

**Submission
No 176**

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Organisation: Ocean Shores Community Association Inc

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Telephone:

Date Received: 19/08/2005

Subject:

Summary

The Standing Committee for the Inquiry into the Pacific Highway Upgrades

Dear Committee members,

The B Double Route Assessment Guidelines used by the RTA were not adhered to by the RTA before the Minister approved the route for use by B Double Trucks.

The document purporting to be the Report complying with the guidelines shows that Mr Bob Wood, the Regional Freight Route Coordinator signed off the Report on 15/07/02 as having addressed the Environment and Community Amenity section.

This is clearly incorrect as the views of the local community in noise sensitive areas was not considered nor were they even consulted.

The same applies as to community amenity where the impact has been disastrous not only on our community but also areas along the gazetted route where there was also no community consultation.

We are concerned that the RTA produced a Report titled 1998 Roads and Traffic Authority Environment Report where the RTA highlighted the so called Community involvement in the section adjoining our area the Brunswick Heads to Yelgun Route.

You will find in that Report, a photograph of what is purported to be "the community", four persons standing behind a model also purported to be of this area.

The persons in the photograph are not from our community but are RTA personnel and there was no model made for this area, other than one made by the community, which offered a less damaging route than the one selected by the RTA.

There were NO COMMUNITY MEETINGS with the affected community, but there were non public meetings with a strong environmental lobby who have objected to there identities being disclosed on spurious non sustainable claims of threats of physical violence if their identities are disclosed.

When incorrect statements and photograph in the 1998 Environment Report were pointed out to the RTA CEO Mr Paul Forward, his response was to have the photograph removed from the web site version of the Report.

The current Route was approved in spite of the Local Council, Byron Council objecting to the proposed route.

The route was approved before the statutory time for Council to respond.

The Matter was referred to the Ombudsman and the response from the RTA was that they would not repeat the charade in the future.

The affected community of Ocean Shores has strongly objected to the chosen route but the Minister's response was to flippantly suggest we have been awarded a "silver medal" for our actions.

This is the ONLY acknowledgement of the concerns documented by the affected community.

There have been properties acquired at more than triple the VG before the route was selected and persons who have had their properties acquired were on the Route Selection Committee.

Clearly there has been vested interests at work.

One property acquired is nowhere near the selected route and has no environmental qualities what so ever, being a contaminated ex Road House garage.

Other properties are so distant from our area as to be of no use as compensatory habitat to the affected community they do not comply with the RTA's own guidelines for compensatory habitat.

We are the largest population base adjoining the Pacific Highway where the highway has been moved closer to the population and have had to endure the increased noise, pollution and deaths from crashes caused by the mixing of monstrous B Doubles and local traffic.

The highway has been left at a dangerous 90 KPH at a major unprotected intersection to our estate in spite of several deaths and accidents relating to speed. Appeals to reduce the speed have been ignored by the RTA.

A traffic speed camera installed at 90 KPH on a dangerous bend of the highway was set too high for this torturous section and has the distinction of being the lowest returning camera in the State.

The RTA has refused steadfastly to drop this camera speed to a safer lower speed until their contractors, ABI Group, have now started construction on the new section bringing the highway closer to our properties.

The section of the hill where the RTA selected the route is a known slip area and we have already experienced such instability in the chosen route at Saint Helena, Byron Bay section.

Because of that, the finished section at Saint Helena has claimed so many lives the speed is now slower than before the upgrade and the corridor has been reduced to 2 lanes because of instability problems.

The RTA has not forward signposted Ocean Shores, the largest population base on the highway(6,000 residents) but has elected to forward signpost lesser populated areas. This policy has continued with forward signposting being adopted for towns adjoining Ocean Shores with populations less than 100 persons.

The RTA has elected to build a massive Truck rest area alongside our area that was not even mentioned in their signage plan less than a year ago and is in complete contradiction with RTA policy in relation to distance between existing truck rest areas.

We believe a full investigation into the RTA and in particular the methods used for Route selection, will uncover corruption and incompetence on a grand scale and we would request the opportunity to document our concerns at the enquiry.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity for to place our concerns before them and wish them well in their deliberations.

Jim Mangleson.

Pacific Highway Delegate

for

Ocean Shores Community Association Inc.