

Submission
No 3

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES: COFFS HARBOUR

Organisation:

Name: Mrs & Mr Louise & John Barselarr

Telephone:

Date Received: 27/10/2005

Subject:

Summary

24 October 2005

The Chair
GPSC 4
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir

**SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY ON THE PROPOSED
PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE BETWEEN COFFS HARBOUR AND
WOOLGOOLGA**

On 25 January 2003, we wrote the attached letter to the then Minister for Transport and Roads, the Honourable P C Scully MP, expressing our concern about the RTA's proposals for the upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga. Similar letters were sent to the Premier and some half dozen Ministers with relevant portfolios.

The Premier and Ministers advised that they had forwarded our letters to Minister Scully for attention. We did not receive any acknowledgement of receipt of these letters from Mr Scully's office and are still waiting for a response to the letters. This we feel is indicative of the contempt felt for the community by the then Minister and his Department.

This view was reinforced by the experience of a local resident who overheard a conversation between RTA representatives whilst travelling on a plane just prior to the beginning of the "community consultation" process. The RTA representatives were heard to say that the consultation process was only cosmetic and would have no impact on the Authority's pre-determined outcome for the Highway.

Our view was again confirmed at an early public meeting held at the Woolgoolga RSL Club when RTA representatives were asked why they were planning only 10-20 years ahead and not 50 years or more into the future. The response from one representative was: "We might all be using public transport by then". Another was heard to say: "We might all be using space ships by then".

The issues raised in our letter of January 2003 remain of concern and have not been addressed by the RTA. What has changed since January 2003, is that the number of trucks using the Pacific Highway has increased dramatically, making travel on the highway increasingly dangerous for residents.

Since that time also, many more people have died on the Highway. Moreover, the recent lifting of development embargoes on the northern beaches will result in thousands more people using the highway between Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour in the next 5-10 years.

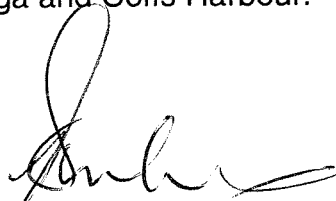
No doubt facts and figures relating to truck movements, population projections and highway deaths will be supplied to the Inquiry by the various lobby groups representing the community on this issue. What we would like to convey in this submission is the acute sense of fear, anger and insult felt by the overwhelming majority of Coffs Harbour residents at the RTA's current proposals to upgrade the Pacific Highway.

The strength of these views can be seen in the degree of support given by the community to the recent outburst by local member, Andrew Fraser in Parliament. Whilst not condoning his behaviour, residents identify with his frustration at the lack of attention being given to this issue.

Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga need a far western bypass of the Pacific Highway and the existing road made safe for local residents commuting between Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour.

Yours sincerely

Louise Barseelaar



Louise & John Barseelaar