

**Submission
No 105**

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Organisation:

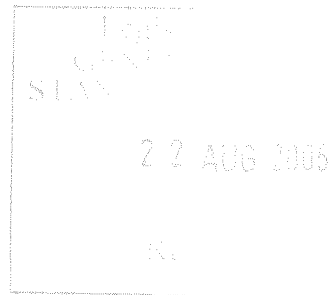
Name: Ms Kerry Kelly

Telephone:

Date Received: 22/08/2005

Subject:

Summary



Parliamentary Inquiry

18 August 2005

Kerry Kelly

RTA & the Woodburn to Ballina Princes Highway Upgrade

I would like to bring to your attention my belief that the process used to come up with the RTA, route short list is seriously flawed in several areas and that adequate scientific study and community consultation has not been undertaken due to the shonky dealings of the RTA and their consultants.

I will attempt to demonstrate in point form

- Many people were unaware of the initial community information evenings held at 3 or 4 venues in our study area because large areas were neglected in the mail-out and therefore people were denied the opportunity attend there meetings and also to apply for a position on the Community Liaison Group (CLG).....when this was brought up at CLG Meeting No 1 on 14 December 2004, (RTA) blamed Australia Post, yet the women who then owned and operated the Broadwater Post Office later told me that none went through her post office and she believed it to be the same of Wardell,
- CLG members were forced to sign a "charter" and pledge not to disclose any information deemed "confidential" by the RTA to the community they were supposed to represent. They were initially told they were not to have anything to do with the media also. In fact, later when the issue of the degree of secrecy was again broached said that unless this was carried out he "wouldn't bring [important] information to the meetings."

It was months later after a lengthy debate about secrecy at a CLG meeting that conceded that he would have documents printed with water stamps with the words "CONFIDENTIAL" or "DRAFT" on them. The draft documents were deemed suitable to show the community. We were begrudgingly told that we could talk to the media only as individuals and not as a member of the CLG.

- Another inconsistency was that a representative of the Cabbage Tree Island aboriginal community, Emma Walke, who tried to join the group, was forced to miss Meeting No2, 18th of January 2005, whilst waiting approval/clearance from the RTA/Hyder/Geolink organisations.

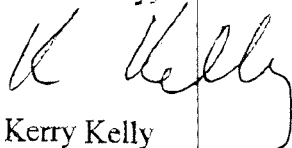
Meanwhile two new members were from Riley's Hill were welcomed that night without such protocol (*both these communities were found to be unrepresented at the first meeting and deemed needing*

representation.) When I asked why Emma Walke had to be approved while Fran Hitchens and Paddy Wilde did not he said he had made a mistake... Could this be racism? Or could it be that their favoured route, at that time would severely affect the community of Cabbage Tree Island and the other land of the Jali Land Council?

- Environmental and flood assessments undertaken by Geolink were proven to be seriously flawed by independent environmental scientists, by Ballina Shire Councils environmental scientist and members of the C.I.G. Time and time again the consultants working for RTA had to admit to their mistakes in their documents, but often too late to change their reports to the public or roads-minister. One example is 10 empty demountable structures that were added to the count of homes affected by a particular route. Therefore I believe these *studies* invalid tools to base any decision making upon.
- Calls to hotline not answered or messages left were not replied to. This problem came up all the time in talking to the community and of course at the meetings....in fact it became a bit of a joke.
- Agenda's of next meeting and minutes of last, arriving just days before the next meeting.... or not at all!!!!... this did not allow C L G member to adequately prepare for next meeting.
- A sanitised version of minutes presented, altered to suit RTA's agenda eg, Emma Walke's comment that route 2D was "the koori cleansing route" was not minuted but was intrinsic to the rest of her address, yet this was not recorded in the minutes nor her other comment in the same vein. This is just an example, Mark Graham was incorrectly documented almost every meeting.

One thing I do know is that the majority of people in this area don't want a six lane super highway built for B-doubles to travel 110 km per hour. They want an up-grade of the existing highway. I have collected signatures of many hundreds of people who, when I say that the petition is to keep the highway on the highway they are always very pleased to sign. I hope this helps with your parliamentary enquiry.

Yours truly,


Kerry Kelly