

# **An alternative highway route for Cowra**

The Cowra Profile study document makes repeated comments about the desirability of an alternative highway route around Cowra but fails to provide any detailed analysis of this problem.

The absence of government recognition and proper treatment of the problem of highway corridor provision in town planning obviously affects Cowra but also has much wider serious implications for highway development throughout NSW. This deficiency in basic planning infrastructure is a serious obstacle to achieving an efficient highway system. The same problem is obstructing progress on vital projects such as a satisfactory express highway between the Central West and Sydney. It is also responsible for much waste in the production of our highways and a major contributor to regional disadvantage.

## **The Cowra situation.**

Increasing growth and diversity in agricultural and food processing industries as well as significant increases in quarrying and manufacturing are placing greater demands on the use of roads within the Cowra district. The closure of the Cowra-Eugowra rail line, the general effects of rail minimisation policy, changes in the system of grain marketing and delivery sites and the expected establishment of more mining enterprises will further increase road usage in the area.

With mounting public concern about the adverse effects of heavy transport through the business and residential areas of the town and the now reduced speed limits in urban areas, including school zones, it is obvious that an alternative highway route around Cowra is becoming increasingly desirable.

A well designed alternative highway route would result in savings in time and energy; provide increased safety, a less stressful traffic environment and reduced noise levels throughout the town.

A definite plan for an alternative route would remove uncertainty among landowners and assist planning of appropriate development.

In assessing the value of an alternative highway route consideration should be given to:

- the reduction of speed limits within urban areas;
- likely increases in the development of irrigation-dependent industries such as dairying and horticulture which are dependent on the fast transport of perishable commodities to markets and processors;
- further effects of rail minimisation policy and removal of air services;
- effects of improved highway standards and possible impacts of improved regional accessibility e.g., better road access to the Sydney region;
- increasing tourism

- the relatively good availability of water from the Lachlan river and the impacts of future development of mining and industrial development including changes in the transport requirements of existing industries.

Note: See also "The need for a Highway Development Planning Policy".

## **Route Options**

With six main roads and three railway lines converging on Cowra and the need to cross the Lachlan River, options for a satisfactory alternative highway route are limited.

The attached map shows a possible option.

The proposed alignment would:

- be completely removed from the urban area of Cowra;
- cross the Lachlan River where the flood plain is narrow allowing efficient bridging thus minimising disruption from flooding;
- provide connection of all major traffic routes;
- minimise any distance disadvantages;
- provide connections with existing and potential industrial areas including rail loading sites, grain delivery sites, abattoirs, sale yards and rail loading sites for quarry products;
- follow terrain allowing efficient curve and grade standards for high standard construction with no restrictive speed or hazardous conditions for through traffic;
- provide opportunities for much improved highway alignment over existing roads e.g., curves of the current Boorowa road;