

Initial field investigations are nearing completion

The project team would like to thank property owners, residents and businesses for their cooperation during the last couple of months. Many of these investigations are now nearing completion.

Environmental field studies

Environmental studies identify key environmental characteristics of the study area, to be taken into consideration during the development of a shortlist of route options. The studies include:

- **Planning and land use** – The various land uses in the area that are being identified include dairy farming, vineyards, organic farms, residential, business and industrial uses. Planning legislation and council zoning is being reviewed.
- **Socio-economics** – This study is investigating how people and businesses in the study area could be affected by a highway upgrade.
- **Indigenous and non-indigenous heritage** – Places of heritage significance are being identified and will be taken into consideration during the development of feasible route options. In addition to a large number of archaeological sites, four places of historical and cultural significance to the local aboriginal community are located in the study area:
 - **Two historical encampments** at Berry and Broughton Village.
 - **Two cosmological, ceremonial and story places** – the “Little Mountain” or “Dicky Wood’s Meadow” battle ground and Toolijooa Hill.

Two Aboriginal focus groups have been formed to ensure representation and participation from all Aboriginal groups with an interest in the study area. In addition to participating in a consultation process, these focus groups will provide cultural heritage knowledge to assist field investigations.

Thirty-four European heritage sites have also been identified, including Ane Bank Homestead, Rose Valley, the Dry Stone Walls Conservation Area, Berry Bank and Post Office and Broughton Creek Bridge.

- **Flora, fauna and aquatic ecology** – The ecology of the study area is being investigated to establish where threatened species and endangered ecological communities are located. So far, many threatened microbats and a threatened plant have been identified.

- **Climactic assessment** – The prevalence of wind, fog and frost and average air temperatures in the study area is being assessed.
- **Air quality assessment** – Significant pollutant sources in the study area are being identified including air quality impacts of the existing highway, particularly in developed areas where traffic congestion is currently experienced. The effects of topography, meteorology and seasonal changes on air quality and the dispersion of air pollutants in the study area are also being investigated.
- **Noise and vibration** – The existing noise levels in the area are being assessed. Locations that are sensitive to noise, such as residences, hospitals and schools as well as proposed developments are being identified.
- **Urban design** – A strategy is being prepared based on urban design objectives for the potential location of an upgraded highway in both rural and urban areas. It includes positive and negative aspects from a road user’s point of view and a visual constraints analysis.

Engineering considerations

- **Flooding and drainage** – Water flow through the study area is important in the selection of route options. The intent is to maintain or improve water flow patterns.
- **Geotechnical testing** – The types of soil and rock in the study area influence how road and bridge foundations are designed. Information from boreholes and test pits will be used to understand the types of soil and rock present in the study area.
- **Public utilities and services** – The location of utilities and services (such as power, gas and telephone lines) are being identified so that their potential impact on a route option can be determined as early as possible.

Preliminary traffic study

Traffic investigations are being carried out to understand current traffic patterns on the Princes Highway and other roads in the area.

As part of this study, an origin-destination survey was undertaken in mid-February over a wide area to determine the proportion of traffic that travels straight through the study area on the Princes Highway and the ‘sandtrack’, and the proportion that is local traffic travelling between townships. This is important to establish appropriate intersection designs, and connecting roads for the various route options.

The survey results indicate that approximately 60% of traffic travelling through the study area (i.e. between the Mt Pleasant lookout and the Shoalhaven River) is on the Princes Highway, whilst 40% is on the ‘sandtrack’.

Project website

The project website will be regularly updated to provide the latest information.

Go to the RTA website and follow the links: Construction and maintenance/Regional projects/South Coast/Princes Highway upgrade: Gerringong to Bomaderry.

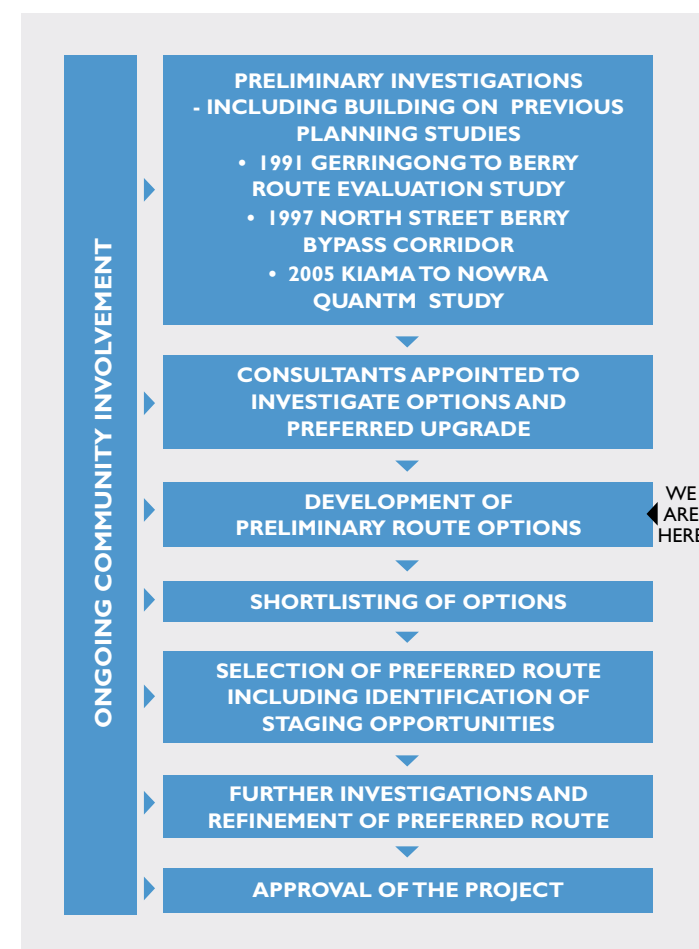
Information available includes community updates, workshop notes, presentations and fact sheets.

Study area map updated

The study area map shown overleaf has recently been updated to include the Local Aboriginal Land Council boundaries. The amended map can also be found on the project website.

Can the timeframe for the project be improved or shortened?

To ensure investigations to select the preferred route are thorough we will keep in touch with the community about timeframes. It is unlikely the current timeframe will be shortened. It is possible that during the assessment of options issues will be encountered which may require additional work to ensure the best results. In this event additional time may be required to complete this work.



What happens next?

Within the next two months initial studies in the study area will be completed.

Maunsell will develop a shortlist of feasible route options after considering all the information obtained through these studies, relevant information from previous studies and information gathered from the community and other stakeholders during the consultation process.

Consultation with all stakeholders including property owners, interest groups and local government will be ongoing.

A shortlist of feasible route options remains on schedule to be displayed later this year for community comment. Community input will be sought to ensure the best overall outcome for the local and wider communities.

More information

If you would like more information or would like to discuss the project you can contact the project team by phone, email or written request. Contact details are below.

➔ Obtaining local knowledge is a very important part of this process. We encourage all residents, property owners and business owners to share information with us.

➔ For more information contact Maunsell’s Community Liaison Manager Kerry Morrison.

✉ Gerringong_to_Bomaderry@maunsell.com

🌐 www.rta.nsw.gov.au

☎ 1800 506 976 (free call) project information line

✉ Gerringong to Bomaderry Project Maunsell
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A New South Wales Government Initiative

Gerringong to Bomaderry

Princes Highway upgrade

COMMUNITY UPDATE
APRIL 2007



The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is committed to upgrading the Princes Highway between Gerringong and Bomaderry. In December 2006, Maunsell Australia Pty Ltd was awarded a contract to investigate options for the upgrade.

Community information sessions were held in February 2007, and environmental, engineering and traffic studies are nearing completion.

This community update

This community update provides a summary of the community information sessions and explains the current status of field investigations.

Community information sessions

Community information sessions were held in February 2007 at Gerringong, Berry and Bomaderry. As with previous workshops, these sessions had a lot of local community input with approximately 300 people attending.

The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the Maunsell project team to the community, provide an update on the field investigations, outline the program of works to undertake the study and seek further input from the community.

The agenda set for each of the meetings ensured an effective two-way information flow. Meeting sessions included:

- Project team introductions.
- Project background and update.
- Question and answer sessions.
- Key issue discussions.

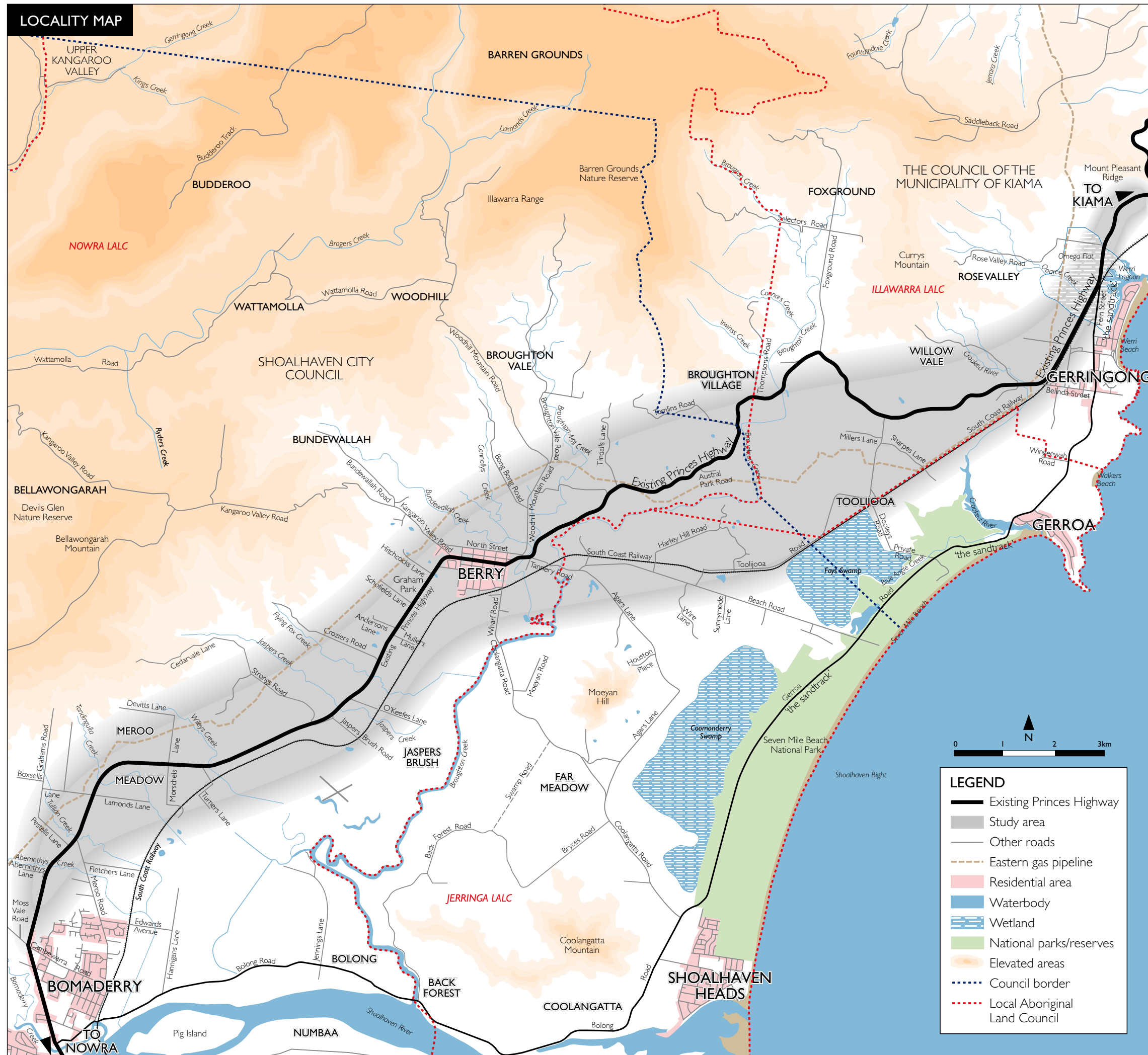
Key issues identified by the community at previous workshops were a focal part of each meeting. This enabled community members to discuss in more detail with the project team those issues they previously identified as being the most important to them.

This additional input assists with identifying feasible route options and ultimately selecting the preferred route.

'Have your say' forms were also made available to community members to allow them to note additional issues and comments during or after the sessions. If you were unable to attend any of the meetings but would like to provide comments please call the project information line on 1800 506 976 to obtain a form and freepost address.

Notes from the community information sessions are available on the RTA website.

The RTA and Maunsell would like to thank everyone who attended and contributed to the information sessions.



Below is a selection of questions and answers raised at the community information sessions:

Is there a preferred route?

No. There is no preferred route at this time. Maunsell have been commissioned to undertake this study to identify a preferred route. This process includes community input.

Who will decide the preferred route?

The RTA will recommend the preferred route to the NSW Government. The NSW Government will then announce the decision.

How does the property acquisition process work?

Property acquisition by the RTA will only take place once a preferred route has been identified and approved. The RTA acquires land under the terms of the *Roads Act 1993*. Payment is assessed in accordance with the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*, which guarantees that compensation will not be less than the market value of the land (based on the value of the land unaffected by any road proposal). A fact sheet on the acquisition process is available and can be obtained from the RTA website or by contacting Maunsell on 1800 506 976.

Why is the word 'bypass' not being used?

The word "bypass" has not been used because the scope of the study is larger than just the Berry Bypass, and stretches from Gerringong to Bomaderry. A bypass of Berry will be included in the options assessment.

Are the previous studies now redundant?

Maunsell will be assessing data collected previously as well as collecting new data as part of this project.

Is the RTA aware of the level of freight traffic which is currently passing through Berry to Nowra?

The studies will consider the level of freight and the number of vehicles carrying freight.

Why isn't the RTA planning to build a freeway?

The selected design of the upgrade will cater for the projected increase in traffic on this section of the Princes Highway. This is proposed to be a continuation of the four lanes from Wollongong to Kiama, separated by a median and traffic barrier. Access to the highway will likely be at key locations and the RTA will consider local roads to make sure all properties have access.

Is land in the study area considered RTA affected?

Property identified as needed to be purchased for a road project is referred to as "affected". Land will not be declared as RTA affected until a route is approved.

When will the preferred route be selected and approved?

It is expected a preferred route could be identified by late 2007 or early 2008. The project could be approved in late 2008 or 2009.

