

## INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

**Organisation:**

**Name:** Ms Jocelyn Hollis & Mr Jim Fiford

**Telephone:**

**Date Received:** 19/08/2005

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**Subject:**

**Summary**

JOCELYN HOLLIS & JIM FIFORD

## FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

TO NSW SENATE INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES  
ATTENTION STEVEN REYNOLDS  
FACSIMILE NO (02) 9230 3416  
FROM JOCELYN HOLLIS & JIM FIFORD  
DATE 19 AUGUST 2005

Note: If you do not receive 16 pages (including this page) please telephone us immediately.

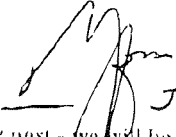
Message

INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

WE ENCLOSE:

- (a) OUR SUBMISSION TO THIS INQUIRY (5 PAGES)
- (b) LETTER 27 JUNE 2005 TO RTA (3 PAGES)
- (c) "NORTHERN STAR" 19 AUGUST 2005 (3 PAGES)
- (d) LETTER 21 JULY 2005 TO RTA (1 PAGE)
- (e) PHOTOGRAPHS OF LANDSLIP & FOG REFERRED TO IN (d) (2 PAGES)
- (f) RESPONSE email FROM ARUP (1 PAGE)

WE REQUEST THIS SUBMISSION & SUPPORTING MATERIAL BE PLACED BEFORE THE ABOVE SENATE INQUIRY & THIS IS A GENERAL SUBMISSION AND WE ARE NOT CLAIMING CONFIDENTIALITY  
THANKS

  
JIM FIFORD

If this fax has been sent to you in error please ring us and return the fax by post - we will be happy to pay your costs.  
This fax may contain information which is confidential or which is subject to legal professional privilege.

Consequently, you must not use the fax or the information in it in any way.  
Any confidentiality or privilege between solicitor and client is not waived or lost because this fax has been sent to you in error.

JOCELYN HOLLIS & JIM FIFORD

18 August 2005

The Hon. Jenny Gardiner MLC,  
Chairperson,  
NSW Senate Inquiry into Pacific Highway Upgrades,  
C/- Mr. Steven Reynolds  
[gpseo4@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gpseo4@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Madam.

**SUBMISSION ON PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE BETWEEN TINTENBAR & EWINGSDALE**

We live at \_\_\_\_\_ which has been owned by Jocelyn since 1987. Jocelyn has had a long association with this area as her father owned a grazing property nearby off Ross Lane in the 1960's. Our property is on the eastern side of Old Byron Bay Road within an area zoned "Scenic Escarpment" by Ballina Shire Council. This zoning is designed to restrict development and to preserve for future generations the unique scenic qualities of this and adjoining lands running for several kilometers in a north/south direction between the existing Pacific Highway and the sugar cane former Newrybar Swamp lands to the east. The existing Pacific Highway follows generally along the plateau farm lands approximately 100 metres higher elevation than the sugar cane lands which are now under investigation as a possible route under the extended study area. Our property drops approximately 90 metres in elevation between its highest and lowest point and contains small creeks and waterfalls with native wildlife and we have been actively extending the existing rainforest by further tree plantings. Similar conservation efforts have been undertaken by several other property owners along this scenic escarpment area. The existing Pacific Highway comes within half a kilometer of the western boundary of our property and our house. Although we do suffer from existing noise it is our belief for reasons set out below that the upgrading of the Pacific Highway between Tintenbar and Ewingsdale should follow as closely as possible the existing footprint of the current highway.

We address the terms of inquiry as follows:

- 1.a) *Reasons for expanding the highway upgrade study area on the St. Helena to Tintenbar section;*

There was clearly agitation by property owners along the existing Pacific Highway route to redirect the upgraded highway as far away from their properties as possible. Jim attended the original public meeting called by RTA at Newrybar Hall for the initial study area even though our property was outside the original study area. He noted a number of property owners at that meeting called for the highway to be completely re routed well to the east on the sugar cane flats below the escarpment. That agitation continued and included an advertising campaign in the Northern Star newspaper. Of concern to us is the belief that RTA seems to have been influenced by the alleged high number of written submissions received by people wanting the highway re routed onto the sugar cane flats. Speakers at subsequent public meetings have stated the RTA counted as one written submission each signature on circular letters received. That could be quite misleading as we recall when attending the Sunday Markets at Bangalow sometime late 2004 that there was a stall at the market being manned by objectors to the highway route in the original study area. A man on the stall called to us as we passed and asked us to sign some form of standard letter or petition. When we read it we realized it was calling on the RTA to re route the highway onto the cane lands to the east of our property and we refused to sign it. Signatures on this letter/petition would in all probability not be representative of affected property owners or occupiers as the Bangalow Sunday Markets are attended by several thousand people most of whom are not local and come long distances to attend what is a tourist market.

*b) The level of upgrade proposed for this section and the remainder of the Pacific Highway.*

Until a year ago the RTA web site was not even contemplating an upgrade of the Tintenbar to Bangalow section in the foreseeable future and only detailed proposals for the upgrade of the Bangalow to Ewingsdale section generally along the existing route. We and other people who more recently purchased properties proceeded with confidence that there would be no significant changes and only gradual upgrades in the Tintenbar to Bangalow section. There is a significant coastal road running north/south between Byron Bay and Ballina of high standard that siphons off from this section of the Pacific Highway a lot of local and tourist traffic and there did not seem to be any need for a major upgrade on the Tintenbar to Bangalow section. Suddenly the RTA deems it necessary to plan a 6 lane expressway through this section. Our belief is that a dual carriageway (i.e. four lane) upgrade following generally along the existing footprint of the highway between Tintenbar and Ewingsdale is all that is needed and will minimize the impact of the upgrade on property owners.

- c) The impact of the highway upgrade on prime agricultural land; and*  
*d) The potential impact of the upgraded highway on prime agricultural land in the expanded study area;*

Whilst we have limited knowledge other than Jocelyn's family background of cattle and sheep raising, it is our belief that there would be greater impact on prime

agricultural lands in the expanded study area than would be the case if the highway upgrade could be contained generally within the existing footprint of the highway. There is already a dual carriageway section of approximately 2 kilometres where the Pacific Highway by passes Bangalow which would be totally wasted with a large swathe of prime agricultural lands having to be acquired further to the east. Only part of any proposed route in the extended study area to the east would be across the sugar cane lands (which it would dissect and complicate ploughing, planting and harvesting). Along the northern end of these flats there is extensive plantings of macadamias which would be similarly affected. North of this any route would have to climb through the scenic escarpment land (causing serious scarring to the visual escarpment and likely affecting the physical stability of it) and then proceed further north to Ewingsdale through prime agricultural lands to Ewingsdale.

- e) *The impacts of B-doubles on the Pacific Highway; and*
- f) *The impacts of interstate heavy transport on the Pacific Highway and of the mixing of interstate and local transport;*

As we live only half a kilometer off the existing Pacific Highway and travel on it almost every day we have noticed both a significant increase in the noise level and in the volume of heavy vehicles on the highway in the last two years. This is caused not just by the State government decision to allow B-doubles on the highway but also by the opening of the Chinderah to Yelgun upgrade. We understand this altered the economics for heavy transports travelling between Brisbane and Sydney and made it cheaper to use the Pacific Highway instead on the New England Highway. We are not aware of any public input being sought by the government before authorizing B-doubles onto the Pacific Highway

- g) *The impacts of interstate truck transport on the New England Highway; and*
- h) *The significance of the New England Highway as a designated national transport route;*

We have travelled many times along the New England Highway and Jocelyn lived on a property beside it about 10 kilometers north of Glen Innes for some 19 years. It had always been recognized and encouraged as the preferred route for heavy vehicle transport between Sydney and Brisbane. Having generally long straight sections across the tableland country combined with climbing lanes when appropriate, the presence of heavy transports does not present a major problem to private motorists as occurs on the Pacific Highway which is used by a far greater number of private motorists. Also the New England highway passes through far less built up areas and towns so there is far less noise for residents than occurs along the Pacific Highway. A major by pass already exists in Armidale. Tamworth and Glen Innes could readily be by passed. The New England Highway should continue as the preferred route for heavy transport.

We have heard that the trucking industry considers there is a saving of at least \$200.00 each way to now travel on the Pacific highway between Sydney and

Brisbane instead of the New England Highway. We suggest the government lost the opportunity to impose a licence fee for each trip before allowing B-doubles onto the Pacific Highway. This would have moderated the volume of heavy transports and given an incentive to continue using the New England Highway as well as providing funds for upgrading both highways. The possibility of still raising a form of toll on heavy vehicles using the Pacific Highway (from the Hunter to the Queensland border) should be investigated. Alternatively the B-doubles should be required to use the New England highway.

- i) *Existing or proposed strategic transport plans that seek to deal with the forecast doubling by 2025 of the NSW freight task;*

As far as we are aware these are largely non-existent. Jim sent in a submission to the Senate committee inquiry into the closure of the Casino to Murwillumbah railway line. This was a very short sighted State government decision. There is a great need to encourage more movement of heavy freight by rail between Sydney and Brisbane. Additionally there is a need to re-instate the rail link from Casino to Murwillumbah with extension on to link up to Coolangatta to provide a transport corridor for future generations. The Queensland government has had the foresight to now be planning to extend the existing Brisbane to Robina rail line further south to Coolangatta.

- j) *The significance of statement by the Minister for Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources that the Pacific Highway is dedicated as a regional road;*

We are not familiar with this and can offer no comment.

- 2) *Ballina and Woodburn issues;*

There is an urgent need to proceed with the long awaited Ballina by-pass. There is a major problem with the high volume of heavy vehicles passing through the middle of Ballina and major traffic delays occurring in holiday seasons. There are major problems for the RTA in constructing the upgraded highway across the water saturated flood plains. This is a problem the RTA will also have for any proposed route across the cane lands below our property if that is ultimately adopted as the upgrade route. Attached is copy of Jim's letter of 27 June 2005 to RTA Project Manager Shane Higgins in which he refers to this problem in the middle of page 2. We recall that at one of the RTA public meetings Ballina Shire Councillor

also warned RTA that there was a massive problem in building a highway on these soils. Our concerns appear to have been justified as I enclose copy of article from today's "Northern Star" of the collapse of embankment built on these soils for the new Teven Road twin bridges approaches. There are also problems of flooding on these lands as detailed in my letter to RTA. The "Northern Star" also recently reported that residents of the Cumbalum area consider recent residential road works and the RTA nearby test pad of filling caused them increased local flooding during our recent heavy rain.

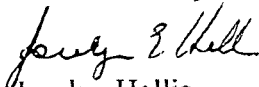
3) *Any other related issues;*

We are concerned in relation to the issue of compensation for residents. We refer you to item 5 on the third page of Jim's letter of 27 June to RTA. We seek that the inquiry look at the issue of compensation with a view to recommending legislative changes that would enable property owners affected once the new route was determined to obtain compensation at that stage for the detriment to the value of their properties then experienced rather than having to wait many years for the route to be actually resumed. Such compensation rights need to be widened to also include the right to claim for affectation by increased noise levels affecting a property even if no part of the actual property was required for acquisition.

For completion of full details we also enclose copy of Jim's further letter of 21 July 2005 to RTA and copy of the only response received so far, being email of 1 August 2005 from Rose Boyd, Community Liaison officer of the consultants Arup.

We appreciate that your inquiry has been called and hope this information is of some assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

  
Jocelyn Hollis

  
Jim Fford