

Project:	Woodburn to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade	Reference:	000561812
Meeting	COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP – Meeting No.4	Date:	22 March 2005

Present: Apology: Name: Group/ Organisation:

✓		David Judge	Wardell Progress Association
✓		Kerry Kelly	Bagotville
✓		Bill Walker	NSW Sugar Milling Co-Operative, Broadwater Mill
✓		Ron Rosolen	Wardell
		Natasha Heath	Wardell Progress Association
✓		Mike Rushby	Wardell
		Julie Coyle	Wardell
✓		Roger Stanley	Coolgardie
✓		Trevor Monti	Bagotville
✓		Emma Walke	Bagotville
✓		John Degotardi	Broadwater
✓		Jack Matthes	Broadwater
✓		Jeffrey Phillips	Woodburn
✓		Rodney Ison	Richmond River CLG – Broadwater and Pimlico interest
✓		Darren Woolage	Broadwater
		Murray Shergold	Woodburn
✓		Steve Flatley	Richmond River Cane Growers Association
✓		Bert Plenkovich	Richmond River Cane Growers Association
		Tony Carusi	Richmond River Cane Growers Association
✓		Ray Collyer	Wardell
✓		David McDonald	Rural area between Woodburn and Broadwater
✓		Stephanie Lymburner	Coolgardie and Coolgardie Scrub Conservation Group
✓		Mark Graham	North Coast Conservation Council, Big Scrub Environment Centre and Nature Conservation Council
✓		Rik Nutt	Woodburn
		Bill Salapic	Woodburn
✓		Colin Duncan	Wardell
		Francine Hitchens	Riley's Hill
	✓	Paddy Wilde	Riley's Hill
✓		Barry Jameson	Jali Aboriginal Council
✓		Arti Ferguson	Jali Aboriginal Council
		Shane Higgins	Roads and Traffic Authority
		Toby Heys	Roads and Traffic Authority
✓		Andrew Nathan	Hyder Consulting
		Georgina Legoe	Hyder Consulting

✓		Carolyn Stone	PPM Consultants
✓		Annette Ross	Hyder Consulting
✓		Georgina Legoe	Hyder Consulting
✓		Brendon Johnson	Hyder Consulting
✓		Matthew Sudgen	Hyder Consulting
✓		Shane Higgins	Roads and Traffic Authority
✓		Toby Heys	Roads and Traffic Authority
✓		Daniela Payne	GeoLINK
✓		Brett Campbell	Geolyse
<b>Recorded By:</b>		Daniela Payne, GeoLINK	<b>Total Pages:</b> 7

**WOODBURN TO BALLINA – COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP  
NOTES OF MEETING NO.4 – TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2005**

Andrew opened the meeting at 6.30 pm, and welcomed members. Andrew introduced the two new CLG members – Barry Jameson and Artie Ferguson, both from the Jali Aboriginal Land Council.

CLG members were asked to complete the Feedback Form sent out with the minutes. The objective of the Form was to inform the Project Team of how the CLG members are viewing the CLG process to date and to make any suggested improvements.

Carolyn Stone introduced a few project team members that had not previously been present at the CLG meetings – Annette Ross (Team Leader - Environmental); Matthew Sudgen (Acoustic Engineer). Andrew also introduced the agenda for the meeting and noted that the importance of the meeting was around informing the CLG on the content of the Constraints mapping workshop.

Q: Why were the notes from the previous meeting sent out so late. Minutes had arrived only one week before this meeting, when there was a previous commitment made by the project team to distribute the notes two weeks prior to the next CLG?

A: There were delays which will certainly be addressed, apologies were given, and the commitment was reaffirmed to send notes out sooner.

**ITEM 1 Acceptance of CLG 3a and b notes (CAROLYN STONE)**

Carolyn asked for comment on the notes of the last two CLG meetings prior to the minutes being accepted by all.

Jack questioned the listing of the strengths and weaknesses of one of the Eastern routes; Rik answered his question by explaining why they were represented as such.

Kerry will be rewording the comment with regard to the privacy of information and that will be changed in the notes and re sent to all members.

The CLG notes 3a and 3b were otherwise accepted.

**ITEM 2 Presentation on route options by Ecologist (Garry Owers, BAppSc (Hons))**

Garry Owers introduced himself and the work in which he is currently involved. He works for Wetland Care Australia, and is part of the Bugwalbin Catchment Management Group, a Landcare group, and has lead canoe discovery trips for National Parks and Wildlife in the past, amongst numerous other projects. He has worked with various Government institutions – including the Department of Agriculture, DIPNR, Department of Fisheries and National Parks and Wildlife. His current work includes working with farmers on various issues including fencing off riverbanks to improve water quality, the removal of invasive weeds; planning to avoid black water flood events; and, the introduction of wetland plants which has the dual purpose of improving farm productivity and increasing water quality. Garry has also undertaken research for Southern Cross University in the past.

Garry made a few points whilst presenting the route corridor options he had come up with: . ( The following text was provided by Garry and has not been changed by the project team)

- Very few landowners want a freeway across or near their property.
- Those living on the left of the study area want it to go right and those on the right want it to go left.
- The RTA study area map provided lacked resolution when printed in black & white.
- Why was the study area so wide, taking in the Tuckean Swamp & Blackwall Range? The mention of the word 'Swamp' and 'Range' should have rung alarm bells.
- Have other options been explored?
  - Money could be spent on Rail which would: -
  - Remove most trucks, buses & many cars.
  - Save lives.
  - Avoid the need for an upgrade. Return the highway back to the community. Effect of a new road will be – MORE TRAFFIC, many studies have showed this to be true. The freeway through Brisbane is up to 12 lanes, congested with traffic even on a Sunday. Traffic volume increased dramatically after the Tweed Freeway opened; building more roads appears to be the wrong way.

- Landsat 7 (1999) false colour image better identifies vegetation type.
- Vast extent of sugar cane on coastal plain to east and southwest.
- Areas to North-West under Macadamia plantation etc
- Limited extent of Native Vegetation, most, already heavily impacted by humans-
  - Broadwater National Park sand mined and used as a rubbish dump at northern end on both sides of the road.
  - Tuckean Swamp drained, acidified and invaded by melaleucas.
  - Blackwall Range logged
  - Wardell heath sand mined
  - Broadwater mangrove community on depositional flats from material eroded by artificial drainage of the Tuckean Swamp.
  - All native bushland subject to high fire frequency.
- The two ways of avoiding cane land is to route the highway down Evans River & along beach but only at low tide or up the centre of the Richmond River. These are not feasible routes therefore; cane land cannot be avoided due to its extent.
- Native vegetation represents biodiversity, which is the reason we are all here and is essential for our continued existence. We cannot afford to lose any more areas of native vegetation.
- Global Dimming as shown on ABC 4 Corners program of 21/3/05 indicates up to 30% drop in solar radiation reaching earth over the last 30 years due to pollution particles shading the earth and combining with water droplets to reflect sunlight back into space, yet the planet is still heating up. Therefore the impact of global warming is dramatically underestimated with maximum 10°C rise in global temperature predicted by end of century which will make areas uninhabitable, melt polar ice caps and cause a 7 metre rise in sea level. (If future residents want to use this section of freeway, they will need a boat.) The forecast rise of 2°C during next 25-years, will have dramatic effects for mankind and the natural environment. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the upper atmosphere has already increased by 30% during the last 100 years from 280 to 370 parts per million. Plant studies have shown long term response to increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> by plants is to reduce stomata, CO<sub>2</sub> intake and oxygen output. It is therefore imperative for the sake of our children and grandchildren that we protect the ecosystems that store CO<sub>2</sub> as carbon, eg forests, oceans and wetlands while reducing the use of fossil fuel.
- Sugar cane presently occupies over twice the area of native vegetation and does not store carbon in the long term. Carbon stored by sugar cane is released as carbon dioxide when burned or methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) when consumed.
- The only two feasible routes are the Eastern and Western Route.
- Widening of the existing Pacific Highway would not have too much effect on the environment or cane farms.
- Eastern route is Garry's preference as it traverses the least cane land & requires one river crossing. There is very little native vegetation as it was previously used for sand mining.
- Western route would affect "new cane country". It would traverse 1.4 times the amount of cane land and would cut through 2.2 times more cane land previously undisturbed by highways than the eastern route. The cane industry should therefore be supporting the eastern route.
- Western route requires additional bridge over the Broadwater at the old ferry crossing. This section is a paleo valley formed during the last ice age and filled in during the last 7,000 years (Holocene) with 60 metres depth of marine gels, clays and muds. Soils are highly reactive with both potential and actual acid sulfate soils with Monosulfidic Black Ooze (MBO) lining drains. Disturbance to MBO's can strip dissolved oxygen from receiving waters within five minutes and kill all gilled aquatic life. Potential Acid Sulfate Soils (PASS) on exposure to oxygen oxidise to form sulfuric acid and other oxidation products including iron hydroxides and toxic aluminium, which also kills aquatic life. These soils form a very poor foundation for a major bridge. . The area of ASS is the "hottest" area on the coast.
- Western route would fragment koala habitat in the vicinity of Old Bagotville Road and Thurgates Lane, destroy native vegetation north of the Broadwater and may need to traverse Aboriginal land to the north.
- Possible alternate link via Riley's Hill Road would pass close to Riley's Hill and over the Dry Dock with a bridge over the Richmond at a sharp bend in the river. This would cause a loss of cultural heritage at the dry dock and place the bridge at a bend most likely to actively erode.
- Mangroves near Back Channel Road are not original.
- As cane takes two years to grow compared to one thousand years for rainforest, it is preferably although still not ideal that the freeway passes through cane land rather than rainforest or other native plant communities.

- The main reason to grow cane is economic with many farmers living elsewhere and economic loss can easily be compensated.
- Therefore it is very important that the committee unites to get the best deal for those in the community who will be most affected.
- Garry thanked the committee for allowing him to give the presentation.

When the floor was opened for questions, Garry was asked to point out exactly where he lived. He pointed out that he lived just outside the study area on the western edge.

Garry was thanked by all CLG and project team members and then left the CLG meeting.

A CLG Member commented that the information received from Garry was no more informative than the information the CLG group had already been through in their deliberations to date. Some CLG members disputed this comment and Carolyn then sufficed to say that perhaps all members were not aware of how much could be learnt from the varied and knowledgeable group represented by the CLG members themselves.

Andrew then pointed out that there is a reasonable level of consistency with Garry's suggestions and some of the corridors already identified. There were many striking similarities and few minor differences in comparison. Garry's work had been done independently of the study team, and in that respect it did have additional value and deserved consideration, especially given Garry's background and local knowledge. The design team were happy that many of the constraints and opportunities raised by Garry were in many ways similar to the teams work to date.

### **ITEM 3 Review of corridor options as considered in CLG 3b and overview of Corridor Mapping Workshop (CMW) (GEORGINA LEGOE, BERT, MARK, JACK)**

The CLG members were asked for their feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses summarised from the CLG 3b workshop. They were reminded that they were not restricted to making comment only at these meetings. Submissions or comments could be given to Daniela from GeoLINK.

An overview of the CMW was given by Georgina, Mark, Bert and Jack. A summary of what was said follows:

- It was held on 16 and 17 February, at the Ballina Beach Resort. It was attended by 13 agency representatives and a range of community based groups.
- The first day was allocated to inform the agencies and members attending of the update on the project life cycle and to inform them of the 14 route corridor options (which had already been presented to the CLG members at their previous meeting).
- The second day was used to confirm project objectives. Amended performance criteria and measures were presented; debated and endorsed by the group. The performance criteria were given a weighting of either high, medium or low significance by consensus within the group, by obtaining a relative measure of importance of the performance criteria.
- Mark suggested that the pace and momentum at which decisions are being made within the project lifeline, is somewhat isolating the CLG members in terms of them giving their full feedback and communicating their issues clearly. Bert reinforced this point by stating that fair analysis was important, and that he felt it would be useful if the CLG had the opportunity to assess and weight the performance measures. To assist in addressing this issue, a worksheet would be distributed to the CLG members so that they could give their personal rating of the performance measures and their input with regards the CLG listing of the strengths and weaknesses of the route corridor options.
- A point was made concerning the assumptions that underlay some of the performance measures, for instance the assumption that there would be interchanges at Wardell and Woodburn along the W2B route. Mark was concerned that the preordained ideals, if any, and associated assumptions should be communicated to the CLG members. Clarification on this assumptions was given in that from the outset it has been communicated that there would probably be two interchange points along this section of the highway, those two points could possibly be Woodburn and Wardell, but was certainly not definite.
- A request was made to get hold of the data which identified the amount of land being 'consumed' by each of the corridor options.

- It was asked whether the fact that Woodburn had 'put it's hand up' to be a service town along the route was enough in terms of securing such a facility? The answer was that this was not definite/ secure but that the analysis was leaning toward that becoming an eventuality.
- Jack mentioned that he felt it would be very useful to the CLG members if the feedback from the flood focus group was in some way fed back to them. He believes that flooding is a far more serious issue which has widespread and severe impact upon all interest groups.
- Jack suggested meeting with project team's CLG from the section of highway immediately south of the W2B section. The suggestion was accepted, and Peter Black (the Project team leader from the RTA from the section of highway to the south of W2B) will be invited to attend a future meeting shortly and to share his experiences and answer questions with regard to the possible connection point.

**ITEM 4 Project objectives and performance criteria and explanation of the weighting system (GEORGINA LEGOE)**

A handout was given to all CLG members detailing the W2B objectives and performance measures assigned to each of them following debate at the CMW by the attendees.

Each of the project objectives were presented with example performance criteria and measure and example of how each corridor was weighted and scored either a positive, negative or neutral impact rating. Attention was drawn to the fact that objectives 3 and 8 were process objectives and therefore could not be measured and weighted according to their impact.

CLG members were advised that they would get the opportunity to put their own assessment of the performance measures as a submission, as there will be a worksheet sent out to all CLG members as requested by Jack earlier at this meeting. Mark urged the CLG members to have a very close and detailed look at the weighting of performance measures, as the process has significant results based upon it.

A number of points were raised:

- Q. How were route options outside of the study area assessed if there was no constraints information on the area prepared? A. There was desktop information available on these areas and this was used as a base for the assessment of those routes.
- Q. A question relating to design details, in particular with regard to % grade and turning angles, was received. A. There is a minimum set of criteria that needed to be fulfilled when considering road design (the RTA's Road Design Guide and other associated technical design standards). For example there would be no ascents greater than 6%. This sort of detail comes into effect at the next stage of the project
- It was confirmed that each possible corridor option had its own length, and that not all corridors were the same length.
- Some comments were made with regards to the importance of the design of the road – questioning of what sort of view one gets at 110km/h; is the design issue for the purpose of statewide and national road users or the local road users. In reply, for urban design to be properly accounted for in highway design, views of both the road *user* as well as the views of the road from the surrounds must be accounted for and balanced appropriately

No.	ACTION	WHO
1.	Worksheet for weighting the Performance measures and the strengths and weaknesses of the route corridor options distributed for CLG member input.	Daniela to send out.
2.	Statistics of each of the 14 corridor options including length and amount of land it occupies to be sent to CLG members.	Hyder

## ITEM 5 Assessment of 14 corridor options and sensitivity test (GEORGINA LEGOE)

A first sieve analysis will be done to reduce the 14 corridor options to approximately 4. It was explained that the first 'sieve' of the 14 corridor options is the weighting process described above.

A sensitivity test, using node locations, has been done to test the outcomes of the first sieve analysis. This methodology has been developed since the CMW, to try to analyse how linkages of different sections affect the whole corridor option. In this regard, certain sections were rated/ assessed as being worse than others in terms of fulfilling the performance measures.

The sensitivity test was based on the information already received from the CLG members at the 3b meeting. These strengths and weaknesses will be sent out with the performance measures worksheet so that additions and changes can be made to the table. This feedback from the CLG members would be both welcomed and encouraged, within a two week period.

A few general comments were made at this stage:

- In terms of the history of the SES – flooding is a major issue and major impacts will be felt with the advent of a road levee bank. Flood impacts would be felt all the way to Coraki if the highway was not planned and constructed correctly.
- The CLG members take cognisance of the fact that someone or some area has to suffer as a result of the project being constructed, and realise that there will be an impact. Their concern is that the impacts are kept to a minimum, or that impacts are positive if possible. For instance, the building of a highway through a location where wild fires do break away would diminish the devastation on a human and ecological level.

Jack Matthes gave a short presentation on some options that could provide a relatively flood free corridor. Jack will provide some written information on the strengths and weaknesses of his options.

No.	ACTION	WHO
3.	CLG members are to review the Performance criteria spreadsheet and assign High (H), Medium (M), or Low (L) priority to the measures as they view it. Sheets to be sent to Daniela by the end of the week following Easter	CLG Members
4.	Prepare a spreadsheet to enable CLG members to review the strengths/weaknesses on a link by link basis	Daniela to send out.
5.	CLG members to review the strengths/weaknesses on a link by link basis and return it to Geolink	CLG Members
6	Jack to provide strengths and weaknesses of his proposal	Jack Matthes

## ITEM 6 Draft noise methodology and results of monitoring (MATTHEW SUDGEN)

Matthew is a Hyder Acoustic Engineer working in the project team. He reported on the work already undertaken as preliminary steps in assessing the current noise levels within the study area, and particularly locations on the current 32km route which register the loudest traffic noise (i.e. where the vehicle speed is changed, or where there are speed cameras). He presented the findings of his initial research in map form – showing the location of the noise measurement equipment, and the measurement period. The measurements were taken in late 2004.

The study is based on a selection of norms that are design standards taken from the RTA's Environmental Noise Management Manual (ENMM), 2001 – including suggestions with regard to quiet road surfaces and noise barriers. The NSW EPA Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise (ECRTN), 1999 were also referenced. In this regard, the project aims to achieve noise levels of 55/50 dB(A) averages over day/night periods, for non redeveloped roads.

Issues raised by the CLG members are summarised below:

- Heavy vehicle movement throughout the night is a major disturbance and issue with regard to noise.
- The choice of survey sites was questioned. It was confirmed that the sites were chosen to be concurrent with traffic surveys, as it is generally accepted that as traffic levels vary, so do noise levels. Other monitors were positioned on various properties where permission had been given.
- There was concern as to why there was no noise monitoring on the western side of the study area, along the escarpment of the Blackwall mountain range, as it was confirmed by a few of the CLG members that by virtue of the landscape characteristics, noise was actually amplified in this area. It was confirmed that this area will get noise monitoring performed in the future, as will all areas possibly affected by the highway.
- CLG members asked that traffic noise information not be distributed as confidential, but rather as draft, as they would be very keen to share it with the wider community.
- Members would like to get information regarding the use of exhaust brakes, they asked that information not be distributed as confidential, but rather as draft, as they would be very keen to share it with the wider community.
- Trucks moving on the flat section of road between Wardell and the Bruxner highway were extremely noisy, and it is the opinion of the CLG members that they also exceed the speed limit. The breaking noises are very loud as well. It was commented that typically 4/7 of the noise emanating from a moving vehicle at constant speed is from tyre noise, 2/7 of the noise is from the engine and 1/7 from the exhaust.
- The baseline level to which other levels of noise registered will be measured was questioned as to what standards they are based on. It was confirmed that the level was in accordance with the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) guidelines of 55 dB(A) for diurnal noise (daytime noise).
- According to the CLG members the level of noise within the study area has drawn numerous complaints over the past few years.
- The advent of noise cameras being used in South Australia was questioned with regard to its applicability in NSW and this particular study area. Shane confirmed that they were being trialled in NSW at present, and that it was a possibility for the future. There was debate regarding their actual effectiveness, as it may result in the diminishing of noise in the region cameras are and then the increase of noise between them.
- A debate regarding the peak noise versus the average noise being two very different statistics and measuring devices. The max peak was quoted as being 85 dB(A) and, the min peak was quoted as being around 77 dB(A)
- The Australian Design rules state that the existing statutory noise levels are around 90 dB(A) on trucks manufactured in or imported into Australia, although this does not include engine braking.
- The UK based model for assessing who would be bothered by eventual traffic noise levels and the initial change in noise levels based on location was used in trying to ascertain which populus would be most affected.
- A noise contour plot for traffic on the straight stretch above Wardell was presented as an example of the future studies that would be undertaken once the preferred route options were established..

No.	ACTION	WHO
6..	Distribute actual noise readings recorded for the monitoring done thus far to the CLG members.	Hyder

## ITEM 7 Water Quality Testing (ANNETTE ROSS)

Annett gave some feedback on the water quality testing that was currently being undertaken and at which intervals it will continue throughout the project life cycle. She explained that it is proposed to undertake water quality sampling at 16 sites within the study area to establish baseline data. The duration of the sampling program will be one year. Samples will be collected on a monthly basis for the first three months. Sampling will then be undertaken on a three monthly basis for the rest of the year. These later measurements would be for comparative purposes with the initial three month sampling data and could indicate seasonal or other changes in

water quality over the entire year. Measurables that will be monitored include; salinity; PH levels; dissolved oxygens; turbidity levels etc.

#### **ITEM 8 General and closure (CAROLYN STONE)**

Carolyn tabled Mark Gittoes concerns and the response given at the meeting.

The process of what happens next in the project was discussed:

- It was asked whether at the stage of the next CLG or during the options display there would be greater attention given to options that extend outside of the study area. This question was raised in particular with regard to category 3,4 and 5 vegetation communities and their significance.
- There was a request to pass Jack Matthes' route corridor submission through the Qantm system to assess it further. It was confirmed that it would be added to the community input method of corridor identification and incorporated into the process in that manner.
- A question was raised as to when local access becomes a pertinent issue, it was explained that local access was a concern for all options currently being investigated by the project team. Because it affects all options, and is associated with severance issue. It is not presently identified as a means of differentiating between corridor options. It was confirmed that at the concept design stage of the project, this would be a major concern. This would follow on from the options display stage.
- Confirmation was requested with regard to how long the display will be on for and for how long after submissions would be accepted. A period of approximately 5 weeks was quoted, including both the display period of around 3 weeks and the further submission period of two weeks following that.
- It was queried what sort of planning impact the heavily publicised toll road issue from Sydney to Brisbane has on the project. It was explained that current funding allocation from Government is a key determinant of the start of construction of the project, the introduction of a toll road could potentially cut the construction time and eventual roll out of the project time considerably.
- The work currently being undertaken on the northern section of the existing highway was queried in terms of its association with the highway upgrade, and more specifically whether the work being done was a quiet agreement that this would be the route taken for the highway upgrade. It was confirmed that the current work was not part of the project whatsoever, and that it was in line with safety work being undertaken on a continual basis along the current Pacific Highway.

Andrew outlined the proposed dates for CLG 5 and 6 meetings. He advised that there will be a Value Management Workshop (Mon 30<sup>th</sup> and Tues 31 May), and that 3 of the CLG members would be invited to attend the two day workshop. CLG members were asked to consider nominations and that it would be voted on at the next CLG meeting.

The route options display, and the validation of field work will be the focus of the next CLG which will be on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April, at 6 for 6:30 pm, at the Wardell Memorial Hall, in Richmond Street, Wardell. . The CLG agreed with the arrangements for the next meeting.

Carolyn finalised the meeting by thanking everyone for their contribution and the meeting was closed at approximately 9:30pm.