

Director Infrastructure Projects
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Sent by electronic submission

17 December 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to object to the Foxground to Berry Bypass in its current form and to provide comments, including recommendations for further amendments and mitigation measures, should the project proceed. I also wish to provide comments on the proposed access/egress arrangements from Victoria Street, Berry to the Princes Highway.

The key reasons for my objection are outlined as follows:

1) The proximity of the road to the existing Berry township and severance of Berry's western edge

The preferred alignment for the Berry Bypass is in close proximity to the existing township and will sever the western edge of Berry (including housing along Kangaroo Valley Road and neighbouring streets and the Berry Cemetery) from the town. This will impact adversely on community cohesion. Aligning the road further to the north of the proposed Highway could have resolved this. Additionally, the alignment of the bypass so close to the township will result in increased noise intrusion and the loss of the visual connection between Berry and the escarpment. I understand that work has been ongoing with the community to mitigate these impacts, and the current proposals reflect that, however in my opinion the impact on the Berry community remains unacceptable.

2) The overall scale of the development and impacts on the character of the historic Berry township and the surrounding landscape

The scale of the proposed bypass is inconsistent with the character of the historic Berry township, its surrounding hamlets and the rural landscape character of the area. The noise and visual intrusion of a project of this size will have an adverse impact on the area's tranquillity and may impact negatively on the local tourism industry, agriculture and the Berry and South Coast 'brand'. This will be heightened during the construction stage of the project, but there will also be longer term effects.

The visual impact of flyovers and junctions for the entire length of the road is considerable, but I am particularly concerned at the proposed works at the western side of Berry, which are beginning to resemble 'Spaghetti junction' – a look that is inconsistent with the scale and character of the town. The size of the cutting required to provide 3 lanes through Foxground Bends (where 2 lanes would be sufficient) is also of concern.

Tourists, locals and the local environment alike will suffer on account of the project's scale, and it is questioned whether a 'lighter touch' option could have been considered, alongside further investment in public transport to reduce car travel.

3) Construction impacts: noise, vibration, air quality, disruption

Related to Points 1 and 2 above, the construction impacts of a project of this scale will have significant impacts on the small community of Berry, with noise, vibration and dust impacts likely, in addition to traffic disruption and delays.

4) Loss/disturbance of vegetation

The scale of the project is also resulting in substantial loss and disturbance of native vegetation, with the environmental assessment stating that 57.1 hectares of native vegetation would be potentially impacted directly or indirectly by the project. The loss of riparian vegetation is of particular note. Please also refer to my suggestions below.

Impacts on local recreational opportunities and vegetation and suggested mitigation

The proposals outline plans for a pedestrian and cycleway from Mark Radium Park/Kangaroo Valley Road to the skate park and recreational facilities at North Street. I support this proposal and the concept of a greenspace buffer between the highway and George Street, however I would recommend this be expanded to create quality linear parkland between Kangaroo Valley Road and Bundewallah Creek/Camp Quality park. The park should include landscaping, native vegetation for habitat, play areas, street furniture and appropriate facilities for dog walkers, with the local community involved in the design of the space and funding to be provided as part of the project.

It appears from the animations that the new Highway would sever existing recreational land to the west of the horse activity grounds, removing access to the existing recreational area along Bundewallah Creek. This is a popular track for local recreation (and the local community has invested much time in regenerating the area). I would like to know if consideration has been given to providing a walking track underneath the Bridge at Berry to retain this important local access.

Access to/from the western end of Victoria Street Options

Having reviewed the three options for access to and from Victoria Street I would state my preferred preference as being Option 3, ensuring that Victoria Street remains open and maintaining two-way travel adjacent to the Highway.

I look forward to receiving your response to the issues raised.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hallahan
Berry