

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Organisation: Summerland Way Action Group (SWAG)

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Subject:

Summary

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PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES & ISSUES FOR CONCERN:

Current upgrades to the highway are largely for the benefit of truck transportation at the expense of community; areas where the new style BW trucks, are having problems negotiating. A more appropriate, holistic solution is to take trucks & interstate through tourist transport off the narrow Pacific H'Way, going all the way to solving the sustainable road development by moving the line of road to a more appropriate less impacting stretch of land. There currently exists a true opportunity for change to occur inter-regionally connecting Northern NSW with Queensland favoured by residents, tourist and trucking transportation within the state.

The current planned modifications are impacting our communities in a major way and in the consultative process our ideas are squashed that could lead to any possible such solution as the upgrading of the Summerland Way to inland highway. Our group formed to connect up and network with groups along the Pacific H'wy to lobby the NSW Planning, state & federal ministers and the premier to bring about a review of the highway issue and allow the residents of NSW have input. This group is the Summerland Way Action Group (SWAG).

These plans propose to impact the amenity of our local villages permanently by constructing drive throughs in the guise of bypasses. Directing the flow of traffic through the Mid - Far North Coasts following the coastline, in areas less than 1km from the shore. What the RTA are proposing is short of miraculous. To construct this will bring about entire coastal devastation, pollution of our Marine National Parks, namely Split Solitary Marine Reserve. These plans are in the final stages of negotiating to direct the states traffic flow north through the coast land of Northern NSW following the outdated dogleg Pacific H'wy. This just so happens to be through the middle of suburbia, villages, pockets of vital coast land, valuable fertile farmland and potential housing estates. The outcome is untenable, the Western side of the highway is cut off from the Eastern side and residents no longer can walk, ride, horseride or cycle to the beach ever again! The impact will be permanent and will decimate our lifestyle as we know it now.

There is an alternative already proposed by Shires on the Summerland Way Promotional Committee and legislated after extensive surveying and consultation in 1989 - 1991 from Coffs Harbour to Brisbane via Beaudesert. The initial upgrades and construction would need to be dealt with now before the Coffs Harbour by-pass is set in concrete as the Summerland Way starts in Coffs Harbour with the Orara Way. This is essential to directing traffic inland at this point of the Pacific Highway to Brisbane via Grafton, Casino Kyogle, Rathdowney and Beaudesert. These are some of the shires set to benefit from such infrastructure but only if we begin now at Coffs Harbour with a Far Western Bypass as planned over a decade ago when we went through the same process that we are being forced to go through again now. WHY?

In consulting the Summerland Way Promotional Committee, at the Kyogle Council an outlined map of the Summerland Way can be obtained. When one looks at this map it stands out as a very obvious route for 2 main reasons: it is a straight flat route where land is extremely cheaper than the coastland and the Shires have been lobbying for this for >40 years to bring desperately needed infrastructure to inland towns.

The building of the Summerland Way would also alleviate the need for Pacific Highway upgrades at Tugun, Ocean Shores, Brunswick Heads, Ballina, Woodburn, Broadwater and Ullmarra as the Pacific H'Way can be down graded to a regional road essentially for internal transportation and the tourist and trucking transportation on the inland Summerland Way. In the interim SWAG requests that all truck transport be sent back to the Newell H'wy. to allow for the construction of such.