

## **Berry bypass Community review group update**

The sixth community review group discussion was held on 16 November 2011.

The group discussed the process the Roads and Maritime Services (formerly the Roads and Traffic Authority) needs to go through to adopt a preferred concept design for the environmental assessment for the Berry bypass.

This will involve wider community input, RMS executive endorsement and final endorsement from the Minister for Roads and Ports. This governance around the process is important for managing public monies.

In documentation the alignment will need to be justified on a range of issues including visual, noise, amenity, road design and engineering, agricultural impacts and cost.

RMS will be responsible for the final preferred option recommendation. The group agreed that we are getting closer to having a preferred alignment.

### **Berry bridge and northern interchange**

The group was updated on intensive Berry bridge and northern interchange design workshops, subsequent investigations and discussions. Two one-day long workshops have been held with external experts in architecture, construction and design and community members working on ideas, with great help acknowledged from bridge engineer Bruce Ramsey.

The workshops developed and tested the feasibility of a set of design and alignment options. A range of technical considerations and limitations were explored in detail, including but not limited to:

- Changing the vertical profile of the road so that Berry Bridge is as low as possible over Woodhill Mountain Road.
- Moving the horizontal line of the new road and interchange ramps in the cutting to minimise the impacts on properties and excavation of surplus soil.
- Ensuring the road is safe to use by the travelling public in wet conditions and good visibility is maintained.

Different bridge types were examined. A presentation outlining the end product to date is on the project website, noting that a few more things need to be tied down.

***The new current preferred bridge alignment is 95 metres further north from Berry and the bridge is up to 6.5 metres lower than the previous design.***

While investigations continue, it was agreed significant improvements had been achieved in the bridge design – including reducing the visual and noise impacts of the bypass.

A gap in the poplars on Woodhill Mountain Road for the bridge to pass through was identified and it is anticipated most of this heritage strip will remain intact. Further, if overhead electricity cables are relocated the existing trimmed trees on the other side could be allowed to grow.

While this design is still being fine tuned those involved agreed this very intensive process had delivered a good result. A report describing this process will be published at the end of November 2011.

The group discussed impacts from the proposed changes including the potential need for RMS to acquire more land and agreed discussions should take place with all directly affected parties.

### **North Berry discussions**

The group discussed the North Berry urban design workshops that were agreed to at the last community review group meeting. The workshops have been postponed as some residents considered it too early to work on the look and feel of the area along North Street before the alignment location and possible depth is really established. This was understood by the group and agreed that these discussions should come next.

The group recapped on the improvements already achieved in the North Berry precinct. From east to west the road will be progressively lower than the previous RMS alignment. This lowering and the effect of reducing the height of the noise wall will be most noticeable at the western end of North Street. This in turn reduces the visual impact.

The group discussed two potential alignments. Graphical representations illustrated the design at several cross sections on these two alignments.

The aim was to help the group understand the scale of difference, how gentle mounding could substantially reduce the noisewall as seen from the south, and how visual impact could be improved. They did not however contain measurements and it was clear the group needed to see all these to properly understand the options. RMS agreed to action immediately.

These illustrations are on the project website [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/fbb](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/fbb).

The group discussed the issue of ownership and maintenance of residual lands after construction is complete and it was agreed that further discussion is required.

Each community review group member provided their own view. Many felt that it was extremely difficult to agree on an alignment that balances the needs of everyone involved. Trade offs, as discussed previously, are needed.

Appreciation was expressed for the consultative process being followed and the group was largely satisfied with the efforts and improvements made so far.

However more work is needed. The group agreed it was very much time to inform and include the whole community of Berry.

**Process from here**

The group discussed the decision making process and governance around that. A draft work plan was presented.

RMS plans to announce the preferred alignment of the Berry bypass before Christmas. It was agreed that RMS would continue investigations and alignment refinements for the next two weeks and present a preferred Berry bypass option to the community on 1 December 2011.

A community meeting will be held in Berry on Tuesday 6 December 2011. There will be a two week period from the 1 December for the community to comment. During this two week period the Berry project office will be staffed all week to help community information and contribution. Further information will be made available in the next week.

Meeting notes and the presentations are on the community review group documents page on RMS website [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/fbb](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/fbb).

**For more information:**

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Placed by the RMS on behalf of the community review group

17 November 2011