

“Bonnie Braes”
WATTAMONDARA
NSW 2794

5/10/09

The General Manager
Cowra Shire Council
COWRA NSW 2794

Dear Sir,

I refer to the Cowra Shire Land Use Strategy, August 2009, currently on display and welcome the opportunity to comment on the traffic deviation proposals outlined in the report.

I draw your attention to my original submission to the Cowra Shire Council for alternative Traffic routes around Cowra dated 9/6/2000 and revised response to the Cowra Profile study dated 24/4/08. I note that no mention of my submission, or other public submissions, appear in the Land Use Strategy report. There is also no mention of how the proposals outlined in the Land Use Strategy report were planned.

Having watched the progress of a number of town bypass projects in the Central West and elsewhere, I believe the issue of developing road corridors to alleviate town traffic problems warrants a much higher priority in State Planning. Some reasons for this are:

- the permanency of the road system and the consequent long-term impacts the efficiency of the highway and trunk road network has on the community. (Losses of time, energy and safety resulting from poor roads are major causes of regional disadvantage eg., the poor standard of the roads across the Blue Mountains);
- waste and poor outcomes in regional road projects are usually attributable to the failure to have in place effective guidelines and planning instruments to ensure efficient research and dispassionate treatment of the issues involved;
- failure of the RTA to provide a holistic approach to research by providing guidelines for communities and Local Government bodies to deal appropriately with road planning issues.
- growing community concerns about increasing volumes of inter-regional and local traffic affecting amenity and safety within towns;
- failure to recognise the need for regional service equity in transport infrastructure and to ensure towns and regions are not unfairly disadvantaged by the actions of others, such as the parochialism usually apparent as Local Government bodies attempt to protect commercial interests in these matters;

- the need to formulate appropriate Local Environment Plans and provide some security to land owners about future impacts on zoning and land values;
- community apathy and the general lack of effective road user advocacy in road development matters, particularly at regional levels;
- Government decisions causing changes to the availability of transport services eg., effects of rail minimisation and removal of air services;

Assessments of these situations should include an analysis of the local and regional problems followed by the establishment of appropriate goals and design criteria. The direction of this planning should be coming from established planning guidelines.

The Cowra Situation

With six main roads converging on Cowra, all carrying a high component of regional traffic, the present need to pass through the town has become a significant obstacle. The steepness of the main street, traffic lights, school zones, extended speed restricted zones, tight and congested intersection turns, the weight restricted bridge and considerable growth of domestic traffic are all contributing factors supporting the need for alternative traffic routes around Cowra.

Options 1 and 4 as outlined in the Cowra Land-use Strategy, would be unlikely to provide significant highway user benefits because of their involvement with intersecting traffic situations and restricted speed conditions within the town area. They would also be likely to cause significant loss of amenity and may create safety problems within the areas concerned.

Option 3 would have some benefits in connecting the Sydney and Boorowa roads and to a lesser extent the Young road but it does not address the Canowindra road problems. Also, because of probable restricted speed conditions which will apply as it passes within the developed area of Cowra, it would be unlikely to provide attractive benefits for the majority of highway users.

Option 2 first appears to have merit as it would connect with reasonable efficiency, the Canowindra, Grenfell, Young and Boorowa roads, thus avoiding school zones and the congested and tight intersections situations of the town and bridge area. Unfortunately however, even with an essential new northern connection between the Canowindra and Sydney roads, this option would be unlikely to provide an attractive route connecting the Sydney road to the Grenfell, Young and Boorowa roads because of the added distance and hill climbing involved.

Alternative industrial areas and routes.

Mention has been made of the intention to create an industrial area in the Glen Logan locality. I question the wisdom of such a decision since it appears unlikely that there is any prospect of rail services being restored to that area. The statement on page 1 of the report "The Glen Logan area is the most suitable location for a purpose built

industrial park to service the needs of the Shire”, is an unsupported assumption. At present, the cannery, Geronimo machinery, Mulyan quarry and the rubbish tip do not create significant volumes of traffic compared to the traffic now using the Canowindra and Sydney roads. Furthermore, the Glen Logan area already has access to the Canowindra road. However, as mentioned above, it would benefit from the construction of a new road connecting the Canowindra and Sydney roads.

If an eastern/southern bypass of Cowra, as outlined in my submissions, were to be established, an industrial area located in the Noonbinna area would have more efficient connections. A eastern/southern road would provide better isolation from the town urban area and have good connections to the more significant local traffic generating industries ie., sale yards, abattoir, wheat storages, fuel depots, concrete batching works, current and future mining enterprises and the existing industries of West Cowra.

Uncertainty about the permanency of the closure of the Cowra/Demonville railway line poses more questions about the long-term development of roads around Cowra. Permanent closure may reduce the railway obstacle for road construction in some situations but it will undoubtedly lead to greater volumes of heavy transport on the road system. The possible future development of an expressway road crossing of the Blue Mountains could also have very significant impacts on the future role of regional roads.

Conclusion.

While option 2 could address some of Cowra’s road access problems, I believe it would not match the potential long-term benefits of an eastern/southern bypass. A copy of this proposal is attached.

There is little doubt that substantial road construction will be needed to provide more efficient and safer access roads around Cowra.

Mention has been made of section 94 contributions to support these developments. There is a perception that these locally levied taxes are very unfair. It should be remembered that current Federal fuel taxes alone, provide revenue in excess of \$13B annually while less than \$3B of this is being returned to the road system. Road users should therefore strenuously resist arguments that the provision of good roads is a substantial burden for government. “Cheap and nasty” alternative traffic routes do not offer wise solutions for efficient long-term highway development.

For further information see: www.centralwesttransportforum.org .

Yours sincerely,

Graham Dun