

THE PROPOSED BARTON HIGHWAY HAS CATASTROPHIC OUTCOMES FOR YASS VALLEY'S WATER SUPPLY

At the Field Days last week end we began a process with Pru Goward MP (Member for Goulburn) and the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), to have one last attempt to shift the Barton Highway to the west so it doesn't traverse the Murrumbateman catchment area with catastrophic outcomes, particularly for the Yass and Murrumbateman water supply in the future.

We have learned so much in the last 25 years about Sustainable Development and Environmental Sustainability since a ridiculous politically motivated decision resulted in the road basically splitting the township. This resulting outcome leaves us with a proposed dogs breakfast design worse than Eagle Hawke near Canberra on the Federal Highway, which will have four roads in a row at one section and three roads for 2km. The confusion will be horrendous for Murrumbateman's future which will discourage tourism, destroy the Field Days and many other businesses as people struggle to find their way around. With Yass Valley Council's plans for future development, the current proposed route just won't cope with the traffic from new development both east and west of the proposed grade separated interchange on Hillview Rd, especially on Field Days weekends. Furthermore, the lack of foresight leaves us with a poorly planned proposed 100kph dual carriageway, which is not the community's expectation and will be criticised forever as a ridiculous planning outcome. This would be reversed with a western route outside the Murrumbateman catchment area, with a better standard of road at 110km per hour the journey would be shorter, quicker and safer for all residents and passing tourism and trade, especially trucks carrying hazardous materials.

Trucks carrying hazardous materials are the main threat to the Yass and Murrumbateman water supply catchment area, with the current proposed route through the town. This proposed route has many bridges across the creeks and rivers of the Murrumbateman catchment area which will cost a fortune to build and with the potential contamination of the Yass and Murrumbateman Water Supply tributary river systems, we have a real potential environmental and economic disaster should there be a major accident. Conversely the much better western route outside the catchment area has no bridges and nil impact in the west outside the catchment area from a catastrophic chemical spillage. This cannot be ignored anymore and we are glad to make it public now. This kind of accident would be a disaster for the Yass Valley from which it would not recover for decades.

We hope Yass Valley Council will speak out on this critical issue on behalf of its residents and commuters who it should be representing responsibly. The proposed current sub-standard Barton Highway decided 18 years ago is one of the worst planning/political decision and processes ever witnessed. The current Barton Highway can however be utilised efficiently as a service road, looping into Murrumbateman with Long Rail Gully Road and Capricorn being the access interchange points. This would facilitate good planning outcomes for the environment, tourism, business, development and of course the Yass and Murrumbateman water supply catchment area.

As Murrumbateman grows, similar to the Hunter Valley and Yass with their Bypass experiences, it will be boosted from Canberra being so close, particularly with the alternative superior standard western bypass duplication all the way to Canberra. Growth if planned properly around this more efficient road network would be improved bringing prosperity and wealth to Murrumbateman and the Yass Valley for decades to come as opposed to potential disaster.