

**Submission
No 131**

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Organisation:

Name: Mr Russel Burtenshaw

Telephone:

Date Received: 19/08/2005

Subject:

Summary

Mr Russel Burtenshaw

26-06-2005.

**TO: INQUIRY CHAIR JENNY GARDINER
GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE 4
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
MACQUARIE STREET
SYDNEY
NSW 2000**

Dear Jenny,

I am writing to you to lodge my submission on the proposed Woodburn to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade Proposal.

Following are my points of objection and opinions in reference to the above proposal.

I oppose and strongly reject options 2A and 2B.

Option 2A is an outrageous example of how Hyder Consultants and the R.T.A. have not adequately researched the highway upgrade options, and have provided inaccurate mapping of route options, leaving the whole community in a state of fear and confusion over their family and property's future.

Option 2A will directly impact on ten houses in a 1.7km section of the Rileys Hill Road. At least three of these homes are directly under the 250m wide corridor, completely displacing the families involved.

If options 2A or 2B go ahead they will dissect several areas of **prime agricultural land**, seriously affecting the viability of generational farms.

The same 1.7km section of Rileys Hill Road in option 2A is a **core Koala Habitat and Corridor**; with six mother Koalas successfully rearing and weaning their young from the last breeding season. Option 2A will totally eliminate this and other core Koala Habitats in Rileys Hill as it runs parallel over these habitats.

Rileys Hill and Rileys Hill Road, Broadwater are the only remaining habitats in this area that have continued to produce Koala offspring regularly. Broadwater has a Koala Park on the highway, as it now exists, unfortunately all the koalas have been eliminated from the area due to **road kill**.

FLOODING:

Local farmers, long term S.E.S members and flood experienced locals all agree that to bridge the Richmond River at the 2A and 2B crossings could have a serious negative impact on flood heights and duration.

The Rileys Hill section of the river is well known as a **bottleneck** during flood times. To add bridge pylons in this area could cause a build up of flotsam against the pylons, possibly causing floodwaters to back up, increasing flood heights and duration at Rileys Hill and upstream towns and villages.

Some homes on this part of the study area have been known to be flood bound for up to two weeks in the past. Too potentially increase the flood height and inundation time on these properties would place an extra burden on local emergency service volunteers, who would be financially and physically strained by their farms and jobs being left idle with extended volunteer time during flooding.

Prolonged property inundation can cause hardship for local farmers due to souring of the ground destroying crops and pastures.

This flooding part of my submission would not be necessary if Hyder Consultants and the R.T.A. would take on the advice of the aforementioned local farmers, S.E.S members and flood informed locals. These people have informed the proponents of a flood free route marginally to the east of section 2 and 3 study areas. Their proposal would have the least negative impact on properties, homes, flora and fauna.

Given that the R.T.A. have several of these experienced locals on their Community Liaison Group (**C.L.G.**) I find it offensive that the R.T.A. choose to ignore these people's advice on the most logically and flood free options available. I am of the opinion that their advice has been ignored because to go east of the study area in section 2 would impinge on Broadwater National Park to the east of Broadwater. This area of the park has previously been sand mined, leaving little if any of the original flora, the resulting regrowth is mainly banksia and bitou bush. I and many informed locals consider the heath area east of Broadwater to be of low conservation value when compared to critical areas such as Rileys Hill, Bagotville, Meerschaum Vale and the Blackwall Ranges in general, the majority of which are not protected as National Parks.

A ^{compromise} ~~comparison~~ must be reached on this highway upgrade issue, ***one that affects the least amount of people, private property, prime agricultural land and high value flora and fauna habitats and corridors.***

In my opinion there are only three options that can achieve this result, they are:

1. Take the freight ~~trains~~ ^{trucks} and trucks to the New England Highway, where it may revitalise towns on route and re-install the North Coast rail system for coastal freight. Marine cartage could also be utilised via the port of Yamba, thereby stimulating the coastal economies.
2. Upgrade the existing highway between Woodburn and Ballina with diversions to the east around Woodburn, Broadwater and Wardell.
3. Select the flood free route partially to the east of the study area. The advantages to this route are as follows-
 - Flood free
 - Provides a fire break for local towns and villages by separating east and west Broadwater National Park.
 - Minimal impact on people, property, prime agricultural land, flora and fauna.
 - Only one river crossing.
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I hereby formally request that the R.T.A. choose the above option 3 flood free route, based on my points already made, otherwise to upgrade the existing highway, with town diversions to the east in place.

I look forward to a fair and positive outcome and look forward to your reply.

Yours Sincerely

Russell Burtenshaw.

