed a longitudinal section of the various proposed options to explain some of the main features and differences between them.
- 4.46 CFG member: *What about the Burringbar Range – how would that compare?*
- 4.47 Chris Clark responded that its maximum height was 110m-120m above sea level. This was comparable to the Bulahdelah to Coolongolook project. The Coastal Ridge Way had a maximum grading of 6% which was the maximum aimed for. Above 6% was not desirable.

Break from 7.45pm to 8.00pm

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Tim Paterson (Connell Wagner) indicated that there was a copy of the Supplementary Options Report for each CFG member. The documents were also available on the website including the Strategy Report, which focussed on the inner corridor options for the Coffs Harbour section, and a review of the Coastal Ridge Way proposal. Hard copies also were available by contacting Pramax. He went through the posters produced for the staffed and static displays and explained them in detail.
- 5.2 CFG member asked if the assessment of Council's preferred corridor would include examination of a different exit from the current Pacific Highway. The southern end of the Coastal Ridge Way was a difficult area.
- 5.3 Chris Clark responded that Council had defined the area it wanted examined and that was what would be concentrated on. We are not revisiting any old options and we are going ahead with the assessment of Council's option. The RTA had held a number of meetings with Pristine Waters Council and it had indicated it did not want a bypass near Glenreagh. It was important to keep in mind that Coffs Harbour City Council had also resolved that it did not want any bypass to go into the Orara Valley. Council had put tight limitations on what might be suitable to it.

6. FUTURE ROLE OF THE CFG

- 6.1 Chris Clark: *There will be ongoing discussions with the community and the CFGs in the next stages. The role of the CFG might change as we go through this process.*

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When we get to the situation where we have a preferred option, some members may decide not to continue on, whereas there could be other people who might want to become involved. As you get into the design and construct phase, which could take 5-10 years, the groups may go through some changes.

6.2 CFG member: *Please define stakeholder*

6.3 Chris Clark: *A stakeholder is a person, community organisations and government organisations that have an interest in the process. It is basically someone who has a role to play in the process and has an interest. It is important that we are able to get information out to and receive feedback from the people affected – that is the role of the CFG.*

7. OTHER MATTERS

7.1 Discussion followed on a media release. It was acknowledged there were past difficulties in getting a release out following each meeting. The group felt that, after such a long break, the community needed to know that the process was up and running again and that the CFG was actively involved. It was also suggested by the group that the community needed to know where the process was heading.

7.2 Chris Clark advised that both newspapers (The Advocate & The Advertiser) had been approached and briefed on the status of the project.

7.3 CFG member queried who took information back to Council after meetings of the CFGs?

7.4 Bob Higgins (RTA) responded that invitations were issued to Council to attend CFG meetings. There was a meeting the following week with Council and it would be stressed to them that there was an open invitation to attend CFG meetings.

7.5 CFG member said only Wednesday's issue of The Advocate was distributed in the Bucca Valley.

7.6 Chris Clark: *We have been using both Saturday and Wednesday issues of The Advocate and Monday's Advertiser to maximise circulation to everyone.*

8. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

8.1 The Notes of the previous meeting were accepted.

9. NEXT CFG MEETING(S)

9.1 Chris Clark indicated the next meeting would be at least 4 weeks away. It depended on the completion of the assessment of Council's preferred corridor.

9.2 CFG member: *Can we have at least 2 weeks' notice as per the charter?*

9.3 Andrew Smith:– *We will endeavour to give you at least 2 weeks' notice prior to the next meeting.*

10. CLOSE OF MEETING

Meeting closed at 8.38pm.