

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Organisation:

Name: Ms Gail Greig-Morrison

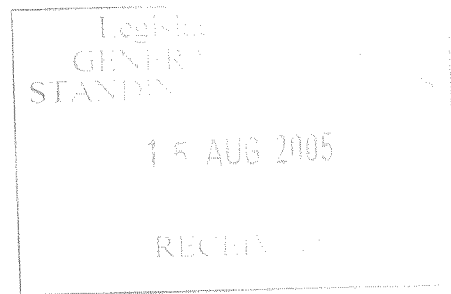
Telephone:

Date Received: 15/08/2005

Subject:

Summary

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4
The Hon. Jennifer Ann GARDINER, MLC



I am a member of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) for the extended study area of the Tintenbar to Ewingsdale Pacific Highway Upgrade (T2E).

I nominated for the position, so I could have an active role in determining the best outcome for myself and the community in which I live and represent.

My concerns generate from the processes the RTA are imposing upon the members of the CLG. They are:

- We were required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement which basically prohibits us from disseminating certain (usually the most important) information back to the communities which we are supposed to represent. This of course puts us in a privileged position which can only divide us from our communities.
- The RTA have a wealth of local knowledge available to it from our communities and on many occasions the RTA and their specialists have been invited to view certain aspects of our area but have declined. It seems that they are determined to rush through this process only utilizing sanitized information.
- The route options initially presented to the CLG have been formulated, by the RTA and their agency specialists, on outdated information and minimal field work. When the CLG members raised their concerns about the errors and omissions in the information, their reply was that when they get down to say 3 to 4 options, then more detailed work will be done. My concern is that had accurate information been used initially in the 'desk top' assessment, then perhaps we would be considering quite different options.
- The RTA has been given a directive to deliver a preferred route by July 2006, even though the road has no funding and is unlikely to be built within 10 to 20 years given current Government funding arrangements. So, why the hurry to announce the preferred route? Surely getting it right is more important!
- The communities that have been affected by the announcement of the extended study area will remain in limbo until the Minister signs off the preferred route. This could be years away and these communities will not be able to make decisions on their future or sell their properties whilst the Minister decides when the work will begin.
- These communities no longer have any faith in the RTA's planning ability given the abandonment of the gazetted Ballina Bypass. The Ballina bypass had been in the planning stage for some 20 years and local authorities and landowners have made substantial investments in the area with the knowledge that the Pacific Highway from Ballina to Ewingsdale will be upgraded along the existing highway corridor. Now this is not the case. Why?

I strongly urge you to investigate why the initial study area was expanded?

Thank you for this opportunity.
Yours Truly
Gail Greig-Morrison

