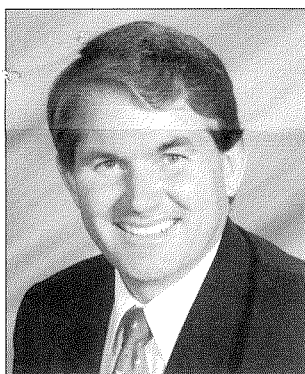


INQUIRY INTO PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Name: Mr Don Page MP
Position: Member for Ballina
Telephone:
Date Received: 24/11/2005

Subject:

Summary



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



DON PAGE, M.P.
MEMBER FOR BALLINA

R'd
CPSC 28/11/05 qb

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21 November 2005

The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC
Chair
Parliamentary Inquiry into Pacific Highway Upgrades
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Gardiner

On behalf of the Members for Clarence (Steve Cansdell) and Lismore (Thomas George), I would like the Committee to consider an alternative route for upgrade to dual carriageway between Tyagarah/Ewingsdale and Grafton.

The rationale for considering this option is as follows:

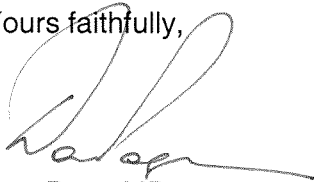
- This option is much less expensive because of cheaper land to the west and the fact that the State Government already owns most of the inland corridor. The road construction costs for the inland option have been estimated by a leading road building company at around \$1 billion, about a third of the cost of the proposed existing highway upgrade.
- The distance of the two routes is the same (around 165km). Please see attached map of the two options.
- Because the inland option is less expensive to build, it is likely to be completed in about a third of the time it would take to do the Pacific Highway upgrade between Tyagarah/Ewingsdale and Grafton. This would save many lives.
- The inland option would separate interstate through traffic (which is forecast to double by 2020) from local traffic (which is also forecast to increase due to strong coastal population growth). This separation is important now and into the future.
- The inland route would have less environmental impact because it does not traverse wetlands, high conservation value land and prime agricultural land.
- It would affect fewer people in a negative sense because it would avoid all existing villages and towns.

- The inland route would provide a much-needed upgrade of the Bangalow-Lismore Road which according to a recent NRMA report is not subject to any planned upgrade despite the need to do so.
- In the longer term, this inland route would be part of an inland freight corridor linking through to Beaudesert in Queensland, where a major freight terminal (road and rail) is proposed.
- There are certain black spots along the existing Pacific Highway route that need to be done regardless of which option is selected. For example, the Ballina Bypass is required for local safety reasons, i.e. to eliminate the dangerous Tintenbar Hill section and remove through traffic from Ballina township. Ministerial approval has been given and some pre-construction work has already been done.
- The section from Brisbane to Tyagarah/Ewingsdale is either completed or in the process of completion for a four-lane divided highway. It is unlikely any Government would duplicate a four-lane road further to the west of this corridor in the foreseeable future. The inland option proposed recognises this and that's why the inland diversion commences around the Ewingsdale/Tyagarah area. The section between Ewingsdale and Grafton has not yet been upgraded to dual carriageway so now is the time to compare these two options from a benefit/cost perspective.

The Members for Clarence, Lismore and myself are keen for a benefit/cost study to be done as a basis for comparison between the inland option versus the coastal (existing Pacific Highway) option. This should be done by an independent consultant, not the RTA. This can be done relatively quickly. Once a comparison is made it would then be possible to proceed to construction for the preferred route.

It is important to do this comparative analysis now before construction money is spent on the dual carriageway between the Tyagarah/Ewingsdale area and the Grafton area, otherwise an inland option will not be considered in the foreseeable future.

Yours faithfully,



Don Page MP
MEMBER FOR BALLINA

DP:bp