



Australian Government



New South Wales Government



Bonville upgrade

Upgrading the Pacific Highway

Flora and fauna management

January 2007

The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has engaged Abigroup Contractors Pty Ltd to design, construct and maintain for ten years the Pacific Highway Bonville upgrade. From the south the 9.6km upgrade commences adjacent to Perrys Road, bypassing Bonville village, and finishes at the junction of Lyons Road, approximately 11km south of Coffs Harbour. It is jointly funded by the NSW and Australian governments.

Modifications to the project

Management of native flora and fauna is integral to the environmental management measures being adopted for the construction of the Bonville upgrade.

The original proposed Bonville upgrade route was modified in 2002 as a result of additional information gathered on koala populations by the RTA. The research project was established following discussions with environmental groups and ongoing information regarding the value of koala habitat at the southern end of the project.

Modifications to the project were made to reduce impacts on high quality koala habitat, by way of reduced impacts on tallwood/moist eucalypt vegetation communities.

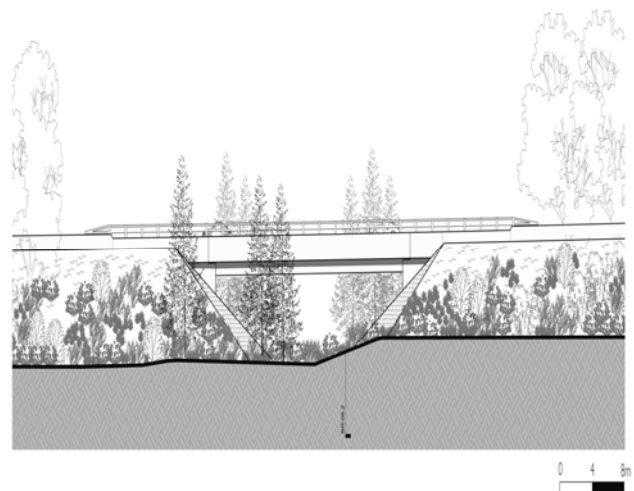
The modifications were developed in consultation with community stakeholders, including local environmental organisations and relevant government agencies.

Flora and fauna management

Flora and fauna management is based on current best practice, the requirements to manage impacts that are described in the environmental assessment documents and the project's conditions of approval.

Mitigation measures were developed during the design of the project, in consultation with local environmental organisations and government agencies.

They reduce the potential impact of the project on flora and fauna, including the impact on high quality koala habitat.



Fauna underpass, passage under a bridge, typical elevation.

Management plan

A *Flora and Fauna Management Plan* has been prepared. It describes measures that aim to minimise adverse impacts on flora, fauna and local biodiversity during the construction of the Bonville upgrade.

The plan describes steps for flora translocation, seed collection, topsoil management, weed management, pre-clearing surveys, hollow habitat management and fauna rescue.

Key elements of the mitigation measures are:

- A 60 metre wide vegetated fauna overpass (highway tunnel) in Bongil Bongil National Park to allow fauna to cross the highway safely.
- A vegetated median, up to 50 metres wide, to allow gliders to cross the highway safely.
- A total of eight passes under the highway, including four dedicated fauna underpasses and three combined fauna underpasses/creek crossings.
- More than 18km of temporary and permanent fauna fencing to:
 - prevent koalas and other fauna crossing the existing highway during clearing activities.
 - direct fauna to safe crossing points during construction and after the completion of the upgraded highway.

Activities that take place before vegetation clearing involve:

- Minimising the extent of the clearing required.
- Establishing polyweb fencing to identify clearing zones.
- Undertaking surveys of threatened and endangered flora and fauna for protection, translocation or propagation.
- Collecting seeds of local flora species for rehabilitation.
- Removing and relocating (called translocation) those threatened species present, including the tree called rusty plum (*Amorphospermum white*).

The procedure during clearing involves:

- A two-stage clearing process with non-habitat trees removed before habitat trees, to allow fauna to relocate.
- Undertaking a pre-clearing assessment by the project's ecologist to identify the presence or absence of fauna including koalas, bat colonies and roosts, and glider dens.
- Having the project ecologist and the Department of Environment and Conservation present during the capture and rescue of affected fauna.

- Identifying and marking hollow/fauna trees (to assist in their collection and future use).
- Checking the location of radio collared koalas to ensure they are not in the clearing zone (a specific protocol has been established for koala management).
- Reusing cleared vegetation whenever possible, with timber to be graded according to its uses on-site under supervision of NSW State Forests.
- Leaving some trees (including hollow trees) near the roadway for fauna movements and habitat.
- Mulching the remaining vegetation for reuse on the project in erosion and sedimentation controls, and landscaping work.

More information on these flora and fauna management plans is available by contacting the project team or visiting the community information centre located on Bonville Station Road.

With these mitigation measures in place, the completed project is expected to significantly reduce the number of koalas and other native fauna killed by vehicles on this section of the highway.

Ongoing monitoring

How many fauna use the fauna overpass and underpasses will be monitored when the new highway is in operation.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the Bonville upgrade project:

Phone toll free: 1800 725 321

Email: bonville@abigroup.com.au

Log on to the project website:

www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific (click on Bonville upgrade)

Or log on to: www.auslink.gov.au

Visit the project information centre:

Located on Bonville Station Road, Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm (excluding public holidays).



This project is jointly funded by the NSW and Federal governments