

**Andrew Beattie - FW: Submission to Environmental Assessment Foxground and Berry Bypass Project**

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**To:** <plan\_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Date:** 18/12/2012 12:13 AM  
**Subject:** FW: Submission to Environmental Assessment Foxground and Berry Bypass Project

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Dear Sir/Madam

Submission: Environmental Assessment Foxground and Berry Bypass

As an active member of the Berry community, I have taken a long term interest in the route selection process and design of the proposed realignment of the Princes Highway around Berry. I have done this as an individual, as a representative of Berry Alliance and as Convenor of the Better Options for Berry (BOB) a subcommittee of the Berry Alliance.

Although I have been involved in preparing formal submissions from the Berry Alliance and BOB, I thought it was important to also submit a personal submission reflecting my perspective based on this experience.

This submission argues that RMS have been deficient in the route selection processes for the Foxground and Berry Bypass outlined in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and this has resulted in selection of a preferred route which has unacceptable environmental and social impacts on the town of Berry and its environs.

This submission also argues that refinements to the RMS "preferred route" outlined in the EA did not adequately address the environmental and social impacts and were constrained by unrealistic budget constraints. Put simply if RMS insist on leaving the preferred route passing so close to Berry more is needed to offset the environmental and social impacts on the town.

When the RMS developed its initial long list of options and presented these to the community they provided insufficient background information on issues such as environmental and social impacts for community to make an informed comment. It is also particularly concerning that the results of the previous 1996 Berry Bypass Value Management Workshop, at which the community were represented, were not considered as a basis for developing the long list of options and are ignored in this EA. Surely this should have been a starting point for developing the long list of options. Instead this earlier workshop was ignored to the extent that RMS project staff would not even acknowledge they had a record of the workshop until the Berry Alliance presented them with a copy discovered in the local museum. It appears the results of the previous 1996 workshop which supported a route to the south of Berry town represented an "inconvenient truth" for the RMS and were ignored.

I would appreciate DP&I formally question RMS why they ignored the results of the 1996 Value Management Workshop in this EA and in developing the long list of options.

Whilst RMS make mention of a modelling approach to route selection I am also concerned that in developing the long list of options RMS did not adequately evaluate the community input to these options. We further seek evidence that the specific issue of "severance" between east and west Berry was considered in this process.

In selecting the short list of options the EA (page 20) states that the route options and access options were evaluated by a "value management workshop" approach. I contend that this is a flawed approach as it does not sufficiently evaluate environmental and social impacts. The fact that RMS had to modify both the access arrangements and the alignment around Berry subsequent to these workshops demonstrates that this

approach was flawed. I contend that as a result of a flawed "value management workshop" process RMS got the access options for Berry wrong, the Berry bridge wrong, the northern interchange for Berry wrong and alignment along North Street wrong as they had to change these elements after the "value management workshops". The fact that route selection has been so controversial in the community is evidence that this process is clearly flawed. I believe that RMS did not provide sufficient information on environmental and social impacts to adequately evaluate these in the "value management workshops" and believe the workshop outcomes were highly subjective.

It would be appreciated if DP&I formally ask RMS to explain how they weight social and environmental impacts in these processes without having the baseline information on environmental and social impacts.

On page 25 of the EA a statement is made about the impact of Pedestrian Access in Berry as if it is confined to severance of North street. The connectivity between west Berry where most of the future housing growth will occur and east berry which contains the social infrastructure including the school and the shops is of importance is not adequately addressed in the EA. DP&I recognised this in their issues list (EA page 142). RMS have not addressed the social dislocation caused by the Southern Interchange in the EA.

It was always of concern that all the short listed route options join the existing highway alignment at Kangaroo Valley Road. As environmental and social impacts had not been fully evaluated at this stage prudence should have dictated that a route going south of Berry township be retained in the short list of options. Many Berry residents who have watched the Berry Bypass planning since 1964 believe RMS were fixated on the "north street corridor" from day 1 of this options review process and manipulated the route selection process to get this outcome.

The short list of options released in 2007 did not include a southern option. The route option shown in Figure 3.8 and discussed on page 35 of the EA was not proposed until December 2011 and should not be included in this section.

This misrepresentation in the EA is of concern as social and environmental issues relating to the southern option had not been reviewed.

The language used to describe the route evaluation in pages 37-40 of the EA is very subjective and does not adequately explain the basis for the decisions or the relative weighting given various factors.

It would be useful for DP&I to ask for details of how the weighting of environmental and social factors used in the evaluation of route options were developed when the baseline information on these factors were not known.

The EA does not adequately explain the methodology for evaluation of options for the North Street Corridor (EA Section 3.6.1 page 51). I request that DP&I ask RMS for details of the methodology used for evaluation of options for the North Street corridor. In particular how was it decided in quantitative terms that the 50/50 option for route alignment between the Miller property and North street properties rendered the Miller farm non-viable? Was an independent opinion of this obtained? This is a very important issue for the future amenity of the residents of North Street and the Berry township.

Options for further lowering the alignment along North Street (EA page 51) are given scant coverage in the EA. The EA does not adequately explain why mechanical pumps cannot be used to drain the road and its abutments. Many pieces of essential infrastructure such as power stations and airfields use this method.

Further lowering of the road along the north side of Berry would significantly reduce the noise and visual impact on the town and needs a more detailed review than outlined in the EA.

The Northern bypass of Berry was described in the 2008 RTA Project Report as a "slender & unobtrusive design that fits into the landscape." However, the design produced by RMS in early 2011 bore no resemblance to that earlier description. This caused serious concern in the community as reasonable design

alternatives put forward by the BOB committee were dismissed by RMS. BOB had to enlist the help of State MP Gareth Ward and Minister Gay to force RMS to listen to community concerns and agree to the formation of a Community Review Group

As part of the Community Review Group process RMS set up a design workshop on the design of the Berry Bridge which involved four industry experts, four RMS staff and five community members. I was one of these community members and over two days we worked with the industry experts to refine the design of the Berry Bridge by lowering it by up to six metres and moving it ninety metres away from the Berry town centre and minimising the number of expansion joints. This modified design has been accepted by the Berry community as the optimum outcome without moving the RMS "preferred alignment".

This approach should be used as a model to resolve remaining issues such as the height of the alignment along North Street and the social and environmental impact of the Southern Interchange. I request DP&I ask RMS why they refused repeated calls from the community to establish an "expert workshop" involving community participants to resolve these issues.

I note on page 142 of the EA that DP&I request that pedestrian connectivity between Kangaroo Valley Road and Berry be maintained. The issue of pedestrian connectivity is not adequately covered by section 7.10. Pedestrians will have to cross two major roundabouts to walk from west Berry to east Berry where most social infrastructure is located.

I also note the scant treatment given the suggestion by Shoalhaven City Council for two off ramps to Berry from south including north bound exit at Woodhill Mountain Road to minimise impacts at Huntingdale Park roundabout and minimise through traffic through Berry. This was supported by a petition coordinated by BOB of over 1100 signatures in November 2010 and presented to the NSW Parliament. I support the call by SCC for a second north bound exit. This is not adequately covered in Section 7.1

A total of 161 separate issues were raised by the community with respect to the inadequacies of the preferred route. These have been categorised in the EA as follows: design 12, consultation 9, transport and traffic 32, noise and vibration 27, terrestrial ecology 8, surface water and ground water 3, flooding 8, landscape character and visual amenity 21, non-aboriginal heritage 8, land use and property 1, socio economic 40, air quality 2.

This clearly shows the community are concerned about the environmental and social impacts of the proposed RMS "preferred route".

Section 6.4.1 and section 6.4.4 dealing with future consultation are far too subjective and open for interpretation by RMS and their contractors. For this reason they are totally inadequate. No formal process for future community consultation has been recommended. The Berry Alliance requests that DP&I request that RMS meet with members of the communities impacted by this project to establish formal processes for future community consultation including reforming the Community Review Group and appointment of an independent Community Advocate and that these processes should be approved by DP&I rather than RMS.

I would appreciate an acknowledgment that this submission has been received and an idea of the timing of a response to the issues raised.

Kind Regards Will Armitage (256a Bundewallah Road Berry)