



## **YELGUN TO CHINDERAH FREEWAY**

*Official Opening 4 August 2002*

Opened by

The Honourable Bob Carr MP

*Premier of NSW*

The Honourable John Anderson MP

*Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services*

# **UPGRADING THE PACIFIC HIGHWAY**



**Roads and Traffic  
Authority**  
[www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au)



# YELGUN TO CHINDERAH FREEWAY

## SAVING TIME AND LIVES

The Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway is 28.5km of four-lane, divided carriageway. It runs from Dirty Flat Road at Yelgun to north of Oak Avenue, just south of Chinderah.

The freeway shortens the Pacific Highway by 14.5km and saves motorists an average of 20 minutes. The new freeway will reduce accidents and save lives by bypassing the Burringbar Range, a notorious accident blackspot. It will also improve travelling conditions on the Pacific Highway significantly.



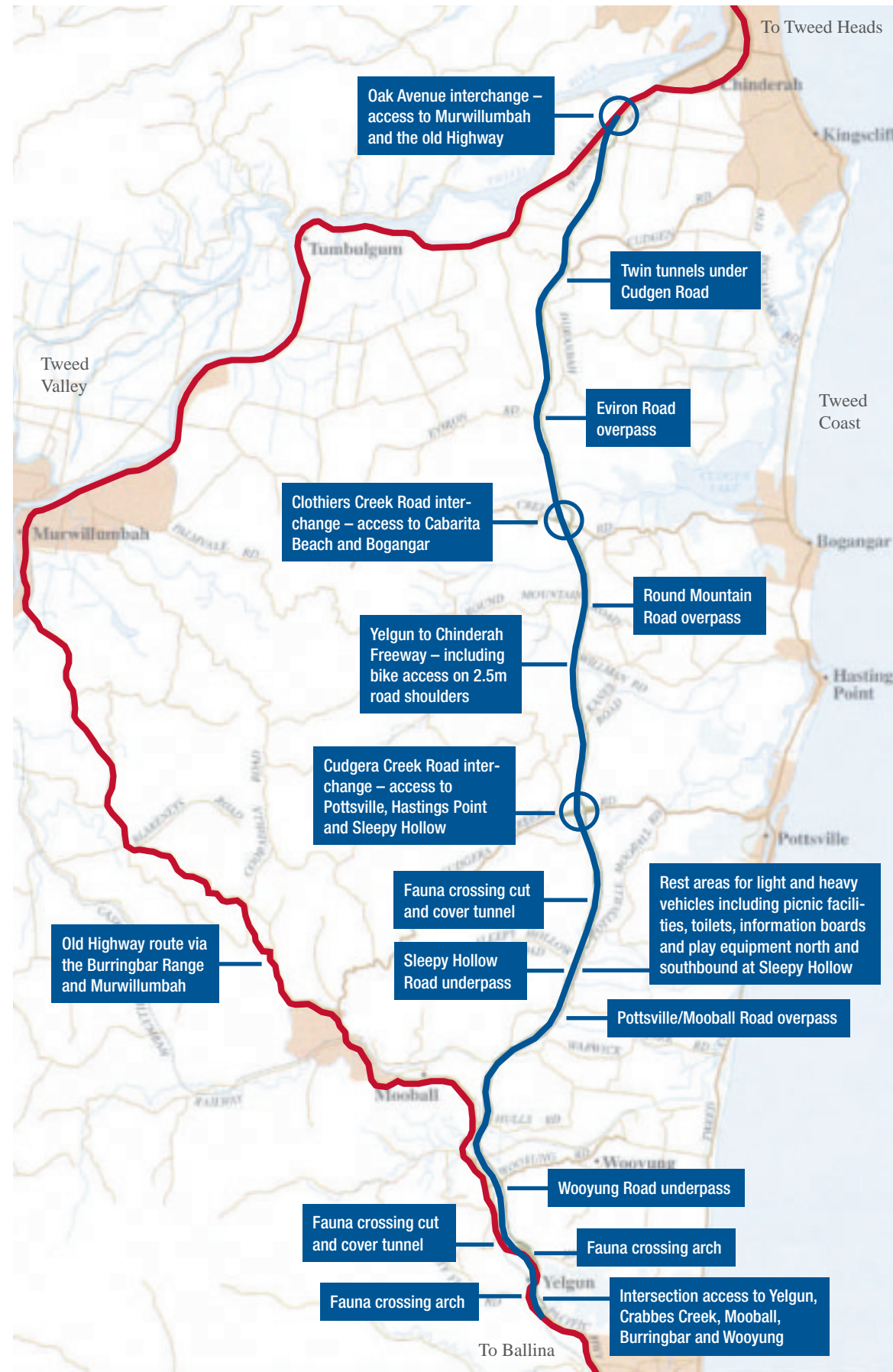
At a cost of \$348 million, the Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway has taken around six years to develop and build. It is the single largest project in the 10-year, \$2.2 billion upgrade of the Pacific Highway from Hexham to Tweed Heads.

The NSW and Commonwealth Governments jointly funded the Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway. More than 500 jobs were created during each year of construction as well as 2000 local flow-on jobs.

Managed by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority and built by Abigroup Contractors Pty Ltd, the freeway is being opened 4 months ahead of schedule.

### Achieving the right balance

The joint State-Federal upgrading of the Yelgun to Chinderah section of the Pacific Highway was the subject of a number of strategic transport planning studies. A comprehensive program of community consultation began in 1996, followed by a complex development process, an environmental impact assessment and nearly three years of construction. The result is a high-standard dual carriageway that provides a balance between the social, ecological, engineering and cost factors.



## PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

During the construction of the Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway great care was taken to protect the local environment, particularly threatened native plants and animals.

More than 150 threatened, rare or regionally significant plants were moved to secure areas outside the freeway corridor. Their progress is being monitored. As part of the regeneration of the freeway route, hundreds of thousands of trees and shrubs have been planted. Native seeds were also collected and propagated. About 200,000 square metres have been hydromulched with native seed.

The Australian Museum was commissioned to manage Koala Watch, the most comprehensive study of koalas ever undertaken. With help from the local community many koalas were spotted and tagged. The results of this study will help in understanding the movements of koalas and the management of this threatened species.

### Involving the community

Following the comprehensive community consultation program during the planning stage, a community liaison group was formed during construction. The group met regularly with RTA and Abigroup staff to discuss issues affecting the local community. Many community groups and schools toured the site, while presentations were made to many other groups.

### Cudgen Road Tunnel – a NSW first

The Cudgen Road Tunnel is the first tunnel to be built as part of a rural road project in NSW.

The decision was taken to build twin tunnels to avoid the loss of prime cane land, avoid flood-prone areas and preserve important local animal habitat. The tunnel is also more sympathetic with the surrounding environment, removing the visual impact of a road cutting.

The two tunnels separate north and south traffic and are both 134 metres long.



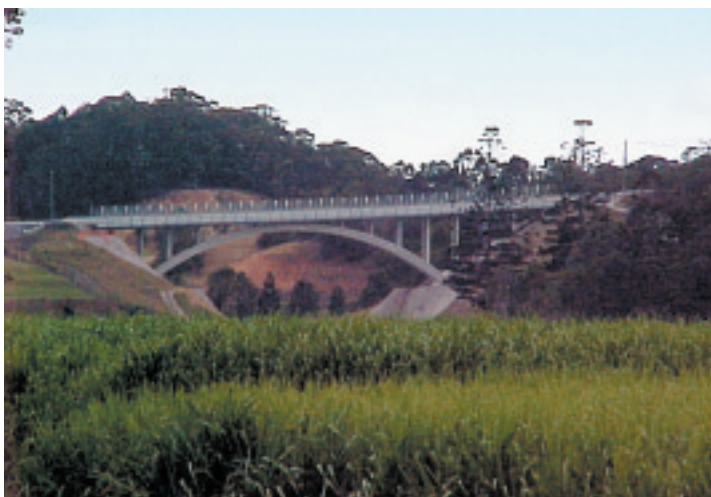
# BUILDING THE YELGUN TO CHINDERAH FREEWAY

Construction work on the Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway began in May 2000 following extensive community consultation.

Along the Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway there are:

- Three interchanges.
- 11 overbridges including two arch bridges.
- 39 highway bridges.
- 36 cuts and fills.
- Two major fauna overpasses.
- Three major fauna underpasses.
- Two major rest areas.

The freeway passes through magnificent valleys, hills and agricultural land. All the bridges and landscaping along the route have been designed to blend in with the local area.



## Soft soil solutions

One of the most demanding aspects of the design and construction was the 5.8km section of freeway through the low-lying areas. To overcome the problem of soft soil foundations more than 1 million metres of wick drains were installed with 700,000 square metres of geotextile placed over the drainage layer to support the embankments. To speed up the settlement process 800,000 cubic metres of earthworks were added on top of the embankments and later removed, before the new road was built.

## Facts and figures

The entire project required:

- Six million cubic metres of earthworks.
- 250,000 cubic metres of concrete.
- 380,000 tonnes of aggregate and coarse sand.
- 500,000 trees, shrubs and plants.
- 19km of fencing to stop animals entering the Freeway.

The majority of the concrete aggregate used to construct the freeway was sourced and crushed in the freeway corridor. This avoided the need to transport materials and saved 25,000 truck movements on local roads.



## Pacific Highway Upgrading Program

The Pacific Highway Upgrading is the single largest construction program in NSW for the last 40 years. Twenty-one major projects and 19 smaller projects have been opened to traffic. Four major construction projects are underway – including Halfway Creek Realignment, Cooperook Bypass, Taree to Cooperook Upgrade and Karuah Bypass. A further 14 are at various stages of planning and development including upgrades at Brunswick Heads to Yelgun and the Ballina Bypass.

The program has brought enormous improvements to road conditions and travel times. From 1997 to 2001, travel times between Hexham and the Queensland border have been reduced by around 40 minutes for passenger vehicles and 50 minutes for heavy vehicles. Notorious black spots have been removed with the completion of the Yelgun to Chinderah Freeway, Ewingsdale Interchange, Raleigh Deviation, Taree Bypass and the Bulahdelah to Coolongolook Freeway.

As well as boosting tourism and transport efficiency, providing safer and more consistent overtaking opportunities, upgrading the Pacific Highway has saved lives and reduced the incidence of serious injury accidents.

## For more information contact

RTA Pacific Highway Office  
21 Prince Street  
Grafton NSW 2460

Phone: (02) 6640 1000

Fax: (02) 6640 1001

Email: [Pacific\\_Highway@rta.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Pacific_Highway@rta.nsw.gov.au)

Internet: [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.htm](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific.htm)

Freecall:  
**1800 653 092**

RTA/Pub. 02.132