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<b>Project:</b>	F3 to Sydney Orbital Link Study		
<b>Place of Meeting:</b>	Chifley on City view , Pennant Hills	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	30 July 2002, 7pm
<b>Present:</b>	Steve Arnold (SA) Christine Taylor (CT) Margaret Harvie (MH) Peter Prince (PP) Ken Robinson (KR) Jo Moss (JM) David Holst (DH) 20 representatives of the community including people from the following organisations; BBK Wahroonga, Kissing Point Progress Assn, Hornsby Rotary, Australian Plants Society North Shore Group, ALP, Pennant Hills Civic Trust, Residents of Blacktown & Seven Hills against further traffic, Kuring-gai Ryde Reserve & Bushland Conservation Assn, Chatswood West Progress Assn, STEP Inc, North Epping Progress Association, Concerned Citizens Group, Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust	<b>Organisation:</b>	Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) Sinclair Knight Merz team

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**Purpose of Meeting** Community Focus Group Meeting No.2

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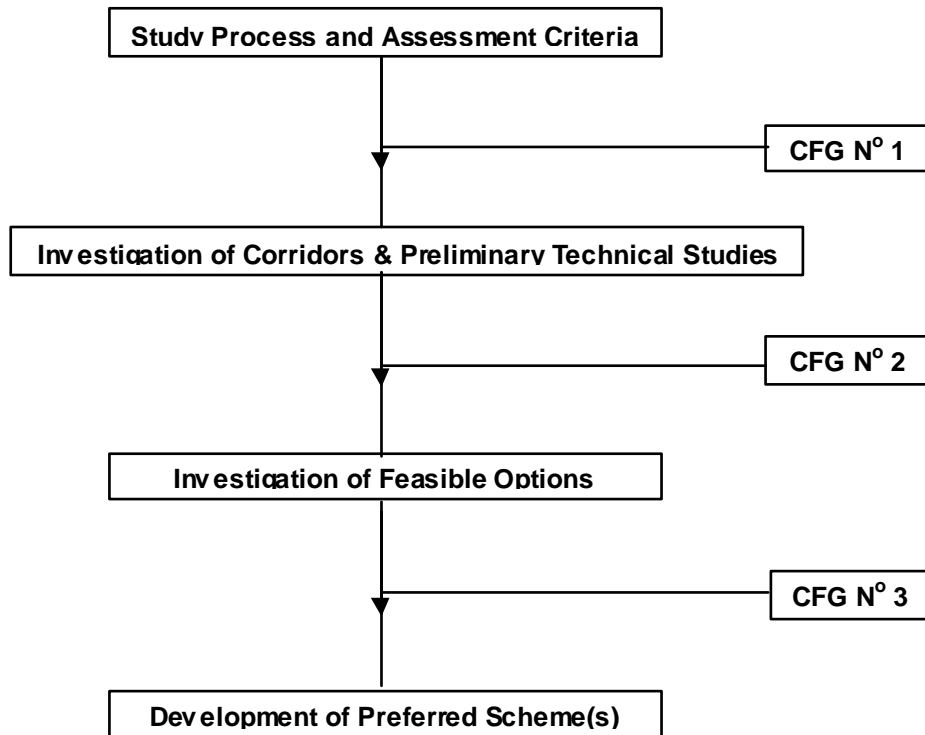
1) **Introduction**

- MH welcomed the participants to this meeting and thanked them for their participation
  - MH gave an overview of the agenda and the outcomes being sought, including the following;
    - Presentation of the route option types
    - Presentation of information from the technical studies
    - Response on some of the current study issues
    - To hear from participants about current community views relating to the study.
  - There was an introduction of all of the participants including the RTA and Sinclair Knight Merz team members.
  - MH reiterated the key activities and responsibilities of the Community Focus Group (refer to detail in Notes of CFG Meeting No.1). It was agreed that while public debate of issues and dissemination of information is encouraged, participants of the Group will ensure that any communications outside the Group are clearly represented as their individual view or that of their particular community group(s), and not as being representatives of the Community Focus Group as a whole.
  - MH presented an overview of the community consultation program to date:
    - 292 Emails
    - 1013 Comment Forms from Newsletters and Public Information Days
    - 241 Telephone calls to 1800 number
    - 55 Letters/Faxes
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Key issues identified from the responses received:

- Air Quality
- B2/B3 Corridor
- Community identity/values
- Consultation
- Design
- Flora & Fauna
- Noise
- Property Value
- Tolls

- MH gave an update on the study development process (shown below) and this was also referred to later by PP. This meeting is an important part of the process.



- Copies of Notes of Meeting No.1 for both Pennant Hills and Dural Community Focus Groups were made available to everyone, and MH advised that they are also available to view on the study website.

## 2) Study Outcomes to Date

### ***Background***

SA reviewed the project background:

- Study in response to poor National Highway connection.
  - Commonwealth funding the study.
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- RTA coordinating the study.
- Sinclair Knight Merz undertaking the study.
- Robust, comprehensive & consultative study.
- Report on Preferred Scheme(s) to be submitted to the RTA/DOTARS in November 2002.
- Full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Preferred Scheme after November 2002, if it is agreed to be developed further.
- Start of construction in 2007, subject to a feasible and environmentally acceptable route being found.

He then reviewed the project objectives:

- Provide a new National Highway Link between F3 and Orbital.
- Improve safety on National Highway.
- Congestion relief, including Pennant Hills Road.
- Remove long-distance traffic off local roads.
- Enable Sydney's long term growth.
- Improve accessibility from the North.
- Enable public transport improvements.

SA spoke about the study process:

- Feasibility Study for a new National Highway through Sydney.
- Looking at Sydney's short and long term transport infrastructure needs including public transport opportunities.
- Establish need for the project.
- Identify Alternatives and assess feasible options.
- Recommend Preferred Scheme(s).

#### ***Studies and Processes***

- KR described the range of environmental and social effects studies that are underway.
    - Environmental Overview.
    - Social Overview.
    - Urban Design, landscape and visual assessment.
    - Traffic Investigations.
    - Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation.
    - Preliminary Engineering Investigation.
    - Options Assessment Framework.
  
  - KR stressed that this is a feasibility study at this stage, not a detailed environmental impact assessment. Detailed studies would be undertaken when and if a route is selected and is agreed to be taken forward. At that time an Environmental Impact Statement would be prepared. Currently a process of constraints identification and analysis, largely based on desk top studies is being used to generate options and to minimise environmental and social effects.
  
  - He broadly described the range of environmental and social effects studies, explained
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data and information sources and showed examples of the sorts of environmental constraints maps that are being developed to assist in identification of options. The studies are investigating:

- Conservation reserves (National Parks, Nature Reserves, Berowra Valley Regional Park, Lane Cove National Park)
- Important habitats, urban bushland, threatened species & ecological communities (terrestrial and aquatic)
- Hydrology and water quality
- Indigenous heritage (sites recorded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Native Title claims)
- Non-indigenous heritage – Australian Heritage Commission, State Heritage Register, Local Environmental Plans (buildings, areas, environmental)
- Air quality and noise
- Landscape and visual
- Social (community features, community acceptance, property effects, severance concerns, regional and local access)

### ***Study Overview***

- PP spoke about the study findings to date. He started by explaining the Base Case assumptions, which are:
    - Population of Greater Metro Sydney to 6 million by 2040 (around 7.5 million if the Hunter Region is included)
    - F3 widened to 6 lanes (3 lanes in each direction) by 2011 between Wahroonga and Kariong.
    - Improvements to the Main North Line rail capacity
      - improved frequency by 2011
      - improved travel time by 2021.
    - Growth in rail freight share through industry reform and rail investment.
  - PP then explained that there are 3 basic “types” of options that have been identified. He stressed these are not actual routes, but representations of corridors or types of routes that enable strategic evaluation against the study objectives. These are:
    - Type A options: potentially linking the Sydney Orbital at the M2 with the southern end of the F3 at Wahroonga. Majority of the length would be in tunnel.
    - Type B options: potentially linking the M2 or Western Sydney Orbital with the F3 south of the Hawkesbury River but north of Hornsby
    - Type C: looks at opportunities to link the northern part of the Western Sydney Orbital with the F3 in the vicinity of Mt White or Kariong; would require a new crossing of the Hawkesbury River.
  - PP explained that these types are different in terms of their strategic value. Differences have been identified in terms of traffic relief, traffic demands and environmental impacts. For example, Type A options relieve Pennant Hills Road more than Type B or Type C. This is demonstrated by considering the forecast reduction of daily traffic on Pennant Hills Rd in 2021:
    - Type A Options: 20 – 30% reduction in traffic on Pennant Hills Road
    - Type B Options: 10 – 15% reduction in traffic on Pennant Hills Road
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- Type C Options: 5 – 10% reduction in traffic on Pennant Hills Road
- That is, the further west the route is located, the less relief there would be for Pennant Hills Road.

The characteristics of traffic on Pennant Hills Road are:

- Today: 75,000 vehicles per day
- 10-12%: heavy commercial vehicles.
- 3-4%: 6 axle - 9 axle articulated trucks
- 20 years time --> demand is predicted to increase to 110,000 vehicles per day, based on present forecast of population growth.
- Accident rates on Pennant Hills Road are significantly higher than the Sydney average.
- Current Origins/Destinations (O/D) of northbound traffic on Pennant Hills Road:
  - 25% to/from the west
  - 15% to/from the east
  - 60% to/from the south

In addition to traffic relief from the new link, the study is also considering opportunities for improvements to Pennant Hills Road. Investigation on the re-allocation of road space is being conducted by considering:

- Provision of Bus/Transit lanes
  - Provision of cycle lanes
  - Pedestrian movements
  - Redistribution of local traffic.
- A key goal for transport planning is the sustainability of the preferred scheme(s), particularly with respect to the movement of long distance freight. However:
- **Even if** rail's share of freight increases from 27% (now) to 40% (2021) and,
  - Growth in rail freight is 6% pa, compared with road freight 4% pa growth
  - **Then** heavy vehicle numbers on F3 are forecast to be:
    - 7,600 (2,500 articulated trucks) in 2002
    - 15,000 (5,500 articulated trucks) in 2021
  - That is, despite increased use of rail there will be a doubling of road freight movement on the F3.
- The required capacity of the F3 between Wahroonga and Kariong in meeting the forecast traffic demand is as shown in the table below.
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Year	Forecast Peak Direction Traffic Volume (vehicles/hr)	Required Improvement (one direction)	Capacity at Level of Service "D" <sup>(i)</sup>
2002	3,700 (existing)	2 lanes (existing)	3,700
2006	4,200	3 lanes	5,600
2021	5,500	3 lanes + climbing lanes + incident management + ITS	6,000
2026	6,000	Further upgrade or demand manage	6,000

<sup>(i)</sup> Unstable traffic condition at design capacity, long delays at the daily peaks, holiday periods and during accidents/incidents

- Other considerations include:
  - Engineering feasibility and costs
  - Consideration of tunnels
  - Tunnels or bridges
  - Funding and finance.

***Discussion and Comments***

- PP clarified that Types A, B and C represent a range of options (not specific routes at this stage) and each could include a range of corridor alignments.
- PP clarified that the figure of about 60% of truck traffic with southerly origin/destinations travel (south of the M2) to/from the south; which includes the south-west, south-east, south including Port Botany, inner west and the city.
- Is the study considering the effects on Pacific Highway south of Wahroonga – PP confirmed that this is the case. In this regard, the further east a Type A option is located, the greater the relief on this section of the Pacific Highway. PP also confirmed that the study is investigating potential effects on traffic outside the study area, and on public transport.
- PP clarified that the majority of traffic using Pennant Hills Road is not “through traffic”. Only 8% of traffic has an origin or destination north of Newcastle; 21% the Central Coast; 24% the Hunter Region; the remainder is local traffic.
- Consideration of greenhouse emissions and fuel availability – PP confirmed that air quality impacts are being considered. He had previously indicated that increasing the transport of freight on rail was being looked at and indicated the likely outcomes based on optimistic assumptions. An assumption is that travel patterns will not change significantly in the next 50 years.
- Consideration of light rail – PP confirmed this could be investigated.

- Relationship to Transitways study – PP confirmed that the study is considering all planned public transport and network improvements.
- One of the CFG participants, Mr Bathgate distributed a paper titled “A proposal for reducing traffic through the Northern Districts” (Bathgate, July 2002).

### 3) **Key Questions for Discussion by the CFG**

The study team is seeking feedback and community views. Some key questions were discussed by the Group. Key points raised and comments made by the CFG participants in the discussion are listed below.

*Discussion on each of the option types and their value in the short and long term. Feedback on option types A, B and C.*

#### **Type A**

- F3 widening to 6 lanes emphasises need for orbital solution by 2006 (makes Type A critical)
- shifting bottlenecks – not a solution to the problem
- Project is focused on meeting the demand - it should address demand management
- Growth in capacity will see a growth in demand above projections
- Have changes in work (and therefore journey) practices been taken into account
- good option – sooner the better
- logical, but unacceptable in terms of potential environmental and social impacts.
- Further east the better
- Need a long term solution
- Types B& C much better than Type A
- Do not want open cut highway, no surface road – particularly North Epping
- If in tunnel there is need for state-of-the-art filtration
- Need to locate ventilation stacks in areas where there is good air dispersion
- Build tunnel as cheaply as possible, use the balance for rail
- Decide the short term solution – plan for now; we should not try to determine what will happen in the future
- Conflict between the objectives of the State and those of the Federal government
- Rail capacity problems going north

#### **Type B**

- Not a viable option – use Type A with a link to the orbital
  - Will have significant impact on housing and communities
  - Would result in increased traffic for new Motorway links
  - Type B not acceptable on environmental grounds – Galston Gorge not an option
  - Does not address growth areas to the West
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### **Type C**

- Too expensive – will take money from more valuable infrastructure needs
- Long term, it is the only viable option for heavy transport – “Missing Link”
- Needs to be complemented with a rail solution
- What is being done to use the Newcastle Port to relieve Sydney?
- Support Type C in conjunction with Type A – and use Type A for road freight only
- Cleanest and most efficient option
- Need to overcome the problems associated with a single Hawkesbury Bridge crossing – Type C provides a required alternative
- Need duplication of the Hawkesbury River crossing for safety/flexibility, to facilitate growth in Sydney’s west and access from the west to the tourist and recreational opportunities of the Central Coast.

### ***Potential issues in tunnel option for relief of Pennant Hills Road***

- Air quality – location of vent to be in an area where emissions would be well dispersed – need state of the art filtration
- Fire/ safety/ cost
- Entry/ exits an issue (severance of communities)
- Preserve bushland
- Exits for safety within tunnel
- Access in and out from local roads
- Construction impacts
- Issue of spoil disposal – number of truck movements – removal should be via rail not road
- Use dual tunnels for safety
- Hazardous vehicles/ vehicles carrying dangerous goods are an issue if they are prohibited in tunnels
- Interaction with other proposed infrastructure ie. Tunnels for rail
- Ridgetop construction would overcome some problems

### ***Study findings show that investment in rail will still lead to the doubling of road freight. What are other potential solutions to the issue of freight on the road?***

- Over reliance on road – solution in rail
- Need wide rail easements – linking with industrial estates
- Until road freight is not subsidised as it is today – no change
- More money on roads
- What are the implications if the assumptions of increases in rail do not occur?
- Introduction of B-doubles did not reduce the number of trucks on road – therefore there is need for more investment in roads

### ***Public transport? \_ What are some of the public transport needs and what are some of the public transport opportunities that may result from this project?***

- Local bus services very poor – should be Government, not private
  - Upgrade Central Coast rail link – urgent
  - Need to build for the demand
  - Very Fast Rail to serve the north – could both share the corridor?
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***Re-allocation of road space on Pennant Hills Road – what are your thoughts and your preferences?***

- Not possible to have dedicated lanes for buses – no opportunities/ no space
- Cycle lane/ public bus lane
- Street tree planting

***Tunnels or bridges?***

- Tunnels are better
- Should remember the cost of tunnels – very high
- Either is ok, as appropriate
- In the past, rail was built through creek beds, with creeks re-engineered over the top – consider this for new road construction

**4) Question Time**

- Who is the determining authority for the EIS?
  - Likely the project would be assessed under State processes and also subject to approval by a Federal agency. The process would be consistent with State and Federal requirements.
- Will there be studies of threatened species and more detailed investigations of flora and fauna?
  - More detailed field studies would be undertaken as part of an EIS.
- Sensitivity of assumptions?
  - This is being tested through a range of scenarios.
- Will there be tolls?
  - Funding and finance are a major part of the investigation and a range of scenarios are being investigated (eg. no tolls, shadow tolls; integrated network with charge/km)
- Validity of traffic numbers and methodology?
  - Traditional traffic prediction models (more than one) are used.

**5) Recap on the Next Steps in terms of Consultation**

- The next steps in the consultation process are:
  - Webpage update
  - Newsletter Number 2
  - Public Displays of route options in mid to late September
  - CFG meeting 3 – opportunity to present issues and questions from the public in response to the release of route options
- MH advised that a letter would be sent to all CFG participants when the information about the routes is to become public via newsletter and display (likely to be mid-late September)
- MH sought feedback on the display locations used in April, and sought suggestions for locations of the next public displays. There were a number of suggestions recorded and these will be investigated in the determination of suitable locations for the displays showing route options.

**6) Close and Thank you**

- PP and MH closed the meeting, and thanked everyone for their contribution and participation.
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