

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

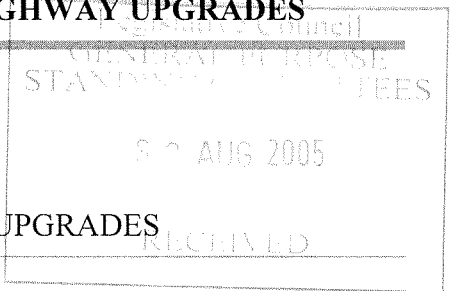
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Date Received: 30/08/2005

Subject:

Summary

GPSC4 GPSC4 - SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY ON PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

From: "Katrina Luckie" <kluckie@nrrdb.com.au>
To: <gpscno4@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 29/08/05 17:00:31
Subject: SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY ON PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES



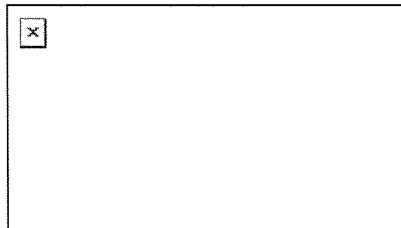
Dear Tanya,

Please find attached a submission from the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board into the Inquiry on Pacific Highway Upgrades. I have also attached two documents referred to in the submission that may be of use for further information or review by the Inquiry Committee.

Regards

Katrina

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Consequently, infrastructure provision and transport planning needs to be considered in terms of this settlement pattern and the unique opportunities and needs it poses.

The provision of sufficient strategic/economic enabling infrastructure to maintain appropriate conditions for continued employment and economic growth is critical for the region's communities. The Development Board is in the process of preparing a Regional Industry and Economic Plan (RIEP) for the Northern Rivers¹ and in this process has identified a need for investment in strategic infrastructure associated with transport and access. The Draft Plan (enclosed) identifies some of these specific needs, noting the importance of the Pacific Highway.

The Development Board encourages government to consider the following principles in all matters related to transport planning, including upgrade of the Pacific Highway:

- a holistic, integrated and long-term approach to transport is needed to address the economic, social and environmental needs and challenges of the region;
- environmental sustainability and the evolution of settlement patterns appropriate to the specific environmental, cultural and economic characteristics of the region should drive transport planning, investment and management decisions;
- transport planning and development should aim to maintain a stable and predictable investment environment for regional industries including agriculture, tourism and residential development;
- the importance to the region of efficient, cost effective and convenient transport links to South East Queensland must be central to transport planning and development;
- transport planning is an integral part of a comprehensive approach to major infrastructure development including telecommunications, energy and water distribution;
- transport development should balance the needs of stakeholders and avoid usage conflicts to ensure higher standards of safety and a more equitable sharing of transport costs and impacts;
- triple bottom line evaluation including full cost accounting should be applied to all transport infrastructure projects; and
- transport development should encourage behavioural change by all categories of users to achieve more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable outcomes.

A particular need is the integration of transport planning with regional economic and land use planning (ie through DIPNR's Far North Coast Regional Strategy) to minimise the negative impacts of transport development on land values and commercial investment planning in the broader regional economy. This requires the protection of all existing transport corridors (including both rail and road) and the investigation of more innovative use of these corridors to enhance flexibility and meet settlement needs. It also involves the use of up-to-date technology to improve traffic and freight management to avoid network congestion and usage conflicts, reduce bottlenecks and usage conflicts and improving the efficiency and convenience of modal interfaces. Greater integration between local, regional, state and national economic objectives and the needs of all categories of users including: local residents/workers, inter-urban travellers, inter-regional travellers, tourists, local and regional businesses, national freight forwarders is also required.

Pacific Highway Upgrade

In terms of the highway upgrade it is important to ensure:

- adequate consideration of the impacts of major highway development on the region's secondary roads network;
- the separation of local and interstate traffic to the greatest extent possible;
- elimination of known safety black spots and areas of conflict between different categories of users and the utilisation of divided carriageways to separate traffic flow;
- adequate community engagement in transport planning, decision-making and management

- to ensure that the transport system reflects the social and cultural values of the community;
- management of the impact of freight movements to preserve residential amenity by, for example, the use of limited access zones and heavy vehicle curfews;
- the use of technical innovation to mitigate transport related noise, visual and air pollution;
- the introduction of strategies to alleviate the environmental impacts of high traffic volumes and congestion;
- the alignment of transport planning and development with the protection of high value agricultural lands and environmental conservation values; and
- preservation of natural and cultural landscape values as a necessary condition for transport infrastructure development.

In the case of the Ewingsdale and Tintenbar, and Ballina and Woodburn upgrading proposals, the Development Board encourages full consideration of the importance of the protection of regionally and state significant agricultural land. The proposed routes in both of these areas has potential to negatively impact on the economic viability of businesses and industry sectors (horticulture, coffee, sugar cane etc), and further flow on effects. A full analysis of the costs and benefits, in both economic and social terms is required as a matter of urgency.

Conclusion

The Development Board encourages the General Standing Committee No. 4 to ensure consideration of these comments in the inquiry. For further information on any of the matters raised in this submission, please contact Katrina Luckie on 02 6622 4011.

Regards



Katrina Luckie
Executive Director

Encl:

- Regional Industry and Economic Plan: Draft, May 2005.
- Working Paper for a Regional Industry and Economic Plan, November 2003.