

## Meeting Notes

Project:	Sapphire to Woolgoolga Upgrade Project	Reference:	1093.40.GE
Location:	Moonee Beach Hall, Moonee	Date:	21 May 2002

Present: Apology: Copy: Name:

NORTHERN CFG (Sapphire/Moonee Area)			
✓			Keith Adams
		✓	Rick Baker
✓			Helen Ball
✓			Charles Barnes
✓			Vincent Brooker
✓			Steve Clemesha
✓			Ray Faggotter
✓			Jill Heris
✓			Andrew Huggett
	✓		Peter Lubans
		✓	Ernie Armstrong (proxy)
✓			Tammy Mills-Thom
✓			Shinichi Otani
✓			Phil Price
✓			Colin South
PROJECT TEAM			
✓			Wes Stevenson RTA
	✓		Bob Higgins RTA
✓			Robert Kook RTA
✓			Martin Howard RTA
✓			Tim Paterson Connell Wagner
✓			Rosemary Russell Connell Wagner

	✓		Bruce Penman	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	PlanningNSW
Recorded By: Pramax Communications				Total Pages: 6
Subject: Community Focus Group Meeting No 5 (Sapphire/Moonee section)				

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Andrew Smith opened the meeting at 5.45pm. He welcomed Martin Howard from the RTA, guest speaker to address the CFG re the RTA Land Acquisition Policy. Also a welcome to Bill Wood and George Stulle from Coffs Harbour Council.

## 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as correct.
- 2.2 It was noted that Rene Burkart, Malcom Imrie and John Finlay should be taken off the attendance list.

## 3. MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 People's Choice Corridor - This corridor was an option brought to the Steering Committee and named as People's Choice by Wilson Dale, representative of the community group PANIC. Tim Paterson showed overhead of the People's Choice option overlain on the Coffs Harbour central and outer bypass corridor options. These had already been found by the Steering Committee to be not feasible. Wilson Dale's corridor was 21kms longer and far more costly than the central corridor. It would have an 80m cutting – there is no previous example of cuttings this deep in Australia. As a comparison the highway through the Hawkesbury is only 35m. Tunnels were not looked at seriously as they would be too long and expensive and not in the realm of feasibility.

### 3.2 Council's Peer Review of options

Councillor Bill Wood told the group that Council has resolved to commission a Peer Review to look at options that have been generated so far. It is common practice to do this on large-scale projects. The need for this Peer Review arose at a briefing of Councillors by Council officers when it was realised that whatever the outcome of the highway planning strategy, it would have a huge impact on Council's strategic planning policies. Connell Wagner and the RTA are currently having further briefings with Councillors. As far as cost goes, it will be a significant amount of money. Council's contribution to the cost of the highway strategy to date has been minimal and limited to staff costs only.

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## CFG questions regarding Peer Review:

- 3.3 *Q: How much was this going to cost?* A: The cost would depend on the scope of work specified in the brief.
- 3.4 *Q: Why are we spending money on a consultant to do what Council should be doing?*  
A: To get an objective and independent examination of the study process and findings to date
- 3.5 *Q: Is it possible the Peer Review will not go ahead? It will cost a lot of money. It is under peer review through the process of CFG meetings and Steering Committee meetings anyway.* A: The feeling is that the public is not happy with the process. This is doing something extra to see if we are going down the right track. The motion has been passed by Council and may, in the end, prove to be a worthwhile process. Council has not put any money into the highway project so far, just staff resources.
- 3.6 *CFG felt like the process had always been transparent. Will the Peer Review go back to the beginning and look at all the options or just look at it from where we are up to now?* A: (Bill Wood) It will be a review of the whole process for the whole length of the highway to date. Overall the feeling of the CFG was that a Peer Review was costly (for the tax-payers), disruptive and unwarranted.
- 3.8 Andrew Smith pointed out that it would not have much of an impact on this group for the present time. The Steering Committee is committed to pursuing the process as it set out until such time as any review necessitates a change. The CFG still has a process to follow.
- 3.9 Tim Paterson said that Connell Wagner was not affronted by the review at all. They had confidence in the results so far. There are plenty of projects that have Peer Reviews conducted.
- 3.10 **Woolgoolga bypass options.** The maps for the Woolgoolga area showing route options were on display – footprints of routes are shown overlain on aerial photo, consolidated property ownership and terrain maps. The options have been developed into engineering concepts and can now be costed. Tim Paterson suggested that the group examines the maps in detail during the break and we continue with the RTA presentation.

## 4. LAND ACQUISITION PROCESS

Presentation by RTA Property Manager, Martin Howard.

Attach summary of land acquisition overheads

- 4.1 Martin invited CFG to take business cards and ring anytime with any questions they may have.
- 4.2 Also available was a booklet outlining the RTA Land Acquisition Policy.

Questions from the CFG:

- 4.3 *Q: Does acquisition override other Acts of Parliament such as National Parks?* A: National Parks require an Act of Parliament to revoke that part of the land. It can be achievable but it is a long drawn-out process and there can also be conditions attached to the giving of that land. Wes Stevenson also indicated that the National Parks have been giving signals now that they do not want any more land to be taken from them.
- 4.4 *Q: What about properties that have such things as a shrine or vegetation that has a recognised value?* A: As far as Martin knows they have power to obtain land that

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has a covenant attached.

- 4.5 *Q: What about land that is owned by Aboriginal Councils?* A: This can only be sold with the agreement of the Aboriginal Council.
- 4.6 *Q: What sort of timetable does the acquisition process have?* A: About 18 months is the usual time frame for negotiation and the compulsory acquisition process. If compulsory acquisition is required, the land owner is notified. After writing to the land holder, the RTA waits 30 days and then makes an offer. The land holder has another 90 days to consider the offer and if they do nothing the offer is considered to be accepted. There are many avenues for mediation and it rarely gets to a situation of compulsory acquisition.
- 4.7 *Q: In the past the Government just resumed land and the price paid was a value of six years ago. How far back does the Valuer generally go?* A: In previous years the Government had the right to resume land. The value is taken from the date land is gazetted for acquisition. When land is gazetted for a highway, its market value immediately drops so when the RTA actually acquires the property it will be worth less money. The valuer must go away from the property and draw a comparison of the market from another location. They must make allowance for the fact that the proposed road is affecting the value of the property. The property owner's valuer and the RTA valuer should then sit down and look at the differences and come to an agreement.
- 4.8 Tim Paterson made the point that there had been occasions when the property value goes up because of a new road going through a site.

## 5. UPDATE ON DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 **Refinement of highway upgrade design.** The CFG looked at a large-scale aerial photo from Sapphire to Moonee showing concepts for intersection treatments and proposed interchanges etc. The concept plan developed so far is not a definitive plan. It does not have all service roads and is only a starting point for discussion. There is already land reserved between Sapphire and Heritage Park for converting the highway to dual carriageway. However, in certain areas, such as at interchange locations, more land acquisition would most likely be necessary.
- 5.2 A significant amount of land-use change is anticipated along this section of the highway over the next 15 to 20 years. North Sapphire already has an area zoned to allow for 1,900 more residents. This will result in increased trip generation. Moonee also has business and residential zoning which allows for an increase of 5,000 people to a total of 7,000 residents. This is a significant influx of new people to this area.

CFG would like a copy of this map attached. Is this possible?  
(Not yet available)

Discussion regarding highway access:

- 5.3 There is a need to rationalise highway access and also make it safe in relation to extra traffic numbers in the future. The highway is not just for through traffic but for local residents of Coffs Harbour.
- 5.4 Major points where interchanges required were at Sapphire, Moonee and Bucca Road. It was also possible that underpasses may be considered along the Sapphire stretch of the highway.
- 5.5 Many properties currently have access directly onto and off the highway – these will be eliminated over time if possible and there will be access changes for many residents. Resorts have indicated that they get overnight stays from passing traffic

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on the highway and need to have good access. It is possible to use some of the existing highway as a service road along parts of a new highway alignment.

- 5.6 Bucca Road interchange is being looked at for linking with Heritage Park and Avocado Heights as their access point. The exact spot for the interchanges are not decided but there is a minimum design standard of 1km between interchanges to stop weaving of traffic on and off the highway. This is a safety issue. The interchange that is on the map for Bucca Road could not really go any further south than it already is as it would then be too close to the Moonee one.
- 5.13 Access to the Zoo is a major consideration and there are many school buses also around the Heritage Park and zoo area.
- 5.15 One CFG member raised concerns that from a Sapphire interchange the residents would have to travel some distance to the north before they could access the highway to travel south. This would cause extra fuel and wear and tear on residents' vehicles.

## 6. FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES & INVESTIGATIONS

- 6.1 Next meeting there would be a footprint of the upgrade concept. Also long sections so we can see hills and over / under passes.
- 6.2 CFG will also be updated on where the rest of the project is headed.

## 7. OTHER ISSUES

- 7.1 *CFG felt that Woolgoolga section is ploughing ahead and that Sapphire / Moonee is being left behind.* The CFG was assured that the two parts of the project were being kept in sync. There are more variables and parameters to consider at the Woolgoolga end.
- 7.2 The next time frame for public release of information and feedback is July. An announcement on the preferred option for Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour will occur around Christmas.
- 7.3 The Steering Committee has received over 1,000 feedback forms from the last public information release. The summary of submissions will be a significant report and this is a substantial part of how we get information from the broader community.
- 7.4 The value in the considerable amount of the feedback from the community is in identifying issues.
- 7.5 CFG was concerned that Woolgoolga is getting more attention and their opinions are having a greater input than those at the Moonee end. The CFG was assured that evaluation of options was not a voting or numbers issue. Everyone has a right to have their say and point of view, but it is definitely not a voting process.
- 7.6 Andrew Smith informed the group that a resident from the Bucca area was joining the Woolgoolga CFG in the northern group as from tomorrow night and he will be a representative at the northern end for the Moonee area.
- 7.7 *CFG stated that some residents thought that if investigations were required on their property then the option had already been chosen.* Tim Paterson assured the CFG that investigations and testing had to be done in order to choose an option. They are non-intrusive but important to the decision-making process. The project team has been refused access onto some properties in the northern area. It would be helpful if the CFG could encourage residents to let the team carry out the investigations.

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7.8 Consideration for a combined meeting with Woolgoolga will be looked at if necessary. It will not be done to satisfy desire for a debate between members of the two groups on any points of difference. The decision-making process we are using does not require this. All views expressed will be considered equally. The Moonee group will be kept informed of the progress of the northern section of the highway.

## **8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be about 5 weeks. Andrew would let the CFG know ASAP.

## **9. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

**Next Meeting:      Wednesday, 3 July 2002**