

Submission  
No 62

## INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES: COFFS HARBOUR

**Organisation:** NRMA  
**Name:** Mr Tony Stuart  
**Position:** Chief Executive Officer  
**Telephone:**  
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**Subject:**

**Summary**

R'cd GRSC  
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National Roads and Motorists'  
Association Limited

ABN 77 000 010 506

trading as  
NRMA Member Services

388 George Street  
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia  
Telephone 02 9292 9222  
Facsimile 02 9292 8472  
Website [www.nrma.com.au](http://www.nrma.com.au)

14 November 2005

The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC  
Chair  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4  
Inquiry into Pacific Highway Upgrades

Dear Ms Gardiner

RE: Inquiry into Pacific Highway Upgrade Coffs Harbour

Thank you for the opportunity to make a public submission to the Committee's inquiry into the Pacific Highway Upgrade.

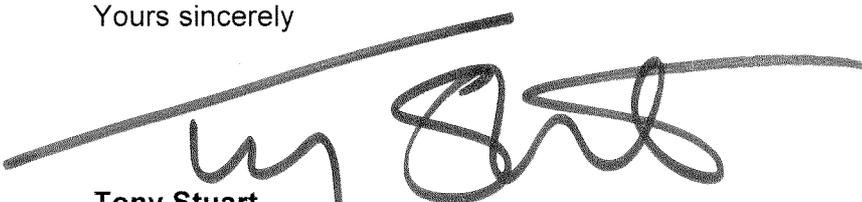
The upgrading of the Pacific Highway is a very high priority project for NRMA Motoring & Services (NRMA) on behalf of its 2 million members. The provision of dual divided carriageways similar to the Yelgun to Chinderah section and other upgraded sections of the highway, has the potential to reduce the number of head on fatalities by up to 90 % with many other benefits, including reduced travel times. The fast tracking of the upgrade of the Pacific Highway is critical.

NRMA wants high standard roads to be provided to ensure that the risk and severity of crashes is reduced. It is true that a significant number of crashes are caused by human error, but a simple mistake should result in loss of life. A forgiving road environment provides a margin for error.

Our specific comments are attached.

Should you wish to discuss NRMA's comments please contact Brett Gale General Manager Public Affairs on 8222 2158 or [brett.gale@mynrma.com.au](mailto:brett.gale@mynrma.com.au)

Yours sincerely

  
**Tony Stuart**  
Chief Executive Officer

## PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES: COFFS HARBOUR

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1) That General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 inquire into and report on:
  - a) the proposed upgrade of the Pacific Highway between Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga as outlined in the Coffs Harbour Highway Planning Strategy, and
  - b) the progress of the proposed Bonville upgrade of the Pacific Highway.
- 2) That the inquiry be in the same terms as, and conducted concurrently with, the inquiry into the Pacific Highway upgrades between Ewingsdale and Tintenbar, and Ballina and Woodburn, as reported to the House on 14 September 2005.

### **Background**

As stated in our previous submission for your inquiry into the Pacific Highway upgrade, in 1995 NRMA Motoring & Services (NRMA) was part of the National Pacific Taskforce which commissioned a report "National Pacific – A road for Australia". This report stated that "the national focus on the need to upgrade of the Pacific Highway arises because:

It is by far Australia's most heavily used interstate highway.

It has a higher fatality rate than other major highways.

It does not meet current, let alone future road transport needs of two of Australia's largest cities – Sydney and Brisbane – as well as those of the nations fastest growing non- metropolitan areas – South East Queensland and the NSW North Coast."

These reasons for an upgrade are still current despite the work that has already been completed. NRMA wants the Federal Government and NSW Government to increase funding levels for the Pacific Highway to ensure that the highway is completely upgraded within the next ten years.

### **Value Management Workshops**

NRMA supports the use of Value Management Workshops (VMW) which are managed and run by the Roads and Traffic Authority to assist in the decision making process for route selection. The VMW is a tool that brings together a wide range of stakeholder interests and expertise to review investigations undertaken to date and on the balance of issues recommend a preferred option for further investigation.

NRMA has participated in three VMW on the Coffs Harbour to Woolgoolga sections. The criteria for selecting the preferred route option for this area were fiercely debated but consensus was reached in the room. The selection criteria for each workshop are dependent on the key issues for that group.

## **Bonville Deviation**

(NRMA Mid North Coast Better Roads Panel Investigations)

The Bonville Bypass is a 9.6 km dual carriageway project that adjoins with the Lyons Road project in Coffs Harbour. In 1999 when the project started, it was expected to be completed in 2003, but by 2003, the program had been extended to 2008. For the last two years, an end date has not been reported in the State budget papers. In 1999, the project was listed as 3% complete. At the end of this financial year, despite total expenditure of \$11.9 million, the budget estimates that only 10% will be completed. In part, this is because the project cost has risen by \$6 million. If you add up all the promised expenditure in each year, then subtract the total of actual money spent in that period, it is in the order of a \$700,000 gap.

Bonville Deviation has had planning approval for more than eight months and still there has been little to no action to fix this stretch of the Highway.

There have been far too many delays on the Bonville Deviation and we have seen the tragic consequences of these delays.

NRMA is pleased to note the announcement recently by the Hon Jim Lloyd, Federal Minister for Roads of an additional \$5million expenditure on Bonville. This is small step in the right direction.

## **Coffs Harbour Bypass**

The Coffs Harbour Bypass has been debated for many, many years. NRMA recently attended meetings in Coffs Harbour on the issue to consider the various options.

This area has very high traffic volumes and a high accident rate where large volumes of local traffic mix with highway traffic. In fact from the period 2000 to 2002 Coffs Harbour experienced two of the five worst Blackspots on the Pacific Highway – at the junction of the Pacific Highway and High Street there were 38 accidents and 21 injuries; and at the junction of the Pacific Highway and Bray Street there were 38 crashes and 17 injuries. The Roads and Traffic Authority will be able to supply you with the latest information on blackspots in this area.

Attached is a copy of NRMA Safer Roads Save Lives document – the State of our Roads in 2004. Also attached is a copy of our most recent study of the Pacific Highway, and the accompanying media release.

The preferred route for this project needs to be confirmed and locked in place as soon as possible – the area is experiencing very rapid growth. Once the route is locked in, then the full project process can occur – this will give certainty to land owners, the community and road users.