

Meeting notes



MARCH 2009

Princes Highway upgrade between Gerringong and Bomaderry Notes of meeting held on Monday 16 March 2009

Meeting	Date/Venue/Location	Attendance (approx)
Gerringong	Monday 16 March 2009 from 10am to 11.45am	15

RTA attendees	
Steve Arnold	Acting Southern Region Manager
Ron De Rooy	Senior Project Manager, Southern Region Project Development
Adam Berry	Project Development & Communications Manager, Southern Region Project Development

Purpose of meeting

The RTA was invited to attend a meeting on 16 March 2009 with a number of Gerringong community members who wanted to provide feedback on the process for selecting a preferred access option for Gerringong.

As the RTA is committed to continuing open consultation as it plans the upgrade of the Princes Highway between Gerringong and Bomaderry, staff attended the meeting and responded to questions about the current planning process.

In the interests of equity and transparency the RTA has prepared these meetings notes for the information of any other interested parties. It is a summary of the questions asked and responses provided by the RTA during the meeting.

Questions and answers at meeting.

The following provides a summary of the question and answer discussions held at the meeting. If you were an attendee, please advise our senior project manager if your question(s) have not been identified below.

#	Question/statement	Answer
1.	In relation to the access options for Gerringong the RTA is placing the concerns of suburban residents of Gerringong over the concerns of rural residents of Gerringong.	<p>The RTA is considering community feedback from all sections of the community and is considering all issues raised, whether by many or few. Community views, technical investigations and the outcomes of the November 2008 value management workshop will help inform the RTA's final decision on access arrangements for Gerringong.</p> <p>The RTA will consider a wide range of factors and issues before selecting the most appropriate access arrangement.</p> <p>A final decision and announcement on the preferred access arrangements for Gerringong and Berry as well as a decision on the preferred route over Toolijooa Ridge are expected in mid 2009.</p>
2.	In relation to the access options for Gerringong there is insufficient awareness of the RTA's modified access options.	<p>In October 2008 the preferred option for upgrading the Princes Highway between Gerringong and Bomaderry was announced. At the same time options for access arrangements to the towns of Gerringong and Berry were also released for public comment.</p> <p>Three possible access arrangements for Gerringong, labelled as G1, G2 and G3, were released for community comment. The issue of how the highway links with Gerringong is extremely important and there was a strong response with more than 590 submissions received.</p> <p>In November 2008, as a result of its own review and the community feedback received at Gerringong, the RTA included three additional access options, modifications of the displayed options G1, G2 and G3, for further investigation and assessment.</p> <p>These additional options were then included as part of the process for selecting the preferred access option for Gerringong. More information on all the access options is available here: < insert link >.</p> <p>The RTA communicated this information to the community through a release to all local media outlets, email to all registered project stakeholders, an update to the project website and by personal contact with directly affected residents.</p> <p>There will be further opportunity for comment on the preferred access arrangements during the environmental assessment stage of the project.</p>
3.	In relation to the access options for Gerringong, there is insufficient awareness of the visual impact of the new interchanges.	<p>The RTA provided the community with information about each of the access option arrangements, and will design the preferred option to minimise the visual impact as far as possible.</p> <p>All of the potential access options will require bridge structures and embankments, to achieve "grade separation" which is the raising or lowering of one direction of road over another to create an interchange</p>

		<p>or flyover.</p> <p>Improving road safety is a major objective of the project. Grade separation will significantly improve road safety at the entry and exit points to Gerringong, which have poor road safety records.</p> <p>There will be further opportunity for community comment on the potential visual impact of the access arrangements during the environmental assessment stage.</p>
4.	<p>In relation to the access options for Gerringong the RTA has made a decision and selected a preferred option.</p>	<p>The RTA has not yet selected a preferred access option for Gerringong. In November 2008 a value management workshop recommended that for Gerringong access, the RTA further investigate the modified G2/8 option which includes two interchanges allowing all turning movements, one at Belinda Street and one in the vicinity of Rose Valley Road.</p> <p>The RTA is considering the workshop recommendations while also completing more detailed investigations focusing on economic, environmental, engineering, community and other issues in relation to the G2/8 access option.</p> <p>A final decision and announcement on the preferred access arrangements for Gerringong and Berry as well as a decision on the preferred route over Toolijooa Ridge are expected in mid 2009.</p>
5.	<p>In relation to the access options for Gerringong, the value management process had been improperly influenced by parts of the community.</p>	<p>The value management process is one of a number of inputs into the selection of a preferred access option.</p> <p>The value management process was independently facilitated and designed to prevent any one party or interest from unfairly dominating, overwhelming or influencing the process and the outcome.</p> <p>The independent facilitator's report does not record any undue influence or bias by any of the workshop participants.</p> <p>The value management workshop was attended by approximately 38 people, including five community participants, and representatives from at least 10 organisations.</p> <p>The independent facilitator of the value management workshop completed a full report which is available on the project website: www.rta.nsw.gov.au/gerringongtobomaderry</p>
6.	<p>The RTA needs to consider the potential impact on flooding patterns that would be caused by building structures around Belinda Street, Fern Street and in flood plains</p>	<p>The proposed upgrade would cross watercourses and floodplains.</p> <p>The RTA undertook groundwater, flooding and drainage assessments of all the publicly displayed options considered in the preferred route selection process.</p> <p>These assessments were taken into account during the development of all the Gerringong access options.</p> <p>During the concept design of the preferred route, including accesses to Gerringong, the RTA will complete more detailed flooding investigations and drainage designs and, where feasible and appropriate, improve current performance during flooding.</p>

7.	When designing for flooding, the RTA should not rely on Gerringong rainfall records as heavier rain often falls over the land to the west of the highway. Some residents have retained rainfall records over many years.	The project design will consider available rainfall records. The RTA would be pleased to receive and consider detailed records held by local residents.
8.	The RTA should minimise the potential impact on agricultural land.	Supporting regional and local economic development is one of the main objectives of the Gerringong to Bomaderry upgrade. The RTA recognises that minimising the impact on agricultural properties is one of the most direct ways of achieving this objective, and is committed to minimising the impact of the upgrade on agriculture through careful and innovative design.
9.	In relation to large embankments, there are also concerns about their potential visual impact.	There will be further opportunity for community comment on the potential visual impact of the upgraded highway during the environmental assessment stage. However, stakeholders are welcome to contact the project team during the concept design process with any concerns they may have.
10.	How do people stay involved in the decision making process?	<p>The RTA is committed to an open and transparent process for selecting the preferred option for upgrading the Princes Highway between Gerringong and Bomaderry.</p> <p>The RTA is happy to speak with community members about their concerns at any time, through the toll free project information line on 1800 506 976, the project office in Broughton Court at Berry between 9am and 4pm each Friday or in person by arrangement.</p>
11.	When will the access options be finalised?	<p>A final decision and announcement on the preferred access arrangements for Gerringong and Berry as well as a decision on the preferred route over Toolijooa Ridge are expected in mid 2009.</p> <p>These decisions will finalise the preferred option for the whole of the route between Gerringong and Bomaderry. The RTA will then continue with concept design and the environmental assessment process.</p>