

# Memorandum of understanding

Upgrading the Pacific Highway



A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the NSW and Australian governments was signed on 23 December 2005. This fact sheet explains what this important step means.

## What does the MoU commit to?

The MoU represents an understanding between the Government of Australia and the Government of the State of New South Wales for the development of a high standard North Coast Motorway between the F3 Freeway at Beresfield and the Queensland border.

## What does this MOU mean?

The agreement means both governments will immediately assign technical and financial experts to find the best way to accelerate the Pacific Highway upgrade project.

The highway serves the rapidly expanding coastal communities on the north coast and mid-north coast of New South Wales.

The Pacific Highway corridor between Beresfield and the Queensland border is also the key strategic interstate transport route for the transport of freight and people between Sydney and Brisbane.

General road traffic volumes on the Pacific Highway are expected to increase significantly (up to 35%) by 2021 compared with today, and truck volumes on the highway are likely to double over this period.

This outlook requires the development of a new major road that is a high-standard, dual-carriageway motorway.

## Will a toll be charged?

Both governments have not made a decision on tolls.

A working party set up by the Federal and State governments will be considering a range of funding options, including tolling, to fund an accelerated works program.

A motorway style highway is a high-cost item to construct. If a North Coast Motorway is to be finished by the Federal Government's target of 2016, private finance may be required. This means tolls may be placed on new or upgraded sections of the highway.

The highway would only be upgraded in stages, as funding allows. With a toll, the Pacific Highway could be upgraded to a dual carriageway from the F3 Freeway at Beresfield to the Queensland border relatively quickly.

## Does signing a piece of paper really mean anything?

Signing the Memorandum of Understanding is an important step. Both Australian and State governments are committed to doing whatever is necessary to upgrade the Pacific Highway as quickly as possible.

Senior technical and financial experts are analysing all the options to find the solution. Both governments agree to explore:

- The development of the North Coast Motorway as a critical economic transport infrastructure project.
- The creation of a Working Party with officers from NSW agencies (RTA and Treasury) and the Federal Department of Transport and Regional Services to undertake economic and financial analysis of the Motorway proposal and to develop and finalise details regarding issues such as:
  - Year-by-year funding arrangements including options to accelerate completion such as tolls and private section involvements.
  - The priority of works.
  - The future management and approval of projects.
  - Reporting on progress and project completion.
  - Design standards.
  - Promotional strategy and community involvement.

## Will the North Coast Motorway be a separate road to the Pacific Highway?

If new sections of the Pacific Highway are tolled, a free alternative would always be available for local traffic.

There is no proposal to construct a North Coast Motorway as an entirely separate road from the Pacific Highway.

## Short and long-term planning for the NSW north coast

The north coast is one of the fastest growing areas in NSW. The volume of traffic using the highway varies from area to area.

The highway design may change to meet the needs of each area and to achieve an appropriate level of safety and accessibility. Motorway and arterial styles of road are described below and right.

## An arterial style highway

An arterial style highway is suitable for areas where there are fewer vehicles turning onto the upgraded highway. It includes four lanes (two in each direction) in separated carriageways. The speed limit generally will be posted at 100km/hr but may be increased to 110km/hr where it is safe to do so.

Access to the highway is by:

- Surface level (or at-grade) intersections with local roads.
- Some grade-separated interchanges may be warranted.
- Left in/left out from local roads and properties.
- U-turn facilities for vehicles to turn around at appropriate, safe locations.

## A motorway style highway

The RTA is planning for the long term in all cases. However in some areas the long term motorway standard is required now. This is because there are more people living nearby, requiring frequent and safe access to the highway.

Providing a motorway style highway provides motorists with a choice:

- Of being able to use a local traffic route for slower speeds (80km/hr) and local access.
- Using the motorway for longer distance travel at higher speeds (110km/hr).

This motorway will have four lanes (two in each direction) in separate carriageways. The speed limit will be posted at 110km/hr. Access to the motorway will be controlled by:

- Interchanges with ramps to access the highway for frequently used areas.
- Local roads to cross above or below the highway.
- A reduced number of left in/left out arrangements for local roads and properties, if these cannot be eliminated entirely.

For further information, contact the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority, Pacific Highway Office on: Telephone (free call) 1800 653 092.

### TYPICAL CROSS SECTION

