

INTEGRATED ANALYSIS PTY LTD

# Community Advocate Monthly Report No.5

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Gerringong upgrade; Princes Highway

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Report outlining activities carried out and issues facilitated by the Community Advocate for the Princes Highway Gerringong upgrade between 1 November 2012 and 31 January 2013.

RMS 13.190

1.	Introduction .....	3
2.	Scope of role .....	3
3.	Objectives .....	3
4.	Activities carried out between November 2012 and January 2013 .....	4
4.1.	Participation in project team meetings and site tours.....	4
4.2.	Meetings with community organisations .....	4
4.3.	Meeting with Gerringong business community representative.....	4
4.4.	Responding to telephone inquiries.....	4
4.5.	Addressing community concern with an aspect of the project design:.....	4
4.5.1.	Noise wall.....	4
4.5.2	Proposed culvert replacement on Union Creek, at Belinda Street .....	4
4.6.	Reviewing complaints and contacts .....	5
4.7.	Initiated contact with highly impacted residents .....	5
4.8.	Reviewing ongoing issues with property adjustments.....	5
5.	Outcomes.....	5
5.1.	Participation in site tours.....	5
5.2.	Meetings with community organisations .....	6
5.3.	Addressing community concern with an aspect of the project design:.....	6
5.3.1.	Noise wall.....	6
5.3.2.	Addressing community concern with an aspect of the project design: proposed culvert replacement on Union Creek, at Belinda Street .....	6
5.4.	Meetings with Gerringong business community representatives .....	7
5.5.	Responding to telephone enquiries.....	8
5.6.	Review of project database of complaints and contacts .....	8
5.7.	Contact initiated by Community Advocate .....	8
5.8.	Review of outstanding concerns relating to property adjustment.....	8
6.	Next report .....	8

## 1. Introduction

The community advocate's role is being piloted on the Gerringong upgrade project, with a view to extending it to additional components of the Princess Highway upgrade.

The community advocate was appointed and started work on 14 May 2102.

This is the fifth report from the community advocate. This report covers the period between 1 November 2012 and 31 January 2013.

## 2. Scope of role

The community advocate is independent of the Gerringong upgrade project team. The main functions of the role are to:

- Support people who are unsure about how to engage with Roads and Maritime Services people and processes by providing advice and an independent view.
- Assist people to raise their issues with the project team and support them in technical discussions.
- Work with the Gerringong community to assess if the project's community involvement plan is working for them.

## 3. Objectives

A specific set of objectives have been identified as follows. These objectives are likely to be refined as the project progresses. In this project start-up phase it is particularly important to:

- Achieve visibility and be easily accessible.
- Clarify the advocate's role with the community and assist in building awareness of contractor's complaint and enquiry response process.
- Develop an informed understanding of community issues/history..
- Contribute to the resolution of issues.

## **4. Activities carried out between November 2012 and January 2013**

The following list identifies the Community Advocate's activities over the previous three months.

### **4.1. Participation in project team meetings and site tours**

- Participated in regular internal project team meeting and site tours to become aware of the progress and impact of construction activities.
- Attended a site visit, along with the Minister for Roads and Ports, The Hon. Duncan Gay MLC, Member for Kiama, Mr Gareth Ward MP, Liberal Candidate for Gilmore, Ann Sudmalis, Mayor of Kiama, Councillor Brian Petschler, Councillors, RMS and Fulton Hogan project team representatives and local media representatives from WIN News, Kiama Independent and 2ST radio.

### **4.2. Meetings with community organisations**

- Attended a meeting of the Sunrise Rotary Club in January 2013.

### **4.3. Meeting with Gerringong business community representative**

- Met with Gerringong business community representative regarding tourism roadway signage.

### **4.4. Responding to telephone inquiries**

- Responded to telephone inquiries and redirected callers who were seeking information about day to day construction related activities to Fulton Hogan's (the contractor) Community Liaison Manager.

### **4.5. Addressing community concern with an aspect of the project design:**

#### **4.5.1. Noise wall**

- Reviewed the issues raised by the community and Fulton Hogan's response.

#### **4.5.2 Proposed culvert replacement on Union Creek, at Belinda Street**

- Reviewed a submission from the Convenor of Kiama Greens, Chairman of South Precinct and member of the Concerned Residents Group outlining their concerns

with the proposed changes to the existing road way crossing of Union Creek at the corner of Belinda Street and Rowlands Road, Gerringong.

- Met with the authors of the abovementioned submission and made arrangements for a meeting to be held with all the concerned parties on Tuesday 22 January 2013.
- Facilitated the meeting and prepared a workshop report.

#### **4.6. Reviewing complaints and contacts**

- Reviewed the project database of contacts (Consultation Manager) to maintain awareness of Fulton Hogan's management of complaints and inquiries.

#### **4.7. Initiated contact with highly impacted residents**

- Made contact explaining the services that could be provided by the Community Advocate to a number of property owners who are potentially highly impacted by construction activity, and who have raised concerns with the project team.

#### **4.8. Reviewing ongoing issues with property adjustments**

- Monitored developments and maintained an overview of ongoing issues.

## **5. Outcomes**

The following list identifies the outcomes from the community advocates activities over the past three months:

### **5.1. Participation in site tours**

- Congratulations about progress of construction, tidiness of the site and comments about the quality and success of community engagement for the Gerringong upgrade were conveyed to both media and project staff by the Minister for Roads and Ports and the Member for Kiama during their visit and tour of the construction site in late January.
- Positive feedback about the management of community issues and the project were also made to the community advocate from the Mayor of Kiama, Councillor Brian Petschler, Councillors and other participants in this event.

## **5.2. Meetings with community organisations**

- The community advocate and the contractor's Community Liaison Manager, were invited to speak at the breakfast meeting of the Sunrise Rotary Club meeting in January 2013. The community advocate gave an outline of her role and functions and some experiences to date.
- The contractor's Community Liaison Manager gave an overview of the project and progress to date. Many questions followed and the main issues of particular interest to the club members were access onto the final configuration of the highway, drainage and flood prevention.
- Sunrise Rotary Club members thanked Fulton Hogan for their support of various fund raising activities. They passed on congratulations to the project team for keeping them so well informed of progress to date.

## **5.3. Addressing community concern with an aspect of the project design:**

### **5.3.1. Noise wall**

- Previously the community advocate met with a group of residents whose properties front the noise wall and who are concerned about its visual impact on their outlook and if it will exacerbate the noise from trains. These concerns were referred to Fulton Hogan.
- As part of the detailed design process Fulton Hogan, assisted by their noise consultants have re-assessed the noise mitigation requirement. They have found that they can achieve the required mitigation while reducing the visual impact of the noise wall. Liaison with residents is continuing.

### **5.3.2. Addressing community concern with an aspect of the project design: proposed culvert replacement on Union Creek, at Belinda Street**

The community advocate facilitated an initial meeting between the authors of the submission, Kiama Council, Fulton Hogan and Roads and Maritime Services representatives.

The purpose of the meeting was to offer an opportunity for participants to listen and better understand each others' perspective and pool their knowledge about the issue/location. This first meeting was not intended to result in resolution, it was agreed that a second meeting would be convened to further discuss the narrowed-down options.

The initial meeting commenced with a visit to the Belinda Street crossing of Union Creek. The community representatives highlighted some aspects of the creek of particular interest and concern to them. After the site visit participants reconvened for a discussion at the Gerringong upgrade site office. The format was as follows:

- Participants nominated what they would most like to achieve from the session.
- Community representatives outlined their concerns in a presentation that included some specific questions to RMS.
- RMS responded to questions arising from community presentation.
- General discussion where all participants nominated the factors that they believe should be considered in the evaluation of the potential solutions for the Union Creek roadway crossing.
- RMS presented a range of options and answered and responded to questions of clarification.
- Representatives of Kiama Council expressed some initial views on the options proposed.
- Participants agreed that a further meeting would be convened once Fulton Hogan had some time to further explore the options in view of the discussion during the meeting.

#### **5.4. Meetings with Gerringong business community representatives**

- The Gerringong business community would like to see the highway upgrade including signage that highlights the facilities that Gerringong offers as a tourism destination.
- The community advocate inquired about the eventual signage plans with RMS and confirmed that tourism signage is part of the overall signage plan.
- While this plan is still going through the approval process the current provision for tourism signage is very unlikely to change.

### **5.5. Responding to telephone enquiries**

- The amount of calls to the Community Advocate relating to Fulton Hogan's activities including and day to day construction continues to decline as the community is becoming more familiar with the Fulton Hogan's inquires and complaints management system.

### **5.6. Review of project database of complaints and contacts**

- Fulton Hogan's management of complaints and inquiries continues to operate efficiently with the vast majority of issues being promptly resolved.

### **5.7. Contact initiated by Community Advocate**

- Some people have taken up the offer of the involvement of the Community Advocate and other people have elected to not to involve the Community Advocate in the management of their complaint.

### **5.8. Review of outstanding concerns relating to property adjustment**

- Community advocate's ongoing monitoring of a number of property adjustments and access arrangement disputes have been concluded.
- Several property owners have expressed satisfaction that commitments made by the project team have been followed through.
- Property owners who express dissatisfaction with property adjustment arrangements continue to be referred to the community advocate.

## **6. Next report**

The next report will cover the period between 1 February and 30 April 2013 and will be issued in May 2013.